

Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin

Volume No. 8, Issue 2, March - June 2011

Rs25/-

FROM THE EDITOR

The theme of the 2010 KFI Gathering held at Rishi Valley was 'Who Am I in this Divided World?'. In this issue of the *Bulletin* we bring Krishnamurti's reflection on the subject to the attention of our readers. The title was meant to address the problem of violence and its associations with identity, which is creating havoc in the world today. I define who I am by the social relations in which I find myself, my family, my caste, the class and country to which I belong, and the religious and ethical beliefs I hold. At the same time, my self-definitions are oppositional, they involve distancing myself from 'the other', those who belong to different groups: castes, religions and nations. Krishnamurti presciently saw that human minds caught in this matrix will inevitably create a violent society.

The question has a long history; it echoes aspects of ancient thought, both Eastern and Western. The theme is highlighted in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, and influenced the Advaita philosophy of the modern sage Ramana Maharshi. It is central to Socrates, who said that the unexamined life is not worth living. Krishnamurti himself considered the question as fundamental to living the good life.

The question, 'Who am I?' however has now become invasive; it pervades different aspects of political life. Venal politicians in democratic societies exploit the affiliations that underpin our identities to garner votes in

order to position themselves in seats of power. Fundamentalists use fixed identities to impose cultural values on education and terrorists cultivate religious identities to justify violence.

Krishnamurti held that if we want to create a peaceful and non-exploitative world, it is imperative to begin with self-inquiry. However introspection, even if our intention is to discover the seeds of violence within ourselves, won't get us very far, neither will precepts. Krishnamurti explains that the question, 'How should one go about discovering oneself?' leads to either a dead end or to a vicious circle. To step out of the matrix in which persons are caught, he tells us to make no effort; he tells us to look without turning what we see into an object that we identify with or that we reject. For, Krishnamurti pointed out, explanations remain on the surface, perception has depth; it lies beyond explanation.

Krishnamurti sought to drive the questions, 'Who am I?' and 'How should I live?' back into its proper domain, to restore the question to the high ground it once held in philosophy, when it was inextricably linked to the values of truth, goodness and beauty. His aim was to create a nobler humanity who would create a better and more just world.

R. H.

HOW DO I DISCOVER WHAT I AM?

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): Can you be yourself if your being is in any way touched by tradition? Or can you find yourself through example, through precept?

QUESTIONER (Q): *What is precept?*

JK: Through a precept, through a saying – evil is all that which divides and good all that which unites – by merely following a principle, can you be yourself? Will living according to a pattern, an ideal, following it ruthlessly, meditating upon it, bring you to the discovery of yourself? Can that which is real be perceived through discipline or will? That is, by exertion, by an effort of the intellect, curbing, controlling, disciplining, guiding, forcing thought in a particular direction, can you know yourself? And can you know yourself through behavior patterns; that is, by preconceiving a mode of life, of what is good, the ideal, and following it constantly, twisting your thought and feeling to its dictates, putting aside what you consider evil and ruthlessly following what you consider to be good? Will this process reveal to you that which you are, whatever that is? Can you discover yourself through compulsion? It is a form of compulsion, this ruthless overcoming of difficulties through will, discipline, this subduing and resisting, a withholding and a yielding.

All this is the exertion of the will, which I consider to be mechanical, a process of the intellect. Can you know yourself through these means – through these

mechanical means? All effort, mechanical or of the will, is habit-forming. Through the forming of habit you may be able to create a certain state, achieve a certain ideal which you may consider to be yourself, but as it is the result of an intellectual effort or the effort of the will, it is wholly mechanical and hence not true. Can this process yield the comprehension of yourself, of what you are?

Then there is the other state, which is spontaneous. You can know yourself only when you are unaware, when you are not calculating, not protecting, not constantly watching to guide, to transform, to subdue, to control; when you see yourself unexpectedly, that is, when the mind has no preconceptions with regard to itself; when the mind is open, unprepared to meet the unknown.

If your mind is prepared, surely you cannot know the unknown, for you are the un-known. If you say to yourself, 'I am God', or 'I am nothing but a mass of social influences or a bundle of qualities' – if you have any preconception of yourself, you cannot comprehend the unknown, that which is spontaneous.

So spontaneity can come only when the intellect is unguarded, when it is not protecting itself, when it is no longer afraid for itself; and this can happen only from within. That is, the spontaneous must be the new – the unknown, the incalculable, the creative, that which must be expressed, loved in which the will as the process of intellect – controlling, directing – has no part. Observe your own emotional states and you will see that the moments of great joy, great ecstasy, are

unpremeditated; they happen mysteriously, darkly, unknowingly. When they are gone, the mind desires to recreate those moments, to recapture them, and so you say to yourself, 'If I can follow certain laws, form certain habits, act in this way but not in that, then I shall have those moments of ecstasy again'.

There is always a war between the spontaneous and the mechanical. Please do not adapt this to suit your own religious, philosophic terms. To me, what I am saying is vitally new and cannot be twisted to suit your particular prejudices of the higher and the lower self, the transient and the permanent, the self and the not-self, and so on. Most of us have, unfortunately, almost destroyed this spontaneity, this creative joy of the unknown from which alone there can be wise action. We have sedulously cultivated through generations of tradition, of morality based on will, of compulsion, the mechanical attitude of life, calling it by sweet-sounding words; in essence it is purely mechanical, intellectual. The process of discipline, of violence, of subjugation, of resistance, of imitation – all this is the outcome of the development of the mere intellect, which has its root in fear. The mechanical is overwhelmingly dominant in our lives. On this is based our civilization and morality, and at rare moments when the will is dormant, forgotten, there is the joy of the spontaneous, the unknown.

I say that in this state of spontaneity alone can you perceive that which is truth. In this state alone can there be wise action, not the action of calculated morality or of will.

The various forms of moral and religious disciplines, the many impositions of social and ethical institutions, are but the outcome of a carefully cultivated mechanical attitude towards life, which destroys spontaneity and brings about the destruction of truth.

