

'BOREDOM'

She said she had always been active in one way or another, either with her children, or in social affairs, or in sports; but behind this activity there was always boredom, pressing and constant. She was bored with the routine of life, with pleasure, pain, flattery, and everything else. Boredom was like a cloud that had hung over her life for as long as she could remember. She had tried to escape from it, but every new interest soon became a further boredom, a deadly weariness. She had read a great deal, and had had the usual turmoils of family life, but through it all there was this weary boredom. It had nothing to do with her health, for she was very well.

Why do you think you get bored? Is it the outcome of some frustration, of some fundamental desire which has been thwarted?

"Not especially. There have been some superficial obstructions, but they have never bothered me; or when they have, I have met them fairly intelligently and have never been stumped by them. I don't think my trouble is frustration, for I have always been able to get what I want. I haven't cried for the moon, and have been sensible in my demands; but there has nevertheless been this sense of boredom with everything, with my family and with my work."

What do you mean by boredom? Do you mean dissatisfaction? Is it that nothing has given you complete satisfaction?

"It isn't quite that. I am as dissatisfied as any normal person, but I have been able to reconcile myself to the inevitable dissatisfactions."

What are you interested in? Is there any deep interest in your life?

"Not especially. If I had a deep interest I would never be bored. I am naturally an enthusiastic person, I assure you, and if I had an interest I wouldn't easily let it go. I have had many intermittent interests, but they have all led in the end to this cloud of boredom."

What do you mean by interest? Why is there this change from interest to boredom? What does interest mean? You are interested in that which pleases you, gratifies you, are you not? Is not interest a process of acquisitiveness? You would not be interested in anything if you did not get something out of it, would you? There is sustained interest as long as you are acquiring; acquisition is interest, is it not? You have tried to gain satisfaction from every thing you have come in contact with; and when you have thoroughly used it, naturally you get bored with it. Every acquisition is a form of boredom, weariness. We want a change of toys; as soon as we lose interest in one, we turn to another, and there is always a new toy to turn to. We turn to something in order to acquire; there is acquisition in pleasure, in knowledge, in fame, in power, in efficiency, in having a family, and so on. When there is nothing further to acquire in one religion, in one saviour, we lose interest and turn to another. Some go to sleep in an organization and never wake up, and

those who do wake up put themselves to sleep again by joining another. This acquisitive movement is called expansion of thought, progress.

"Is interest always acquisition?"

Actually, are you interested in anything which doesn't give you something, whether it be a play, a game, a conversation, a book, or a person? If a painting doesn't give you something, you pass it by; if a person doesn't stimulate or disturb you in some way, if there is no pleasure or pain in a particular relationship, you lose interest, you get bored. Haven't you noticed this?

"Yes, but I have never before looked at it in this way."

You wouldn't have come here if you didn't want something. You want to be free of boredom. As I cannot give you that freedom, you will get bored again; but if we can together understand the process of acquisition, of interest, of boredom, then perhaps there will be freedom. Freedom cannot be acquired. If you acquire it, you will soon be bored with it. Does not acquisition dull the mind? Acquisition, positive or negative, is a burden. As soon as you acquire you lose interest. In trying to possess, you are alert, interested; but possession is boredom. You may want to possess more, but the pursuit of more is only a movement towards boredom. You try various forms of acquisition, and as long as there is the effort to acquire, there is interest; but there is always an end to acquisition, and so there is always boredom. Isn't this what has been happening?

"I suppose it is, but I haven't grasped the full significance of it."

That will come presently. Possessions make the mind weary. Acquisition, whether of knowledge, of property, of virtue, makes for insensitivity. The nature of the mind is to acquire, to absorb, is it not? Or rather, the pattern it has created for itself is one of gathering in; and in that very activity the mind is preparing its own weariness, boredom. Interest, curiosity, is the beginning of acquisition, which soon becomes boredom; and the urge to be free from boredom is another form of possession. So the mind goes from boredom to interest to boredom again, till it is utterly weary; and these successive waves of interest and weariness are regarded as existence.

"But how is one to be free from acquiring without further acquisition?"

Only by allowing the truth of the whole process of acquisition to be experienced, and not by trying to be non-acquisitive, detached. To be non-acquisitive is another form of acquisition which soon becomes wearisome. The difficulty, if one may use that word, lies, not in the verbal understanding of what has been said, but in experiencing the false as the false. To see the truth in the false is the beginning of wisdom. The difficulty is for the mind to be still; for the mind is always worried, it is always after something, acquiring or denying, searching and finding. The mind is never still, it is in continuous movement. The past, over shadowing the present, makes its own future. It is a movement in time, and there is hardly ever an interval

between thoughts. One thought follows another without a pause; the mind is ever making itself sharp and so wearing itself out. If a pencil is being sharpened all the time, soon there will be nothing left of it; similarly, the mind uses itself constantly and is exhausted. The mind is always afraid of coming to an end. But, living is ending from day to day; it is the dying to all acquisition, to memories, to experiences, to the past. How can there be living if there is experience? Experience is knowledge, memory; and is memory the state of experiencing? In the state of experiencing, is there memory as the experiencer? The purgation of the mind is having, is creation. Beauty is in experiencing, not in experience; for experience is ever of the past, and the past is not the experiencing, it is not the living. The purgation of the mind is tranquillity of heart.