

Truth and Science

Osho, *The Long, the Short and the All*, Chapter 2

Osho,

What is the definition of truth?

The experience of truth is neither a thought nor a feeling. It is a vibrating and a throbbing of all the vital components of your entire being. It is not in you; you are in it. It is your whole being, not just an experience that is happening to you. It is in you yourself, but it is larger than you because the whole of existence is included in it as well.

You ask me for a definition of truth? There is no definition of truth. How can one's self define one's self? Pilate asked Christ, "What is truth?" and Christ simply looked at him and remained silent. Truth has no words, no sounds. Truth is an experience of the extreme depths of the self. It is total identification with what is.

Truth is not the opposite of untruth. The opposite of untruth is still untruth. All extremes are untruths. Truth is the mean between extremes. In other words, truth transcends all extremes.

As I see it, mankind has lost all sense of direction. And this has happened because man has chosen investigation of the physical world over exploration of his own inner being. Nothing should be more important to a man than himself. His first and fundamental inquiry should be into himself.

Unless a man knows himself all his knowledge lacks authenticity. In the hands of an ignorant man nothing can be creative, but even ignorance can become a creative tool in the hands of a knowledgeable one. If a man can understand himself, can master himself, only then will his other achievements have real merit. Unless this happens he is simply digging his own grave.

That's what we are doing. We are digging our own graves. Previous civilizations were destroyed by external attack; ours is threatened by a great internal danger. If the civilization of the twentieth century is annihilated, it will be by suicide. This is what we will have to call it, if there is anyone left to call it anything. It is possible this final war may never be written into human history. It will take place outside history's ken, because it will destroy all of humanity. Those who came before us made history, we are preparing to unmake it.

We are in control of infinite material power, but we know nothing of the depths of the human heart, we know nothing of the poison and the nectar that lies hidden there, side by side. We know the atomic structure of matter but nothing of the atomic structure of the soul. And this is our great misfortune. We have achieved power, but no peace, no enlightenment.

There is great power in the hands of the unenlightened, of the unawakened. But these are

the people who should not be allowed to possess power; if it is misused, power can wreak great evil. Our whole search has been for power. And this is man's mistake. He is in danger from his own achievements, from his own successes. The world's great thinkers and scientists should be made aware of the pitfalls of this preoccupation with the question of power. It is just this sort of blind, thoughtless investigation that has brought us to the brink of the present crisis. The aim should be peace, not power. And if the aim becomes peace, then the focus will be on the mystery of man himself, not into the secrets of nature. There has been much research and exploration into unconscious matter, but the time has come when we must concentrate on man himself, on his mind.

The science of the future will be the science of man, not the science of matter.

This change must occur before it is too late. Those scientists who are committed to the investigation of the inanimate are orthodox men, with minds bound by tradition and convention. Men of awareness must come forth to alter the direction of scientific research. Science must strive for knowledge of man himself.

In their efforts to master the material world modern scientists have attained results unprecedented in human history; there is no reason they cannot be equally successful in achieving the same insight into man. Man can be known. He can be mastered; he can be transformed. I see no reason to be discouraged. We can come to know ourselves, and on this knowledge we can build a totally new consciousness.

A new man can be born; a new life can begin. This has been attempted by various religions in the past, but to see it through, to perfect it, a scientific approach is needed. What religion has begun, science can complete.

In relation to the world of matter, the attitudes of conventional science and orthodox religion have always been dissimilar. In fact, religion has not been concerned with matter at all. In this area, science reigns supreme. But this does not mean religion has nothing of value to contribute. Traditional science must be abandoned and science and religion must join forces. Only this kind of marriage can save mankind. What we have acquired through our knowledge of matter is nothing compared to what we will gain by knowledge of the self. In the past, religion has only made it possible for this knowledge to be possessed by a very select few, with a scientific approach, this knowledge can be available to all.

In the human mind there are latent powers and infinite possibilities as yet undeveloped. And the reason mankind is so miserable is because of the confused state of these untapped energies. When the mind of a man is in chaos, his individual confusion automatically multiplies by the time it merges with the collective consciousness, by the time it mixes with the universal mind. Society is much more than the sum-total of its individuals -- it is its individuals, multiplied; it is the expanded effect of our personal interrelations. You must remember that whatever happens in each individual will be reflected in society in a greatly magnified form. The cause of all war, the roots of all social degeneration are within the individual human minds. If we are to change society we have to change the men who exist within it; if there is to be a new base for society we have to offer a new

kind of life to the individual.

I said earlier that both poison and nectar exist within the hearts of men. The confusion of energy is the poison; the control of energy is the nectar. And the way in which a man's life can be transformed into harmony and bliss is through yoga.

The ideas and actions that go against this inner harmony are sin; those that help create it, that help nourish it, are virtues. When a man is out of tune with life he lives in a state of anarchy, and a mind that knows no harmony is in hell. When this harmony is sublime a man is in heaven. And when an individual becomes one with the harmony within him, his outer actions reflect his accord with the universe. Whatever is within us is what flows from us; it is what we give out. It is also what we receive.

We must create a science that can fill the inner world of man with glowing health and celestial music -- not for any future kingdom of heaven, but for this world, for life on this planet. If this life is bountiful, why worry about any other! One's imagination is only fired by visions of another world as an escape from this one. Authentic religion has nothing to do with other worlds, with other lives. But that is what has happened to this world. Religion's concern for the other world has been detrimental to mankind because it has taken his attention away from this one.

Religion, philosophy and the scriptures have not been concerned with the physical world at all, not as science has been. Matter has been conquered, but the man for whom this has been done has been completely ignored. Man must come first.

Man must become the center of both science and religion.

Science must disengage itself from matter; and religion must disengage itself from the other world. This rejection of their individual attachments will be their point of meeting. This will give birth to the greatest event in human history; this will give birth to a great creative energy. This union alone will save mankind. There is no other way.

From this joining, from this coupling, the science of man will come into being for the very first time. The life, the future of mankind depends on this. On this alone.

Truth liberates. But the truth that liberates is manifested in the very breath of one's being. The strongest chains of all are borrowed truths. Nothing in the world is more untrue than these.

I see a lie as a pile of straw. It has no might whatsoever. The tiniest spark of truth can reduce it to ashes.

