

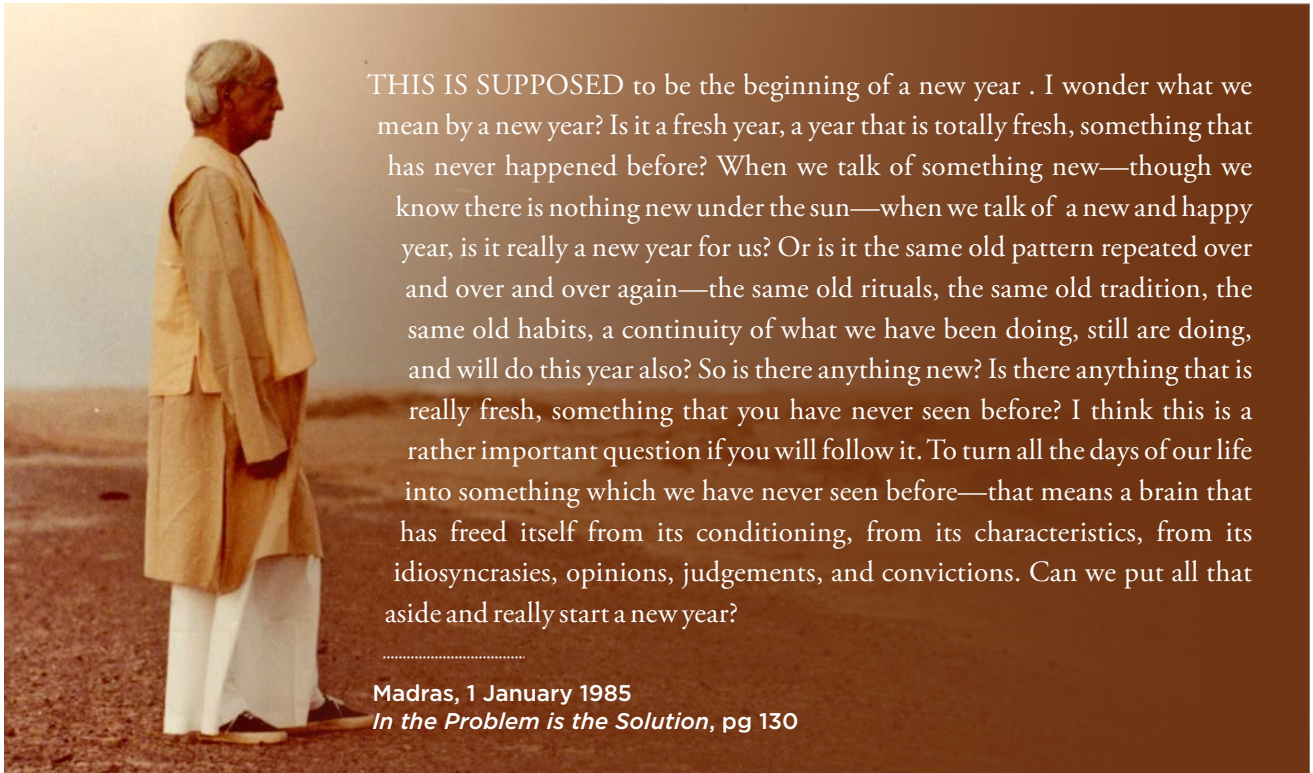
# the pathless

— KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA

## IS THERE ANYTHING NEW IN OUR LIVES?

Every new year begins with pious resolutions, the newness of which, it is hoped, will last. Human beings look forward to change: good health, better luck, more money, less monotony, fulfilling jobs, stable relationships, new experiences, enduring freshness, creative living—in short, a more acceptable version of ‘me’. Krishnamurti seems to have a different view on all these, as seen in the following passages.

Editor



THIS IS SUPPOSED to be the beginning of a new year . I wonder what we mean by a new year? Is it a fresh year, a year that is totally fresh, something that has never happened before? When we talk of something new—though we know there is nothing new under the sun—when we talk of a new and happy year, is it really a new year for us? Or is it the same old pattern repeated over and over and over again—the same old rituals, the same old tradition, the same old habits, a continuity of what we have been doing, still are doing, and will do this year also? So is there anything new? Is there anything that is really fresh, something that you have never seen before? I think this is a rather important question if you will follow it. To turn all the days of our life into something which we have never seen before—that means a brain that has freed itself from its conditioning, from its characteristics, from its idiosyncrasies, opinions, judgements, and convictions. Can we put all that aside and really start a new year?

