

Loneliness

Ishwar Puri

Thank you, Pat.... Loneliness is a common enough used word, but why we are lonely has not been discussed very often. It seems to me that we are lonely because we do not have the capacity to communicate. Even in the midst of a crowd we can be quite lonely if we do not communicate with the rest of the crowd. On the other hand, if we can communicate even without words with people, we are not lonely.

We have learned many words and we exchange words, but we do not exchange the meanings of words. When we speak our words, we use those words to mean what we wish them to mean, what our previous experience with those words suggests that they mean. Words have the meanings which come from the association of ideas from previous experience. Since no two people have the same previous experience, words don't mean the same thing to any two people. The result is that when two people are conversing, are in a dialog with words, they are not really exchanging the meanings of those words, they are merely exchanging the words.

It's very interesting if we sit as a third party and watch people talking to each other. And we will notice that when one person speaks he's saying something to himself, not to the other person, because he's just saying what he understands. The other person answers without much relation to what the first person said and speaks to herself or himself. The result is that we are trying to communicate with ourselves and not with the other person. When we find that we are not understood, the feeling of loneliness, the unexpressed feeling of loneliness grows. Loneliness will continue to grow till we can communicate with people.

When there is no communication a crowd does not help to reduce the loneliness. When there *is* communication we are not alone even when alone. When we can communicate with people through means other than words, we do not feel lonely. For instance, we may have somebody for whom we have very tender feelings, feelings of love and affection, and the very thought of that person, the very remembrance, the memory of that person removes our loneliness even when we are completely solitary. On the other hand, if we do not have any such experience and we do not have the ability to have such an experience, we remain lonely. It's very important, therefore, that we understand what makes for communication between people, because if we could communicate we could avoid being lonely. Now, let us see how communication is possible at all between human beings....

True communication only arises when we feel that the other person is going through an experience through which we have gone or through which we are going. When that kind of understanding comes and we feel, "Yes, I know what you mean." without saying what you mean, when you feel you know what's going on at the other end without having to say what's going on, communication has been established. It is then not a question of exchange of words. It is an exchange of experience, an exchange of understanding. This transference of understanding from one person to another does not take place unless our understanding

has been raised to a level where we can understand the understanding of all people. Some people describe it as the state of universal mind. Some people say we have reached a level of consciousness where we can understand how the mind would universally behave, how the mind would have its thoughts and feelings. When people have that large awareness, that higher level of consciousness where they can experience one universal understanding then transference of understanding is possible and leads to communication which removes loneliness. But that is not a complete removal of loneliness. Even with the best of transference of understanding we can revert to a state of loneliness, because understanding communicates while it lasts. If it does not last too long the communication is snapped and loneliness comes back. Whenever, with universal mind, with a mind that can reach out to other people's minds, we can communicate by transferring understanding when we both think that we know what it means, when we both think alike, we can achieve a degree of transference of understanding or communication. But that lasts so long as our state of belief in what the other person understands lasts. When that finishes loneliness returns. So, to break loneliness through communication by understanding is a temporary phase. A few moments of understanding will give you only a few moments of company, of freedom from loneliness.

There is a higher way of communication which can remove loneliness for all time. The highest communication that is possible between human beings is the communication through love. When we experience love for another person, we transcend the realm of understanding. We are not confined to the levels of thought. It is not necessary to think that we love in order to love. In fact, if we think about loving, love disappears. Whenever we think of transferring love from one consciousness to another, love disappears. Nobody yet has been able to experience love by thinking about it. You cannot induce love by thinking about love. Love just comes. In fact, it comes when we stop thinking. The more we think the more we keep love away. In fact, we have very often, by over use of thinking and reasoning, kept love at arms length and we have wondered what's gone wrong with our communications. We have come very near love and thoughts have come in the way and stopped love from coming to us. Thoughts have been a great barrier to communication through love. But when we look into the lives of those who experienced love and when we recall the few moments of love we might have experienced, we know those were moments when we had, in fact, suspended communication through thoughts. In fact, we had at that moment suspended communication through thoughts even with our own selves. Because when we resumed communicating with thoughts, the experience of love disappeared. The experience of love, then, is an experience that transcends communication through the mind, through the thoughts. We can think about the experience of love. That's different. That will not reduce the communication through love. We can think about the person we love. We can think of the beloved. But thinking about the beloved, thinking about love is different from thinking into love. We cannot think ourselves into love. The true communication which removes the loneliness of man or loneliness of a human being is through communication through love.

