

Beginning to understand the Philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti

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Guide: Prof. Raja Mohanty

Thanks...

God, for being my only hope in spite of all what I have read, said and written

Mom and Dad, for the unconditional support and for never making me feel guilty for my recalcitrance all my life.

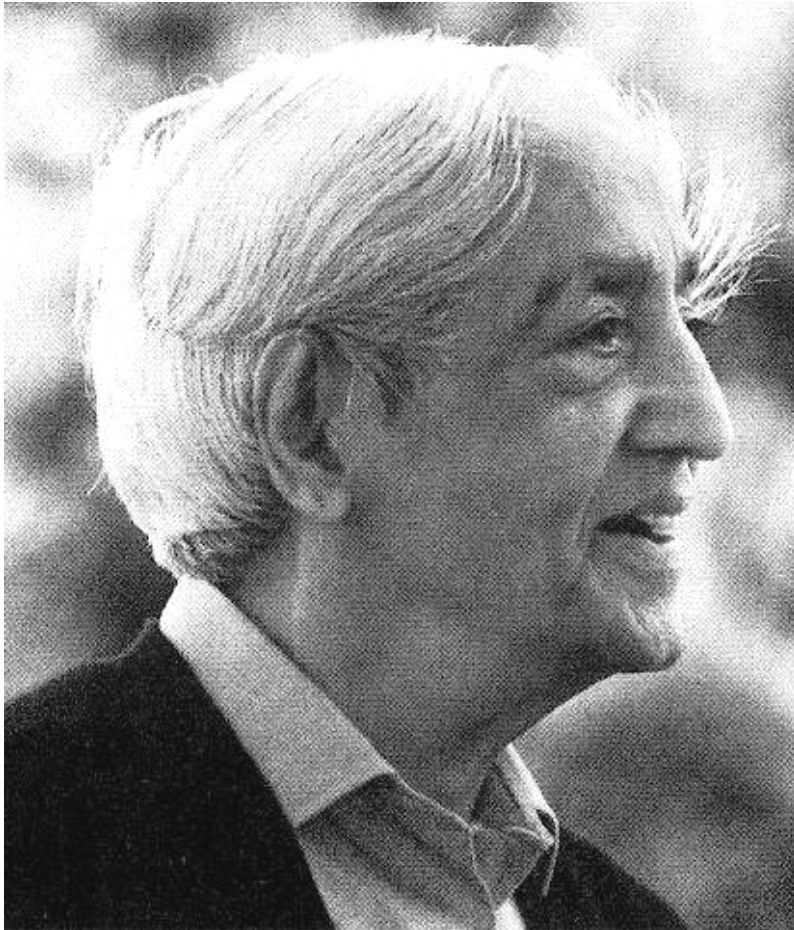
Prof. Raja Mohanty, for never judging me, for never telling me what to do, for giving me an infinitely large leeway and for never once criticizing me negatively.

Savi, for being the only person who still believes in me after all my misadventures and follies and for refilling my bank account from time to time without asking questions.

Abstract

The project is a record of my personal journey. Questions, answers, more questions...My beliefs and my *weltanschauung* ... Never before have they taken such a beating as they have in the past one year. Krishnamurti reconfirmed some of my beliefs and introduced me to a more objective way of looking at things which is light years away from my fanciful subjective way of thinking where I am the centre of my universe and the entire cosmos revolves around me.

Happiness, Pleasure, Fear, Social Darwinism, Problem-solving, Transformation and Meaning of Life are the few topics that have been discussed in a my own distinctive subjective manner.



Jiddu Krishnamurti

1895 – 1986

"Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect."

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born on May 11, 1895 in the town of Madanapalle, near Madras in the south of India. His father, Jiddu Narianiah, was educated at Madras University and worked as an official in the Revenue Department of the British Administration eventually becoming District Magistrate. Krishnamurti's mother was Jiddu Sanjeevamma, second cousin to Narianiah, whom she bore eleven children. Of these Krishnamurti was the seventh, and in keeping with tradition was named after Sri Krishna. Although not poor by Indian standards, the life of the Jiddu family was nevertheless wretched; Krishnamurti -- one of the only six to survive childhood -- himself nearly died of malaria at the age of two, and when he was ten his mother did die of it.

