

# Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin

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Volume 11, Issue 1, Jan. to June 2014

Rs25/-

## FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the *Bulletin* contains the record of a talk Krishnamurti delivered at Madras on the 31st of December, 1978. It was the first talk to be recorded on video in India. Apart from the substance of the very long talk, the video reveals a wise sage in love with the world but detached from it, and at ease with his audience. Unfortunately, the radiant presence that the video reveals is faded in the transcript we publish.

The video was shown at the opening session of the recently held K.F.I. Gathering at Rishi Valley. A brief summary of the video and its wider implications within the context of three other talks viewed at the Gathering are published in the later pages of this issue of the *Bulletin*.

R. H.

**SINCE NOTHING OR NOBODY ON EARTH OR IN HEAVEN  
IS GOING TO HELP US,  
ONE CAN ONLY BEGIN WITH ONESELF  
AND  
THE REQUIREMENT FOR LEARNING IS TO HAVE A BRAIN  
THAT IS NOT BURDENED WITH KNOWLEDGE**

First of all I would like to point out, if I may, that this is not propaganda, nor a new set of ideas, a new set of beliefs, nor the setting up of oneself as a guru, but that together we are going to talk over our many problems. As there are so many of you, one cannot possibly communicate with each one. But in talking over together, if we are able to think together, not agreeing or disagreeing, but able to think clearly, objectively, sanely, it implies that you are not prejudiced, that you don't start out with a lot of opinions, judgements, and opposing arguments. We are not dealing with arguments, nor with opinions. We are trying, actually, to find out a way of life in which we understand the total complexity of our lives.

To think together implies – does it not? – that you approach the problem without any previous conclusions, previous ideas, or beliefs. We are thinking together, and that, [also], implies that you must exercise your brains and not go to sleep, not accept.

First of all we must look at the problems that surround us, both outwardly and inwardly. We must first examine clearly what the outward things are, what is going on in the world, because we have to think globally, not provincially, not with a class mind or a sectarian mind, believing in one thing and contradicting what we believe by our actions, and so on. So we are together examining clearly, if we can,

what is happening in the world outside us, not only environmentally but politically, religiously, ecologically. Because if we don't examine from the outside accurately, as far as we can, it is very difficult to examine oneself accurately. You must begin with the outer and come inwards. Like a tide that goes out and comes in, it is the same movement; the world outside us is not different from us. We can clearly observe what is happening around us and, [so], we have at least a criteria from which we can work inwardly. I hope that is clear.

First we are together going to examine what is happening around us in every possible way, if we can, with the facts which we have (but we have not many facts because we are dealing with politicians, with so-called rulers; right throughout the world they are governing us). If you observe in each country [there is] a group of people [who] are concerned about their own little area. This is obvious. And, if you further examine, not only are they concerned with their own little area of a vast field, which is the world but, also, that little area is broken up, fragmented more and more and more. So there is fragmentation going on in the world – nationally, religiously, politically, economically – [a] breaking up. It's so obvious in this country, *and* in the rest of the world.

So there is fragmentation not only [externally] but, also, within oneself. We are broken up human beings, we are not whole; that's clear. And each nation is fighting the other nation: the Hindu, the Muslim, and so on, and so on, and so on. And one has relied [on], one has hoped that politics will save man. It has not saved man; on the contrary, it has brought about much more suffering through wars, through division. One has hoped that through science man would

break through, and that, also, has failed, [as has] economics, and so on. We have relied on politics for the saving of man; we have relied on religions for the saving of man; we have relied on science, which is the accumulation of knowledge in action, we have relied on [all] that, and none of these have helped man. They may have given man a little corner somewhere or other, but it has been a constant struggle – which is obvious.

And we have, also, seen that no organisation of any kind – whether of the left, the right, or the centre – is going to save man. Right? I hope you will see that. Even small communities are not going to save man, because it is a world problem; [it's] a global problem, and it must be dealt with globally, with a global mind, not with a little sectarian, parochial, narrow little mind.

So organisations have failed; institutions have failed. The gurus multiplying like so many mushrooms all over the world are not going to save man; on the contrary, they make their own little whirlpool, little noise – you know what they are doing, so I don't have to tell you all that! So what is going to save man? – because we are now, [as] you observe what is happening in the world, preparing for war. Four hundred-thousand million dollars are spent on armaments every year by all the governments. All the governments put together are spending four hundred-thousand million dollars every year. That is totally insane. Right?