Through no method – and all methods must inevitably be mechanical – can you unravel the truth of your own being. One cannot force spontaneity by any means. No method will give you spontaneity; all methods can but create mechanical reactions. No discipline will bring about the spontaneous joy of the unknown. The more you force yourself to be spontaneous, the more spontaneity retreats, the more hidden and obscure it becomes and the less it can be understood. And yet that is what you are trying to do when you follow disciplines, patterns, ideals, leaders, examples, and so forth. You must approach it negatively, not with the intention of capturing the unknown, the real.

Is each one aware of the mechanical process of the intellect, of the will, which destroys the spontaneous, the real? You cannot answer immediately, but you can begin to think about the intellect, the will, and especially feel its destructive quality. You can perceive the illusory nature of the will, not through any compulsion, not through any desire to achieve, to attain, to understand, but only when the intellect allows itself to be denuded of all its protective sheaths.

You can know yourself only when you love completely. This, again, is the whole process of life, not to be gathered in a few moments from a few words of mine. You cannot be yourself when love is dependent. It is

not love when it is merely self-gratification, though it may be mutual. It is not love when there is a withholding; it is not love when it is merely a means to an end; when it is merely sensation. You cannot be yourself when love is at the behest of fear; it is then fear, not love, that is expressing itself in many ways, though you may cover it up by calling it love. Fear cannot allow you to be yourself. The intellect merely guides fear, controls it, but can never destroy it, for the intellect is the very cause of fear.

As fear cannot allow you to be yourself, how then is one to overcome fear – fear of all kinds, not just of one particular type? How is one to free oneself from this fear, of which one may be conscious or unconscious? If you are unconscious of fear, become conscious of it; become aware of your thoughts and actions, and soon you will be conscious of fear. And if you are conscious of it, how are you going to be free from it? Are you going to free yourself from fear mechanically, through will; or will it begin to dissolve of its own accord, spontaneously? The mechanical or the will process can but hide away fear more and more, guard it and carefully withhold it, allowing only the reactions of controlled morality. Below these controlled behavior patterns, fear must ever continue. This is the inevitable result of the mechanical process of the will, with its disciplines, desires, controls, and so on.

Until one frees oneself from the mechanical, there cannot be the spontaneous, the real. Craving for the real, for that flame which bursts from within, cannot bring it about.

What will free you from the mechanical is the deep observation of the process of the will, being one with it, without any desire to be free from it. Now you observe the mechanical attitude towards life with a desire to get rid of it, to alter it, transform it. How can you transform will when desire is of the will itself?

You must be aware of the whole process of the will – which is the mechanical – of its struggles, its escapes, its miseries; and as the farmer allows the soil to lie fallow after a harvest, so must you allow yourself to be silent, negative, without any expectation. It is not easy: if in the hope of gaining the real, you mechanically allow yourself to be silent, force yourself to be negative, then fear is the reward. As I have said, this creative emptiness is not to be run after or sought by devious ways – it must happen. Truth is; it is not the result of organized morality, for morality based on will is not moral.

We have many problems, individual as well as social, and for these problems there is no solution through the intellect, through the will. As long as the process of the will continues in any form, there must be confusion and sorrow. Through the will you cannot know yourself, nor can there be the real.

– Ommen
August 4, 1938

TO UNDERSTAND THE 'ME', YOU MUST COME TO IT WITHOUT SAYING, 'I KNOW'

May I suggest that we talk over together this evening the question: What is self-knowledge? It is a rather complex problem, and like many other problems of life, it has no final answer. Most of us easily accept the explanations of self-knowledge which we hear from another or read in psychological or religious books, and it would be a great pity if we merely remained at that level. Instead, let us this evening see if we can penetrate into the depths of our own consciousness, which is to experience directly the total process of our own thinking and feeling, the totality of our hopes and our fears.

Before we go further, I think it is important for you to be aware of how you are listening to what is being said. I shall try to go into this whole question of self-knowledge, but if you merely listened to the explanations and were satisfied with words, it seems to me, that would be a most fruitless thing to do. It would be like a hungry man listening to a lot of words and explanations about the harvest or the preparation of food, hoping that his hunger would thereby be satisfied. Actually, most of us are in that position. We are not hungry in the deep sense of the word; we are not really eager to understand the whole process of the mind, the totality of our own thoughts and feelings. That is why we are so easily satisfied by explanations and approach our many problems at the explanatory level; and I think that both the man who merely explains and the person

who is satisfied with explanations are living very superficially.

Do explanations ever resolve any vital problem? I may explain to you the falseness of nationalism – its corrupting, destructive, and deteriorating effect – but though you may see the validity of such an explanation, it obviously does not free you from nationalism. The fact is that you enjoy the feeling of being nationalistic; you like belonging to a particular group – it is profitable to you both emotionally and economically. So explanations never bring about understanding, they never really solve any vital problem. A dentist may tell you that taking too much sugar is very bad for your teeth, and he may even show you a great deal of evidence in support of his statement, but you like sugar, and you go on taking it in large quantities. So explanation is one thing, and direct action is quite another. Either you are merely following the words, the explanations, or in the very process of listening, you are directly experiencing what is being described, and that has much more significance, far greater validity, greater vitality than being satisfied with words.

So let us be very clear about where explanations end and real perception or experiencing begins. You can go only so far with explanations, and the rest of the journey you must take by yourself. Most of us are not willing to take that journey because we are lazy and easily satisfied with the obvious, which is always the explanation. But the vitality of direct action, experience, lies beyond the explanation, however obvious or subtle it may be. That is why it is very

important to experience directly the things that we are talking about and not merely stop at the verbal level. I think it would be really fascinating if we could go into this whole problem of self-knowledge and find out what is the real basis of our thinking, the basis of all our actions, of our very being. If one can inquire into this step by step, in minute detail, and directly experience it, then I think one will go very far. After all, to go far one must begin near, and the near is the 'me', the self, this whole process of the mind. You may be a scientist or an engineer and master the technology of space travel, but the real journey is inward, and that is much more difficult, much deeper and more significant than mechanically going to the moon. The immeasurable is still within oneself. So it is very important to comprehend where the verbal or intellectual explanation ends, and direct perception or experiencing begins. Explanations can never lead to reality. However satisfactory the explanation may be, it cannot give you the understanding that is born of direct perception, direct experience.