As a boy, Krishnamurti was "vague and dreamy" and did poorly in school, both because of disinterest and because classes were taught in Tamil and English, whereas Krishnamurti spoke only Telugu. He longed to be out-of-doors, was considered to be mentally retarded, and was beaten at school as well as at home. Nevertheless, he was very sensitive to nature, standing for long stretches to look at trees and clouds or squatting to gaze at plants and insects. This characteristic he retained: he has mentioned having once watched two squirrels chase each other for two hours; and once a friend with whom he was staying on an island was worried by his four-hour absence, when Krishnamurti returned to explain that he had been watching ants. He also showed a mechanical aptitude, taking his father's clock apart and reassembling it; and in later years he repaired his own motorcycle and once took apart and reassembled the engine of an expensive sports car he had been given.

By 1909 Narianiah had retired and was working as Secretary to the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, Madras. It was here that Krishnamurti, with his brother Nityananda (Nitya), was "discovered" by Charles W. Leadbeater, an important Theosophist, who noticed the boys playing along a nearby beach. Leadbeater, who professed clairvoyance and other supernatural powers, was struck by Krishnamurti's aura -- "the most wonderful aura he had ever seen, without a particle of selfishness in it." The President of the Theosophical Society, Annie Besant, confirmed this observation and both agreed that Krishnamurti was to become not only a great teacher but the "vehicle" or incarnation of the Lord Maitreya. Maitreya, in Hindu mythology, was a divine spirit that incarnated on earth every two thousand years or so to found a new, up-to-date religion. (In Buddhism, Maitreya is to be the next Buddha.)

- Excerpts from an essay by Alan Gullette

According to the Theosophical extenuation of this myth, both the Buddha and the Christ had been manifestations or *avatars* of Maitreya; and now the body of Krishnamurti was to be prepared for divine occupation. To facilitate this process, the boy was adopted along with Nitya by Annie Besant, and thereafter they remained in the comfortable care of the Theosophists.

Krishnamurti was educated privately in Europe, having failed to gain admission to Oxford, Cambridge, and London University, although he attended lectures at the latter and at Sorbonne. He learned English, eventually losing his native Telugu, and learnt French, Italian, and Spanish, to some extent. Although he claimed never to have read the Vedas, the Gospels, or any other religious or philosophical writings, he was fond of the Old Testament (especially "The Song of Solomon," then parts of Ecclesiastes, and Ecclesiasticus of the Apocrypha).

Other literature he is known to have read with some interest are: Keats, Whitman, Voltaire, O. Henry, Kipling, Shakespeare, Turgenev, Sinclair Lewis, and Edgar Wallace; he once said he took delight in Shaw and Anatoly France and considered Shelley to be "as sacred as the Bible." Of the books he read in 1920, those which impressed him most were Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. He found P. G. Wodehouse and Stephen Peacock to be hilarious. And once he said that he reads "everything that seems interesting," naming Huxley, Lawrence, Joyce, and Gide. He appreciated art ("you go away from everything") and in music he seemed to prefer classical, though he once admitted to liking jazz.

His physical training involved hygiene, yogic postures (*asanas*) and breathing exercises (*pranayama*), and sports. He is said to have had "considerable natural aptitude as an athlete." His favorite sports were tennis and golf. He also liked horseback riding, biking, and such games as volley-ball and rounders (a sort of English baseball). He took daily walks, practiced yoga for two hours a day, and used to drive powerful sport cars.

Of Krishnamurti's "spiritual" training it is more difficult to speak. The Theosophists claimed to be in contact with Mahatmas or Masters who lived in the Himalayas and in the invisible city of Shambala in the Gobi Desert. These advanced spiritual beings overlooked all human activity, operating to lead men to Truth. Discipleship consisted of a preliminary stage of preparation and five succeeding Initiations, after which one was an *Arhat* or perfected one (a term borrowed from Hinduism and Buddhism). Now that a suitable vehicle had been found for the Lord Maitreya to occupy as the World Teacher, the Order of the Star in the East (OSE) was founded -- nominally separate from the Theosophical Society -- to prepare the world for the Coming (also called "the Second Coming"), and Krishnamurti was named President.

For eighteen years Krishnamurti was prepared as the Vehicle and was encouraged to address Theosophical Society and OSE meetings and to write editorials for their respective publications, also writing or co-writing some very Theosophical-sounding books, with at least some aid from others.

