

The Intuition Network, A Thinking Allowed Television Underwriter, presents the following transcript from the series Thinking Allowed, Conversations On the Leading Edge of Knowledge and Discovery, with Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove.

MIND AS A MYTH with U. G. KRISHNAMURTI



MISHLOVE: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today we're going to be examining the mind -- not as an object of reality, but as an illusion, as a myth. With me is Mr. U.G. Krishnamurti, a philosopher and world traveler. U.G. is the author of several books based on his conversations. One is called *The Mystique of Enlightenment*, and another is *Mind Is a Myth*. He is sometimes thought of as an anti-guru, as a man who defies all definition, as a reluctant sage. Welcome, U.G.

KRISHNAMURTI: Thank you.

MISHLOVE: It's a pleasure to be with you. In your thinking, if I can call it that, you seem to suggest that the mind isn't real, in the sense that there is no mind separate from the body. Is that fair?

KRISHNAMURTI: Yes. What is there is only the body. So where is mind? If there is a mind, is it separate from or distinct from the activity of the brain? So it is very difficult to deal with the question of mind. You see, we are only familiar with the definitions. The topic is "Mind Is a Myth," but the series you have here is called "Thinking Allowed." Thinking aloud, or silently, brings into the picture a very fundamental question -- what thinking is, and why do we think? These questions arise from the assumption that the thoughts are self-generated and spontaneous, but actually the brain is only a reactor, not a creator. It is very difficult to accept this, because we have for centuries been made to believe, or brainwashed -- it is very difficult to accept my statement that there are no thoughts at all.

MISHLOVE: You seem to be taking a position which we would categorize as being very materialistic and very mechanistic -- that the brain is nothing more than a machine or a computer.

KRISHNAMURTI: It is actually a computer, but we are not ready to accept it. For centuries we have been made to believe that there is an entity, that there is an I, that there is a self, that there is a psyche, that there is a mind, and so on.

MISHLOVE: A soul, so to speak, or spirit.

KRISHNAMURTI: Soul. If you accept the fact -- it may not be a fact to you, you may not accept, you will most probably reject it, and most people will not hesitate to reject -- that there is no such a thing as a soul, and soul is created by the thinking of man. We have been fed on this kind of bunk for centuries, and the diet, were it to be changed, we would all die of starvation.

MISHLOVE: We have many words for things that are intangible. We talk about love or honesty or integrity as if they were real objects, and yet they're not objects so much as qualities or processes.

KRISHNAMURTI: I'm afraid we are drifting away from the basic question. If you do not want to think, is there thinking? Wanting and thinking go together, and thought is matter, you see, so you use thought to achieve either material or spiritual goals. But unfortunately, we place the spiritual goals on a higher level, and consider ourselves very superior to those who use thought to achieve material goals. So actually, whether you call it spiritual or material, even the so-called spiritual values are materialistic. So it is matter; thought is matter. And as I said at the very beginning, thought is not a creator of thought, it is a responding to the stimuli. What is there is only the stimulus and response. Even the fact that there is a response to the stimulus is something which cannot be experienced by us except through the help of thought, which creates a division between the stimulus and response. Actually, the stimulus and response is a unitary moment. You can't even say that there is a sensation; even the so-called sensations we think we're experiencing all the time cannot be experienced by us except through the knowledge we have from the sensations.

MISHLOVE: We infer from all of this that there is a self, that there is a mind that is mediating between the stimulus and the response.

KRISHNAMURTI: What is there is only the knowledge we have of the self, the knowledge that we have gathered, or had passed down to us, from generation to generation. Through the help of this knowledge we create what we call self, and then experience the self as separate from the functioning of this body. So is there such a thing as the self? Is there such a thing as I? For me the only I is the first person singular pronoun. I use "I" to make the conversation simpler, and call you "you," and I "I," but simply what we call I is only a first person singular pronoun.

MISHLOVE: A part of speech.

KRISHNAMURTI: Yes. Other than that, is there any such thing as I? Is there any such thing as the self? Is there any such entity, different from the functioning of this living organism? You see, somewhere along the line of evolution -- I can't even make a definitive statement and say there is such a thing as evolution, but we assume and presume that there is such a thing as evolution -- somewhere along the line the human species experienced this self-consciousness which doesn't exist in the other species we have on this planet.

