

KRISHNAMURTI
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FROM THE EDITOR

‘Self-knowledge, that is, knowing yourself completely, is total freedom; from that freedom you can act in the world, not away from the world.’ Two important implications follow from the statement: One, that freedom and action are intimately related and two, that action which flows from knowledge engages with the world; it is not a denial of the world.

For Krishnamurti, knowledge is not a cumulative process that supplies the premises for action. Rather it is a subtractive process that wipes ‘out all the imprints of other people’s feet on. . . [the] mind,’ and leaves it empty to ‘to find out how to live in relationship with life and with people’. An empty mind, a silent attention, and constant learning are the basis of freedom in Krishnamurti’s philosophy. They form the intersection where education and life meet.

The talk we present in this issue is a meditation on the subtractive process, the insight that dispels the fragmented imprints of the past. The insight brings a quietude, a freedom from which ‘you can act in the world’.

— R.H.

YOU CANNOT LEARN IF THE MIND IS NOT STILL

I often wonder why we attend any meetings at all, why you listen to another, why you read books, why you follow various leaders — religious, political and all the rest of it. Is it that in ourselves we are so insufficient, so confused, so unhappy that we hope by following a hero or a leader, worshipping a person we shall find a way out of all this confusion? And we never wonder what freedom is. Is there such a thing as absolute freedom, or is it a matter of a temporary, relative, fleeting perception, seeing or feeling of freedom? Apparently most human beings don't want freedom. They want it in one particular category, a fragment of life, which is politics — if they are under tyranny, dictatorship, and the weight of bureaucracy.

Freedom, it seems to me, is one of the most important things in life. Is there total and absolute freedom? Now, we are going to investigate into that this evening. The word 'investigate' means 'to trace out', *investigare*, 'to go into and trace out'. Trace out the thing that we are going to inquire into, namely freedom. And I hope that we are going to inquire together and, therefore, share the thing together, because what we share is yours not somebody else's; what we think over together is yours not the speaker's; what we create together is yours. And if we are going to listen, that is, communicate with each other over this question, then we must be fairly serious, and realize that this is not an entertainment, an escape, a form of intellectual or sentimental experience. We are, together, going to find out for

ourselves if there is or if there is not total, absolute freedom — freedom from the known. The known is the total content of consciousness. I am afraid I am going to be rather serious and if you can't follow it, I can't help it. And I hope you will also be very serious and go along together.

The content of consciousness is consciousness. What you think, what you feel, what you believe, what you are attached to, your beliefs, your fears, pleasures, superstitions — all that is your content. That is your consciousness. Please look at it yourself through the description which the speaker is describing, bearing in mind that the description is not the described, the word is not the thing. The content of consciousness, which is you, is the known. Whether you are conscious or not the content can be known totally. And as long as that content is not totally perceived, there is no freedom.

So freedom is from the known. The known is time. What you don't know, the unknown, can only be envisaged, imagined, or contrived at through the content of the known, which is thought. Right, sir? Are we moving together? Without knowing yourself totally there is no freedom. Knowing yourself is the known. And the known is the factor of time, because the known is always in the field of thought, and thought is measurable, and thought is time.

So we are asking whether the mind, which is the total content of consciousness, can ever be completely, absolutely free. Otherwise we are always moving,

reforming in the field of the known. The known is the 'me': my desires, my pursuits, my ambitions, my fears, my demand for success. The 'me' that is constantly imitating, conforming — that is the content of the consciousness of every human being. Right? Are you following all this? That's your consciousness; that's what you are. Whether you know it or you don't know it, whether you are conscious or unconscious of it, that's a fact, as factual as the microphone. It is not an abstraction. You can make an abstraction of it and live in an abstraction, but you can't live on words.

So, self-knowledge, that is, knowing yourself completely, is total freedom; from that freedom you can act in the world, not away from the world. And is this possible? — Can you know yourself completely, so that there is not a hidden corner, a secret recess, a door which you have never opened? Is this possible? Do you understand my question? Can you know yourself totally? Yourself is the known. You can only know the known, not the unknown. And what you are is the content which is knowable, which can be found out. And can the mind be free from the 'me', the content which is the consciousness? Are you getting all this? May I proceed? Right. Because, this evening, we are going to go into a great many things, and if you don't follow this very, very closely, attentively, I am afraid you will miss the whole thing. And as you have taken a lot of trouble to come here do, please, share.