Here I am using the word love as I said last evening, in a slightly different way than the way in which it is used in most countries. Especially countries of the west. Most of the time in the West we use the word love for attachments. Attachment is quite distinct from love. In attachment we are attached to another person and are conscious of the existence

of two persons, ourselves and the one to whom we are attached. This awareness of two also gives us the awareness of separation and therefore the awareness of pain. Separation, pain, and feeling unhappy and miserable follow attachments. When a person says, "I love you" and says it repeatedly, "I love you", you can be sure that person loves "I" more than "you" because "I" comes first in his awareness. He's conscious of his own self. He's conscious of the lover and him. When he talks of "I love you" it's a case of attachment. On the other hand, if there is real love, the person does not say "I love you". He just thinks of you. He doesn't have time to think of "I" or "love". He thinks of you. And when that happens you're truly in a state of love. There is no time for the experience of two to take place. The experience of two has been reduced to the experience of one. There has been a complete identification with the object of love. The identification is so strong that many thoughts which belong to you are ascribed to the beloved. Many experiences which belong to you are ascribed to the beloved. An assumption is made that there is only one experiencer left of this whole world and that is the beloved. This feeling comes, and when that feeling comes all loneliness disappears. No man feels lonely when he has experienced love. So, attachment, in fact, creates loneliness because when the object of attachment is not close to you, you feel lonely. Love on the other hand reduces and eliminates the feeling of loneliness because it gives you the memory, the awareness of the beloved at all times. It may be true that we do not normally experience love and it's only rarely, accidentally that we experience love.

How come that we should not have the natural feeling of love? Is it something not quite human? Is it something out of our reach? The answer is no. It is not only within easy reach, it is in us all the time. Every human being born upon this Earth has natural love flowing in him. It is so full that if he were ever to experience it he would not know how to contain it. Then what is containing the love? What is submerging the love? It is our mind. It's the thinking process. We think and think and submerge the experience of love. We think ourselves out of love. We do not allow our own natural self to come up to the surface of experience because we hide ourselves under the mask of thinking, of thoughts. We keep on thinking and create an additional personality for ourselves behind which love cannot be seen.

The same thing is true of intuition, which is another faculty which belongs to our real self. We suppress our intuitive feelings, our intuitive experience by the overuse of reason. We can know everything that is worth knowing, that ought to be known through intuitive knowledge. Each human being born upon this Earth has the capacity. It is not necessary to be a yogi or to be somebody very smart to use intuitive feeling. All that you need to have your intuitive experience is to be yourself and not to be your mental self. If you are your self, you have intuitive knowledge and experience of love flowing all the time. But when we cover ourselves up with a mask of thought and reason and logic, when we cover ourselves by that use of mind which creates doubt, suspicion, uncertainty, we have indeed lost both our intuitive capacity as well as the capacity to have love. All the doubts are created by mind. When we think and keep on thinking, we keep on generating new doubts and new fears, new uncertainties. It is the nature of human mind to create doubt and uncertainty. Every time we think we create a doubt. See two people talking to each other with their minds and the first person, before starting, will start thinking, "Now, should I say or not say?" The whole business of not revealing yourself starts when you

communicate with the mind. And the other person says, "Is he telling the truth? Is he really coming out? Does he mean it?" And the doubt starts. As conversation with the mind proceeds, doubts grow. And with doubts, uncertainty and fear. When we do not know and we are doubtful, we are afraid. All fear arises from ignorance. When we are ignorant what is in the other person's heart, we are afraid. If we knew, we would never be afraid. When the very basis of our conversation is thought filled with doubts and uncertainties, we generate fear. And when we are afraid, we are unwilling to trust the other person. When we are unwilling to trust the other person, we get more and more into new masks to conceal ourselves.