MISHLOVE: You seem to be suggesting it's a product of our language.

KRISHNAMURTI: Not necessarily the product of language. You see, the very experience of what we call what separates us from the totality of things, the problem is -- and that is what I want to emphasize -- that the whole of nature is a single unit. Man cannot separate himself from the totality of what we call nature. Unfortunately, through the help of this self-consciousness which occurred somewhere along the line, he accorded himself a superior place and placed himself on a higher level, and treated himself, and we still continue to treat ourselves, as superior to the other species of life that we have on this planet. That is the reason why we have created this disharmony; that is why we have created these tremendous problems, ecological problems and other problems. Actually, man, or whatever you want to call him, cannot be separated from the totality of nature. That is where we have created one of the greatest blunders, and that unfortunately is the tragedy of man.

MISHLOVE: Don't you yourself say at times that there really is no problem -- that since we are part of the totality of nature, nothing really is wrong, even if we're doomed?

KRISHNAMURTI: But we are not ready to accept the fact that there is no problem. Actually, there is no problem, but we have only solutions offered to us, and we accept the solutions offered to us by those whom we consider to be in possession of the truth, in possession of the wisdom. And those solutions do not help us to solve the

problems at all, you see. So we replace one solution with another solution. The problem is the solution, and the solution has not helped us to solve the non-existent problem. So actually, it is the solution that has created the problem, and we are not ready to throw the solution out of the window, because we have tremendous confidence in those who have offered these solutions as the things that will free us from the problems that the solution has created for us.

MISHLOVE: What you seem to be saying is that we think that the solution to the problems of the world is that we can use our mind, we can act rationally, we can develop ourselves, we can become enlightened, we can get involved in social programs, and therefore we can solve the problems of the world -- which you're suggesting only exist as problems because we believe we have a solution for them.

KRISHNAMURTI: What I'm trying to suggest is that there is no such thing as your mind and my mind. For purposes of convenience, and for want of a better and more adequate word, I can use the world mind. The world mind is the totality of man's thoughts, feelings, and experiences passed down to us.

MISHLOVE: The world mind.

KRISHNAMURTI: The world mind. It is that that has created you and me, for the sole, main purpose of maintaining its status quo, its continuity. That world mind, if I may use that word, is a self-perpetuating one, and its only interest is to maintain its continuity. It can maintain its continuity only through the creation of what we call the individual minds -- your mind and my mind. So without the help of that knowledge, you have no way of experiencing yourself as an entity. You see, this so-called entity -- the I, the self, the soul, the psyche, or whatever word you want to use -- is created by that, and through the help of that you will be able to experience these things, and so we are caught up in this vicious circle, that the knowledge gives you the experience, and the experience strengthens and fortifies that knowledge.

MISHLOVE: You seem to be suggesting, if I understand you correctly then, that I'm a body here, and a brain, and my brain serves as some kind of antenna. I'm receptive to these thoughts that are coming to me from the world mind, and they give me the illusion that I am an individual self, that I have a mind even.

KRISHNAMURTI: Yes, but is it possible for you -- let alone the mind, or the entity, or the I, or the self, or the soul, or whatever you want to call it -- to experience your body as a body, without the help of that knowledge? For example, you look at your hand, and is this hand yours? First of all, the hand, is it created by the knowledge you have of that?

MISHLOVE: What you say reminds me of experiments with people who have been blinded, and then operations are performed, and they see for the first time, and they don't know anything. They have to be taught to recognize the things that they see. So without the mediation of the mind, if the mind is not trained somehow to recognize this, you're right, it would all be meaningless.

KRISHNAMURTI: We have only these senses. The sensory perceptions do not say that this is a hand. The knowledge that we have tells us that this is a hand, and that this is your hand and not my hand.

MISHLOVE: Otherwise it's just a patch of color and form.

