

Jiddu Krishnamurti

(Address at the commencement of J. Krishnamurti's centenary celebration at Nehru centre, London on 24.10.1994)

On the Inauguration of Centenary of the Seer

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me, as Chairperson of the Krishnamurti Birth Centenary Committee to join those gathered here to pay homage to that Seer of Seers. When the prospect of journeying to Britain for programmes marking the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the commencement of Krishnamurti's centenary celebration was put to me, I could not but ponder the inter-relatedness of these two events, and their compelling relevance for our times.

Both Gandhiji and Krishnaji first arrived into Britain when they were very young – in their early 20s. This country was to leave a profound, indeed, determining influence on their lives. Gandhiji was trained here in the Law, which calling took him soon thereafter to South Africa where he forged his unique instrument of *satyagraha*. Krishnaji was to begin a process of self-questioning here, which process led him to the words of Jamnadas Dwarkadas, *to choose his own path (where) no one dared to interfere with him*.

As you are all aware Krishnamurti was “discovered” by the Theosophical Society in 1909. His traditional Hindu boyhood sloughed off at that point. This second home of his – the Theosophical Society – however, was not to be his last. He could not abide being fussed over as a “World Teacher”. The Theosophists and the Order of the Star had, for years, predicted a Great Coming, the arrival of a World Teacher who would say something so new and unexpected that it would startle the world. But the Order of the Star and the Theosophical Society had visualized the World Teacher in their own likeness. Krishnaji was not to be in anyone's likeness. . Krishnaji's speech at the famous Ommen Camp in 1929 at Holland belongs to the category of all-time utterances. He said at the conclusion of it: “I have now decided to disband the Order, as I happen to be its Head. You can form other organisations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages, new decorations for those cages. My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free.” He dissolved the Order of the Star of the East, which the Society had specially created for him. His Theosophist youth slid down Krishnaji's shoulders.

After his severance from Theosophy, as Mary Lutyens tells us in her book on Krishnaji, his meetings drew people who were “interested in what he had to say, not what they had been told he was.”

Dr. Anne Besant had predicted that in Krishnaji the sound of the Flute that had been heard on the banks of the Yamuna would be heard again. This came true, but in a way that was totally different from what she had announced. For nearly half a century, thereafter through talks, conversations and extensive writings, Krishnaji incandesced in the world. He became a lamp that kept touching wick after wick, raising them from their drab ordinariness into illumined life. Because of the ambient smog of our times, many of those lamps flickered and faded when he was not there, and waited to be revived when Krishnaji returned through books or oral recordings.

Krishnaji disliked the Guru-Shishya syndrome; he wished everyone to be his own guru through constant and continuous search for light. He never sought an audience or even a readership, much less a following. But a group of “the faithful” grew around him; thinkers, academics writers, scientists and a large number of simple folk. They travelled with him whenever possible. Krishnaji would talk for precisely one hour at these lectures, each member of the audience feeling that he or she was being addressed individually. Many heard him, eyes closed in meditation. Many just watched him, not fully comprehending the message. But whether heard or just seen Krishnaji was an experience that touched every member of the audience profoundly. There were always some people who found it contradictory that Krishnaji, who said he was no Guru, should be addressing people. “Why does he lecture then?” they would ask. Such critics never explained why they went to listen to him. One always emerged from Krishnaji’s lectures feeling that one’s mind had been rinsed, albeit temporarily, of petty pre-occupations. For the moments one heard him, one felt elevated and brimmed with internal peace.