Belief and non-belief are closely related. There is really no difference between them at all. Their bodies may be different, but their souls are the same. And the man who seeks truth must beware of both of them. One is a well and the other is a ditch. Both are fine if you wish to fall, but if you want to move on towards truth you have to take the in-between

path. The mind becomes liberated only after it frees itself from the two, from belief as well as from non-belief.

**Only the man who is neither a theist nor an atheist,
neither a believer nor a non-believer, can undertake the journey to truth.**

In a small village one moonless night everyone was fast asleep when the sound of weeping and crying suddenly broke the stillness. It awakened everyone, and the villagers confused and shaken, ran towards the small hut from which the shouting came. From within they heard, "Fire! I am on fire! My house has caught fire!"

Some of the villagers immediately ran to fetch buckets of water, but on closer examination and to their great amazement they could find no sign of fire anywhere in the vicinity of the hut. There did not even seem to be a lamp burning inside. Someone brought a lantern and they pushed open the door and crowded into the hut. They found the old woman there, still yelling, "Fire! I am on fire! My house has caught fire!"

"Have you gone mad?" they shouted back at her. "Where is the fire? Show us where it is and we'll put it out."

The old woman's shouting stopped and she began to laugh instead. "I am not mad," she said, "But you are. You have all gathered here to put out a fire that has broken out in your own houses. Go back to your own homes and look for the fire there. The fire I am shouting about has broken out within me and you will not be able to extinguish it. Only knowing myself can put out this fire. If the fire had been outside you could have doused it, but what I am shouting about is the inner fire."

And once again she began weeping and wailing that her house had caught on fire and that she was burning up inside.

I was in that village on that particular night -- and all of you were there too. You may have forgotten the incident but I have not. I saw you all returning to your houses, upset by the old woman's behavior, annoyed that she had disturbed your sleep. When you arose next morning you had forgotten all about it. Actually one could say the whole world has forgotten that incident, since that village is also the dwelling place of the entire human race.

You all went back to sleep but I could not. That old woman shook me out of my sleep once and for all, because when I looked inside to find that invisible fire I found nothing at all. I did see, though, that my sleep had been only a dream, only an illusion, and that the illusion itself was the fire of which she spoke.

Most people's lives are simply consumed in flames because of this illusion, because of this ignorance of the reality of life. But that ignorance itself is only an illusion, and it is this illusion that causes you pain, that makes you miserable. But you cannot see the fire, and so you go back to sleep, back to your dreams. Dreams are good companions of sleep,

but they make it difficult for you to awaken. Dreams are, in fact, fuel for this fire of illusion.

Painful dreams may make you uncomfortable, but then you simply turn over. You tolerate bad dreams in expectation of nice ones. But the absence of painful dreams does not guarantee pleasant ones. It just makes you hope for better dreams to come. But pleasure and pain are yoked together; they are like a pair of bullocks pulling the cart of dreams. And so a man wastes his life in sleep, in dreams. And one who is asleep cannot be called alive.

This is the very old and very painful story of humanity. It is as old as creation. But whenever a man says that he is on fire people say he is mad. They ask where the fire is and then rush to him with buckets of water to put it out. But the fire is not on the outside, and so those whose eyes are only accustomed to looking outwardly cannot find it. And how can outer water extinguish inner fire anyway?

Whether the fire is visible or not, every individual feels at some point that his life is consuming him. And where there is fire, there is flame -- whether we can see it or not. Its existence does not depend on our sight.

The truth is that the fire only exists because we cannot see it. Its very existence is due to our unawareness. It lives only in our ignorance. But when a man feels the heat of the flame he thinks he is burning up and instead of looking for the cause of the fire he rushes madly about in search of water. This quest for water is also an illusion. Everyone is running here and there in search of water -- be it in the form of wealth, fame or salvation.

Water is outer, and to find it requires an outward approach. But this outer race only adds fuel to the flames; it only stimulates the fire. Any outer search only fans the flames and as one is running about looking for water on the outside the flames get higher and higher, the inner fire grows hotter and hotter. It is just a vicious circle. But even this vicious circle is also an illusion. And you can never find the water you are looking for. All the wells are illusory too. How can any outer effort extinguish this inner fire?

The man who thinks he has found water and the man who cannot find any at all really share the same defeat. Illusion and real success can never exist together. One's lack of success is really fuel for the fire of illusion.

When Alexander the Great died, millions of people came to pay homage. And they found, much against tradition, that his hands were visible. In almost every country it is customary to place the hands inside the coffin. When people asked about it they were told Alexander has expressly wished his hands be visible so that people could see that he too had left the world empty-handed. A great conqueror like Alexander also leaves the world with nothing in his hands! How nice it would be if every corpse's empty hands were exposed so mankind could witness again and again the truth that worldly possessions have nothing to do with life at all.

Nothing outward can ever extinguish the inner fire.

No outer happiness can ever cure inner pain. No amount of outer light can ever dispel the inner darkness. But up to now all attempts to remove this inner darkness have been made by outward approaches. And it is this very effort that has given birth to science.

I am not against science. On the contrary. I am a great friend of science. But I wish to assert that science can never bring peace, joy or anything of real value to mankind. It can provide comforts, however, but all these comforts do is help us forget our misery for a while. Within a very short time we get used to them. We soon take them for granted and then we are miserable once again. All they do is suppress mankind's misery, not cure it. And then we seek new answers in even greater comforts. It is an endless merry-go-round. It causes neuroses, agony, misery, and ultimately culminates in madness.

Science is relative only insofar as life on the physical level is concerned. And really, scientific knowledge is quite essential, because it can help to improve things on the physical plane. Pain is felt on the outside, for example, and an outer remedy may appear to work, but in actual fact pain is not the source of human agony at all. Pain is simply the outer boundary of an inner agony, and the center of that agony is one's own inner conflict. Outward remedies may help us to escape from pain but they can never cure it. And because of the numbing effect of these outer remedies, the inner conflict goes on increasing.

The higher the outward trappings of happiness the deeper is one's inner poverty. It is not at all surprising that Buddha and Mahavira, in the midst of their worldly riches, felt their inner poverty so keenly.

Because of the great riches science has brought mankind, people are gradually waking up to the fact that outer wealth does not guarantee inner peace and freedom. The advances of science have slowly shattered this age-old conviction. The progress of science has not only shown man the benefits of science, it has also bared its faults. Science is not as useless as the orthodox religious leaders used to believe, nor is it as infallible as its blind supporters once thought it was. Whenever this kind of blind faith exists, things are never perceived as they really are.