Leadbeater, especially, oversaw Krishnamurti's "steps on the Path," traveling with him in astral form to be presented to and to receive instruction from the Masters. Krishnamurti evidently had dreams or experiences of some mode conforming to Leadbeater's own descriptions of such astral incidents. All of these Krishnamurti later explained away as products of superficial conditioning. In the 1920s, when Krishnamurti began "to think for himself" he expressed doubts in the existence of the Masters and began to speak from his own experience. Despite his respect for the aging Annie Besant, he announced to a section of the Theosophical Society that he had never been able to read through a Theosophical book, could not understand its "jargon," and was not convinced that any of the Theosophical Society lecturers had any real "knowledge of Truth." Finally, on December 28, 1929 he gave a famous speech dissolving the Order of the Star, proclaiming **"Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect."**

As for Krishnamurti's "spiritual development," a peculiar paradox arises that may be of central importance to his "teaching." The first volume (of four) of his authorized biography by Mary Lutyens is subtitled *The Years of Awakening* and indeed the story seems to indicate a sort of progression in maturity and awareness. But Krishnamurti claims never to have had a "self" or "center" to wipe away (as he claims we do), though he does say that he "woke up rather late -- about age 33" (ca. 1928). This "awakening" would refer to the physical-mental process of becoming aware of precisely what was going on about him in the world from a holistic sort of perspective. Likewise, Krishnamurti claims never to have felt jealousy, envy, hatred, personal (i.e., conditional) love, etc.; but his biography clearly indicates attachment (to his brother Nitya and to a number of girls); depression and despondency (even talking about suicide); doubt in his prescribed role in world history and the wish to escape to the sylvan simplicity of a *sannyasi*, sarcasm and anger, etc. Again, all of these can be explained, as Krishnamurti explains some of them, as being "superficial" in nature, pertaining to the merely physical life of the body (as when, during the worst spells of his painful *kundalini*-like "process" he called deliriously for his mother). He has explained that the unexpected death in 1925 of his beloved brother Nitya caused him great suffering which played an important role in his awakening; it seems to be the event that cleared away most of his Theosophical conditioning -- at least to the extent that his belief in the Masters was apparently destroyed.

Three years before, while in Ojai, California, Krishnamurti had experienced a "spiritual awakening" that he said changed his whole outlook and which started the odd "process" with its intense pains in the nape of the neck and in the head which continued throughout his life. A month after Nitya's death, when speaking publicly of the coming of the World Teacher, Krishnamurti shifted abruptly and dramatically from the third to the first person, which was taken to be the first real manifestation of Maitreya through His new vehicle. During the next year a number of such manifestations took place, and in 1927 Annie Besant issued a statement to the Associated Press declaring "The World Teacher is here." The next year he himself claimed to be united with "the Beloved" (as he preferred to call Maitreya), saying "I am that full flame which is the glory of life" and thus explaining that for him the Beloved was not transcendental (altogether) but was "the open skies, the flower, every human being." Though he no longer speaks in such terms, Krishnamurti recently said in private that the Maitreya phenomenon -- taken as the manifestation of Goodness in troubled times -- seems to be "happening" with Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti thus thinks of himself as "an unconditioned one that had to come to become the hub of a world transformation." He does not, however, accept the "vehicle theory" and insists that any normally healthy human being can instantaneously transform himself or herself into the state that for Krishnamurti is "natural."

Krishnamurti's central themes have always been (at least since he began to speak for himself): that there is no authority in spiritual matters; that one must learn for oneself the nature of the conditioning which binds and fragments human consciousness; and that out of this learning comes a new "quality" or "dimension" of awareness which is itself "religious" - so that one both realizes and reifies the true sacredness of Life itself. The possibility exists, of course, that Krishnamurti is either mad or a charlatan. Arthur Nethercot, biographer of Annie Besant, holds the theory that Krishnamurti is "a sort of schizophrenic, or at least a man of a now permanently divided dual personality." Krishnamurti claims, for instance, not to remember the events of his life up to 1929 when he broke with the Theosophical Society, though Nethercot claims to have tripped up on this matter. But Mary Lutyens, on conferring with Krishnamurti, wrote in his defense: "There is no question of amnesia; he is just not interested in the past and cannot bring his mind to it and cannot see its importance... He wouldn't be able to tell you what happened a fortnight ago... He is very fully alive in the present and excited about what goes on inside himself from day to day." Having no interest in the memorable past or imaginary future -- and thus, having no "movement of the past as the observer" or "center" or "self" .