True to Krishnaji’s spirit, his friends and colleagues never pressed themselves on others through the media or otherwise. Having no doctrine to propound or formula to sell, Krishnaji never needed ad-men. To him, the human mind was made for freshness and not for conditioned reflexes; for life-giving observation and not for atrophy. Instinctively, countless persons came to regard him as a preceptor who could enlighten them. Shrimati Pupul Jayakar tells us in her moving book on Krishnaji about a discussion that took place between her, Shrimati Radha Burnier and Krishnaji at Rishi Valley. At her comment that, for her, Krishnaji was the guru, he asked, “What do you mean by *guru* ?” Pupulji said, “He who awakens”. He then said, “The approach of the awakener and the awakened is wrong. When there is light and I am in darkness and move into lights, where is the awakener? Some stay in the light, some wander away, that is all.” A little later, Krishnaji added a comment which echoed the Tathagata: “I am not saying I am the light”.

Krishnaji said that “There are no answers to life’s questions. The state of mind that questions is more important than the question itself”. To Krishnaji, neither intellectual nor academic thought nor conventional religious thought could ever bring satisfaction, since they were all liable to fall into the tracks of repetitive habit. And habit, he saw, could only perpetuate status quo and spiritual stalemate. The human mind, Krishnaji felt, needed, to free it from what he called ‘programming’. In a dialogue with students of Rishi Valley School in 1980, he asked, “Do you understand the word ‘programmed’? We are programmed to be Hindus, Muslims, Christians; we are programmed to be communists, socialists or capitalists. So our minds are conditioned, are programmed, like the computer is programmed. Now, when a mind is programmed, it says, “I am a Hindu, I am a Muslim, I am a Christian, I am a Buddhist, I am this, I am that.” Therefore it is not free, because it is merely repeating. Only a mind that is free from all programmes is a free mind. A mind is free only when it is not caught in a programme, in a conclusion, in a belief, in an attachment.”

And to keep the mind free from a programmed and programming memory he said that no outside influence would be allowed to impose itself on thought. And if that is done, and to the extent that it is done, there would be no distortion and therefore no conflict.

“Thought”, he once said, “is responsible for all the cruelty of the wars, the war machines . . . Thought is also responsible for the cathedrals, the beauty of their structure, the lovely poems, it is also responsible for all the technological developments.” Krishnamurti

conceded the utility of thought in practical, everyday, situations, or in areas where technique is called for. You have to earn money, get a livelihood, which demands thought. So there you exercise thought. When you have got to go to the dentist, you exercise thought. When you have to buy a suit, a dress, you compare – this is better material than that, and so on – that requires thought.” But, he maintained, that since thought is fed by memory, it has necessarily to be limited and being limited it can never satisfy man. That is not all. Being limited, conditioned, programmed, and therefore both distorted and distorting, thought can in fact be dangerous to that ‘wholeness of being’ which we must attain if we are to be truly at peace.

What, then, was to be the alternative to ‘thought’? Krishnaji believed that it was simply, being ‘awake’, with all one’s being, to things as they are.

Speaking to a group of students at Brockwood Park here in this country, Krishnaji asked, “What is the point of your getting educated? What is the point of passing some examinations and getting a degree, getting a job, if you’re lucky, setting up house? Will all that help you, help each human being, each one of you, to blossom? So, if you were my daughter or my son, I would say *look*, look around you, at your friends in the school, at the neighbours; see what is happening around you, not according to what you like or don’t like, but just look at the *fact*. See exactly what is happening, without distortion. People who are married are unhappy, have quarrels, endless strife, you know all that goes on. And the boy and the girl - they also have their problems. And see the division of people into races, groups - national groups, religious groups, scientific groups, business groups, artistic groups. Do you follow? Everything is broken up. Do you see that? Do you follow? Human beings have done this. Thought has done it. Thought that says, “I am a Catholic’, ‘I am a Jew’ ‘I am an Arab’, ‘I am a Muslim’, ‘I am a Christian’. Thought has created this division. So thought in its very nature, in its very action, is seen to be divisive, bringing about fragmentation.”

Krishnaji believed therefore that for a true transformation to take place within individuals and in the world as such, the processes of thought would have to be replaced by a choiceless awareness. He spoke of the state of ‘creative emptiness’ or ‘complete attentiveness.’