KRISHNAMURTI: No, you don't even look at this hand. You have no way of looking at it, you see, except through the knowledge you have of this hand. This knowledge is put into us during the course of our life. When you play with a child, you tell him, "Show me your hand, show me your nose, show me your teeth, show me your face. What is your name?" This is how we build up the identity of the individual's relationship with his hand, with his nose, with his eyes, and with the world around, you see. So do we look at anything -- you see, this so-called looking is a blurry experience of yours, but you have no way of looking at anything at all except with the knowledge. So it is necessary for us to have that knowledge, otherwise it is not possible for us to function sanely and intelligently. It helps us to function sanely and intelligently, and we have to accept the reality of the world as it is imposed on us. Otherwise we have no way of functioning sanely and intelligently; we will end up in the loony bin, singing merry melodies and loony tunes. So it is very essential for us to accept the reality of the world as it is imposed on us by culture, by society, or whatever you want to call it, and leave it at that, and treat it as functional in value, and it cannot help us to experience the reality of anything.

MISHLOVE: But there may be a mind independent of culture. They may be a mind independent of any knowledge that we have, that which receives culture.

KRISHNAMURTI: That is an assumption on our part, that there is a mind, you see. As I said before, the totality of your experiences, feelings, thoughts -- is there any such thing as a totality of thoughts, feelings, and experiences? We assume that there is a totality of thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Are there thoughts? Even that I question. There are no thoughts, but what is there is only the activity about thoughts. What we call thinking is only a dialectical thinking about thinking itself. We use thoughts, the nonexistent thoughts, to achieve a goal, to accomplish, to attain a goal; whether it is material or spiritual, it really doesn't matter. So we need this to achieve our goals. So if you don't want a thing, there is no thinking at all. Whether you want this material goal or spiritual goal, or whether you want to be an enlightened man, or a god-man, or whether you want to run away with the most beautiful girl living next door to you, the society may condemn such a thing, but basically the instrument which you use to achieve your goal and act to achieve your goal is only through the help of thought. Otherwise any thought that is born out of that creates misery for you, because any thought that is born out of thought is destructive in its nature, because it is interested in protecting itself. Thought is a protective mechanism. It isolates you from the totality of nature, which cannot be separated from you. So the difficulty here is that it is impossible for you to accept that you are not separate from the totality of things, you see, what you call nature -- that every form of life is also part of this nature. When I use the word nature, I use it in the general sense; it's not that I have a general insight into nature that others don't have. You are not separate from nature; nature means the world around you. All the species that we have on this planet are integral parts of what we call nature; it cannot be separated from that. But unfortunately, through our thinking we have succeeded in separating ourselves, and through the help of this knowledge we continue to maintain the continuity of the knowledge, and that is the reason why we have invented all this integrity -- becoming one with nature, and all that kind of thing -- and we are not going to succeed, because we don't understand and realize that what it is that separates you from the totality of things is the thought. And the thought cannot be used to bring about an integral unity. Basically, we are all integrally united, and unfortunately, through our thinking, we have separated ourselves, and we are acting from this point of separateness, and it is this that is responsible for the chaos in your personal life, for the chaos in the world around you. I am giving a talk, but --

MISHLOVE: Well, you've certainly addressed many ideas and stimulated many thoughts in my mind. Maybe they passed through, I don't know. Let's step back for a moment. You seem to have said that all that we know is by virtue of thought, and yet we can't even know thought itself, because every time we look at thought we don't see thought, we just see thoughts about thought.

KRISHNAMURTI: Even the thought we are talking about is created by the knowledge that is given to us. So the thought is a self-perpetuating mechanism. And when I use the word self, I don't use it in the sense used by the philosophers and metaphysicians -- like a self-starter.

MISHLOVE: Or auto-perpetuating.

KRISHNAMURTI: Yes, perpetuation. The body is not interested in that at all. The actions of the body are responses to the stimuli, and it has no separate, independent existence of its own. Unfortunately, time is the one that has created the beginning and the end, and it is interested in permanence, whereas the functioning of the body is immortal in its own way, because it has no beginning, it is not born, so it has no death, you see. So there is a death to the thought, but not to the body. I don't know if I make myself clear.

MISHLOVE: Well, let me try and paraphrase you. You seem to be suggesting quite a fabric of intertwined notions here, and one of them is that thought tends to perpetuate itself.

KRISHNAMURTI: You see, it does not want to come to an end.

MISHLOVE: The mind doesn't exist, but even so it wishes to believe it is immortal.

KRISHNAMURTI: It is interested in creating an artificial immortality -- of an entity, soul, self, whatever you want to call it. It knows in a way that it is coming to an end somewhere along the line, and its survival, its continuity, its status quo depends upon the continuity of the body. But body is not in any way involved with the thought, because it has no beginning, it has no end. It is the thought that has created the two points -- this is the birth and that is the death, you see.