If you realize this very clearly, then you will never be satisfied with explanations, you will never quote, you will never turn to the authority of the *Gita* or the *Bible*. You may read books as a mere intellectual amusement, but direct experience is worth infinitely more than what is taught in books. A living dog is better than a dead lion. All the heroes in the books are dead lions, and their authority is disastrous. What you directly experience and know for yourself is far more valid than the explanations of all the various authorities, whether ancient or modern.

With that in mind, let us inquire into the process of self-knowledge. Like a signpost, I am merely pointing the direction. The signpost is not important at all. What is important is the man who is journeying. The speaker is not a guru, he is not an authority, he is not a guide. One has to take the inward journey alone – not as a reaction away from outward things, but as the inevitable process of trying to understand. The outer must lead to the inner, that is, to an understanding of the whole process of existence, in which there is no division as the outer and the inner.

To understand the whole process of existence, outwardly as well as inwardly you must comprehend the ways of your own thinking; you must find out why you think what you think, which is to see the source of your thought. Without the discovery of that source, you have no real basis for inquiry, for action. Your action now is based on habit, on routine, on discipline, on your particular conditioning. There is an action which is entirely different from the habitual action of routine, of discipline, of conditioning; but such action comes only through self-knowledge, and that is why it is so necessary to understand oneself.

Now, what do we mean by knowledge? When we say, 'I know', what does it mean? I know you because I have been introduced to you. Having once met you, a picture of you remains in my mind, and when we meet again I recognize you. So knowing is a process of recognition, and we recognize through the background of past experience, which means that knowing is cumulative,

additive; knowledge can be added to. And when we say, 'I must know myself', we think the 'self' is something stationary, static, fixed, and, therefore, recognizable. Or we have been told what the self is and have come to certain conclusions about it, and from that background we begin to recognize the self. So knowing is always a process of recognition, without which there is no knowledge. Knowledge is additive through recognition. This may seem complex, but it is actually very simple. Knowing is one thing, and understanding is another. Knowing implies accumulation; it is a process of recognition through past experience. Each new experience is conditioned by and adds to previous knowledge. So knowing is additive, whereas understanding never is. When you say, 'I know you', you know me only from the background of a previous, static experience. You know me by my features, by my name, by what I have said to you, or by what others have said to you about me, and so on. All that knowledge is of yesterday. Since then I have undergone many experiences, many varieties of influence, and I may have changed tremendously. But you retain the memory of yesterday, and from that background you judge me today. You say, 'I know you', when in fact you do not know me at all; but you find it very convenient to say, 'I know you', and move on.

Perhaps I am not making myself clear. Unless you understand this one simple thing, it is going to be very difficult for you to see the significance of this whole movement of self-knowledge.

When the mind says, 'I know', all that it knows is what has happened yesterday or at some other time in the past. With that knowledge it approaches the present, but the present is changing from moment to moment. So the mind can never say, 'I know', and this is very important, psychologically, to understand. The man who says, 'I know', does not know. You can never say, 'I have found Truth', because Truth is moving, living, dynamic; it is never still, never static, never the same; and that is the beauty, the splendor of Truth.

To understand this thing called the 'me', the self, you must come to it without saying, 'I know', without accepting any authority. All authority is dead, and it does not bring about this creative search. Authority can guide you, shape you, tell you what to do and what not to do, but all that is still within the field of knowing; and burdened with the known you cannot follow that which is living, vital, moving. So the mind that sees the truth of this and wishes to inquire into itself will never say, 'I know'; therefore, being in a state of constant movement, it is able to observe that which is also never the same. This is the beginning of self-knowledge. I do not know if I am making myself clear.

Look, sirs, the self as we know it is a limited thing, but it is also living, moving, and a mind that is conditioned, bound by tradition, a mind that says, 'There is a higher self and a lower self', and all the rest of it, cannot possibly understand the self. I am not using the word 'self' in any significant spiritual sense; I mean by that

word the self which functions daily, which thinks, feels, invents, hopes, wants, and is caught in conflict, the self which is biased, which speculates, judges, seeks.

Is all this too difficult? I hope not. Perhaps I can put it differently.

We know the self as the 'me' which has property, which has qualities, which has certain relationships, which is conditioned by a particular culture, by the many environmental influences, by the books it reads, the philosophies it studies, the techniques it learns. The mind which is jealous, which knows love and hate, hope and fear – all that is the self. The self is not only at the superficial level, it is not only the conscious mind functioning in our daily activities, but it is also the unconscious mind, which functions at a much deeper level. The totality of that consciousness is the self.

Now, from that centre, which is the self, all our thinking begins. Where there is a centre, there is also a circumference, a frontier. **The centre is the conscious as well as the unconscious thinker who knows, and the frontier is that which he seeks and which is also within the field of the known. So there is the thinker and the thought, the experiencer and the experienced, the observer and the observed. Don't accept or deny this; rather follow it, not just verbally, but through the explanation actually see how your own mind is working.**

I want to know myself. Why? Because without knowing myself, I have no ground upon which to build anything. I do not know whether my thoughts are valid, whether I am living in illusion, whether I am deceiving myself; I do not know why I struggle, why I have certain habits, and so on. Without knowing myself I am incapable of seeing clearly. So I must know myself, which means that I must understand my own mind. I must be aware of every reaction, of every thought, without any sense of condemnation or justification. I must be in a state of inquiry, which means looking at every thought, every feeling without prejudice, without the background of previous experience which says, 'This is good, that is bad; this I must keep, that I must discard'.

All this is obvious, is it not? If I want to understand my son, I have to be aware of him as he is, study him without condemnation or comparison; I have to observe him when he is playing, when he is crying, when he is overeating, and so on. In the same way, if I want to understand myself, I must watch myself, without judgment, in the mirror of relationship; I must be aware of what I say to you and how you react to me; I must observe how I talk to my servant, how I talk to my wife or husband, how I treat the busman and the coolie; I must know what I feel, what I think, and why. I must see the whole process of my thinking and feeling. This does not demand discipline at all. When you discipline yourself to observe, the discipline prevents you from observing because discipline then becomes your habit. Where there is a real concern to find out, there is a constant observation which does not require the habit of discipline.