Communication through the mind then generates fear, uncertainty and doubt and does not lead to love. And then we feel isolated because we feel we are let down. We feel that the other guy let us down. He did not mean what he said. You may say we are misunderstood. It's amazing how many people I have come across using their minds, brilliant people, masters and doctors from big universities, and I talk to them and they say, "No one really understands me." And I tell them, "But, why don't you tell them what you are. They'll understand you." And he says, "I keep on telling but they don't understand me." Why does this feeling grow? Because this is the nature of the human mind to generate doubt and uncertainty and ignorance.

Let us see, if we did not make use of the mind, if we kept the mind, the thinking machine aside, and dealt with another human being, what would be the response. We would trust the person. We would say, "That's me. That's part of me. That's just like me. We have the same heart. We have the same soul. Imagine, we are both human!" The feeling of commonness, or of what is common between us would capture us and we would say, "Since we are both human, how wonderful we both have the same feelings." And we would open out and the other person would respond with love, would be able to give everything, would be able to make all sacrifice, would reveal everything and conceal nothing. Communication would be complete. And even with a brief meeting of this kind, you would feel you were never lonely. You always had company. You were always full. You would wonder how people could ever be lonely. You would not only remove your loneliness, you would remove the loneliness of the world around you. And anyone who came across such people, their loneliness would be removed, because it is such a strong force that draws people out into real company, into the company of soul, into the company of the intuitive self, into the company of love. That, when people reveal themselves through love, they become one with the other. They identify themselves. They see so much around. They never feel alone. Such an experience can never leave you alone after that, because such an experience carries with it its own memory. It carries the experience through remembrance. Therefore even if the experience of love is momentary, it's for a few moments, it lasts. It is not like the mental experience of understanding which goes away. The experience of love provides a company through memory which lasts for days, for weeks, for months, sometimes for a lifetime depending upon the intensity of that experience, depending upon the depth to which that experience has gone. If the experience has gone right inside to our soul, to our very inmost soul, the experience never leaves us. The memory, the beauty of that experience captures us, enraptures us for the rest of life. And no man and no person who has had that experience can ever say that loneliness was ever part of their life.

Then the real answer to the problem of loneliness is to have the experience of love without the shackles of the human thoughts, without binding ourselves to thinking. We can use thinking where it belongs. The problem is we are using thinking for areas where it does not belong. Use it for technology, science, for development of material creature comforts. It belongs there. Use it for understanding the higher intuitive process. Use it for understanding what is love. But do not use it for creating love. In fact, keep it away from the basic human experiences of love and intuition.

We have made a great mistake and we are paying a heavy price because of overuse of reason and thought. We have redesigned, in the past forty, fifty years, perhaps in the last hundred years of our educational process, that it should sharpen the instrument of reason at the cost of natural capacity to be intuitive and to love. Today we talk of wars amongst men. Where are the wars being created? In the minds of men through the same thinking process which has come in the way of a man discovering his own real natural self. We hate people. The human soul is incapable of hating anybody. The human soul, the intuitive self of man likes to be one with everybody, see the oneness of humanity, whereas the human mind through its process of analysis divides, analyzes, breaks up. Sometimes people ask why in recent times in the universities throughout the world students are turning violent. Why is there violence growing in the world? If you make a study, you'll find violence is growing along with the growth of reason, along with the growth of an educational system that plays undue emphasis on reason. What has happened to those robust common sense centers of learning? What has happened to the places where we learned just by watching a lovely kind teacher who radiated love? Where are those teachers gone? We have eliminated those teachers by asking them to follow the rules of logic in teaching everything, including human relations. And that's where we failed. When we begin to teach human relations through a device of human thought and reason, we have taken the human being away from his natural self. We are now producing a generation of youngsters who have not experienced love. They do not know what love is. They neither get love from their parents who are all attached to them and in pain and in suffering. Nor do they get love from their brothers and sisters who are completely divided up by thoughts. Nor do they get love from their children to whom they are merely attached. Sometimes not even attached. The thinking process has affected the entire system of society, of an individual. And the love that was natural to us has given way to reason and hatred and division.