MISHLOVE: So our illusion that we have a mind is born out of fear.

KRISHNAMURTI: Of fear. So we do not want the fear to come to an end, because the end of the fear is the end of the thought. If the thought comes to an end, the body drops dead there. What is left after that is something the body does not know. For you I am alive and not dead, because you hear I am responding to your questions, I am answering to your questions. But there is nobody who is talking.

MISHLOVE: There's no you there.

KRISHNAMURTI: There is nobody who is talking, but there is only talking. This is like a tape recorder, you see, and you are playing with the tape recorder for your own reasons, and whatever comes out of that is what you want to hear from this tape recorder.

MISHLOVE: Well, you seem to be taking a position almost equivalent to that of the physicists who look at matter, and they look at molecules and atoms and then particles, and beneath particles into quarks, and finally they say there's really nothing there.

KRISHNAMURTI: You see, one of these days the scientists will have to come to the terms that their quest to find out what they call the fundamental particle -- they don't realize that the fundamental particles does not exist, and they are not ready to accept that. Then once they come to terms with that, and accept that there is no such thing as a fundamental particle, and that there is no such thing as the great big bang, whatever they call it -- it is an exercise in futility. They will continue to dabble with that, you see, to find out answers for the question only for their Nobel Prize.

MISHLOVE: You seem to be saying that the body exists, that the brain exists, and that nature exists.

KRISHNAMURTI: But that has no beginning and no end; this is all that I am emphasizing. So since the body is not born, so it has no end.

MISHLOVE: Well, I don't know, when you say the body is not born. That seems to contradict --

KRISHNAMURTI: It is the thought that has created the body, and established a point and says it's born here, and is going to end there. So it is the thought that has created the time factor.

MISHLOVE: You mean that every cell was created from a previous cell, even the egg.

KRISHNAMURTI: We don't know the beginnings of it, you see. So the whole concept of the creator is redundant. We are caught up in the field of logical thinking, and that there is no beginning, that there is no end, is something which shatters the whole fabric, the foundation of our logical thinking.

MISHLOVE: Yes, it does.

KRISHNAMURTI: So we are not ready to accept that at all.

MISHLOVE: But the notion of no beginning and no end -- I can see how that might apply to time and space, but not to the body.

KRISHNAMURTI: This body, you talk as if it is separate from the totality of the universe or totality of nature, or whatever you want to call it. It is the thought that has created the body, a separate entity, and tells that this has a beginning, this has an end. You see, this is the end that is the beginning. You see, it has created the space. Thought creates the space, thought creates the time. So it cannot conceive the possibility of anything outside the field of space and touch. Actually, the thought is the one that has created the space and experiences the space, but actually there is no such thing as space at all. What is there is a space-time-energy continuum, which is a continuum, but it has no end. You see, the thought cannot conceive of the possibility of a movement without a beginning and without this point where it is going to arrive someday or sometime. So there is the problem of the thought; its actions are limited to its perpetuation, its continuity, its permanence. But anything it says about anything -- it tries to talk about, deal with, or experience the body -- it cannot, because living thought is something dead.

MISHLOVE: You seem to be saying -- if I can summarize your thoughts -- that we're trapped in the prison of our own thoughts, and this prison creates the illusion that we are separate, that we are not part of nature, and yet the prison itself is also an illusion.

KRISHNAMURTI: The prison also is created by the thought, and that is the reason why it is trying to get out of that trap it has created by itself. You know, there is a simile given in one of the scriptures in India. The dog picks up a bone, a dry bone, there is nothing there, and then it bites, and the bone hurts the gums, and the blood comes out of it. And the dog believes -- imagines, experiences, feels, whatever word you want to use -- that the blood which is coming out of its own gums is from the bone. So that is the kind of trap in which the whole structure of thinking is caught up, and tries all the time to get out of that, the trap it has created.

MISHLOVE: That's the human predicament.

KRISHNAMURTI: That is the human predicament.

MISHLOVE: U.G., thank you very much for being with me. We're out of time now.

KRISHNAMURTI: Thank you very much.

MISHLOVE: It's been a pleasure.

KRISHNAMURTI: Thank you.

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