So when you see all this, what is man to do? Do you understand my question? What are you to do? Where shall we start with the reformation of man? We have tried every way to resolve these problems. We have had principles,

extraordinary ideals, great theories, volumes of so-called sacred books (no book is sacred, including the *Gita*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bible* or, even, the *Koran*).

We have tried everything to resolve our problems. The Maoists in China, Lenin and his group in Russia, the Capitalists, the Socialists, the Liberals; every way we have tried. So in looking at all this – the divisions and fragmentations, the confusion, every human being against another human being, one guru against another guru, the ‘My guru is better than yours; he is more peaceful than yours; he knows and you don’t know,’ and so on, and on, and on – I hope you realise how serious all this is.

So this is not a gathering of an evening which you casually attend and forget. We are gathered for a serious purpose. And that serious quality depends on you, whether you are being challenged, whether you accept the challenge, or [whether] you just pass it by. Various cultures have failed, including the culture of this country. So when you observe all these outward signs of violence – terrorism, brutality, enormous cruelty and torture, and politicians fighting for power, and so on – you are challenged: What is a human being to do? What are you to do? Where do you begin? Because man, human beings like you and me, we are now facing a great crisis of humanity. I do not know if you realise it. And we must respond to that crisis – which is a challenge – accurately.

So realizing all this, who is going to save man? Do you understand my question? Who is going to save you, to save you from your confusion, from your conflict, from your suffering, from your constant contradictions, from your envy, from your petty nationalism, from the gurus which you

have accepted [along] with their authority? When you observe this, surely there is only one answer. Since organizations have no value any more, since leaders cannot help us, since no book is going to give freedom to each one of us, one can only begin with oneself – right?

I hope we are in communication with each other. Communication implies sharing: sharing in our thinking, in our feeling, in observing what is going on, and demanding of ourselves the highest capacity to act correctly. So from the outward we are moving inward; it is the same movement. The world is not different from us. We have made this miserable world; we have made it. No gods, no external agency, but we, human beings, have created this society in which we live, with all its corruption, with all its malignant superstitions, with all its absurd gods. We have made [all] this: the national, the class divisions. Please see all this.

So we must begin with ourselves. Right? Nobody on earth, or in heaven, is going to save us. No book, no guru, no system, no method, no leader, no hero, no prince. We have to begin with ourselves, and see if we can transform ourselves, if we can change radically from the very root of our being so that we have a free mind, not a mind that is broken up, corrupt, fearful, anxious, greedy, in sorrow. Is that possible? Do you understand my question? Am I making this clear? Is the speaker making this clear?

To go very far, you must begin very near. ‘Very near’ is you. That’s why we are asking: What is the quality of our thought, what is the quality of our mind that – seeing what is happening – is willing, is demanding that it must change the society in which we live, [to have] a different kind of

education, different kinds of global government, and so on, and so on. Are we as human beings – you – willing or desirous, or deeply serious to find out, to investigate the whole human structure: psychological and religious? [Can we] see if it is possible for every human being who is good enough to listen to all this [to] investigate into himself [or herself]. Do you understand, sirs? Right?

So I am asking: What is the state of your mind, your consciousness that is serious enough to investigate? You understand my question? Are you serious, or you [merely] want to spend a pleasant evening under a tree? – not that it is not beautiful after the rains; the clear sky. Do you know for yourself the state of your own existence, your daily existence: the way you think, what you feel, whether you are greedy, envious and all the rest of it? The whole human structure – are you aware of it? Do you know what you think and why you think? Do you know your feelings, your prejudices, your anxieties, your fears – which is your life, your daily life? Your relationship with another – intimate or otherwise – [do you know] what that relationship is? Is it superficial or deeply real? Is it merely sexual, sensory, or in your relationship is there affection, care, tenderness, love?