We are asking whether the whole content can be known; otherwise there is no freedom. You can imagine

a freedom. You can, through thought, create an idea of freedom in Heaven and all the rest of it, but that's not freedom. That is just an abstraction, an idea of what freedom is; therefore it's not freedom. Can the mind — your mind — know its total consciousness and therefore be completely free, and from that freedom act in the world? Because we live in this world. This world is very real. You cannot make an abstraction of this world: of this suffering, pain, anxiety, fear, pleasure. The pursuit of ambition, corruption, the petty, narrow stupidity of human beings — that's a fact; that's the world in which we have to live and operate. And can the mind, that is, your mind with all its content, ever be free?

Do you see the beauty of the question? You know, for most of us beauty is non-existent. To us beauty is not generally — in quotes — 'spiritual'. To us beauty is a distraction: a man who is seeking Truth cannot possibly indulge in the enjoyment of beauty. (The pleasure of beauty and the enjoyment of beauty are two different things.) Beauty is the highest form of sensitivity — physically, intellectually — and that quality which is love. To us beauty is something not desirable. We associate it with sensation. If you are a very religious person, especially in this country, you don't look at beauty: you don't look at the mountains, the trees, the rivers. You don't dare to look at a woman who is beautiful; that's taboo; that's unspiritual — because you might be entangled in pleasure and get lost. So unconsciously, or deep down, you avoid the sense of the great beauty of life. Once I was following a very

well-known guru with his disciples. I was rather behind him; fortunately he didn't know I was there. And he never looked at a tree, at a bird, at the lovely valleys, and the beautiful lines of the hills. To him the earth didn't exist. He was so concerned with whatever he was concerned with, which is, generally with his own imagination and contrivance of something which he thinks is spiritual.

So we are, together, inquiring into the whole question of beauty which lies in total freedom. It lies not in pictures, not in poems, not in books or in marbles; it lies in the mind that is totally free from the known. So, we are asking: Can the mind ever be free from the known, from the 'me' with all its complexities, with all its sorrows, and anxieties, and so on?

Is it — this inquiry — a matter of time? Will it take a long duration between the question and the fact? Are you following this? My mind, this consciousness, is your consciousness — not just mine. My consciousness is the residue of the past, the acquired, inherited tradition, modified according to the culture I live in; but my consciousness is your consciousness. When I am inquiring into my consciousness, I am really inquiring into your consciousness also. Will it take time: many days, years, weeks, of careful examination, careful analysis, careful observation? All that requires time. And is time necessary to uncover the whole nature and structure of the content of consciousness? Are you getting all this? Are you following? Don't go to sleep, please. This is a very

serious matter that we are discussing.

Time involves the analyzer, the examiner, the one who observes. Now: Is the observer, the analyzer different from the content of consciousness, or is it that the observer, the analyzer *is* the content — or one part of that content? And is it possible to uncover the whole of it without analysis, without time, and to see the content instantly, to have an insight into its working? That is, is it possible to observe without the observer? — for the observer is time, the observer is the past with knowledge, experience, justification, condemnation, rationalization, and so on? The observer is the past, as the thinker is the past. And when you operate, when the mind operates through thought, it is operating in the field of time, because thought is time, and thought divides as yesterday, today and tomorrow. (Not that there is no yesterday and today and tomorrow, but that thought, being used in a process of investigation, needs time.)

And is there an observation in which time is not required at all? Are you following all this? Probably most of you have not thought about these things in this way at all. Most of us are second-hand people. Do you know what that means? You repeat what others have said, or what you have discovered four days or ten years ago. You are the result of other people's ideas, conclusions, and formulas, whether it be of the *Upanisads*, the *Gita*, the *Quran*, or your own particular, pet religious book. Therefore you are second-hand or third-hand. And when something new is

put before you, obviously the reaction is to resist or compare what is being said with what you already know, what you have already read about. And that gives you complete satisfaction because, 'That's ours ... What you're saying I can understand because I've put it in the tradition which I know'. Therefore, you don't know. Right?