.....  
Madras, 1 January 1985  
*In the Problem is the Solution*, pg 130

## SELF-IMPROVEMENT IS PROGRESS IN SORROW

**WE SEE THAT** there is progress in the obvious sense of that word; there are new inventions, better cars, better planes, better refrigerators, the superficial peace of a progressive society, and so on. But does that progress bring about a radical change in man, in you and me? It does superficially alter the conduct of our life, but can it ever fundamentally transform our thinking? And how is this funda-

mental transformation to be brought about? I think it is a problem worth considering. There is progress in self-improvement: I can be better tomorrow, more kind, more generous, less envious, less ambitious. But does self-improvement bring about a complete change in one's thinking? Or, is there no change at all, but only progress? Progress implies time, does it not? I am this today, and I shall be

something better tomorrow. That is, in self-improvement, or self-denial, or self-abnegation, there is progression, the gradualism of moving towards a better life, which means superficially adjusting to environment, conforming to an improved pattern, being conditioned in a nobler way, and so on. We see that process taking place all the time. And you must have wondered, as I have, whether progress does bring about a fundamental revolution.

To me, the important thing is not progress, but revolution. Please don't be horrified by that word *revolution*, as most people are in a very progressive society like this. But it seems to me that unless we understand the extraordinary necessity of bringing about, not just a social amelioration, but a radical change in our outlook, mere progress is progress in sorrow; it may effect the pacification, the calming of sorrow, but not the cessation of sorrow, which is always latent. After all, progress in the sense of getting better over a period of time is really the process of the self, the 'me', the ego. There is progress in self-improvement, obviously, which is the determined effort to be good, to be more this or less that, and so on. As there is improvement in refrigerators and airplanes, so also there is improvement in the self; but that improvement, that progress does not free the mind from sorrow...

If I really want to understand sorrow and the ending of sorrow, I must find out, not only what are the implications of progress, but also what that entity is who wants to improve himself; and I must also know the motive with which he seeks to improve. All this is consciousness. There is the superficial consciousness of everyday activity: the job, the family, the constant adjustment to social environment, either happily, easily, or contradictorily, with a

neurosis. And there is also the deeper level of consciousness which is the vast social inheritance of man through centuries: the will to exist, the will to alter, the will to become. If I would bring about a fundamental revolution in myself, surely I must understand this total progress of consciousness.

One can see that progress obviously does not bring about a revolution. I am not talking of social or economic revolution—that is very superficial, as I think most of us will agree. The overthrow of one economic or social system and the setting up of another does alter certain values, as in the Russian and other historical revolutions. But I am talking of a psychological revolution, which is the only revolution; and a man who is religious must be in that state of revolution.

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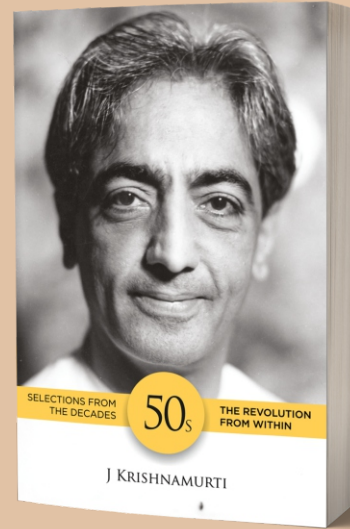
In grappling with this problem of progress and revolution, there must be an awareness, a comprehension of the total process of consciousness. Until I really comprehend what is consciousness, mere adjustment on the surface, though it may have sociological significance and perhaps bring about a better way

of living, more food, less starvation in Asia, fewer wars, it can never solve the fundamental problem of sorrow. Without understanding, resolving and going beyond the urge that brings about sorrow, mere social adjustment is the continuance of that latent seed of sorrow. So I must understand what is consciousness, not according to any philosophy, psychology, or description, but by directly experiencing the actual state of my consciousness, the whole content of it...

We are trying to discover for ourselves what is consciousness, and whether it is possible for the mind to be free of sorrow—not to change the pattern of sorrow, not to decorate the prison of

of sorrow, but to be completely free from the seed, the root of sorrow. In inquiring into that, we shall see the difference between progress and the psychological revolution which is essential if there is to be freedom from sorrow. We are not trying to alter the content of our consciousness, we are not trying to do something about it; we are just looking at it. Surely, if we are at all observant, slightly aware of anything, we know the activities of the superficial consciousness. We can see that on the surface our mind is active, occupied in adjustment, in a job, in earning a livelihood, in expressing certain tendencies, gifts, talents, or acquiring certain technical knowledge; and most of us are satisfied to live on that surface...