Faith has always been a great blindfold.

Blind faith smothers facts with ready-made formulas, clouds the truth with cut and dried theories. Shrouding a fact in theories is running away from the fact itself. Looking squarely at facts as they are is to widen one's vision, and what one learns then does not constrict life but liberates it from all narrow-mindedness. By viewing life through this haze of preconceptions, humanity has reduced itself to a crippled and stagnant state. Man cannot view life as a whole. He has never looked at life except through the veil of his own subjective selection; he has never seen life as it is, in its perfection, in its unity.

Religion has denied the outer in many ways, and in reaction others have denied the

existence of an inner being. Science has done this. And so religion and science have long been each other's rivals. But this competition has not really been between religion and science, it has been a war of one mental state with another, of one human tendency with another.

The human mind is motivated by its predispositions; it swings from one state to another like the pendulum of a clock. One mental state simply gives birth to another, but the truth is not to be found in any of these conditions. No condition can be perfect; it is not in its nature to be perfect. Reality only exists in between these mental states, in between these conditions. Reality is only present when all conditions have dissolved, when all is still. Reality is only to be found in the absence of conditions.

Life is neither inner nor outer. Life is both.

If a man concentrates on the inner, then he sees only the center and loses sight of the periphery. But how can there be a center without a circumference? The center only exists because the circumference exists. And if a man only concentrates on the circumference then the center is lost to him. And how can there be a circumference without a center? Life is both. Life is never just inner or outer, never one particular state on its own.

Science is research on the circumference, into man's environment, religion is an inner inquiry, focused on the self. Science is concerned with the material world; religion is concerned with God. And though exploration of the outer and the quest for the inner may at first appear to contradict each other, they are really just two faces in the search for one total truth. The controversy only exists in man's imagination. Life is whole, total. Only the perversity of human nature has created this division.

Life is the totality of inner and outer. The breath one inhales is the breath one exhales. The in-breath and the out-breath are just the two sides of the same coin. And what is air? Is air outer or inner? It is neither and it is both. From a subjective point of view we can call it inner; from an objective standpoint we can call it outer. But as far as breathing is concerned it is both. It is all relative. And life is the same. If you look at life from one angle it is an inner phenomenon; if you look at it from another, it is outer. Science is the objective angle; religion, the subjective.

The reality of life can only be perceived by one who can view life from both perspectives, by one who is outwardly and inwardly calm, tranquil and still. Only the man who is free of opinions and preconceived ideas can see the unity and integrity of life. No one can ever experience the totality of life as long as he is bound by concepts and fixed ideas, because this fragmenting of life creates space for the ego.

Where there are no points of view, no concepts, no ideas, there is no ego, no "I." Then what is, simply is. That is truth. Truth is not a viewpoint; truth manifests itself when all viewpoints have dissolved. And where no changing circumstances exist, reality exists. And that is truth. The realization of truth is the only water that can extinguish the flames

of life's frustrations.

When a man identifies himself with objects, with possessions, he divides his heart. He is in inner conflict and he is in outer conflict. But people always find themselves caught up in this duality. This duality, this split, is caused by identification of the self with something outer, and it is because of this identification that the duality exists. It is another vicious circle. But we all live with and suffer this dichotomy. And the man who is able to look at his life objectively will find that the tension arising from this feeling of duality just keeps on increasing, because the wheel of identification keeps revolving by its own momentum.

Science has a beginning -- it begins with the circumference of life

But it has no end. And so it keeps moving further and further away from the center. Science is a single pointed quest. It is simply a means; it is not an end in itself. It sets out in search but can never attain a final goal.

Religion is an inner state. But it is not really a state. Religion is inner peace and emptiness, but the roots of all states, of all human conditions are only found on the periphery.

Religion is an inner search. But the word "search" is not really accurate, because this search is effortless.

Religion is inner watchfulness. But the observer, the act of observing and the observed only exist as long as there is duality, as long as man is centered on the circumference. The heart makes no such distinctions.

Science is technology. So can religion also be called technology? No, religion is not technology at all. What exists on the outside can be explained by technological terms, but what exists at the inner core is beyond all explanation. In fact science starts where explanation begins -- on the outside.

Science is words; religion is silence. Because the circumference consists totally of expression, of manifestations, science exists in words; because the inner is unknown, invisible, silent, religion needs no words at all. Science is like a tree; religion is the seed.

Science can be known; religion cannot be known, a man can be religious and can live in religion. Science is knowledge, but a religion has to be lived. And so science can be taught, but religion can never be a subject for any kind of instruction.

Science is the search for the known; religion is the discovery of the unknown. Science aims to widen the scope of human happiness within the world, while the aim of religion is for one's individual identity to dissolve into the unknown. That is the reason there are so many different sciences, but only one religion. Silence is progressive; religion is

unchanging and eternal.

To seek security by looking for happiness on the circumference is to move even further away from the reality of one's being. Yet the great mystery of life is that when a man moves closer to his center, closer to reality, he becomes happy on the circumference. But the process is such that when he reaches his center the circumference disappears, happiness and all. This happens because his center, his self, dissolves as well. When worldly happiness ceases to exist as well. The center only exists because the outer exists. Their existences are relative.

As it approaches the center the circumference grows smaller and smaller until it is finally reduced to the point where it coincides with the center completely. And then the identity of both is lost. This point of meeting is the door to truth. It is neither the center nor the circumference, but a state wherein the seer and the seen, the observer and the observed, become one.

This is why I say that science can be at odds with religion, but that religion can never instigate any kind of argument with science. The outer can be at odds with the inner, but this is not possible for the inner. The inner knows no outside at all. The son may be at odds with the mother, but for the mother her son's existence is her own.

Religion cannot be in opposition to science; if it is, then it is not real religion.

Nor can religion stand against the world. The world may oppose religion but the opposite can simply never happen. Religion is absolutely non-controversial.

Religion is a song of a freedom; where there is, controversy or antagonism there is bondage. And where there is controversy there is no peace. There is only fire.

So that old woman was quite justified in shouting, "My house is burning. I am on fire." This is why she laughed when people came running with pails of water -- just like scientists who go on searching for outer remedies. She must be still laughing because the world is still in the same dilemma today. At this very moment the world's quandary is the same. This is the same moonless night.