Krishnaji would have regarded parallelisms as another example of ‘programmed memory’. And yet one cannot but recall in this context, the Buddhist teachings of ‘nothingness’ and of ‘mindfulness’ and the Hindu concepts of ‘gnana’ (knowledge) and ‘*pragna*’ (wisdom or insight).

When he asks us to be islands unto ourselves, it is as if the Sakyamuni is speaking to us again and when he says, ‘What you are, the world is’, he is talking the language of Ramana Maharishi. But the Buddhist or *advaitin* analogies with Krishnaji’s teaching in them are not important. What is important is that Krishnaji beckons us to realize these truths within ourselves through an awakening of our intelligence. A resolution of conflict within ourselves, he has said, is the surest and only lasting method of resolving conflict around us.

‘Who can have any disagreement over this? A skeptical logician might however say. The world’s crises cannot wait for slow inner change to take place one by one.’ Of course the process is slow. But has external order without inner change worked anywhere? Does the skeptic have an alternative?

Krishnaji said in New York in 1971:

“Don’t you know what it means to be related to the world? – When you feel you are the world, feel that you are responsible, that you are committed to this responsibility. This is the only commitment; not to be committed through bombs, or committed to a particular activity, but to feel that you are the world and the world is you. Unless you change completely, radically, and bring about a total mutation in yourself, do what you will outwardly, there will be no peace for man.”

A Philosopher of Philosophers, a Teacher of Teachers, Krishnaji recoiled from these descriptions! He so recoiled because he did not set out to *persuade or* instruct anybody. At all times he was a comrade, a friend, a fellow thinker.

I last saw Krishnaji around New Year time in 1986 in Madras. I had gone to Vasanta Vihar, his Madras headquarters, for a meeting of the Krishnamurti Foundation India Trust, of which I have been a member for many years. As always, his large eyes lingered on the surroundings with laser-like intensity; his uniquely expressive hands sculpted the air as he spoke. Krishnaji had given of himself unsparingly, on that trip. And yet, the signs were clear: Cancer had dug destructively into Krishnaji’s pancreas. He told us to carry on the Trust’s work from then on without expecting his counsel.

Always a big draw, Krishnaji’s lectures at Vasant Vihar on that last visit to Madras pulled unprecedented audiences. People listened to him with a reverence reserved for finales. Krishnaji’s most memorable talk in the series was on the theme of death. He explored the reasons for our fear of death and dying. Krishnaji’s words that evening are said to have contained not just insight and clarity but a mystical power. “What would you say to someone who is dying?” Krishnaji had asked a group of people, on an earlier occasion. “Would you give him philosophy?” And then, answering the question himself, Krishnaji ventured, “I would say to him: “Let me die with you”. No message, I believe, could go to the core of the dying man’s being than this. To simultaneously extinguish oneself, not in the sense of one’s corporeal being but in the sense of one’s ego, is the most precious offer that can be made to one who is Crossing Over by someone Staying Behind. Krishnaji had a unique capacity to touch one’s deepest and most essential being with his thoughts. In an age of “godmen” offering “instant” formulae for spiritual nourishment, he offered no soft solutions, nor hard ones. Krishnaji, in fact, made only one offer “ the offer of participation, of joint exploration and of shared discoveries. All he asked for was that we should walk with him, awake. “Compared with what we ought to be “, William James has written, “we are only half awake.”

Krishnaji felt for others as I have known very few people to do. He was able to interiorize the thoughts and anguish of others. He tried to help them overcome their difficulty by assisting them to see and understand the nature of their difficulty and their fear. He personified the concept given in the Vedas: “I seek not temporal power, nor swarga nor freedom from rebirth. All I see is that the suffering of all mortal beings be destroyed . . . “

In an age in which fundamentalism is masquerading as the religious spirit, and consumerism and the entertainment industry are taking over what is left of the human psyche, the teachings of Krishnamurti are of the deepest relevance in every walk of life.

