

Jean Klein: Dialogue in Perugia, Italy (1991)

[Interlocutor]: There are moments in individual life when one feels malaise, fear, and wonders how to continue. These are moments of "stopping." How can we face these moments?

[Jean Klein]: There is a very beautiful word: "welcoming" (accueillir). Acceptance. To be in a "waiting without expecting anything." Normally, our energy is dispersed. When the dispersion stops, the energy re-centers and reforms itself. At that point, you must abandon your personal will.

[Interlocutor]: What do you mean by harmony?

[Jean Klein]: Harmony is where there is no constriction. When you refer to yourself as a personal image, there is conflict. But when every thought and action refers to your true nature, we are integrated. That is harmony.

[Interlocutor]: What is perfection?

[Jean Klein]: When you occupy your true center, your true nature, the word "perfection" has no place. Conflict arises when one object refers to another object. If the object refers to your true nature, there is no conflict. This idea of "perfecting the self" is a misunderstanding. Why do you want to perfect the "I"? It must be eliminated!

[Interlocutor]: Why is it so difficult to say "no" in life?

[Jean Klein]: Both "yes" and "no" (as personal reactions) are false. One must be free of both. When you are free of "yes" and "no," you find yourself in your own space, in a global vision. In that global vision, "yes" and "no" don't exist as divisions.

[Interlocutor]: What about destiny? Have you ever lost your happiness since you found the Self?

[Jean Klein]: How can one lose something? You can lose a letter or your shoes, but you cannot lose what you fundamentally are.

[Interlocutor]: What is the function of love?

[Jean Klein]: Love cannot be thought or pronounced.

[Interlocutor]: Can sickness be healed?

[Jean Klein]: Health is the ground; sickness is an accident. Sickness is an indicator pointing toward something. An accident is never gratuitous; it points to a need for deeper understanding. Our meeting here is pedagogical; you must follow the answer to its end, not abandon it for a new question or an escape. Sickness has nothing to do with the Truth. The one who perceives the sickness is outside of it. The perceiver can never be objectified.

[Interlocutor]: Why is the truth so hidden in our society?

[Jean Klein]: Where does society begin? It begins with you. You are the first member of society. Society as an abstraction is one thing, but in reality, the question begins with you. Where is your truth?

[Interlocutor]: Jean, some time ago I was on a train going to Zagreb for a peace demonstration. And I saw how the Croatian controller threw some Slovenian passengers out of the compartment. I felt very confused; I didn't know what to say to my son. I felt suspended in a transition. You tell me to accept the situation, but how is this possible in the face of such injustice?

[Jean Klein]: You went to a peace demonstration, but are you in peace? Everything else is an escape before finding it in yourself. The first thing is to see that you are NOT in peace. Peace cannot be "thought." You can only see what is not in peace in you. When you see that "you are not in peace," you find yourself outside of that agitation.

You cannot "find" peace as if it were an object. Peace is established in us when we are "absent." Our total absence is peace. As soon as the concept of "I" arises, war arises. The "I" is at war by definition.

[Interlocutor]: What about art?

[Jean Klein]: What is the deep impulse to express through art? It is the joy of being. The artist tries to share this joy of the Self. It is an expression of deep gratitude for being—the "permission" we are given to be. It can take the form of proportions, light, colors, or sound. Real art frees the observer from the object and points toward what we are fundamentally. It comes from the Truth and leads back to the Truth.

[Interlocutor]: You said peace is found in absence. What should our attitude be toward the world around us, and how should we behave?

[Jean Klein]: You **are** the world around you. You must first have a "right" relationship with yourself. The world that surrounds you—with its fears, anxieties, and emotions—begins with your own body. Discover this first. At that point, there is no more conflict. Peace is not an object; it is the deep silence that is found when the "I" concept is absent. As soon as the concept of "I" arises, you are at war.

[Interlocutor]: Can we express this gratitude if we are not artists?

[Jean Klein]: Gratitude is not limited to words, sounds, or colors. Every gesture, every look, even looking your neighbor in the eyes, can be an offering—a pure act of love.

[Interlocutor]: You insist on the fact of "seeing oneself" in fear and anxiety, but this can be painful. Is seeing oneself the first step to freedom?

[Jean Klein]: Seeing the "reaction" is key. When you see a situation in reference to your self-image, it is a relationship of object-to-object. Both are concepts with no real existence. You must have a non-objective relationship with yourself and your environment. You are not an object! Discover your absence.

In love, there is total freedom. Otherwise, it is not love. You cannot name it. The "I am in love" is often just a part of the ego's sympathy. Love for beauty is not an object; beauty is what is beautiful in itself, needing no experience or intermediary. It is the resplendent Self.

[Interlocutor]: Can you talk about the power of the mantra and its role in transmutation?

[Jean Klein]: A mantra is energy and sound; it has no conceptual content. Religions use them for the power of the sound. Our body is composed of organs, and each organ has its own vibration. If one can pronounce a mantra correctly, it can quiet the body and the mind. But this silence should not be an "objective" silence (a state achieved by the ego). Correct pronunciation requires the body to "live" the sound, which can take twenty years. It's not just a matter of saying a word.