Right now the villagers are being awakened from their slumber but not out of their lifelong hypnotic sleep. Right now they are rushing about with buckets of water. Right now they are asking, "Where is the fire? We cannot see it. Show it to us and we will put it out. We have buckets of water to throw on it."

Every night the same thing happens over and over again. But the fire is inner and the water is outer. So how can that fire be extinguished? The fire blazes higher and higher every day and humanity continues to be consumed in its flames.

There is a possibility that the fire may one day reach a crescendo and that humanity may finally surrender itself to it. Another possibility is that as the fire reaches its climax,

mankind may finally see the truth, may finally be transformed, may finally achieve wisdom. But remember, science can never extinguish that inner fire. So far, with all its inventions and innovations, science has only succeeded in fanning the flames.

And what has science really done for humanity? Great effort and much research have brought science to its present state, but the inner fire continues. All the miraculous discoveries of science have simply given man great power, reinforced the circumference, added more fuel to the already-blazing fire.

Would you find it strange if the tremendous strength science has placed in the hands of the ignorant finally proves to be man's downfall? As I see it, the last two world wars have just been rehearsals for the eventual and total destruction of humanity. Approximately one hundred million people lost their lives in these two wars. And yet preparations for warfare still continue. The Third World War will be the final one. I do not mean that mankind will wage war no more, I simply mean there will be no one left to attack, no one left to defend.

This desire for self-destruction that mankind continues to display is not without cause. Man's outward quest has not brought him anything satisfying or substantial, and perhaps this may be the underlying reason behind his desire for the total destruction of the world.

**Despite everything he has at his disposal man is exactly where he has always been.
His life is empty, aimless.**

It was only at the hour of his death that Alexander the Great realized his hands were empty, and by having them visible in his coffin he wanted to help his people understand the mystery of death. Could it be that because man has had a glimpse of death he wants to destroy himself? Could it be he wants to save God the trouble? When one's hands are empty and one's soul is shallow what is the meaning of life, what is the aim of life, what is the purpose of life?

A man's life is pointless because he does not know life at all. And there is no question that what he knows as life is pointless. It is not worth living at all. If a man lives his life without paying any attention to the inner, by looking for solutions to his misery outside, his life is bound to become purposeless. This is because the only things that are left for him are material things, objects. If a man seeks security in material things at the expense of the inner he causes his own sickness, misery, poverty and frustration -- and ultimately invites his own death.

And the man who simply denies the outer world and looks for security in the inner is equally helpless. He creates mental conflict for himself at a sub-conscious level and is also deprived of inner peace and freedom. Only a man who lives in love and beauty can really reach his inner core. Denying the outer only brings sorrow and frustration and the resulting conflict carries inertia and stagnation along with it. This kind of subjective conflict only strengthens the ego. And when this happens it is impossible to attain to one's innermost being.

Life is a unity, a merger of both subject and object. Life is the rhythm of subject and object. Where suppression, domination or tension exist, there is no life. Life only exists in peace, serenity and simplicity. And these only grow out of awareness -- awareness towards life, awareness of what really is. Awareness is the lack of ignorance; awareness is consciousness. In a state of total awareness there is a constant flow from the object on the circumference to the subject in the center. And then there is the kind of quest that is neither subjective nor objective. This is an authentic quest.

That is why I say over and over again that ignorance, unconsciousness and unawareness are a fire in which life is being consumed, and that understanding, consciousness and awareness bring about a totality in which one's life is transformed into bliss. The very energy that consumes a life of ignorance is transformed into bliss through awareness. There is nothing worse than ignorance and unawareness, but if a man lives in awareness every power he has becomes blissful. Energy is neutral, impartial. How energy is used depends totally on the individual.

To a really religious mind, the inability of science to achieve fulfillment on its own is not a source of frustration. It can be turned into a medium for inner contentment. It can help make the world a paradise. The union of science and religion can give birth to an entirely new vista, to a totally new dimension for mankind.

A king once said to an ascetic, "I have heard that sleeping too much can be harmful, but still I sleep a great deal. What is your opinion?"

The ascetic replied, "It is bad for good people to sleep too much, but it is good for bad people to sleep a great deal. The more active bad people are the more they work to bring frustration to the world."

Where there is inner peace activity is always constructive, but where there is inner conflict, dullness and lethargy are good things.

In the right hands, science can be a means to achieve great good, but how can one justify the existence of science when it is in the hands of monsters? When power is coupled with understanding the result is bliss -- but the combination of power and ignorance is certain to end in disaster. And humanity is caught up in just such a sorry state of affairs. Science has given man power, but where is the right understanding to enable mankind to use this power properly? There will be disaster if peace is not achieved. It is only in peace that man moves on energetic, creative and constructive, paths. But now all we have is outer creativity and inner frustration. The mathematics is simple; the combination is very dangerous indeed.

A mind that is frustrated and disturbed only derives pleasure from torturing others. An unhappy and discontented mind values nothing more than this kind of perverted pleasure. We can only give that which we possess. As unhappy man feels even more unhappy when he sees others who are content. His only desire is to see that others are as discontent as he.

This is what has been happening; this is what is happening.

Science has put great power into the hands of ignorant and frustrated men, and this power itself will most likely be responsible for the total destruction of life on this planet. Such men have been and are in positions where they control the possibility of global destruction. If mankind becomes engaged in this kind of holocaust can it be said to be accidental? Aren't we all involved? Aren't we all heading in the same direction? Where are all man's efforts invested? What are we living and dying for? Is it only to invite death, to invite mass suicide?

In the past, so-called religious people used to meditate to escape life.

Now science has provided new avenues for people of all walks of life to escape life collectively and instantaneously! Who would want to miss such a golden opportunity?

We are all co-conspirators, fellow-comrades in this march towards planetary suicide. And even those who talk of peace are ready to destroy each other. They are even prepared to forfeit their own lives for peace. And they talk of the great sacrifices they are willing to make to protect the world! They are also enemies of peace, they are also partners in this inevitable annihilation of the human race.

Do I mean by this that all of humanity has gone mad? Perhaps. But this statement is not quite accurate because it may create the impression that man, at one time, was in his right senses! If the truth be known, man is now as he was before, as he has always been. The only difference is in the power he possesses today. In the past that power was not his. And it is this new-found power that has brought all his hidden frustrations to the surface. Power and prestige do not necessarily result in madness, but under the aegis of power a man's hidden madness finds the opportunity to show its true colors. And all man's frustrations are surfacing.