Now, can we go below that and see the motive of this superficial adjustment? Again, if you are a little aware of this whole process, you know that this adjustment to opinion, to values, this acceptance of authority, and so on, is motivated by self-perpetuation, self-protection. If you can go still below that, you will find there is this vast undercurrent of racial, national and group instincts, all the accumulations of human struggle, knowledge, endeavour, the dogmas and traditions of the Hindu, the Buddhist, or the Christian, the residue of so-called education through centuries, all of which has conditioned the mind to a certain inherited pattern. And if you can go deeper still, there is the primal desire to be, to succeed, to become, which expresses itself on the surface in various forms of social activity and creates deep-rooted anxieties, fears. Put very succinctly, the whole of that is our consciousness. In other words, our thinking is based on this fundamental urge to be, to become, and on top of that lie the many layers of tradition, of culture, of education, and the superficial conditioning of a given society, all forcing us to conform to a pattern that enables us to survive. There are many details and subtleties, but in essence that is our consciousness. **contd...**



**I THINK MOST** of us find life very dull. To earn a livelihood we have to do a certain job, and it becomes very monotonous; a routine is set going which we follow year after year almost until our death. Whether we are rich or poor, and though we may be very erudite, have a philosophical bent, our lives are for the most part rather shallow, empty. There is obviously an insufficiency in ourselves, and being aware of this emptiness, we try to enrich it through knowledge or through some kind of social activity, or we escape through various kinds of amusement or cling to a religious belief. Even if we have a certain capacity and are very efficient, our lives are still pretty dull, and to get away from this dullness, this weary monotony of life, we seek some form of religious enrichment. We try to capture that unworldly state of being which is not routine and which for the moment may be called otherness.

.....  
Madanapalle, 26 February 1956,  
*The Revolution from Within*

Now, any progress within that consciousness is self-improvement; and self-improvement is progress in sorrow, not the cessation of sorrow. This is quite obvious if you look at it. And if the mind is concerned with being free of all sorrow, then what is the mind to do? I do not know if you have thought about this problem, but please think about it now.

We suffer, don't we? We suffer, not only from physical illness, disease, but also from loneliness, from the poverty of our being; we suffer because we are not loved. When we love somebody and there is no loving in return, there is sorrow. In every direction, to think is to be full of sorrow; therefore it seems better not to think, so we accept a belief and stagnate in that belief, which we call religion.

Now, if the mind sees that there is no ending of sorrow through self-improvement, through progress, which is fairly obvious, then what is the

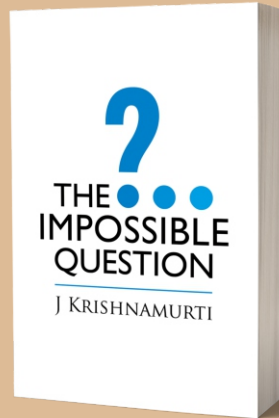
mind to do? Can the mind go beyond this consciousness, beyond these various urges and contradictory desires? And is going beyond a matter of time? Please follow this, not merely verbally but actually. If it is a matter of time, then you are back again in the other thing, which is progress. Do you see that? Within the framework of consciousness, any movement in any direction is self-improvement, and therefore the continuance of sorrow. Sorrow may be controlled, disciplined, subjugated, rationalized, super-refined, but the potential quality of sorrow is still there; and to be free from sorrow, there must be freedom from this potentiality, from this seed of the 'I', the self, from the whole process of becoming. To go beyond, there must be the cessation of this process. But if you say, 'How am I to go beyond?', then the 'how' becomes the method, the practice, which is still progress, therefore is no going beyond, but only the refinement of consciousness in sorrow. **contd...**

THERE ARE MANY escapes, conscious as well as unconscious, from boredom, from routine, from the extraordinary pettiness of our lives. You may be very intellectual and may have a good, high position in a government; but your heart and your mind, everything, may be small, petty, shallow; you are bored, and you are escaping from that either through drink, sex, or through God—they are all on the same level when you are escaping. So, to be aware of this, to be conscious of this, brings about energy. . . .

Our whole life is a problem. And not being able to solve it, we try to run away; and sex is one of the things to which we run away and escape, because intellectually, emotionally, in every way, we are uncreative, we are second-hand, and there is nothing original, there is nothing pristine, clear, beautiful, unspoilt, untrammelled. We are second-hand. All our education is a repetition of something that we have merely acquired as information, to get a job, to earn a livelihood. And therefore life becomes a terrible boredom. Or we try to give significance to life: we say 'What is the purpose of living?', as though living has a purpose. You live richly, completely, fully—there is no purpose. Beauty has no purpose. But our life being what it is, tawdry, empty, without much meaning, we are bored in the very act of everything that we do. I do not think we realize how bored we are. That is why religious organizations exist—to escape from this boredom, from this loneliness, from this shallow existence.

