**Conditioning: A Story and Its Implications**

As a gentleman pointed out just now, we were discussing conditioning to a certain extent but were rather driven off course. Let me tell you a lovely story that illustrates the concept of conditioning. A pupil goes to a teacher and asks to be taught the truth. The teacher agrees and tells the pupil to stay with him, converse, and explore the universe and its beauty. For 15 years, the pupil listens to the teacher and observes his actions but feels he hasn't found the truth. He decides to leave and learn from another teacher miles away. After five years, he returns and claims to have found the truth, stating he can now walk across a river. The original teacher remarks that the pupil could have simply paid a cent to cross the river by boat, highlighting the simplicity that is often overlooked in our search for truth.

**The Nature of Conditioning**

Now, let's discuss conditioning. Physically, we are conditioned by our gender, height, skin color, and so on. This is natural and normal. However, we are primarily concerned with psychological conditioning, which encompasses our feelings, sensations, emotions, imagination, intellectual concepts, fears, anxieties, guilt, and hurts. All these elements form our consciousness. Conditioning is shaped by culture, tradition, superstition, religion, economic conditions, social structure, family, and societal norms. This conditioning creates a division among people, such as the distinctions between races, religions, and beliefs, leading to conflict and prejudice.

**Awareness of Conditioning**

We must ask ourselves if we are aware of our conditioning. Is it a realization we come to on our own, or is it something we are told? A famous journalist once remarked that only the Indian mind could delve into such subtleties, indicating that he did not apply the concept to himself. This highlights the importance of personal discovery. Realizing one's conditioning through external persuasion is superficial and ineffective. Genuine awareness of conditioning must come from within, much like recognizing one's own pain.

**The Danger of Conditioning**

Recognizing the danger of conditioning is crucial. Conditioning leads to division, conflict, and immense harm, as evidenced by the billions spent on armaments worldwide. Some may argue that certain conditioning is beneficial and should be retained while discarding the harmful aspects. However, any form of psychological choice is itself conditioned. To address conditioning comprehensively, we must examine its totality, not just its pleasant or unpleasant aspects.

**Breaking Free from Conditioning**

Is it possible to become unconditioned both superficially and deeply? Understanding the impact of conditioning on the world, we must explore how to break down the walls built by ourselves and society. Depending on external guidance to overcome conditioning is futile. Instead, we must observe and be aware of our conditioned responses without taking positive action. Non-action, in this context, is a form of intelligence, allowing conditioning to wither away naturally.

**The Path to Unconditioning**

Positive action perpetuates conditioning, while non-action leads to intelligence. Recognizing this distinction helps us move beyond the limitations imposed by our conditioning. As we become aware of our conditioned responses and refrain from acting on them, we allow them to dissipate. This approach contrasts with the positive actions taken by nations to assert power, which only lead to more conflict. By understanding and practicing non-action, we can achieve true freedom from conditioning.