We should be grateful to science for such a tremendous breakthrough. All man's facades have been stripped away and now he stands there, naked and insecure. He is in a dilemma. But at such a crucial point he can either perish or awaken into a new way of life.

To come face to face with reality and to remain oblivious to it is to bring any further evolution of life to a standstill. Mankind previously labored under some very false and dangerous notions, but it is better to face the facts now than to indulge in more intellectual escapism. False notions are not only harmful to others but to one's self as well. And it is because of this self-deception that man has been unable, in the past, to break through the barriers that hemmed him in. The time has now come when man can see his frustrations clearly. The time has now come when, whatever the disease, a way can be found to overcome it. In a short period in human history, in three thousand years, there have been approximately fifteen thousand wars. Five wars every year! Is this not perverse? And these wars were all supposedly fought for peace! The span between wars cannot be called peace; it has only been a breather to allow for the preparation of the next war! If this is not

pathological, then what is? Does mankind live just for war?

Because of science this disease has reached its climax. There is no doubt about it. But the disease must go. If mankind wants to survive it must rid itself of this affliction no matter how close it may be to its heart. The older an infirmity is and the more used to it one becomes, the more pleasant it seems. This particular disease is hereditary. It has become habitual. The older something is, the more solid its claim, the more one will defend it -- and the sickness of war is as old as man himself. It is deeply and firmly rooted in the culture of mankind.

I would like to tell you a little story.

It is absolutely untrue, but what it has to say is very true.

After the Second World War was over, God was quite perturbed about what he had seen -- man's treatment of man in particular. But his concern reached a peak one day when a messenger arrived to inform him that mankind was preparing for a third global war. The perversity of human nature brought tears to his eyes. And so he invited the representatives of three major powers -- Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union -- to call on him. When they arrived God said to them, "Have I heard correctly? Are you preparing for a Third World War? Did you learn nothing from the second?"

Had I been there I would I have pointed out to God that mankind is always learning its lesson. For the Second World War, man learned his lesson. For the Second World War, man learned his lesson from the first! And for the third, they have already acquired all the knowledge they need from the second! But I was not there. However I am here, and I am telling you exactly what I would have said to God.

But, being God, he said with divine benevolence, "I will give each of you anything your heart desires on the condition that you avoid this suicidal war. The Second World War was quite sufficient. I have already repented enough about creating mankind, and I would be grateful if you would harass me no further in my old age. Haven't you noticed that after I created mankind I didn't create anything else."

Had I been there I would have said, "You are quite right, God. As they say on earth; once bitten, twice shy." But I was not there.

The American representative said, "Almighty Father, we have no great desire at all. We have but one trivial wish. If that is fulfilled there will be no need for another war as far as we are concerned.

God seemed quite pleased at this. But when the American ambassador added, "Our only wish, trivial as it is, is that there should be no trace left of Russia on the face of the earth." God was unhappier than he had ever been since creating man.

Mankind seems to want complete revenge on his creator! Then God turned to the Russian,

"Comrade," the Russian spokesman said, "first of all I would like to point out that we don't believe in you at all. Our great nation forgot about you years ago. We have annihilated every trace of you from our world. But we are prepared to revive worship in you; we are prepared to allow you once again into the devastated and dilapidated churches, synagogues, and mosques, but you will have to do something for us in exchange. We would like to have America wiped off the face of the world map. If you feel you are not in a position to do this, don't worry. It may take us a bit of time, but even without your help we are quite prepared to do it on our own. We may survive or we may not survive. That is unimportant. We will do it anyway. We will do it for the common welfare of all men. The future of humanity lies in the destruction of America."

And then God raised his tear-filled eyes to the British ambassador. Can you possibly imagine what the Englishman said? No, probably not. He said, "Oh Lord, we have no desire of our own at all. All our wishes would automatically be fulfilled if the desire of both our friends were satisfied at one and the same time."

Such is the state of affairs!

Is this really such an untrue story? Can any story be more factual than this?

This incident is not only about these three countries. All nations have the same notions. Where nationality exists, war exists. The very concept of nationality ultimately results in war. And this is not only true of nations. The situation between individuals is the same. If this kind of perversity is not already present between men, then how can it possibly exist between countries? The individual is a part of everything that happens to the whole human race. Whether a collective action is one of love or one of hatred, the source is always individual.

If the entire world were blanketed with clouds of hatred one would only have to look into the heart of each individual to find the source of the personal anger, ambition, pain, misery and hate that have combined to form those clouds. When one man stands against another in hatred or in violence the effect multiplies. It spreads all over. It becomes like a shadow of death, encompassing the earth. And the totality of this hatred and violence is far greater than the sum-total of individual hatreds, of individual acts of aggression.

But what has happened with hate can also happen with love. There is the possibility of a love that can be many times greater than the total contributed by each individual. That love is God. But what we have now is a monster, hatred itself. You can call that Satan. But remember neither God nor Satan is separate from the totality, from the whole. They are nothing but human creations. What is good in man is God. What is beautiful in him is paradise; what is evil in him is hell.

**A man constructs his own world.
What I am is my contribution to the world.**

And by that very offering I become a participant in the creation of the world, in the

creation of my environment. In that respect every man is a creator. It is essential to understand that each individual is a contributor to the ugliness of the world, that each individual is equally responsible for whatever happens in the world, be it violence, anger, hatred or total annihilation by war. The responsibility for this condition rests on each and every pair of shoulders. Everyone is responsible. No matter how unimportant he may be, every man is responsible for every war, even the most major catastrophe. The collection of individuals is what constitutes a society. What else is society? The individual himself is society.

Man is drunk with ambition. Everyone would like to be something other than he is. But in this race to become something he forgets what he really is. To be something more than one is, is impossible. What is not in the seed cannot be in the tree, yet every individual is in search of what he is not. And this is the very cause of the illness of society. It is this desire that results in violence and anarchy.

For his natural evolution man requires nothing from outside. No searching, no tampering, no outer interference whatsoever is necessary. Man is gifted with a silent mysterious and natural evolution. But this evolution is so natural that even the results of this growth are not visible on the outside.

In the process of trying to become what he is not, a man expends great effort -- but in the end he accomplishes nothing at all. Tension, struggle and unhappiness are the results of this attempt to be what one is not.