Krishnamurti claims to live without fear or sorrow in the non-dual life-death of the timeless present (for the present, he says, "is not of time," insofar as it is only memory active as thought that gives a sense of continuity through time). Obviously, a lot of questions remain to be answered about Krishnamurti. But, as he points out, what is really important is whether what he *says* is true -- and this can only be ascertained by each one individually, through direct experience.

The Beginning...

We human beings are what we have been for millions of years – colossally greedy, envious, aggressive, jealous, anxious and despairing, with occasional flashes of joy and affection. We are a strange mixture of hate, fear and gentleness; we are both violence and peace. There has been an outward progress from the bullock cart to the jet plane but psychologically the individual has not changes at all, and the structure of society throughout the world has been created by individuals. The outward social structure is the result of our human relationships, for the individual is the result of total experience, knowledge and conduct of man. Each one of us is the storehouse of the past. The individual is the human who is all mankind. The whole of history is written in ourselves.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, Freedom from the known

Ever since I can remember I have found myself asking these questions: What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of my existence? Why do things happen the way they do? Why are people the way they are? All the isms, religions, ideologies put together have not seemed to have solved the state of perpetual crisis of human lives. When one looks around and realizes the futility and the insignificance of ones existence, the drama of ones life starts to appear amusing, if not anything else.

Living on secondhand knowledge as secondhand people, we are constantly conditioned to live according to the code of conduct set by the society. We have been 'taught' about the rights and the wrongs, spoon fed by our elders, teachers, books, saints and other authorities who probably received the knowledge from authorities of their time. Generations of second hand people conforming to an established pattern cannot but result in a mediocre society. Conditioned by nationality, class, tradition, religion, language, customs, conventions, propaganda, literature, art...Mediocre in thoughts. Mediocre in action. Mediocre lives.

But if we reject the intellectual authority the generation weaned on conformist thoughts and made dull and insensitive would find itself completely lost. The traditional approach would then be the most natural one. To rebel. To reject it completely. To deny it as absolutely false. And to fill the vacuum left by the ideology an anti ideology takes its place which is nothing but getting trapped in yet another conformist pattern. How am I to begin to understand myself? How am I to decipher the abstract thoughts? How am I to explain all my motives, intentions, desires, pleasures, fear, inspirations, longings, hopes, sorrows, joys? How am to resolve my conflicts? How am I to understand the egocentricity of my thoughts?

The fittest survives...

...the weak members of civilised societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.

The aid which we feel impelled to give to the helpless is mainly an incidental result of the instinct of sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered, in the manner previously indicated, more tender and more widely diffused. Nor could we check our sympathy, even at the urging of hard reason, without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature. ... We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind; but there appears to be at least one check in steady action, namely that the weaker and inferior members of society do not marry so freely as the sound; and this check might be indefinitely increased by the weak in body or mind refraining from marriage, though this is more to be hoped for than expected.

- Herbert Spencer, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*

1. *Species have great fertility. They have more offspring than can grow to adulthood.*
2. *Populations remain roughly the same size, with small changes.*
3. *Food resources are limited, but are relatively stable over time.*
4. *An implicit struggle for survival ensues.*
5. *In sexually reproducing species, generally no two individuals are identical.*
6. *Some of these variations directly impact the ability of an individual to survive in a given environment.*
7. *Much of this variation is inheritable.*
8. ***Individuals less suited to the environment are less likely to survive and less likely to reproduce, while individuals more suited to the environment are more likely to survive and more likely to reproduce.***
9. *The individuals that survive are most likely to leave their inheritable traits to future generations.*
10. ***This slowly effected process results in populations that adapt to the environment over time, and ultimately, after interminable generations, these variations accumulate to form new varieties, and ultimately, new species.***

Charles Darwin, On Origin of the Species

The human mind is constantly window shopping to discover an ideology that benefits it most. The ultimate motivating factor must be self preservation. Do we need to change as a society? Do we need to change as individuals? Is it possible for us to live in a convivial spirit instead of competitive spirit? Social Darwinists believe other wise. So as a species are we to live in a brutal, violent, competitive, envious, fearful, greedy society? Are we to live in a state of constant misery in a competitive culture vying for power, position, prestige and success thereby breeding antagonism and endless conflicts?

The instinct of self preservation is probably the most powerful of all. As a Darwinist would say survival and procreation are the two ultimate motivating factors of any species. These influence the hierarchy of our society, our behavioral patterns and our endless conflicts. Darwin's theory is based on key observations and inferences drawn from them on his voyage on HMS Beagle and on other continues investigations and experiments upon his return. The summary of his theory is given on the left.