So, the mind is the product of time, because it is an evolutionary process. The mind, which is the content of consciousness, has functioned, always, within the field of time as thought. We have examined everything through thought, and thought, being time, needs time to explore. And we are asking: Is there an observation which is without time? We will come back to that. Is the known a factor of death? Can the mind be free of death? And can the mind which is always pursuing pleasure, and therefore avoiding fear, can that mind be aware of what love is? We are going to inquire into all this. That is, can the mind be free of its content as the known, and be free of death, and be in that state of attention which is love?

You know, most of us are **frightened of death**: death the unknown, death as the **known which is the product of thought**. One is so **frightened of death that one needs comfort, needs security**. Therefore one believes in something which will give comfort. If you are **frightened of death, then you must believe in reincarnation — believe**. And to find out whether there is anything permanent requires the quality of a mind that is capable of having an insight instantly. We are

going to go into this.

There is death. The older you grow, the more aware of it you are. Old age, with all its calamities, with all its physical pain, when you lose your memory. The sadness of all old people! There is the fear of the unknown called death. There is the fear of not surviving. And we are asking: What is it — please, listen carefully — that reincarnates? Is it not the content of your consciousness? Right? The content of your consciousness is part of your culture, part of your religion, part of your beliefs, what you have read in the *Vedas*, *Upanisads*, the *Gita*, the *Bible*, the saviours, the Christ, the Buddha — all that. And you want that to reincarnate, to be reborn.

Now: Is the content permanent? Or, in that content is there anything permanent? Or there is nothing permanent, and that is what we are frightened of? We went into the question of fear the other day. Thought demands for its survival memory, and the brain cells must have security; otherwise it cannot function properly. So thought creates the fear of death — not surviving, not having a continuity. Anything that has continuity must have the seed of permanency in it; otherwise it cannot continue. Now, is there in your consciousness anything permanent? Or is the whole of consciousness the you which can be known, and is therefore not permanent? Are you following all this? Is the known permanent? The known is the past, the known is time, the known is the structure and the nature of thought which is you, and is the 'you' permanent?

You would like to think you are permanent, otherwise you won't pursue ambition. To you this life is the most important thing. You want to be the biggest success in this life. You want everything in this life. And if you really believed in reincarnation you would behave rightly today, because what you are today you will be tomorrow, next life. So can you incarnate today differently? Are you following all this?

So if there is nothing permanent in your consciousness, permanent being that which endures, that which has a timeless quality, that which is eternal, that which is beyond time — Is there such a thing in your consciousness? — have you invented such a thing and put it in your consciousness? Are you following all this? So death is something that can be known. I do not know whether you are following all this. See the beauty of it, sir. Can the mind be free of death? — not become immortal, because that is what we all want. That is what the painter, the writer through his poems, the sculptor through his sculptures wants to achieve. Because he has identified himself with the work which he has done — and that work is considered immortal, that is, not capable of dying.

And we are asking, can the mind be free of death, free of the content which it has gathered through thousands and thousands of years? Because your consciousness is not fundamentally different from the consciousness of your neighbour. He has his worries, his miseries, his confusions, his ambitions, imitations, conformity just like you. You may have a different name, a separate

bank account, live in a different house, you may know much more, you may have read all the scriptures of this unfortunate country. What your content is is the content of my consciousness. So see, sir:

Consciousness is not yours or mine. That is, we are conditioned by the culture in which we live. According to that conditioning we have tendencies, idiosyncrasies, and characteristics. These characteristics, tendencies, idiosyncrasies make us different — or we think that we are different. But if we go behind that you will see that we are terribly alike — because we are all pursuing the same thing, we all want to achieve success, achieve enlightenment, find God; we are afraid of life, constantly in conflict, struggle, pain, agony, sorrow. And: Can the mind be free of death?

The body is going to die. It will die sooner if you have ill-treated it, if you have put a lot of unintelligent strain on it, if you have eaten wrong food, if you have lived a stupid life. If you have pursued the dictates of your tongue, then the body will pay for it; the body will die sooner. The body will die; it is inevitable. Like everything that is used, it will come to an end. That is not what we are afraid of. We are afraid of things that we hold dear, things to which we are attached, things known coming to an end.