So this is the first thing to realize: that it is absolutely essential to know yourself; otherwise, you have no basis for thought at all. You may be very erudite and have a big position, but that is all nonsense as long as you do not know yourself, because you will be walking in darkness.

To understand yourself there must be an awareness, a watchfulness, a state of observation in which there is not a trace of condemnation or justification, and to be in that state of observation without judging is an extraordinarily arduous task because the weight of tradition is against you; your mind has been trained for centuries to judge, to condemn, to justify, to evaluate, to accept or deny. Don't say, 'How am I to get rid of this conditioning?', but see the truth that if you want to understand yourself, which is obviously of the highest importance, you must observe the operation of your own mind without any condemnation or comparison.

Now, why do you compare, why do you condemn? Isn't that – to condemn – one of the easiest things to do? If you are a capitalist, you condemn the communist, just as the communist condemns the capitalist. If you are a devout Christian, you obviously condemn Hinduism, or Islam, because to condemn and get on with it is the easy thing to do. Condemnation is really a reaction, and it is one of the indications of a lazy mind.

The same is true of comparison, is it not? Can a mind that compares ever understand? Sirs, don't agree or disagree, but watch yourself. When you compare your

younger son with his older brother, do you understand the younger boy? And in the classroom, in so-called education, is not the sensitive child destroyed by comparing him with those who are older or more clever? Surely, comparison is also one of the indications of a slack mind, a thoughtless mind, a mind that is inherently lazy; and such a mind can never understand.

The next question is: What is thinking? Surely, what we call thinking is a reaction of memory, of one's conditioning. If I ask you a question with which you are familiar, your response is immediate because the mechanism of memory operates instantly. There is no gap between the question and the answer. If I ask you a much more complex question, then between the question and the response there is a gap, a lapse of time during which the mind is looking in the storehouse of memory, going over all the things it has learned in order to find an answer. Surely, that – the response of memory – is what we call thinking? Now, memory is always conditioned – is it not? You are conditioned as a Hindu, a Muslim, a communist, a capitalist, or whatever it is, and when I ask you a certain question, you reply according to your conditioning. If you are a devout Hindu and I ask, 'Do you believe in God?', you will say 'Yes', because for centuries you have been educated, conditioned to believe. And if the same question is put to someone who has been conditioned not to believe in God, he will say, 'What nonsense are you talking!' So all our thinking, from the most superficial to the most complex, is a response of memory according to its conditioning.

The mind that says, 'I am going to inquire into myself', is already conditioned; it is conditioned as a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Christian, this or that. It is only in understanding this conditioning that the conditioning can be broken down. And obviously it must be broken down. It is absurd to be a Hindu, or a Christian, or a communist, or a socialist. We are human beings, and to solve the problems of life, we must approach them as human beings, not as members of these conflicting groups. No system, no belief or ideology is going to solve our human problems. Starvation is a human problem, and we must tackle it together, not divided as capitalists and communists. Systems are no good at all in solving the basic problems of life; they only further condition our minds, which are already conditioned by tradition, by environmental influences, and so on.

Now, how is the conditioned mind to resolve its conditioning? Do you understand the question? You are conditioned as a Hindu, let us say, and you are totally unaware of that conditioning because you live in a society where practically everybody is Hindu and you have accepted it, so you never question it at all. But now someone is telling you that your mind is conditioned, and you have begun to see that it is true, so you say, 'How am I to be free from this conditioning?'

Sirs, freedom from a particular conditioning is still a conditioned state – is it not? Please follow this. To be free from something is a reaction; therefore, it is not freedom at all. I will show you what I mean. Merely to

free myself from nationalism is a reaction because I want to be something else. My conditioning gives me pain, sorrow, and I say that I must be free from it in order to be happy, that is, in order to be something else. In other words, I free myself from something in order to be in a more gratifying state, which is obviously a reaction; therefore, it is not freedom. Freedom is not born of reaction; it is a state of mind in which there is no desire to be or not to be something.

If you see the truth of that, then the next question is: What does it mean to be free of conditioning? It means, surely, not freedom from something, or freedom to be something, but seeing the fact as it is. Let us say I am conditioned as a Hindu. I do not want to be free from my conditioning; I want to see it. And the moment I see it as it is, there is freedom, not as a reaction. I do not know if I am making myself clear on this point. I don't want to take examples because examples can be refuted by other examples. But what is important is to think of it negatively, because negative thinking is direct thinking.

You see, there is positive thinking and negative thinking. Positive thinking is deciding what to do, how to break down one's conditioning by practicing a system, a method, a discipline. In practicing a method or a discipline in order to be free of conditioning, one has merely introduced a further conditioning, a new habit. That is positive thinking. Whereas negative thinking is to look at the fact of one's conditioning, and see the truth that no system or discipline can bring freedom from conditioning.

Sirs, many of you practice nonviolence, you worship the ideal of nonviolence, you everlastingly preach non-violence. That is the positive approach, which you know very well. But the truth is that you are violent, and the negative approach is simply to perceive that truth. To perceive the truth that you are violent is enough in itself. You don't have to do anything. The moment you act upon violence, you have introduced the fictitious ideal of non-violence.

I don't know if you see this. Let us say I am greedy. That is a fact, and I know it. I don't want to change greed into non-greed; to me that has no meaning because I see that becoming non-greedy still has the qualities of greed. All becoming is obviously a form of greed. The mind is aware of the fact that it is greedy, and it also perceives that any move on its part to change greed is still within the field of greed. This very perception of what-is is the resolution of it.

So the inquiry into the self must begin with a negative approach because you don't know what the self is. You may think you know the self as a greedy man, as this or that, but the self is being influenced, it is undergoing constant change, and to understand it you must approach it, not positively, but negatively, obliquely. Most minds are conditioned, and the breaking down of that conditioning does not come about through any resolution or determination, through any practice of discipline. It comes about only when there is a negative approach to one's conditioning. The mere perception of what-is is enough in itself. Follow this, and you will

see why. When you understand the negative approach, which is to see the truth of it – its uselessness, its fictitious nature – then your mind, which is greedy, is no longer caught in the fictitious process of trying to become non-greedy. Therefore it is free to look at what-is, which is greed; and because the mind is free to look at greed, it is capable of dissolving greed. Try this the next time you are angry or violent. Don't condemn it, don't say that it is right or wrong, but look at it. Just to look at the feeling without naming it, without condemning or justifying it is an extraordinary thing. The very word 'anger' is condemnatory, and when you look at the feeling without naming it, the verbal association with that feeling through the word, anger ceases.