Drawing social parallels to points eight and ten are we to understand that as a species we are biologically tuned to compete amongst ourselves and that the entire struggle is for the *survival of the fittest*? Have we as a species evolved over years to become what we are today. A society of paranoid psychotics living in constant unknown fears easily manipulated by figures of authority with questionable scruples. Are these figures of authorities the fittest deemed by nature and rest who seem to be less fit to be weeded out by the society or be rendered impotent? What is it that we as individuals and as a society that we fear?

What makes us act the way we do? What motivates us to make certain decisions the way we do them?

All decisions are taken in way that would maximize our gains. It is always the thoughts about the past or the future that influences our decisions. If all other factors influencing the decision, unknown while it was taken, act in our favour then the expectation of the windfall gives us immense joy and if it works the other way becomes a source of great sorrow. Our entire life is an effort towards maximizing our joys. A momentary elation arising from sensual gratification.

Pleasure...

Pleasure is the structure of the society. From childhood until death we are secretly, cunningly or obviously pursuing pleasure. So whatever out form of pleasure is, I think we should be very clear about it because it is going to guide and shape our lives. It is therefore important for each of us to investigate closely, hesitantly and delicately this question of pleasure, for to find pleasure, and then nourish and sustain it, is a basic demand of life and without it life becomes dull, stupid, lonely and meaningless.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, Freedom from the known

Pleasure is an abstract feeling related to the past...to the memory of the moments of elation. It is a concept in itself and the pursuit of pleasure directs us to repeat activities that give us that elated feeling. We would like to remain in the state for elation as long as possible. It is when we descend from our high that we feel the withdrawal and an irresistible urge to return to that state just like the addiction towards endorphin rushes or towards psychotropic substances that produce a feeling of well being or a momentary elation. This state is purely biological and dependant on the levels of serotonin in our brain as has been proven by medical research. Joy is connected to fear. What is laughter if not the manifestation of the anxiety of the subconscious? Is it possible to trace back the roots of all joy to fear of some kind? Does it in some manner bring out the primate in us, the hunter who experiences the fear in the jungle rife with dangers? The alpha male who dominates the herd and experiences elation after a successful hunt? Isn't that the reason why we crave for position in our society and isn't the primate tribe mentality that manifests as a nationalistic and patriotic fervour? We are just protecting our resources so that the species doesn't have to face extinction. Have we in some manner failed to adjust ourselves to the changing social order or has the social order not changed at all? Has our biological evolution not adjusted to the social evolution or vice versa? Is the evolution of civilization just a superficial phenomenon?

... More specifically, mammals are equipped with a nerve system that enables them to distinguish not only between pleasant and unpleasant sensations, but positive and negative experiences in general. While the biological term fitness refers to the capacity to create offspring, happiness (or quality of life) is, at least in a biological perspective, a question of the qualities of the experiences our nervous system offers us.

In order to improve these experiences there are two main principles to consider:

To utilize the rewarding sensations the brain is designed to offer in a way that gives optimal long-term benefits; and, similarly, to avoid punishing sensations.

To avoid stress and maladaptive ways of living in order to have a healthy mind with optimal potential for positive experiences.

As to the first principle, humans may actually have been equipped with more powerful positive and negative sensations, compared to other mammals, due to our capacity for free will. That is, evolution might tend to add stronger incentives for behavior benefiting the genes in a species with a powerful free will; as otherwise, the free will could easily result in unfavorable behavior.

As to the second principle, it may be added that, as a rule of thumb, we ought to adapt our way of living to how we are designed by evolution to live. Current ideas in evolutionary medicine and evolutionary psychology suggest that mismatches between the environment of evolutionary adaptation and the present way of living may cause somatic and mental health problems.

Bjorn Grinde, Darwinian Happiness: Evolution as a Guide for Living and Understanding Human Behavior

The original feeling...

Fear, perhaps, is the only original feeling. It has no binary opposite. Only the presence or absence of it. Rest all follow fear; either presence of it or absence of it. The positive experiences are called so because of the absence of fear in those and negative experiences because of the presence of fear in them. There is no presence or absence of fear in the experiences per se, but it is the memory that assigns certain value to those experiences. A hypothetical human being without any memory would be an interesting subject of study. Would this human being experience the fear and joy? And if this being were to experience fear due to the collective conscious that we are inherit from animals due to the influence of evolution what would be the nature of this fear? This leads to a more important question. Are all fears physical in nature or are there psychological fears as well? Is there a difference between the two?