The soul of man is basically a force for synthesis. The mind of man is basically a source of analysis and division. The reason is simple. Mind functions in time and time requires division. Nothing can function in time without dividing it at least into beginning, middle and end. Everything the mind does must have a beginning, middle and an end. It divides. The mind understands through analysis. Analysis is by dividing. Taking this part, then this part, then this part. The very mental process in human beings is an analytical process. The process of division. The process of breaking up experience into little bits in order to understand it.

The soul, the intuitive process, the love process in man, does not divide. It unites. It synthesizes. It takes the whole experience all at once. It gets a flash of knowledge which is not divisible. It's just one. You just know it. Like love is just experienced. The basic quality in human awareness to have experience of synthesis is negated by this abecedarian quality of the human mind to analyze. By over-emphasizing the mental

process we have ourselves reduced the capacity of man, the capacity of a human being, to use his inner real power of synthesis and love.

To get back to the problem of loneliness, I would say we are lonely because we don't love. We are lonely because we think too much. We are lonely because we can't communicate. We are lonely because nobody understands us. We don't understand anybody. We are lonely because the only way to communicate is through words and words mean different things to us. We are lonely because we don't understand what words mean. We are lonely because we don't know ourselves. We are lonely because we have none of our own self as company. On this last point, you'll be interested to know that people don't know how to keep their own company. People need not be lonely even if they are alone. They can have company of themselves. We have even lost the capacity to have ourselves as our company. The reason being: we are no longer with ourselves. I have sometimes said that if this body, if the cage containing our human consciousness and awareness, if this head of ours which contains the brain and soul and everything, the living force, the lightened force, if this were to be regarded as our house, we as conscious entities, if we are housed in this cage, in this beautiful house, how long do we stay here? You'd be surprised! We spend our entire life wandering outside. We never come back home. We are in everybody's house. We sometimes go out to jobs. Sometimes other people's problems. Sometimes our problems. Sometimes in this desire, that desire. We, through attention, travel to every other place except our own self. What kind of home do we have that we don't live? Through the process of divided, scattered attention we are occupying every other place except our own home. And who occupies our home? Thoughts. Negative thoughts. They're our tenants. We are supposed to own the house and we have let it out to negative thoughts who occupy it. Why don't we come back and stay in our home and enjoy it? If we were at home, we would at least have the company of our self. By being out and not communicating with anybody, we are alone. We are lonely. The feeling of loneliness is growing because we have lost the capacity even to enjoy our own company. Even if we had no communication with anyone, even if we did not know what love was, we could still avoid loneliness if we knew how to be with ourselves. The capacity to pull back and be with ourselves has also been lost.

We have identified ourselves with things which are not ourselves. When we talk of a person, we talk of his body. We all know that we have a certain conscious entity which is not this physical body. And yet, when we refer to ourselves, we only refer to the physical body. And nobody, even after understanding this, ever refers to his body as his body, but as himself. Every day we say, "That's my son." "That's my daughter." "That's my mother." I never heard anybody saying, "That's my body's son." "That's my body's daughter." Because it is not the consciousness' son! That son belongs to the body. The physical body. It has been begotten from this physical body. And if this is not me, that couldn't be my son. We have not identified ourselves as our own conscious selves. When we identify ourselves with the cage in which we are housed, it becomes very difficult to have the company within ourselves. If I think this body is me, I must seek company outside of this body. And outside of this body I can't communicate and therefore I am lonely.