.....  
Madras, 2 February 1964,

**THOUGHT IS ALWAYS** mechanical; it falls very easily into a pattern, into a groove, and then you consider you are being tremendously active, whether you are confined to the Communist groove, the Catholic groove, or whatever it is. It is the easiest, the most mechanical thing to do—and we think we are living! So although thought has a certain limited freedom in its field, everything it does is mechanical. After all, to go to the moon is quite mechanical, it is the outcome of the accumulated knowledge of centuries. The pursuit of technical thinking takes you to the moon, or under the sea and so on. The mind wants to follow a groove, wants to be mechanical and that way there is safety,



security, there is no disturbance. To live mechanically is not only encouraged by society, but also by each one of us, because that is the easiest way to live. So thought being a mechanical, repetitive pursuit, accepts any form of conditioning which enables it to continue in its mechanical activity. A philosopher invents a new theory, an economist a new system, and we accept that groove and follow it. Our society, our culture, our religious prompting, everything seems to function mechanically; yet in that there is a certain sense of stimulation.

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Saanen, 28 July 1970  
*The Impossible Question.*

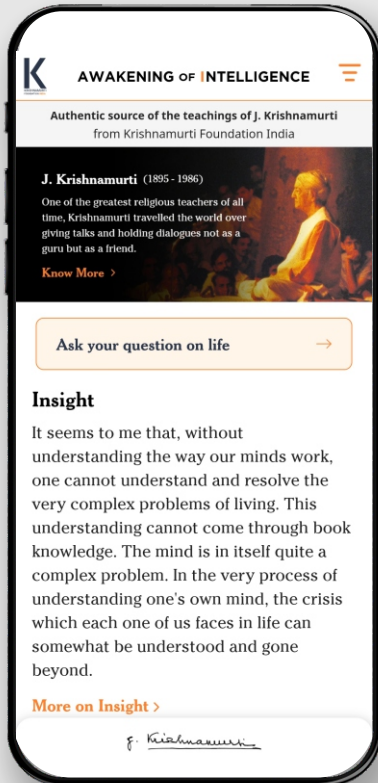
The mind thinks in terms of progress, of improvement, of time; and is it possible for such a mind, seeing that so-called progress is progress in sorrow, to come to an end, not in time, not tomorrow, but immediately? Otherwise you are back again in the whole routine, in the old wheel of sorrow. If the problem is stated clearly, and clearly understood, then you will find the absolute answer. I am using that word *absolute* in its right sense. There is no other answer.

That is, our consciousness is all the time struggling to adjust, to modify, to change, to absorb, to reject, to evaluate, to condemn, to justify; but any such movement of consciousness is still within the pattern of sorrow. Any movement within that consciousness as dreams, or as an exertion of will, is the movement of the self; and any movement of the self, whether towards the highest or towards the most mundane, breeds sorrow. When the mind sees

that, then what happens to such a mind? When the mind sees the truth of that, not merely verbally but totally, then is there a problem? Is there a problem when I am watching a rattler and know it to be poisonous? Similarly, if I can give my total attention to this process of suffering, then is not the mind beyond suffering?

Our minds are now occupied with sorrow and with the avoidance of sorrow, trying to overcome it, to diminish it, to modify it, to refine it, to run away from it in various ways. But if I see, not just superficially but right through, that this very occupation of the mind with sorrow is the movement of the self which creates sorrow, if I really see the truth of that, then has not the mind gone beyond this thing that we call self-consciousness?

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Ojai, 14 August 1955  
*The Collected Works Vol 5.*