We all have fears. Fear of losing respect, fear of losing position, fear of failure, fear of being lonely etc All fears are essentially fear of loss of some kind. They are manifested by our priorities in life. Career, job, relationships, health etc. These are the biggest sources of most of our fears. Are they not directly related to our survival and procreation?

Fear has a crippling effect on our lives and for this reason becomes our biggest and the most important problem. A mind in fear always results in conflict of some kind. A crippled mind is incapable of reason. This is where the instincts kick in and we resort to either aggression or camouflage. That is how animals have been trying to survive for millions of years.

Is it possible to live without fear? What would such a life be? I am reproducing paragraphs from 'Freedom from the Known' by Jiddu Krishnamurti here

"...Consciously you can be aware of your fears but at the deeper levels of your mind are you aware of them? And how are you going to find out the fears that are hidden, secret? Is fear to be divided into conscious and the sub-conscious? This is a very important question. The specialist, the psychologist, the analyst, have divided fear into deep and superficial layers, but if you follow what the psychologist says or what I say, you are understanding our theories, our dogmas, our knowledge, you are not understanding yourself.

You cannot understand yourself according to Freud or Jung, or according to me. Other people's theories have no importance whatever. It is of *yourself* that you must ask the question, is fear to be divided into conscious and the sub conscious? Or is there only fear which you translate into different forms? There is only one desire; there is only desire. You desire. The objects of desire change, but desire is always the same. So perhaps in the same way there is only fear. You are afraid of all sorts of fear but there is only one fear.

When you realize that fear cannot be divided you will see that you have put away altogether this problem of the subconscious and so have cheated the psychologists and the analysis. When you understand that fear is a single movement which expresses itself in different ways and when you see the movement and not the object to which the movement goes, then you are facing an immense question: how can you look at it without the fragmentation which the mind has cultivated?"

There is only total fear, but how can the mind which thinks in fragments observe this total picture? Can it? We have lived a life of total fragmentation, and can look at the total fear only through the fragmentary process of thought. The whole process of the machinery of thinking is to break up everything into fragments: I love you and I hate you; you are my enemy, you are my friend; my particular idiosyncrasies and inclinations, my job, my position, my prestige, my wife, my child, my country and your country, my God and your God- all that is fragmentation of thought. And this thought looks at the total state of fear, or tries to look at it, and reduces to fragments. Therefore we see that the mind can look at the total fear only when there is no movement of thought.

Can you watch fear without any conclusions, without any interference of knowledge you have accumulated about it? If you cannot, then what you are watching is the past, not fear; if you can then you are watching fear for the first time without interference of the past.

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You can watch only when the mind is very quiet, just as you can listen to what someone is saying only when your mind is not chattering with itself, carrying on a dialogue with itself about its own problems and anxieties. Can you in the same way look at fear without trying to resolve it, without bringing in its opposite, courage – actually look at it and not try to escape from it? When you say, 'I must control it, I must get rid of it, I must understand it', you are trying to escape from it.

You can observe a cloud or a tree or the movement of a river with a fairly quiet mind because they are not very important to you, but to watch yourself is far more difficult because there the demands are so practical, the reactions so quick.

So when you are directly in contact with fear or despair, loneliness or jealousy, or any other ugly state (value assignment) of mind, can you look at it so completely that your mind is quiet enough to see it?

Can the mind perceive fear and not the different forms of fear – perceive total fear, not what you are afraid of? If you look merely at the details of fear try to deal with your fears one by one, you will never come to the central issue which is to learn to live with fear.

To live with a living thing such as fear requires a mind and heart that are extraordinarily subtle, that has no conclusion and can therefore follow every movement of fear. Then if you observe and live with it – and this doesn't take a whole day, it can take a minute or a second to know the whole nature of fear – if you live with it so completely you inevitably ask, 'who is the entity who is living with fear? Who is it who is observing fear, watching all the movements of the various forms of fear as well as the being aware of the central fact of fear? Is the observer a dead entity, a static being, who has accumulated a lot of knowledge and information about himself, and is that dead thing who is observing and living with the movement of fear? Is the observer the past or is he a living thing? What is your answer? Do not answer me, answer yourself. Are you, the observer, a dead entity watching a living thing? Because in the observer the two states exist.

The observer is the censor who does not want fear; the observer is the totality of all his experiences about fear. So the observer is separate from the thing he calls fear; there is no space between them; he is forever trying to overcome it or escape from it and hence this constant battle with himself and fear – this battle which is a waste of energy.