When a man remains simply as he is there is no struggle, no conflict. Such a man is simply what he is. He is not in any kind of competition with anyone. There is no trace of any other personality in him; nothing has been imposed on him from outside. His heart is free of tension, free of competitiveness -- and he evolves naturally. In this way, he stops expending his energies in pointless struggle and competition and becomes a great, natural reservoir of energy. It is this very stockpile of energy that directs his innate evolution. And then there is no tension in him whatsoever.

An individual who spends his life comparing himself to others does not live his life at all. Life is an inner phenomenon. It is not to be discovered by forgetting about oneself. When a man compares himself with others he feels envy, anger and aggression. That is not life; it is a living death. And it is unavoidable that a world populated by walking corpses has become as ugly as this one is now.

When a man tries to live with all this ambition and competitiveness he is unable to find any inner peace, and in the deeper levels of his subconscious mind the conflicts and frustrations continue to multiply. And eventually, out of his despair, he begins to take revenge. He becomes destructive. The reaction of one who is unable to understand himself is destruction. The lack of self-understanding manifests itself as destruction, violence.

This is why I say that a world based on ambition can never be non-violent, whether a man's ambition is for this world or for the other world. Wherever there is ambition there is

aggression. Ambition itself is violence. And science has placed immense power in the hands of ambitious people. Destruction is inevitable unless religion can erase ambition from the hearts and minds of men.

Why is there all this ambition? Where does it come from?

Ambition is the result of an inferiority complex. Inside himself every individual feels weak, ineffectual. Inside he feels shallow and empty, as if he is nothing. He feels a kind of non-existence, an emptiness. And it is this emptiness he is trying to escape.

In reality he is not running towards something, he is trying to escape from something. But it is impossible to escape from one place without fixing one's sights on another -- and that is why he focuses on material objects. The root cause of man's escapism is his inner emptiness, but outwardly it takes the form of trying to attain something, of trying to reach somewhere else. In fact he is running to escape from his self.

But to accept this as a fact is to expose our own escapism and so we indulge ourselves in theories about freedom from the wheel of birth and death. This self-deception is very deep-rooted and unless one breaks this chain of deceit he will never free himself from ambition.

If a man fails at one ambition he simply selects another, if he fails in the world he will create an ambition for God. A businessman who cannot free himself of worldly ambitions becomes a sannyasin -- but it is the same ambition in a new garb. And is not ambition itself also an illusion?

The birth of religion in a man's life only takes place at the moment he begins to look at and understand the reasons he is trying to escape. Realizing that the root of ambition lies in trying to escape one's inner emptiness opens a new vista in a man's life. Thinking one can flee from one's inner emptiness is just another illusion, but being aware of one's inner emptiness is religion. Escapism is illusion; awareness is religion.

The man who tries to escape finds the inner emptiness quite shallow, but the man who lives in awareness finds no shallowness there at all. What appears as shallow in one's ignorance becomes deep, whole and profound in awareness. Trying to escape means increasing this feeling of shallowness because you move further away from your self. And the further you go the more shallow you will feel. The degree of this feeling is your distance from your self. Remember, a man is as ineffectual as his ego is strong.

A man's sense of emptiness increases as he tries to escape from his self -- and the basic cause of this attempt to escape is fear. To escape is to accept your fear; to escape makes your fear secure. And whatever you accept, whatever brings you a sense of security ends up dominating you. As you try to escape, your fear does not decrease; on the contrary, it increases. Your fear grows to the same extent you lack understanding of your self. You feel more and more shallow, and this ultimately becomes very painful.

The man who does not try to escape from the self and who becomes aware of the self finds he has entered a whole new world. He does not feel shallow at all. He does not find his life empty. His whole life is one of unfathomable love and joy.

The man who is aware of the self finds no shallowness within himself whatsoever. He finds godliness there. There is no shallowness in the self. Shallowness is only to be found in one's ignorance of the self. If you are unaware, that unawareness itself is your feeling of shallowness; if you are aware, there is no shallowness-just like there is no darkness in the presence of the sun.

The moment you become aware nothing like shallowness exists. The moment you become the sun there is nothing like darkness to be found anywhere. I say this after having become the sun; I say this after having been filled with the totality. Come, look at my hands. Are they not full? You too are the sun. Your hands are also full.

But you are asleep. Your eyes are closed. Because of your slumber you do not see that your hands are already full, and so try to fill them you spend your life in dreams. But I ask you, how can you fill hands that are not empty? How can you fill an inner emptiness that is already full? This is why all your efforts are futile.

And this futility, this failure, is the cause of all human agony.

A man who is in mental anguish wants to torture others. One who suffers wants to share his suffering with others. A man can only share what he possesses. It is impossible to live without sharing what you have. Flowers share their fragrance because fragrance is what they are; stars share their light because they are light themselves. A man shares his suffering if suffering is what he is.

But man can also share joy, because man can also become joy. And religion is the road to unimaginable joy. Religion is awareness of the self, and one who is aware of his self finds there is not shallowness in him at all. He is filled with unfathomable joy, because now nothing remains to be achieved. In the self, one finds that whatever is worth achieving is already there.

The self is not shallow. The self is the fullness of joy. To be aware is to share one's joy with others. The heart that scatters the fragrance of joy is a religious heart.

In the hands and hearts of truly religious people, science and its power could be a truly glorious thing. Such a collaboration, such a merger of science and religion has long been awaited. Are you prepared to support that union? Each man must be a vehicle. Each individual must become an instrument. Such a partnership can bring a period of great glory to the earth. It is not an era that has been and gone, it is an era that is yet to come.

There is a world of difference between the experience of truth and an interpretation of truth. When you try to interpret truth you stand outside; when you experience truth you are completely inside it, in total communion with it. This is why it is impossible for those

who have had the experience of truth to define it. If a man can give you some explanation of truth it is a sign he has never experienced it. People ask me what truth is. But what can I say? I have to remain silent.

What is truth? Is it a creed, a cult, an organization, a scripture, a word?

No.

A creed is dead and truth is life itself.

Truth is not a cult. There is no path leading to truth. How can a path that is known lead to the unknown?

Truth is not an organized religion either. Truth is an experience that transcends time. It is extremely individualistic, totally personal. How can it be confined in the limited circle of time?

Truth is not a word, not a sound. Sounds are born and die out, but truth exists forever.

Then what is it?

You will never find truth in the language of who, what, where, when or why. Truth simply exists, and what is just is. Truth cannot be thought about or pondered over but it can be lived. All thought and deliberation are obstacles to being in truth.