So, we are asking whether you are aware of your own daily life with all its complexities. And it is only from there one can start, [and] not with some belief, with some ideal, with some conclusions – belief in Brahman, or God, or Jesus, or something or other. Those are all illusions. So one is asking – please listen – if your mind is caught in an illusion. If it is, you cannot possibly bring about a radical change in yourself [and, so, the world], because you are the world, you are not different from the rest of humanity. Because you

suffer, and the people living ten thousand miles away suffer; they are afraid as you are afraid; they seek security and find very little of it (both in the world and psychologically there is very little security); they want happiness; they are unhappy; they are gullible, like you. [So] you are, essentially, similar to another human being. It is not an intellectual concept to argue about; it's a fact. You may be brown, or black, or white, or pink but, apart from racial division, every human being throughout the world goes through what you go through psychologically, and physically. Isn't that so? You are afraid of death, and so are the others. You believe in reincarnation because that gives comfort, [and] others have their own theories about afterlife. [You] are exactly like every other human being in the world.

So you are, essentially, the world, but the realization of it is not an intellectual affair. It is not an idea, however good or bad. Unless you feel – with all your blood and brain and guts – that you are the world [and], therefore, to bring about a change in the world you have to change radically ... Can we start from there? Which means: Is one aware? One's thoughts, one's feelings, one's beliefs, one's ideals, one's corruption, one's fears, one's pleasures, and [so on] – do you know all that? If you do, or [even] if you don't, one has to investigate why we live as we are living, why we accept to live this way. Do you understand my questions?

So we are together, and I mean *together*, going to examine, explore, into ourselves. And this isn't group therapy – which is an abomination, exposing each other's faults, and hoping thereby to clear up something! We are going to talk over together, examine [together] the quality of our minds, the quality of our hearts, the quality of our brain. To

examine, you must be free to look – right, sirs? – free to look into yourself. That means: There must be no conclusion; there must be no sense of authority; there must be no person who will tell you how to look because then you look according to him; there must be no guide. You must be free to listen to yourself, to observe yourself, and learn as you observe, and act as you observe.

So we have this problem: First to know what actually is going on, what is happening now in your minds and hearts, in your daily life, and to be able to listen to your own mutterings, your own fears, your own miseries – to listen to it – and to observe in your relationship with another [your] reactions, because *that* – your reactions with another – is the only guide. [Observe] how you have respect for those who are above you, or have better position, status, power, and [how] those below you, you kick. You see this in this country; [you see] this total lack of care, respect for human beings. So you have to find out for yourself, by thinking over together as we are doing now, how to observe yourself. [It's] not what to think, but how to think; not 'my' way of thinking, or 'your' way of thinking, or [that of] the professor's, or the guru's, or the specialist's, but 'thinking together' without any prejudice, without any opinion – [for] otherwise you cannot think together. Do we see this? Do we see that [if] you have an opinion and I have an opinion, our thinking is distorted? So is it possible to think without opinions? Please go into it with me. I am going to go slowly into it. Is it possible to observe without any conclusions? Is it possible to listen purely, without any distortion?

We are going to go into that slowly step by step.

It's a nice evening. It's nice to sit under the trees and talk about serious things. Not to forget to look at the leaves, the branches and the blue sky that is beyond, and to see the sunset and the beauty of the colour, the clouds with their light on it but, also, to see ourselves exactly as we are. You can't change the clouds; you can't change the sunset. So, look at yourself without the desire to change. The very desire to change is born out of a motive either of greed, or to better oneself in order to meet some principle, or ideal. So can you observe yourself without a single movement of thought?

So, first, let's find out what it means 'to listen'. Don't say, 'I have heard that before from you'. There are many people here who, unfortunately, come year after year without changing. It becomes a game. They are not serious. But even though they have been here very often and heard the speaker, please forget what he has said previously; totally forget all that he has said, and begin again. You know, when you look at a flower day after day, the flower is never the same – is it? The beauty of the flower varies from day to day. In the same way, those of you who have listened to the speaker for many, many, many years, listen to it as though you were listening to it for the first time; then you are learning – not memorizing; you are learning about yourself. Without learning about yourself you have no basis for a correct action, for right response, for objective comprehension.

First we are going to find out together. I am not telling you what to do, but together we are going to find out what it means to listen. Do we ever listen to anybody? Are you listening to what I am saying now? Are you? If you are

honest, are you listening, or is your mind so occupied with other things? Are you here because the speaker has a reputation, and you are searching [for] what he is going to say? All these movements prevent actual listening.