As you watch, you learn that the observer is merely a bundle of ideas and memories without any validity or substance, but that fear is an actuality and that you are trying to understand a fact with an abstraction which, of course, you cannot do. But, in fact, is the observer who says, 'I am afraid', any different from the thing observed which is fear?

The observer is fear and when that is realized there is no longer any dissipation of energy in the effort to get rid of fear, and the time-space interval between the observer and the observed disappears. When you see that you are a part of a fear, not separate from it – that you are fear – then you cannot do anything about it; then fear comes totally to an end.

How do we solve our problems?

"If we can really understand the problem, the answer will come out of it, because the answer is not separate from the problem."

Jiddu Krishnamurti

We have discussed broadly about our problems. Now how do we go about solving them? Firstly we need to establish them as our problems. To paraphrase Swami Chinmayananda most problems are not problems at all but become problems because we assign them a value by considering them as problems. Can we solve our problems by thinking and intellectual deliberations? Can we rely on our intellect and on the collective human knowledge that we have accumulated over thousands of years to understand the varied levels of complexity?

It is important to understand the process of problem solving that we follow. The most common approach of problem solving is reactionary. We react to the given set of problems in the given circumstances. Experience tells us that it is possible to react differently for the problem that seems the same in different ways according to the circumstances. So where does that leave us? How can we approach a problem if the problem itself is not clear to us? Most of us think on our feet solving the problems as we move along. We accumulate information either from our experiences or vicariously on the most successful solutions and try to repeat them. So most of our problems solving strategies are based on memories of the past. It would not be unwise to say that we have not been very good at it. For centuries now, we have been grappling with problems, social, economic, political, cultural and all that thinking has not yielded any effective results. We are still riddled with problems of unimaginable proportions. It would be safe to say that the strategy has not succeeded.

What is our strategy? The strategy is division. We divide the problem into airtight compartments and try to solve each of these divisions with constant referral to the knowledge base that we have built over the years. Not a bad strategy, if you do not want to reinvent the wheel. But the only problem is that hundreds of partial answers do not add up to become a complete solution. All our problems big and small over the years have not been solved completely. Partial answers give rise to new problems which in turn needs new partial answers. This is a perpetual cycle.

We have been asking all wrong questions. We ask more number of how's than why's. In an industrially driven society it is more profitable to find answers to the how rather than the time consuming why's. The chances of survival become greater. All major isms and inventions are answers to questions based on how. How do I become more successful? How to be happy? How to be bigger? How to be stronger? How to be faster? How to yield more power? How to bring equality?

After the dawn of consumer age the business of answering how's has become more profitable than ever. Thoughts and decisions are driven by economics which seems to make sense in a world that is shrinking everyday. It is shrinking in terms of the distance, time and resources. It is important to formulate processes that will enable faster results. Processes need to have the ability to reproduce results with minimal variation. Environment and circumstances are adjusted to make way for these solutions. The pressure on resources does not permit other means. In reality, problem solving has become a profitable business in itself. 'Creativity' and 'innovation' have become words that propagate this myth. We still face the same problems that we have been facing since the beginning of civilizations. What do we have to account for thousands of years of our existence?

Should we investigate the way we solve our problems without prejudice and without resistance? Should we delude ourselves with intellectual gymnastics or should we just be honest about our ignorance? Should we clothe ourselves with isms or should we just stand naked?

It is impossible to be free from conditioning. But can we not try to understand the factors that condition us? Is a transformation not long due?

Transformation...

A man who sees that time is not the way out of our difficulty and who is therefore free from false such a man has naturally the intention to understand; therefore his mind is quiet spontaneously, without compulsion, without practice, When the mind is still, tranquil, not seeking any answer or any solution, neither resisting nor avoiding- it is only then that there can be a regeneration, because then he mind is capable of perceiving what is true; and its is truth that liberates and not your effort to be true

Jiddu Krishnamurti, The first and the last freedom

As a child I felt that something was wrong somewhere. All my investigations often led to one culprit...Time. For a good number of years, I kept telling myself that I do not believe in time. But it took me a long time to realize that by denial one does not negate its existence. One only lives in a delusion. Time is probably the biggest conditioning factor. All our thoughts are based on time because all our thoughts are a result of a memory.