In the cadence of music, in the fullness of love, in the beauty of nature the individual virtually disappears -- and what exists then is truth.

The individual himself is untruth; the non-individual is truth. The "I" is untruth; God is truth.

What so-called spiritual men call renunciation is ignorance to me. How can there be any renunciation where there is no knowledge. There can only be detachment where there is still hidden attachment; there can only be virtue where there is still sin. And these only exist in ignorance.

The man of knowledge is free from the entanglements of attachment and detachment both. In that state of realization there is no conflict between attachment and detachment whatsoever. This is the state of oneness, of non-duality, of the realization of truth -- and there are no worldly pleasure, there is no renunciation. This is the state of absolute truth, of pure existence.

Ignorance lives and breathes in duality. And in this state the mind wanders from one extreme to the other. If a man drops enjoyment then renunciation steps in. But what is this renunciation? Isn't it just the opposite of attachment? And what is detachment? Isn't it simply the other side of attachment, just escaping from the world in the opposite

direction? But don't forget, this kind of man becomes just as entangled by whatever it is he is trying to escape from. Detachment is just another kind of slavery. But it is not independence, not by any stretch of the imagination.

Independence is not attained by opposing untruth or by running away from falseness in life. Independence lies in the knowledge of truth. And it is truth and truth alone that makes us free.

If you do not consider the truth worthy enough to be lived then it is improper of you to consider it worthy of being honored.

For the acquisition of perfect knowledge nothing is more essential than a mind that is humble and free. But as rule the mind is neither humble nor free. It is usually afflicted with egoistic pride and tightly hemmed in by obsessions and feelings of prejudice. Egoism constricts it from within and obsessions and prejudices restrict it from without. And imprisoned thusly, the human intellect gradually loses its capacity to rip open the seal that covers truth.

Someone once asked Albert Einstein:

"What is the most important principle in scientific investigation?" Do you know what Einstein replied? Even in his wildest dreams the questioner could never have imagined the reply he was given, Einstein said, "The absence of egoism."

Without a doubt, the key to perfect knowledge is the absence of egoism. Egoism is ignorance. The mind that is filled with the notion of "I" has almost no room left to welcome truth as its guest. If it were free from this-I-ness there would be lots of room for truth. The house of the heart is too small for two to obtain adequate accommodation. Kabir was not at all wrong when he said the path to God was narrow.

The ego is an avid collector of obsessions and prejudices. Can you think of an easier way to appear wise in one's ignorance? The ego gathers bits and pieces of knowledge for its own growth, for its own further development. It steadfastly holds on to its own notions and pet ideas as a way to protect itself.

You will notice that any intellectual discussion very quickly evolves into a battle of egos. It doesn't take very long before it's *my* truth, *my* religion, *my* scriptures, *my* God, and not just truth, religion, scriptures, God. The ego thrives on this kind of thing; its whole existence is centered in these kinds of notions. How can truth be present when "I" asserts itself? How can there be any religion there? How can perfect knowledge find any room? To the extent "I" is present, truth is absent. In his sort of situation the ego simply accepts the precepts and words of the scripture as truth and remains quite content with itself.

But there is always an element of fear in this contentment. There is always the possibility, always the suspicion that what has simply been accepted as true may turn out to be untrue. And this is why the ego proclaims a belief it has accepted as its own; it is done in order to

solidify its own belief. It is even prepared to die for its sake. It is even afraid to listen to anything contradictory, because at any time some fact may come to light that could prove the truth it has accepted is really false. Under these conditions the egoist neither wants to listen nor to think. He wants to retain his complacency; he wants to continue in the blind belief he has already accepted.

For a man who wants to search for truth this attitude is fatal. No one has ever found truth at the price of cheap contentment. To reach truth complacency has to go. One's aim should be truth, not this pseudo satisfaction. When truth is attained real satisfaction follows in its wake like a shadow.

The man who girds his loins and sets out to find truth at any cost also attains satisfaction, but the man who wants satisfaction first is denied access to truth. And eventually he also loses the satisfaction he thought he had found.

Someone once asked a venerable sage, "Is there any advice no one has ever given? Is there any teaching no one has ever taught?" The old man replied, "There certainly is. There is one teaching that has never been taught and one bit of advice that has never been given."

The man began to ask, "Can you tell me what it is?" when the sage laughed and added, "But it is not an object you can see, or a thought you can put into words."

Truth cannot be taught through any word. Understand well that any truth that can be taught through words is not truth at all. Truth can be known but it cannot be uttered. To know truth you have to become wordless, silent empty. How can something that is known in emptiness be put into words?

I have heard that when Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden, the first words Adam uttered were, "Eve, we are going through a period of great revolution!" Even if those were not his exact words, the idea certainly crossed his mind. He was about to enter a world that was totally alien; he was being forced to leave the known for the unknown. And it was only natural he should feel like that. This idea has been expressed by men of every age, because the procession of life is always from the known to the unknown.

One must leave the known to discover the unknown. Lacking the courage to leave the known behind is stopping at the door of the unknown itself. Staying with the known indicates the absence of knowledge, because until a man has perfected himself he will always have to bid farewell to what he has known, to the familiar. It is a passing through darkness. But it is necessary. The sun must set to allow a new sun to rise. The process is difficult -- but there is no birth without pain.

At this point in time we are going through an unprecedented revolution in human consciousness, an upheaval unlike any that has ever taken place before. There has always been change, sometimes to a great degree, sometimes to a lesser degree, because unless

there is change there is no life. But every once in a while this eternal process of change reaches a zenith -- and then there is a real revolution.

The twentieth century has brought mankind to such a peak.

And his consciousness is now ready to evolve, to turn in a totally new direction. It is probable we will have to travel along entirely new paths from, and what we know, what we are acquainted with, will disappear. The principles and values by which we have lived are no longer applicable; the grip of tradition is weakening. This is in preparation for a great change. We are being uprooted from the past; we are awaiting transplanting into the future.

Through all of this I see man knocking at unfamiliar doors, trying to fathom the mysteries of his existence. The well-trodden paths that led in repetitive circles have been abandoned and people are trying to light the darkness of the future. These are all very good signs and they fill me with hope. These efforts herald the good news that the consciousness of mankind wants to scale new heights, wants to set a course in a new, uphill direction.