Go along with this, sirs; don't accept or reject what is being said, but just follow it.

To understand the whole process of the self, there must be a negative approach because the conscious mind can never go consciously into the deep unconscious. You may be a great technician outwardly, on the conscious level, but inwardly, in the deep layers of the unconscious, there is the everlasting pull of the racial, instinctual, traditional responses; there all your ambitions, your frustrations, your hidden motives and fears are rampant, and you have to understand all that. To understand it, you must approach it negatively. The positive approach is always within the field of the known. But the negative approach frees the mind from the known and, therefore, the mind can look at the

problem anew, afresh, in a state of innocency. Then you will discover that the self is not only the seeker but also the process of seeking, as well as that which is sought. The seeker is seeking peace of mind, and he practises a method by which to find what he seeks. The seeker, the seeking, and the sought are all one and the same thing. When the seeker seeks what he wants, which is peace of mind, it is still within the field of the known. His seeking is a reaction from the conflicts of life, so the peace he is everlastingly pursuing is a projection of the known. Whereas, if the mind, seeing for itself the fictitiousness of that pursuit, is not concerned with peace at all but with understanding its own conflicts, and therefore approaches them negatively, then there is the beginning of self-knowledge.

The understanding of oneself is a constant, timeless process. There is no end to self-knowledge. The moment you see the truth that the understanding of oneself is limitless, your mind is already freed from the known and, therefore, able to penetrate into the unknown. A mind that is tethered to the known can never move into the unknown. All your gods, your *Bibles*, your *Gitas*, your Marxist books will not lead you very far. To go far you must begin near, which is to see that a mind hedged about, bound by the known, cannot proceed into the unknown.

The unknown is the total negation of the known; it is not a reaction from the known. So there must be an end to the game of the seeker and the sought. In other

words, there must be an end to all seeking. Then only is there something new. All profound discoveries are made in this state, not when the mind is pursuing a projection of the known. It is when the mind ceases completely to move in the field of the known, when it does not project the known into the unknown, it is only then that there is the coming into being of an extraordinary state of creative newness which has nothing to do with the known. That is Truth, that is Reality, that is God, or whatever name you care to give it. But the name is not the thing.

So one must begin near, which is to empty the mind of all the things it has known – inwardly, psychologically, not factually. You cannot forget where you live, that would be amnesia. But you have to wipe away, in the psychological sense, all that you have known as a man of experience, as a man of knowledge, as a man who has read, read, read, and who is controlled by what is known. All that must come to an end. What is known has always a centre and, therefore, always a circumference, a recognizable frontier. The frontier ceases only when the centre ceases. Then the mind is unlimited, not measurable by man.

– *New Delhi,*
February 25th, 1959

**IF THERE IS NO DESIRE OR WILL,
WHY SHOULD ONE SEEK SELF-KNOWLEDGE?**

The questioner is asking: Is desire and will necessary or required to understand the depth of self-knowledge? Is not desire itself a movement towards self-knowing?

That is the question.

First of all to understand this question, not only superficially but also at depth, we must understand the nature of desire and will, and the structure and the nature of self-knowledge, self-knowing – you understand? We must understand, first, desire, will, and what it means if there is no desire, the movement of self-knowledge. If one has not the urge, which is part of desire and will, how can this flowering take place in knowing oneself? Right? That is the question.

We went into the question the other day: What is desire? And what is the relationship of desire to will? I'll go into it very carefully. You have probably heard it ten times, but please don't get bored with it; just look at it. How does desire come into being? One can actually see perceptions – visual seeing, contact, touching, sensation – right? Then thought comes, creates an image out of that sensation and desire is born. Right? (I'm not an oracle. Delphi has gone long ago.) You can see this for yourself. You can see for yourself when you watch through a window a dress, or a shirt, specially a blue shirt (*laughter from the audience*), that there is the seeing, the entering into the shop, the touching of the the material, then there is the sensation, and then thought comes along and says, 'How nice it would be if I had that shirt or that dress'. Thought creates the image – right? – of you having the blue shirt or the dress, of you putting it on, and at that moment desire arises.

Is this somewhat clear? No? Please be clear yourself, and not just understand the explanation.

This is the movement of perception, contact, sensation. That is natural, healthy. Then thought creates the image of, for example, you sitting in the car and driving it. When thought takes possession of sensation, and creates the image, then desire is born. Right? And will is the summation of desire, the strengthening of desire, the stability of desire. The urge to achieve, the urge to express one's desire and acquire is the operation of desire, but strengthened as will. So desire and will go together. Right? And the questioner asks: If there is no desire or will, why should one seek self-knowledge?

What is self-knowledge? Let's examine that first. What is self knowledge? That is, the ancient Greeks, and the ancient Hindus talked about knowing yourself. It is as old as the hills. Socrates – and others in Greece and in India – talked about knowing yourself. What does it mean 'to know yourself'? Can you ever know yourself?... What is the self? And you must know about it. What is the self that apparently it is necessary to know it?

Now: What do we mean by the word 'know'? Sorry to be so careful about this [for] we shall be misleading each other if we do not understand the words. What do we mean by 'know'? I know Gstaad because I have been there for twenty-two years. I know you because I have seen you here for twenty years or more. I don't know why, but you are there, and I am here. And when we say

'I know', we mean by that not only recognition but also the remembrance of the face, the name. Right? Which means recognition, remembrance, and association. Or rather association, remembrance, which is, I met you yesterday, I have recognised you today, that is the memory operating. So when I say, 'I know', it is the past expressing itself in the present. I hope you are following all this. Does all this interest you? So the past is the movement of knowledge. Right? I study; I go to school, college, university, and acquire a great deal of information. Then I say 'I am a chemist', or 'I am a physicist', and so on, so on. So when we say one must know oneself, do you come to that knowledge about the self afresh, or do you approach it already having knowledge about it?