It's a good way to break loneliness to use the body as a house in which one lives. And to go on inside and move upstairs into this big nice room. Draw a chair, a cushion chair, sit relaxed and talk to yourself. It's beautiful, if you can do it. There is so much to talk. There

is so much to remember. There is such beautiful experiences which we have kept on the shelf there. We can pick them up and go through them. It's lovely. We can remove loneliness if we know how to relax in our own selves.

The biggest problem which people are facing is the inability to relax within themselves. The chief reason being they are not within themselves in the first place. And if they come within themselves, they are not relaxed. They are in tension. They carry tensions with them instead of relaxing within themselves. I have often advocated yoga, mental yoga, not physical yoga...Physical yoga has its own place to keep physically fit. Mental yoga, where you can sit in calm and quiet and concentrate upon yourself as a good device to remove loneliness. Because, what do you do in yoga? You have union with your self. You pull your thoughts and your attention back to your own place where you belong, and there you relax and watch the great drama that takes place outside your body. One of the reasons why we are so tense and why loneliness becomes so overpowering and so difficult for us is that we have lost the capacity to look at the drama of life in its proper perspective. We take it far too seriously. If we could see the drama of life by sitting in our cushion chair behind the eyes, we'd be still very happy and not lonely.

When we go and watch a movie and we sit in the chair in the audience and see the screen, the things look real. They can look so real they can make us cry. When they laugh, we laugh. When the character is there, they have a tragic event, we feel very bad. It affects us. But I have not seen a guy sitting in the audience running up if a murder is going to take place on the screen, running to prevent it. He knows it's a drama. Even though the drama involves him, even though it affects him, even though his consciousness is part of the drama, he doesn't rush out of the chair in the audience. He knows, at the back of his spine, it's a play in which I am involved...Let me watch. But here this four dimensional, five dimensional screen around us is carrying a drama which we through consciousness are observing. Instead of enjoying, we don't sit in our chairs. We jump out and go into the drama and try to prevent that which cannot be prevented. But that makes us more lonely because we find we are isolated, we can do nothing.

Disappointment is a great creator of loneliness. When we expect a thing and it doesn't happen, we feel lonely. Because upon our expectations depends our company. When our expectations are not fulfilled, we think we have been isolated and we are lonely. When we are let down by a friend, we feel lonely. There may be the rest of the world with us. Our attention gets riveted to the snapping of ties that has come about by disappointment. When we are disappointed, we feel that the whole world has been cut off from us. For that moment this experience of snapping ties even with one individual pushes us into complete isolation, solitariness and loneliness. It's strange that a guy may have ten friends and if one disappoints him he feels lonely. The other nine cannot comfort him because he feels that he has lost his world. He never expected this. When a man says, "I never expected this!" he feels lonely.

Why should all these feelings of loneliness come in the first place? What is the nature of this loneliness? Why are we lonely? There must be some good reason. The reason which mystics give is very interesting. The reason given by spiritual teachers is quite amazing. They say that like love is natural to us, loneliness is also natural to us. That love is a device to overcome the experience of loneliness, but loneliness is as natural to us as love. And the reason they say is that the Creator of all of us is only one. He had no colleague,

no mate, no partner, no friend, no other person, no other God to create. Since there was only one God, one Creator, one consciousness, one total consciousness, one experiencer, He, She, It, whatever it was, was lonely. In fact, this is the reason given for genesis, for creation. The explanation given for creation is the loneliness of God. A lot of people say if we had to be put to so much trouble in order to go back to God, to realize Him, why did He push us out of his home and send us into this world in the first place? Why should He have created this miserable place if He had to tell us and call us back from here and say this is a horrible place, this doesn't belong to you, find Me, Come to Me. Why? Weren't we happy there with Him already? And the answer is no! When there was no creation, God was lonely. And since we are all merely the experience of God, The creation of God means the experience of God...we carry with us the initial experience of loneliness of God. Man has been made exactly in the image of God and carries with him not only the creative power of God, but the loneliness of God. Man in his inmost self realizes that ultimately there is only one and this ultimacy of realization is the realization of loneliness. But like God created a world which he made so real, it looks more real than himself. Likewise man created an experience of love and togetherness which was more real than himself. And both God and man removed their loneliness.