We are close to some new stage in man's evolution. Man will be different from what he has been before. Those who have eyes to see, can see what is coming; those who have ears to hear, can hear what is coming. When seeds break apart and the tiny sprouts poke through the ground in search of the sun there is a feeling of agitation, a kind of anxiousness. And there is a similar sense of expectancy within us, a restlessness. It is nothing to worry about. This state of confusion is part of the period of transition. To turn back in fear now is suicide. Life only moves forward; it is not possible to go back. As darkness is deepest before dawn, the pain and confusion are worse, at their most intense, just before birth.

The reason behind this restlessness, behind this revolution of consciousness, behind this possibility of a new age, is science. Science has opened our eyes; it has shaken us out of our slumber. It has shattered many of our most cherished dreams; it has shown us our own nakedness; it has awakened us from the darkest night. Science has given man maturity and has taken away his childhood. Its inventions and the conclusions it has drawn from its experiments have freed us from traditional concepts, have liberated us from conventional patterns of thinking. We were living in falseness, because thinking that is not free is not real thinking at all. We were enmeshed in the blind faith of centuries past as if caught in the web of a spider.

Science has broken these bonds.

And now it is possible for mankind to proceed towards understanding, discrimination, and awareness. Science has also freed man from the slavery of faith.

The era that has just ended can be called the age of faith; the coming period will be the age of awareness. This progression from blind faith to discrimination is science's greatest gift to mankind. It is not a change in faith that we have been given, but freedom from faith

itself. In the past beliefs changed -- new faiths simply replaced the old -- but through science, something is happening today that is completely new, that has never happened before; the old beliefs have been shattered, and they have yet to be replaced. This emptiness, this vacuum, is unprecedented in human history. It is not that faith has changed focus, but that it is disappearing altogether. A consciousness that has nothing at all to do with faith or with belief is coming into being.

In changing one's faith, nothing basically different happens. One belief is simply replaced by another just as man shifts the weight of a coffin from one shoulder to the other. The tendency to believe is important, it is this propensity of his for belief that is the real factor. Science has not given man a new faith, it has broken this habit completely.

This tendency to believe leads men to follow blindly; it makes a man stick to his prejudices. A mind that is stuck in prejudice cannot know the truth. To acquire knowledge, a man must be totally free from bias. One who simply believes in something possesses no knowledge, and his very belief itself is a kind of slavery. For a man to realize the truth his consciousness must be free. It is discrimination, and not belief, that leads a man to truth.

For the awakening of discrimination in a man, there is no greater obstacle than belief. Remember, a man who believes never investigates. Doubt, not faith, leads to investigation. All knowledge is born out of doubt. And do not think that doubt is only lack of belief. Lack of belief is nothing more than the negative aspect of belief itself.

To embark on a real search for truth a man needs a mind that is not only free but one that is also full of doubt. The scientist questions accepted knowledge, and it is his doubt that paves the way for further investigation. As science discards prevailing beliefs it proceeds towards the truth. Science has no use for belief or for disbelief; science is free from such prejudices. It accepts nothing but that knowledge which has been acquired through experiment. It is neither theistic nor atheistic; it has no preconceived ideas. It has no belief of its own to prove. Science is non-sectarian; its findings are universal.

When a man sets out with preconceived notions, no matter what he is investigating, the result is always sectarianism, never truth. The only thing that is universal is truth itself. This is the reason there are so many religions, each opposed to the other, but only one science. When religion is based on pure discrimination and not on beliefs, it will be one as well. Beliefs can be many; real discrimination is one. Lies can be many; truth is one.

The essence of religion in the past was faith. And faith entails the acceptance of precepts without any kind of verification at all. If a man had no faith he was considered irreligious, because faith was looked upon as the shadow of religion. The essence of atheism, the opposite of religion, was lack of belief. This is only the other side of faith; as opposed to acceptance it involves rejection, but without any verification either. Without faith, neither atheism nor theism could have existed. Mankind has always swung between these two extremes, between these two polarities. But now, science has given us a third option. It is now possible to be neither atheistic nor theistic, now possible to be absolutely free of

belief. Now, mankind can free itself from those so-called principles that have been hammered into its unconscious through generations of tradition, through centuries of teaching.

The various societies and the different schools of thought always imprint their ideas on young minds in the most formative years. Whether parents are Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Christian or Mohammedan, all implant their views in the minds of their children. And by constant repetition these ideas become firmly ingrained in the unconscious minds of these youngsters. This negates any opportunity for free thinking. The same approach is used to promote atheism, to spread communism.

This indoctrination of innocent children is one of the greatest crimes against the human race. The young mind is stuffed with ideas, imprisoned by them. When he grows up a man is like a train on a track; he only appears to be functioning of his own accord. He is only under the illusion that his ideas are his own.

This kind of ideological indoctrination simply allows people to relate to each other within the framework of their own beliefs. This is tremendously detrimental; this stands in the way of the development of a man's free and uninhibited consciousness. It results in a kind of mental slavery. Like a bullock turning a waterwheel, a man moves within the boundaries of his own beliefs and is unable to think for himself.

One's latent power of thought only develops when one's mind is totally free. And this alone can lead to truth.

Science has been of great benefit to mankind by its attack on the static belief-mentality. It has laid the foundation for mental freedom. And this will give rise to a new religion, to one based on discrimination and not on belief, to one whose essence will be knowledge and not faith. Religion will become the science of consciousness.

Authentic religion has always been scientific.

The experiences of Mahavira, of Buddha, of Christ, of Patanjali of Lao Tzu were all based on experimentation, on investigations conducted with discrimination, with awareness. Belief followed, but there was no belief in their beginnings. Their experiments were based on knowledge; faith ensued. The truth they propounded was their experience itself, the essential and unique experience. Their words may have differed, but the essence of their truth is the same. Truth cannot differ from person to person.

This science of religion has always remained in the hands of a few enlightened beings; it has never spread to the masses. The religion of the people has always been fettered by blind belief. But now, the advances of science are finally eradicating this blindness, and this is to the great good fortune of true religion. The fire of science will purify religion, and religion in turn will enlighten human consciousness. A religion based on wisdom and discrimination can lead mankind to superhuman consciousness. The consciousness of man can only rise above itself in this way. And when a man rises above himself he becomes

one with God.

Truth can only be realized. It cannot be explained or understood.

Osho, *The Long, the Short and the All*, Chapter 2