Now: Can the mind be free of death? — which means, can the mind be free of time as thought? Right? Are you following this? So: Can the content of consciousness be observed without thought as time,

without the observer, which is the past? That is, can you see your consciousness totally without the impediment of analysis, without the impediment of calculation, contrivance, without justification — all that — without the past? Do you understand? Can you have an insight into the content? When you have an insight into the content, you have solved it. Do you understand?

Now, how is it ..? No, no; the word 'how?' implies a method. So we will not use that word 'how?' because you are all eager to find out a method. Method implies practice. Practice implies time. And when you practise there is the division as the one who practises the thing that he is told, and the method. So there is a division in practice; therefore conflict. Where there is division, there must be conflict — as you have conflict between Pakistan and India, Russia and Germany, and all that. Where there is division, there must be conflict, violence, suppression, conformity. And when you ask 'How is this to be done? How is the mind to look without the past?' you are asking for a method; therefore you want something mechanical. You have been fed on that; all your gurus, everyone feeds you on methods.

We are asking: Is it possible for the mind to have an insight? To have an insight means 'to observe without time'. To observe without time means to look or to listen without the division as the observer and the observed. Look, sir, let's make it terribly simple. Have you ever noticed a gap between two thoughts? Or is your thought a continuous movement? Have you ever

been aware of an interval between two thoughts? If you have, what takes place in that interval? Is there an interval which is not the product of thought, or an interval of which you are not aware *as* thought? If that interval is, and if in that interval there is an undercurrent of thought of which you are not aware, then that interval is a continuation of thought. If there is no continuation of thought, that is, an interval in which time doesn't exist, then in that interval you have insight. Don't ask me, 'How do I have that interval?' The moment you ask me, 'How does one have that interval?' you will never get it. Do you understand? You have to be interested, you have to be passionate, not just sloppy; you have to be tremendously vital, serious, intense, otherwise you won't have this extraordinary quality of perception which is insight. And when you have that insight, it has no time and, therefore, that insight reveals the whole content. You may take time to describe the content — right? — but the perception is instant. So perceiving is timeless; therefore intelligence which is perception is timeless — it's not yours or mine — and that lies beyond the field of consciousness.

So, can you look at your consciousness with all its content: your loves, your fears, your pleasures, the agony, the callousness, the violence, the imitation, conformity, the desire for security, the pursuit of ambition and so on — you know, the whole of it? Can you look at it without any movement of thought? Can you look at it with that state of mind which is completely immobile — which is attention? And

freedom is this immobility of attention. Right?

Do you understand, sir?

And we must also inquire into, share together, love. What is love? Has it any relationship with death? Is death something apart from life, apart from love, or are they fragmentations which thought has brought about? Are death, love, and living one total movement of existence? To find out we must go into this question of what love is. We can see very well what love is not. Love is not pleasure. Is it? For most of you it is, because you associate love with sex. (Don't be frightened of that word.) We went into the question, the other day, of pleasure. Unless you really have an insight into the nature of pleasure, love will avoid you, love will never come near you. So you have to understand the nature of pleasure, which is entirely different from enjoyment, joy, ecstasy. When you have a tremendous sense of beauty, joy in something, when you really delight in seeing a cloud or a hill or a face of a man or a woman or a child, thought comes along and says, 'I must have more of it'. The pursuit of pleasure is the cultivation of enjoyment. Do you understand this? Am I wasting words, or are we moving together? So, unless you understand, go into it, have an insight into the whole structure of pleasure, you will confound pleasure and love.

So pleasure is not love. And can there be love when there is attachment? When you are attached to a person, can there be love? What is implied in

attachment? I am attached to my wife, husband, house, job, or an idea. What is implied in that? Watch it, sir. You are attached to something, aren't you? You are attached to your knowledge if you are a scholar; you are attached to your paintings if you are an artist; you are attached to your wife, husband, or house. What is implied in that attachment? Is there not in it — we are investigating; we are not being dogmatic — a sense of security? When I say, 'I am an Indian' — I don't, except in the passport — I am attached to an idea called 'India', and that gives me a tremendous sense of identification, stability, and security. I am attached to my wife, the wife whose image thought has put together; I am attached to that image, and love that image. And when you are not attached, or when attachment gives pain, sorrow, jealousy, then you cultivate detachment. You know that is one of your favourite words: 'We must be "detached"'. You first are attached — see the absurdity of it — first you are attached, then you cultivate detachment. You never inquire why you are attached. Attachment is not love. When you think about somebody whom you love, it is not love. It is thought thinking about the image you have about that person who gives you pleasure, companionship and, therefore, there is attachment. Do you follow all this?