Loneliness, then, is a basic experience of God and man. When we talk of God and man, I am using them in the sense in which I have been adopting them in my human awareness lectures earlier. Mainly that God is not somebody sitting distinct from us. He's within us, part of us, the whole of us, He's our own totality. Our awareness has been limited and therefore we feel God is separate from us. When the awareness is expanded to its totality, we become God, we become one with Him. People have often felt that if God is a big ocean and we are mere drops of that ocean and we have come away from that ocean. How will we go and get back and merge in that ocean? God realization has sometimes been described as the merger of that drop in the ocean. People haven't realized that if one drop left the ocean, the ocean wouldn't be total. If one soul left God, God wouldn't be God anymore. Nothing has left God because nothing can leave God. He's always been total. Nothing has left total consciousness! It has always been total. Then where do we come from? We have become individuated within God. We are drops of water in the ocean, but not outside the ocean. We are still drops of water. We are very small. But we have not left the ocean. The ocean is still there. If we could really imagine that we are merely a drop of water and we have to go and merge back in that big ocean, it's a horrible thought! To think that we are going to merge back in that big ocean and lose this identity? It's terrible! The ocean will gain nothing. A drop of water in the ocean means nothing. We lose everything. We lose our identity. We lose all experience. Who gains? If we are souls, go and merge with God, God doesn't gain anything. He's already total. We lose everything because we are there because we are drops of ocean, drops of water in the ocean. What kind of merger is this? What kind of return to God is this? This concept of separation from God is fallacious, it's created by the mind. In fact, we are part of God all the time. What has happened is an individuation of awareness. Coming back to the ocean and drop illustration, you look at the ocean, what does it consist of? Drops of water. The whole ocean is full of drops of water. You can see the drops of water. How big or small are they? Well, they are very small if you think they are small. If you look at them as small drops, they are small. If you look at them as big drops, they are big. What limits their size?

Our awareness. We can reduce our awareness to a drop, and the ocean becomes a drop. We can expand our awareness to totality and the drop becomes the ocean. It is in this sense that we achieve God realization. It is in this sense that we attain total consciousness. We do not go and merge and lose our identity. We rediscover our total identity. We rediscover that we were total but had, by narrowing our awareness, become what we are. We do not lose. We gain by this kind of total realization. It is this realization that gives us God consciousness, makes us God, makes us like God.

Since basically this consciousness is one and has never been subdivided, except in illusion, loneliness is common to us. The total consciousness has always experienced its subdivision in order not to be lonely. The Creator has always had a creation in order not to be lonely. And we have always had the capacity to love in order not to be lonely. We have regenerated experiences through the mental process of being separated, being isolated, and of being lonely. The answer to the problem of loneliness then is stop thinking, start loving. Stop using the mind for everything, including human relations. Use it where it belongs. Use it for studying a book, use it for science, use it for technology, use it for educational purposes. But don't use it for educating people in human relations. Use the intuitive process and love for dealing with human beings and no human being will ever feel lonely. Thank you. Yes?

Listener : You say loneliness is as natural as love and somehow I got a little confused. Loneliness should not necessarily be a bad or sad state of affairs. Is that right?

Ishwar : Quite right. Loneliness is the sense of total consciousness, total awareness of one's own self, is not a sad state of affairs. But loneliness seen as isolation from those who do not exist, but we think they exist, is a sad state of affairs. Loneliness in total consciousness is a very happy state of affairs, because we have company of our own self. Loneliness mentally created separates us from those whom we think exist outside of us and makes us sad.

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