Do you see the difference? ... No.

That is, I want to know myself. Do I approach myself through the knowledge I have acquired, which is, I have studied psychology, I have been to psychotherapists, and I have read a great deal, and I approach the understanding of the self through the knowledge I have acquired? *Bene*? Or, do I come to it without all the previous accumulation, knowledge about myself? Right? Do you understand the question?

We have explained what desire is, what the will is, and when we say, 'I must know about myself', I am already acquainted with myself. And so this acquaintance, this knowledge, dictates how I observe myself. Right? This is very important [to realize] if you want to go into this

carefully. So having previous knowledge about myself, I use that knowledge to understand myself, which becomes silly – right? It is absurd. Which is, I have understood about myself from the knowledge of others – Freud, Jung, and all the rest of the modern psychologists and so on.

So can I – please listen – can I put aside all that knowledge? I am looking at myself through other people's eyes, therefore can I put all that aside and look at myself afresh, anew? Have you understood my question?

Now, the questioner asks: Is desire, will necessary in observing myself? Right? Now see what happens. I have acquired knowledge about myself through others, and [there is] the actual fact: what I am. Do you see the difference? The knowledge I have acquired through study about myself, and the fact of myself, what it actually is. Right? So there is a contradiction between what-is and what-I-have-acquired. To overcome this contradiction, I exercise will. I've got it! How marvellous that is! Have you understood that?

One has studied – I have not, I have not studied any of these things, thank God! [I have] studied, let us say, the latest psychologist, the latest – what do they call them? – psychotherapists, and gone to him, talked with him, discussed, and he gives me a certain knowledge about myself. And I acquire that knowledge, take it home and discover that that knowledge is different from 'me'. And then begins the conflict: to adjust what-is to

what-I-have-been-told. Then, in that conflict – to suppress it, to overcome it, to accept it – the desire and will comes into being. *Bene*? Gosh, sirs! Is this clear? So that is the question. Now we are asking: Is will and desire necessary at all? It only comes into being when I have to adjust myself to a pattern, to a pattern of the guru, or all that stuff. And then the struggle, the conflict to overcome, to control – all that – begins. Right?

I am a seeker – you understand? I am a seeker, which is, I am questioning; therefore in my questioning I reject all that. I reject *completely* what others have told me about myself. Will you do it? You won't, because it is much safer to accept authority; then you are secure. Whereas if you completely reject all that – the authority of everyone – you don't become a follower, you don't become a disciple. [When] you are absolutely out of that field altogether, then how do you observe the self, its movement? Do you understand? The movement of the self. The self is not static; it is moving, living, active. Now how do you observe something that is moving tremendously, active [with] urges, desires, ambitions, greed, romanticism? How do you observe all that? Are you following all this? Which means: Can I observe this movement of the self, the me – the desires, the fears, all that – can I observe it without any knowledge acquired from others, or the previous knowledge which I have had in examining myself? *Vous avez compris*? Do you understand what I am saying? I will show you something.

One of the activities of the self is greed. Right? Or comparison, comparing myself with another. That is the activity of the self. Now when I use the word 'greed', I have already associated that reaction, or that reflex with a memory which I have had of that reaction previously. I am greedy. I use the word 'greed' to identify that sensation. The identification of that is that I have already known it. So I use that word to identify it. Right? So can I look at that reaction without the word, and therefore without the previous acquaintance with it? Are you following this? Am I making this clear? Can I look at that reaction without a single movement of recognition? The moment that recognition takes place, I have already strengthened that reaction because I recognise it and take it back into my memory.

Now can I observe myself without any direction, without any comparison, which is, 'I have had this before' – you follow? – just to observe without direction and therefore without motive. That is learning about yourself afresh each time. Not that you have accumulated knowledge about yourself and you know about yourself. If you go – very, very seriously – into this question, you will find that it is not little by little by little (first step, second step, third step, first initiation, second initiation), but to see the truth of this instantly – you understand? – to see the truth that the moment recognition takes place, you are not knowing yourself at all. Is that clear? That requires a great deal of attention. And most of us are so slack, so lazy, we have got all kinds of ideas – that we must be this, we must be that, we must not be this – so we come to it with a tremendous burden. And so we never know ourselves.

That is, to put it differently: as we said the other day, we are the rest of mankind. Mankind, whether they live in Asia, here, in America, suffer, go through a great deal of anxiety, uncertainty, sorrow. So we go through it; each one of us. So we are, essentially, the common humankind – psychologically. You may be tall, you may be short, dark; I am not talking about that.

Psychologically we are like the rest of humanity, so we are humanity. And what is there to know about myself? You understand my question? I am all that. That is a fact.

Then the problem arises: Can that content of my consciousness be wiped away? That is the learning about oneself – which is not ‘yourself’, but the consciousness of mankind. I wonder if you are meeting all this. No? You see, we are so trained, we are so conditioned to individuality – I am psychologically different from another – which is not a fact. We are so trained, conditioned, that we accept it. And, so, when we say, ‘I must know myself’, we are saying, ‘I must know my little cell’. And when you investigate that little cell, there is nothing. But the actual truth is that we are mankind. We are the rest of humanity. And to enquire into this enormous complex human mind is to read the story of yourself. You are history – you understand? Historia. And if you know how to read the book, it is finished. But we come to the book with knowledge. We don’t say, ‘I know nothing, let’s read the book’. Then you learn vastly – not accumulate knowledge. Do you understand what I am saying? So you begin to find out the nature of yourself which is

mankind, and the nature of this consciousness which is the consciousness of all human beings, and enquire into that.

So we are saying that the answer to the question is in the question itself. *Vous avez compris?* You see that? The questioner says is not austerity necessary? Are not these three – austerity, sensitivity, and integrity – necessary before transformation in the consciousness can take place? The word ‘austere’ means ‘ash’; the root meaning of that word is ash. You know what ash is? It is what remains after you have burnt a piece of wood. The ash. See the meaning of it. That is, those who practise austerity – practise – end up in ash.