So when you see for yourself what is not love, can you drop it instantly? — not take time, not take days over it. So you find love is not attachment, love is not pleasure, love is not desire, love is not jealousy. And, obviously, love is not violence. Violence can be physical violence,

and generally is. But violence has a much deeper meaning. When you conform to a pattern — whether that pattern be yours, the pattern that you have cultivated yourself, or whether it be given to you — when you conform it is violence. Come on sirs, wake up. When you follow somebody, that is violence. When you think in hierarchical ways, that that is violence. Have you noticed this hierarchical attitude towards life? The *guru* with his *asrama* — which is really a concentration camp. You know, he has his favourite disciples who are near and there are those who are far. And you think that gradually, through a hierarchical attitude towards life, you will attain enlightenment. Nonsense! So violence is not merely physical. Violence is suppression in any form, control in any form, obedience in any form. Accepting authority in any form is violence.

How can such a mind come upon the beauty of love? And can you, sitting there, listening to the Truth, the factual truth, can you drop it, wipe it away completely? Can the mind purge itself of all this so that you are a totally different human being? To him there is no death — not that he believes in reincarnation — do you understand, sir? The quality of mind that has no death means for the mind to be free of time. Time is thought; time is imagination; time is contriving, remembering. So, time is not love. And when there is this total harmony in living, when there is death, love and life, then the mind itself goes beyond itself. (*Pause.*)

Tomorrow evening, if you will permit it, we will talk

about meditation. What we have done this evening *is* meditation, because it demands a mind that's completely immobile, completely still. And you cannot listen if the mind is not still; you cannot learn if the mind is not still. You can accumulate, but accumulation is not learning. Accumulation of knowledge is one thing, and learning is another. Learning is a constant movement, whereas knowledge is placed in time and held in time. And to have an insight into the beauty of a mind that is free of death is to have a mind that has no fear, a mind that is absolutely empty of all its content and, therefore, free of time.

AUDIENCE (A): *Sir, you said that the consciousness in every individual is the same. So there is pressure from outside to conform to a pattern. You might not like it, but there is a pressure from the wife, from the boss, from friends. There are all the pressures there*
...

K: The gentleman says, 'Through pressure we conform'. Right sir? Through pressure — of the wife, the politician, the economic situation — through external pressure you conform. Do you? Do you conform through external pressures? Are you a Sikh, a Hindu because of external pressure, or you are part of that pressure, you are part of that culture which has made you what you are, which accepts the pressure? Do you understand this? You see, you will never give up your attachment to being a Sikh, or a Hindu, or a Christian. Sir, you see, your difficulty is: We are always blaming others, outside agencies: 'It is

everybody's fault what I am' — right? You blame everybody for what you are. We find excuses — which is so utterly immature. And we'll go on for the rest of our lives blaming others for what we are. We don't say, 'Look, I'm going to understand myself completely, and wipe out all the imprints of other people's feet on my mind.' Sir, when you leave this tent not to be a Sikh, not to be a Hindu, not to be a Muslim or a Christian, but to find out how to live in relationship with life and with people. But you won't, because to do that you must have tremendous energy. But you waste your energy in excuses, in blaming, in self-pity, and all the rest of it.

A: Sir, all this content, the consciousness and the total mind and all the individual developments which you are talking about, do they pass on after life, or do they just become extinct?

K: What is that question, sir?

A: My question, sir, is: This consciousness and this developed mind, and the intellectual capacities — do they pass on after death, or do they become extinct?

K: (*Sighs.*) You see the question?

Do you understand, sir? Have you understood the question? The gentleman wants to know: Do all my miseries and the content of my beastly little consciousness continue or not?