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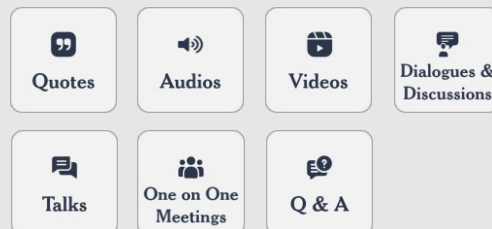
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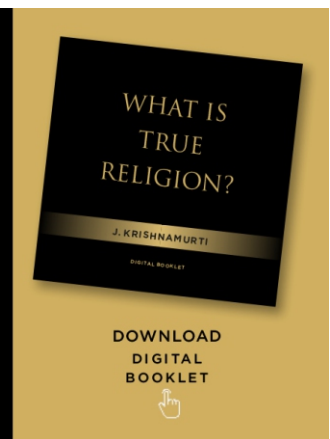
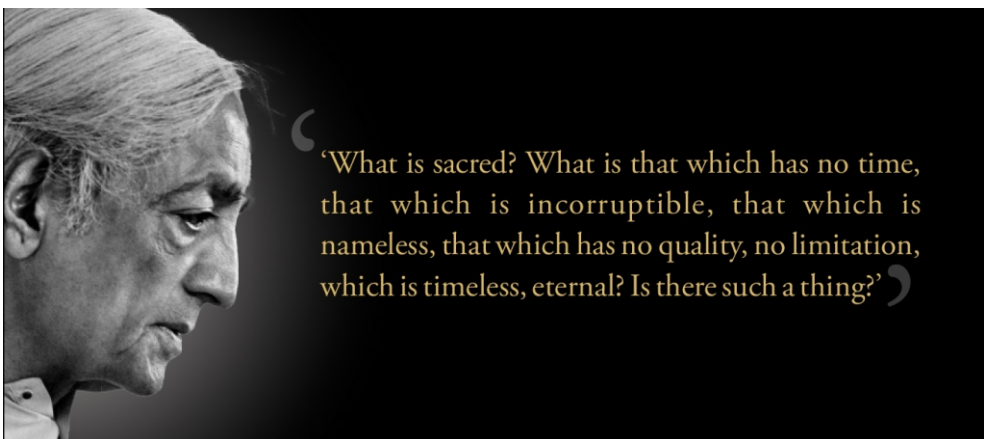
## BITTER-SWEET TIMES AT VASANTA VIHAR

Vasanta Vihar is yet to recover from the havoc caused by the cyclone that hit Chennai on the 5th of December, what with huge trees falling, one over another, and damaging a portion of the compound wall, and the rainwater overflowing the pond and entering a few cottages and the bookshop. Several books got water-soaked. Some places look barren without tree cover.

Despite all this, visitors kept coming, and more are expected. The highlight of the last few months was the gathering one morning of nearly forty students and three teachers of the Sacred Heart Seminary, located on the outskirts of Chennai. They watched a video and later asked very relevant questions related to their daily living. The students study Krishnamurti as part of their regular theological curriculum. Earlier, Class XII students of The School-KFI had a similar session here as did about 25 teachers from the neighbouring Adyar Theosophical Academy.



Twenty-five tourists from Portugal who wished to acquaint themselves with Krishnamurti's teachings had a three-day retreat from 5 to 8 October. Many of them were not quite at home in English, and so they were pleased to watch videos with Portuguese sub-titles. The discussions that followed were conducted with the help of those who could do the translation from one language to another.



## KFI GATHERING 2023

After a three-year break, the KFI Gathering was held this year, at Sahyadri Education Centre (near Pune), from 18-21 November. The theme was 'Living in a changing and divided world: the place of self-knowledge', which has obvious relevance in the contemporary world in which there is so much conflict, swift changes in many areas, driven by technological advancement and human greed, and a growing sense of nihilism and hopelessness in life.

The gathering began with a welcome by A.R. Vishwanath, Secretary, who gave a brief presentation of the various activities of KFI (publications; running schools; looking after the lands; maintaining the archives; taking care to maintain the purity of the teachings).



As part of the exploration of the theme, talks were given by G. Gautama, Swami Chidananda, Siddhartha Menon, and Shailesh Shirali. In addition to video screenings of Krishnamurti's talks and discussions, there were small group discussions, with 15 participants in each. The highlight of the gathering was the brisk sale of books.

## TEACHERS' CONFERENCE



The annual KFI Teachers' Conference was held this year at The School KFI, Chennai, on the last three days of October 2023. Teachers from the six schools of KFI, from KFA and four K-inspired schools came together to talk over issues of relevance to our schools. The theme was: The humane educator—education, environment, and empathy.

Through the three days, speakers took the gathering through the role of the teacher in the present times in nurturing a healthy mind and finding a meaningful response to contemporary issues of environment and society. A panel discussion examined questions around the themes of attention and identity. Over a selection of activities, a reflective assembly of music, time over meals, walks to a lake and the beach, there was hopefully time for serious conversations and the joy and strength in being together. Some of the participants were visiting the campus of the school after its relocation to Thazhambur for the first time, and the school was particularly happy to receive them. The conference was hosted on the third day by Vasanta Vihar, and the participants grew aware of both the beauty and the work of the place.



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