So let’s go into that question. Throughout the world monks have practised austerity. In India a monk who is called a *sannyasi* renounces the world, sex, drink, drugs; he becomes a mendicant – not an organised mendicant; do you understand this? He becomes a mendicant. He has one meal a day, and he can never stay in the same place twice; he has no home. I won’t go into the whole nature of *sannyasa* ... Let’s leave it at that. That is, a monk, especially in India, lives on one meal, and begs; he is a mendicant, never staying in the same place twice; he has abandoned the world – the world being the senses, which is sex, and all that. And, naturally, he goes around from village to village, town to town, and preaches, talks about what it means to live a good life, and so on. Right? And the monks in the western world have it carefully organised. They belong to a monastery with an Abbot – authority.

So first of all the expression of this austerity is an outward sign. You understand? The putting on of a robe [expresses] that you have really renounced the world. There are all kinds of phoney *sannyasis* now – here, too. But they are not *sannyasis*. That is a very, very serious affair. And austerity is not the practising or the denial or the acceptance of sex, and all that. It is austerity, which is a form of high discipline, according to a pattern laid down by the Abbots and so on, so on, and there in India laid down by the *brahmanas* from the ancient of days. There is a pattern set. And you conform to that pattern, denying everything in yourself your desires, your ambitions, your greed, and all that. And that is, generally, called ‘austerity’. That is, look what happens: you start with certainty – right? – certainty that you have given up the world, the senses, sex, and so on. You start with that. When you start with certainty, you end up in uncertainty. I wonder if you understand all this. If I start accepting everything – all the religious edicts, sanctions – and I begin to enquire into them, if I ever do, I end up saying, ‘My goodness, it’s nothing, I don’t believe in anything!’ You understand? When you start with certainty, you end up in uncertainty – if you are at all intelligent, that is.

So austerity has quite a different meaning. May I go into it? Are you are interested in it? Never deny anything, but observe very carefully, intensely; and that very observation frees the mind from the worldly affairs. That is real austerity. I wonder if you understand this.

Look: I observe I am violent; that is part of human structure, human nature, derived from the ancient animals, and so on, so on – if you accept evolution. Or if you are one of those who start with creation suddenly, then you have your own game. One is violent. The ordinary person who wants to be austere struggles with violence. Right? He won't kill, he won't do this, he won't do that, he won't even take part in society, he won't join the army, he is a pacifist, and so on. He is constantly denying what-is by saying, 'I won't'. Do you follow all this? I say that that is not austerity; that is only a form of suppression. But when one recognises in oneself violence – that is, anger, hate, envy, comparison, imitation, conformity are all patterns of violence – [when one] observes that in oneself without wanting to go beyond it, without wanting to suppress it, without wanting to escape from it, [when one] sees the fact and remains with the fact, remains with it without any movement away from it, *that* is the depth of austerity.

We are trained to control: control your desires, control your anger, suppress it and give all that energy to Jesus, to Krishna, whatever ... But we are saying ... the depth of austerity is not in sacrifice, is not in conformity, in training yourself to accept an ideal but to see completely the nature of this violence. And to see it completely, [without] moving, thought mustn't interfere. Don't let thought carry [it] away in any direction. Just observe it. And you will see, if you do, that [with] real depth of understanding comes

intelligence. And when there is that intelligence, you don't have to struggle, it is finished.

And the other thing is sensitivity. Most of us are sensitive about our own feelings, our own ambitions, our own struggles. But we are not sensitive to others because we are so concerned about ourselves, our little cell. And when there is tremendous concentration on oneself – what one is doing, how one looks, why shouldn't I do this, when there is this everlasting concern about oneself – how can one be sensitive about another? – [It is] not about *how* you can be sensitive. How can a man who is ambitious be sensitive? Physically one has to be sensitive, first. Right? There is no school, or college or university that is going to teach you how to be sensitive. Right? You go off to India to learn to be sensitive – think of the ridiculousness of it!

So are your nervous reactions, alertness of the mind – are they alive, or have you drugged them? You understand? Drugged them through belief, drugged them through the acceptance of some authority? Have you drugged your physical system as well as psychological structure by constant struggle, battling, battling, battling? [You say], 'I am romantic, and I know I am romantic, but it pleases me to be romantic, which is contrary to seeing clearly, but I like it'. So that drugs me; so I become insensitive. Are you following this?

Integrity means to be whole – the word 'integral' means 'whole'. Which means no contradiction in oneself. We

are examining the question itself, the meaning of the words. That is, austerity, sensitivity and integrity. Which is, to never say a thing that you don't mean. And what you mean may be doubtful – you understand? I say something and I think that is what I feel, think, act but what I think, feel and act may be the result of some conditioning, of some desire, of some motive, therefore it is not integral. I feel like doing something that is the latest craze – 'I must express myself immediately'. What does that mean? That is, there is no depth of understanding of that urge, the meaning of it, the content of it, why it arose, but just action because you are ... And you think that is having integrity! The word 'integrity' means to be whole. And we human beings are broken up, divided, antagonistic, dualistic, and we accept all this and try to be integrated, to have integrity, which is impossible. So one must go into this question: What is it to be whole?

First of all, any image that thought creates about being whole is not whole. Right? Because thought in itself is fragmented, limited. Therefore whatever it projects as the whole is not. So then can the mind discover for itself what it means to be whole, integral, have this sense of tremendous integrity? First of all you cannot have this sense of integrity if you follow anybody. Right? If you are a disciple of anybody, then you are merely conforming to what somebody has laid down. Then you are merely romantic, playing tricks upon yourself ... To have integrity is to have no ideals, no beliefs, no sense of the past and the future. Sir, this is tremendously difficult, you can't play with all this,

because the past is dictating, is translating what-is, the present. Right? And the past is modifying itself through the present and going [on], but it is still the past. How can your mind, your heart, be whole, integral, have absolute integrity if it is living in the past: past experience, past memories, romantic – you know, all that stuff? ...

So austerity, sensitivity and integrity are not the first step. The first step is the first step. You understand? If you are going north and think that is the right direction, and [when] somebody comes along and tells you, 'Look, what you are doing', and explains the whole business, you say to him, 'What is the first step?' He says, 'Stop!' Then he says, 'After having stopped, turn south'.