A: *Yes.*

K: Yes, sir, that's right. (*Laughter from the audience.*)

Look sir, as I said, your consciousness is my consciousness; the content of your consciousness is my content, your neighbours', your rulers', your wife's. You're caught in this stream of consciousness with its content. As long as you are flowing in that current of consciousness it will go on; you will be like the rest of the world. But to step out of that consciousness totally is what is demanded, not just to conform and follow the flow of bourgeois life, or the life of conflict, life of misery. If you like that kind of life, it will go on; but it's not *your* life — do you understand? — it's the life of everybody: your neighbour, your sister, your husband, your ministers, because they are all ambitious, greedy, corrupt, frightened, and they will go on. It's the man who steps out of that current totally — to him there is freedom from death.

A: *Sir, what is immobility of attention?*

K: The gentleman wants to know what I mean by 'immobility of attention'. Need I explain it? You know what is 'mobility': changing, moving, reshaping, reforming; always in movement. Is attention of that quality? — That is, one day I am attentive, the next day I am not; one day it is clear, pure, you see things most extraordinarily clearly, the next day you are confused, uncertain, depressed. Is that attention? Or is attention something that is absolutely quiet, without any movement and, therefore, without any border? Do you understand, sir? Anything that has a movement, has a

border. Right? Mechanically, even. Right?

I said, sir: Attention is steady, completely without this movement which is brought about by thought. Now have you, sitting there listening, have you this attention? If you haven't got it — why? Who is preventing you: your neighbour, your social position, your poverty, or you are really not serious, you really are not listening? Sir, you can go to the well with a small bucket, or you can go to the well without a bucket and be the well. But most of us go to the well with a pitcher that breaks, and we blame others or our own carelessness. I am asking you: You have spent an hour and a quarter discussing, talking over together, the most important things of life, because when you understand that — the highest and the greatest thing in life — then you will know how to act in this world. But without that, whatever you do in this world will be a confusion, more misery, more conflict. Therefore, have you listened, paid attention, cared to find out? Or, you just come with a little curiosity and are influenced by somebody sitting on a platform; therefore go away secondhand, never having drunk at the fountain?

A: Sir, when I am completely attentive and there is no division in me, there is no observer and observed.

K: Right, sir.

A: Then what is it that attends?

K: 'When I am attentive,' he says, 'there is neither

observer nor observed; there is no division between the observer and the observed, there is only attention. Then,' he says, 'who is it that is attentive?' Do you understand? When you put that question you are inattentive. You've got it? Have you understood it, sir?

A: I do not put that question in a moment of attention; I might put it later on.

K: Which means, when you put the question later on, you are putting that question when you are not attentive. That's all. When you are attentive, you don't put that question; there is no question. It is only when we are not attentive, when we are inattentive, then these questions arise: Who is it who observes, who is it who loves? Come off all that. It all shows that you don't know what it means to be attentive.

A: Sometimes if we do not conform we are physically annihilated. What is to be done in such a situation?

K: 'If you don't conform,' the questioner says, 'what will you do? You will be annihilated.' Right?

A: In some situations of life, you are physically annihilated.

K: Yes, you are physically annihilated, if you don't conform. Are you annihilated if you don't conform?

A: I have seen others annihilated.

K: Ah! (*Laughter from the audience.*) Are you destroyed because you don't conform? Because you are conforming, you are living — living in conflict, in misery. Find out, sir, what it means not to conform. Find out. Don't say, 'I will not conform'; that is absurd. Find out what it means not to conform. It means not to have measure; it means not to compare. But we are brought up to compare from childhood: 'You must be as clever as your elder brother.' You have your saints, your gurus, your heroes with whom you are always comparing. So you are constantly conforming. Find out what it means never to conform and what it means to conform, also. (When I come to India I put on these kinds of clothes; when I go to Europe, I put on European clothes. Is that conformity?)

A mind that measures, compares, must imitate, because it conforms to the pattern of society whose morality is immorality. Do you understand what I am saying? When it conforms to a pattern, it is becoming violent; it has no freedom. When you conform, when you imitate, you are bringing destruction. A mind that is free has no sense of conformity and, therefore, no sense of time and measure.

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I, G.Rajeev, hereby declare that the particulars given are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated March, 2005

Sd/- G. Rajeev
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