The human tendency to create a superficial order is against the universe which favours entropy. Time is one such example. It would be heresy to say that the world will become a better place if all the watches were to be destroyed. It is rather silly but it is just a hypothesis. All the 'order' that will collapse due to the absence of 'time' would probably lead to more stable systems. All good systems are self correcting ones. It is the systems that do not favour entropy create conflicts. There is nothing no such thing as being more nobler or idealistic than the reality of the present. All that matters is the present. Any change in the system or transformation must happen in present. Revolution is reactionary and it takes place often in future or the past. Evolution is the only thing that takes place in the present. By evolution I do not mean only biological, but also psychological. Evolution is the change resulting from within the self correcting system trying to attain a more stable state. But this is also reactionary in nature and gambles on future. Can any change occur that is not dependent on past and the future and that is not reactionary in nature?

Can the human crisis be solved by a radical revolution? Can a new order set right everything?

It is a waste of time to bring order in system whose intrinsic nature is entropy. The catastrophic wars, the ceaseless class struggles arising from social and economic inequality are all nothing but the external manifestations of the intrinsic quality of the universe.

Can repeated attempts at transformation give the desired effect? History of human life has proven otherwise. New attempts to create order have resulted in more confusion. A desire of a utopian reality has resulted in discordant delusions which in turn have led to ceaseless conflicts – physical and psychological. Repeated attempts to make the place better and lives better have resulted in making lives worse and always with an overwhelming feeling of emptiness.

So what are we to do now?

To try and escape is the easiest way and requires no special effort. The world around us is filled with amusement and abundant escape routes. Over years of practice one might even master the art of escaping. It is a partial solution and very superficial at that too, but nevertheless easiest and offers instant gratification. I must add that this is my favourite solution to all my problems and I am quite good at that too. But to my dismay it always has a feeling of incompleteness to it. A lack of resolution that gnaws from within...

The more difficult one is the most obvious one. To try and understand the problem. Being egocentric in nature, more often than not, the problem and the solution lies within us. This brings us to the age old cliché of trying to understand selves. We complete the proverbial circle and come back to the same questions.

What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of my existence?

On the meaning of life...

By Jiddu Krishnamurti

Does life have a meaning, a purpose? Is not living in itself its own purpose, its own meaning? Why do we want more? Because we are so dissatisfied with our life, our life is so empty, so tawdry, so monotonous, doing the same thing over and over again, we want something more, something beyond that which we are doing. Since our everyday life is so empty, so dull and so meaningless, so boring, so intolerably stupid, we say life must have a fuller meaning and that is why you ask that question. Surely a man who is living richly, a man who sees things as they are and is content with what he has is not confused; he is clear, therefore he does not ask what is the purpose of life. For him the very living is the beginning and the end. Our difficulty is that, since our life is empty, we want a purpose of life and strive for it. Such a purpose of life can only be mere intellection, without any reality; when the purpose of life is pursued by a stupid, dull mind, by an empty heart, that purpose will also be empty. Therefore our purpose is how to make our life rich, not with money and all the rest of it but inwardly rich – which is not something cryptic. When you say that purpose of life is to be happy, the purpose of life is to find God, surely that desire to find God is an escape from life and your God is merely a thing that is known. You can only make your way towards an object which you know; if you build a staircase to the thing that you call God, surely that is not God. Reality can be understood only in living, not in escape. When you seek a purpose of life, you are really escaping and not understanding what life is. Life is a relationship, life is action in relationship; when I do not understand relationship, or when relationship is confused, then I seek a fuller meaning. Why are our lives so empty? Why are we so lonely, frustrated? Because we have never looked into ourselves and understood ourselves.

We never admit to ourselves that this life is all we know and that it should therefore be understood fully and completely. We prefer to run away from ourselves and that is why we seek the purpose of life away from relationship. If we begin to understand action, which is our relationship with people, with property, with beliefs and ideas, then we find that relationship itself brings its own reward. You do not have to seek. It is like seeking love. Can you find love by seeking it? Love cannot be cultivated. You will find love only in relationship, not outside relationship, and it is because we have no love that we want a purpose of life. When there is love, which is its own eternity, then there is no search for God, because love is God.

It is because our minds are full of technicalities and superstitious mutterings that our lives are so empty and that is why we seek purpose beyond ourselves. To find life's purpose we must go through the doors of ourselves; consciously or unconsciously we avoid facing things as they are in themselves and so we want God to open for us a door which is beyond. This question about the purpose of life is put only by those who do not love. Love can only be found in action, which is relationship.

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