Do you understand this?

– *First Question & Answer Meeting , Saanen, July 1980*

© Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd, Brockwood Park, Bramdean, Hampshire SO24 OLQ, UK.

ADDRESSES OF J KRISHNAMURTI SCHOOLS

RAJGHAT EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

Rajghat Fort

Varanasi — 221 001

Uttar Pradesh

E.mail: [kfivns@satyam.net.in/](mailto:kfivns@satyam.net.in)

[kcentrevns@satyam.net.in/](mailto:kcentrevns@satyam.net.in)

Fax: (0542) 2430 218

Telephone: (0542) 2430 717

Boarding School

Ages 7 to 19

VASANTA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

(Admitted to the Privileges of

Banaras Hindu University

Assessed & Accredited by NAAC)

Rajghat Fort

Varanasi — 221 001

Uttar Pradesh

Telephone: (0542) 2441187

E.mail: vasantakfi@rediffmail.com

B.A. & B.ED.

(Humanities only)

RISHI VALLEY SCHOOL

Rishi Valley — 517 352

Chittoor District

Andhra Pradesh

E.mail: office@rishivalley.org

Fax: (08571) 280261

Telephone: (08571) 280622/280582/280044

Boarding School

Ages 8 to 17

THE SCHOOL

'Damodar Gardens'

Besant Avenue

Madras — 600 020

E.mail: alcyone@satyam.net.in

Telephone: (044) 2491 5845

Day-Boarding School

Ages 3½ to 17

THE VALLEY SCHOOL
'Haridvanam'
17th K.M. Kanakapura Road
Thatguni Post
Bangalore — 560 062
E.mail: thevalleyschool@vsnl.net
kfibr@blr.vsnl.net.in
Fax: (080) 2843 5242
Telephone: (080) 2843 5240/2843 5241

BAL-ANAND
'Akash Deep'
28, Dongersi Road
Bombay — 400 006
Telephone: (022) 2362 7817

SAHYADRI SCHOOL
Tiwai Hills, Rajgurunagar Taluk
Pune District — 410 513
E.mail: sahyadrischool@vsnl.net
Fax: (02135) 284269
Telephone: (02135) 284270/71/72

THE OAK GROVE SCHOOL
220 West Lomita Avenue
Ojai, CA 93023, U.S. of A.
E.mail: office@oakgroveschool.com
Fax: (001-805) 646 6509
Telephone: (001-805) 646 8236

BROCKWOOD PARK SCHOOL
Bramdean,
Hampshire SO24 OLQ
England
E.mail: admin@brockwood.org.uk
Fax: (0044-1962) 771 875
Telephone: (0044-1962) 771 744

Day-Boarding School
Ages 6 to 17

An After-School Centre
for young children

Boarding School
Ages 10 to 15

Day/Boarding School
Ages 3½ to 17

Education Centre and
Boarding School
14 years upwards

* * * *

BULLETIN
KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA

Please note that the editorial matter in this *Bulletin* does not reflect any official position of Krishnamurti Foundation India. The Editor is responsible for selecting materials to be printed in the *Bulletin* and for any editorial comments on these selections.

Copyright Notice: Passages from Krishnamurti are protected under International Copyright Laws and may not be reproduced in any form without prior written permission from the copyright holders. For materials prior to 1968: Copyright © Krishnamurti Foundation of America, Box 1560, Ojai, CA 93024, USA. All rights reserved. For materials from 1968 onwards: Copyright © Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd, Brockwood Park, Bramdean, Hampshire SO24 OLQ, UK. All rights reserved.

Krishnamurti Foundation India
124, 126 (Old 64-65) Greenways Road, Chennai 600 028, India

Published by G Rajeev on behalf of the Krishnamurti Foundation India, 124, 126 (old 64-65), Greenways Road, Chennai – 600 028.
Editor: Dr Radhika Herzberger. Printed by N. Subramanian at M/s Sudarsan Graphics, 27, Neelakanta Mehta Street, T. Nagar, Chennai – 600 017.

**KFI BULLETIN, ENGLISH
SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

Annual Subscription (India)	Rs 75.00
Annual Subscription (Foreign)	US\$ 5.00
Five-year Subscription (India)	Rs 375.00

(DD or MO, in favour of KFI Publications payable at
Chennai, to the address below)

KFI Publications
Krishnamurti Foundation India
'Vasanta Vihar'
124, 126, Greenways Road
CHENNAI 600 028.

Dear Sir,

Please enrol me as a subscriber/renew my subscription to the
'KFI Bulletin' for the present year/five years.

Name (in block letters) _____

Address: _____

PAYMENT ENCLOSED (Rs 75/Rs 375/US\$5)

BY D.D. No _____

KFI BULLETIN, HINDI SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Annual Subscription (India)	Rs 100.00
Annual Subscription (Foreign)	US \$ 5.00
Five-year Subscription (India)	Rs 250.00
Five-year Subscription (Foreign)	Us \$ 25.00
Life Subscription (India)	Rs1000.00
Life Subscription (Foreign)	US \$ 75.00

Please send DD or MO in favour of KFI Study Centre payable at Varanasi, to the address below:

J. Krishnamurti Prajñâ Parisad
Krishnamurti Foundation India
Rajghat Fort
VARANASI 221 001

Dear Sir,

Please enrol me as an annual subscriber/five-yearly subscriber/
life subscriber for the *Parisamvad*

Name (in block letters) _____

Address: _____

PAYMENT ENCLOSED (Rs 100/Rs 250/Rs 1000/US \$ 5/US \$
25/US \$ 75)

BY D.D. No _____

DATED _____ ISSUED BY _____

Registered with The Registrar of Newspapers for India
Under No:TNENG/2003/12845

Published by G. Rajeev on behalf of the Krishnamurti
Foundation India, 124, 126 (old 64, 65) Greenways Road,
Chennai – 600 028. Printed by N. Subramanian at
M/s Sudarsan Graphics, 27, Neelakanta Mehta Street,
T. Nagar, Chennai – 600 017.
Editor: Dr Radhika Herzberger.