Asit Chandmal tells us that Bernard Shaw, after meeting Krishnaji, described him as “the most beautiful human being I have ever seen” and that Aldous Huxley after hearing Krishnaji said “It was like listening to a discourse of the Buddha - such power, such intrinsic authority .

. . . .” Krishnaji, as Bernard Shaw observed was encased in one of the most beautiful of physical moulds. He has escaped now from even that mould in what we of the eastern tradition, would like to regard as his final migration. And yet as long as there is a single suffering soul in our midst Bodhisattvas deny themselves that Final Crossing. I would therefore like to believe that Krishnaji will continue to be with us. Not as an individual but as that fresh uncontaminated visions that can enable us to see and therefore understand, afresh.

On the occasion of release of Jiddu’s CDs#

No country in the world produced a succession of saints, scholars, thinkers and social revolutionaries as India has done. In the twentieth century, there lived amongst us great thinkers and seers like Sri Aurabindo, Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi and Gandhiji who tried to elevate man from mundane existence to a realm of peace and beauty. To that galaxy of stars belonged J Krishnamurti, affectionately remembered by us as Krishnaji.

One of the greatest thinkers of this century, Krishnaji’s teachings were born out of deep and penetrating analysis, profound observation of human nature and intense contemplation and meditation in search of Reality. He was not one of those Godmen who offered instant formulae for spiritual nourishment. He performed no miracles. He helped us to search for Reality, Truth and Light. Like the great Buddha he asserted “Be a light unto yourself”.

He was our comrade, friend and fellow explorer of truth. “Let us examine this together” was a recurring phrase in Krishnaji’s talks and discourses. He excited our thoughts with counter questions, which often baffled us, and he pushed us further into seeking our own answer.

Krishnaji believed in the moral elevation of Man. He said “Unless you change completely, radically and bring about a total mutation in yourself, do what you will outwardly, there will be no peace for man.” He explained in one of his talks Ego was the source of all human misery. The desire to look more handsome than others, to excel in studies over classmates, to be richer than the neighbours breeds competition, conflict and violence.

The desire to dominate the world, build empires, capture markets for goods and exploit the resources, which belong to other peoples, has been the cause of all wars.

Disarmament Conferences and strategic Arms Control cannot prevent wars. If you ban nuclear weapons, people will fight with conventional weapons. If you ban conventional weapons, people will fight with Bows and Arrows. If you ban Bows and Arrows, people will fight with swords and sticks and if you ban them, people will fight with their fists. So long as Man is mentally conditioned to fight, wars of varying destructivity cannot be prevented.

The preamble to the UNESCO charter says Wars spring in the minds of men. Krishnaji said “that with order, harmony and wholesomeness in Man, everything will fall in place. Without such order, things cannot but fall apart”.

Speech Delivered at J Krishnamurti’s CD release function on 20th April 2002 at Chennai

The Video and Audio recordings, the vast array of books containing his thoughts, ideas, discourses and discussions gathered meticulously by the Krishnamurti Foundations are a vast treasure house of inexhaustible wisdom.

I am happy that the Compact Disc which I am releasing today is yet another addition to the vast collection Video, Audio records of his authentic voice. The vast array of books dealing with every conceivable aspect of human life constitutes a library itself. Thanks to modern technology Krishnaji's voice and thoughts will reverberate in the world not only for posterity but eternity.

On this happy occasion I am overwhelmed by emotion caused by the memory of Krishnaji sitting under this hallowed tree and leading the kindly light dispelling darkness doubts and tribulations. I see before me his adorable presence calm serene and benign, his piercing eyes that saw through ignorance, hypocrisy and the thickest mask of deception, his gaze which was seeing and yet remote, looking beyond into the far future and his voice pleasingly smooth and yet compelling attention. We sat mesmerized by the indefinable charm of Krishnaji