It is very important to learn the art of listening. Learn that art, not memorize it, because if you merely memorize how to listen, then you are not listening. So what does it mean to listen – not only to the world outside of you, but also to listen to one's own deep mutterings, deep anxieties, fears and pleasures? What does it mean 'to listen'? There is a listening with the ear and, also, there is a listening without the operation of the nervous reactions. (Do you follow what I am saying? Are we somewhat together in this? Am I speaking Greek, or Chinese, or are we understanding each other?) It is very important to find out what it means to listen, to observe. We are going to observe, without any distortion, the actual movement of ourselves. And so to observe, to listen is a great art, and we are learning that art together. I am not your teacher, and I really mean it. I am not your authority, but [we are] as two friends talking over together their problems, their fears, their anxieties, and each friend talks about his own problems, and together they approach, they resolve the problems. So we are doing the same. (Not that the speaker has resolved, [and then] ... He has, but we are trying to communicate; so we are sharing together.)

So first: What does it mean 'to listen'? To listen to a statement, to listen to the noise of that crowd, to listen to the honking of that car, to listen to your own thought, to your own feelings. To listen implies no interference of thought, because the moment thought intervenes by saying, 'It is good' or 'It's bad', 'I don't like that noise' or 'I do like that

noise', you are not listening. Please do it now as you are there and I am explaining it; do it now [and] not when you go home; then it is too late; then you haven't heard.

So the speaker is going to make many, many statements and you have to find out for yourself whether they are true or false. But if you listen with what you have learnt from books, from authority, or from your experience, then you are blocking yourself from actually listening to what the other person has to say. Do you understand the responsibility on your part to listen to the world *and* to your own anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty, sorrow? Step by step we will go into the whole of fear, sorrow, pain, anxiety. The whole of human existence – we will go into it. But first we must learn how to listen to all this.

Then comes also how to observe, [and] what it means to observe. You are observing me, the speaker. How do you observe me? Come on, sirs, examine that very simple fact. You are sitting there, the speaker is here, you are watching, you are seeing him. Are you actually seeing him, or you have images about him, conclusions, ideas? So conclusions, reputation, images prevent you from actually looking at the person. Right? Do you understand this very simple fact? If you say, 'He is a socialist', you don't look at him. If you say, 'Oh, he is communist', the label prevents you from observing him. Then if you say, 'He is a Muslim', it is finished – for a Hindu. So can you observe – please listen – can you observe without a single movement of your prejudice? That prejudice is put together by thought. If I want to know you, I must forget all my labels, [forget] whether I like you or not, this or that, and just look at you. By observing I learn. To observe, [but] not from books – that's the beginning of wisdom. That's one thing: listening,

observing and learning.

What does it mean to learn? From the age of five or six we go to school. There we learn facts. We learn a great deal of information, and store it up in the brain as memory. Right, sirs? [There's] memory stored up, and with that memory we act. To have a career, a job, money, and so on we accumulate knowledge: biology, physics, mathematics, and so on. [We] gather all the information from past researches, from all the people who have gathered information; they have handed it down to us, from generation to generation, and that is stored up in the brain. And that's what we call learning. Learning: gathering information, gathering what other people have said about God, about heaven, about how you should live, how you should not live, what is right and so on. [We have] gathered all that, and stored it up in our brains; and that [store] is called 'knowledge'. That's one way of learning. Right?

There is, also, another way of learning: to go out and act, and from that action learn, which becomes knowledge. We are always acting from knowledge, and knowledge is always the past, that-which-has-been – right? [So there is] learning from other people's experience, from your own experience, from the habits, the customs, tradition handed down from generation to generation [which] is stored up in the brain (and our brains are very, very, very old). And that is generally called 'learning'. So we are acting with knowledge, which is the past – right? Please see this because we are going to investigate into what is learning.

[Then] there is another way of learning which is not the accumulation of knowledge – which I am going to explain presently – but first we must understand very clearly where knowledge is absolutely essential. To do anything – to

drive a car, to speak a language, to know where your house is – knowledge is essential. But knowledge is always in the past; so we are living in the past. Right? And there is another way of learning which is not the accumulation of knowledge.

Will you kindly listen to what I have to say? Listen. Don't agree or disagree; don't accept or deny, just listen as you would listen to that bird. As I said – as the speaker said just now – we only know one method of learning: which is, to accumulate knowledge. And from that knowledge [we] operate, function, to have a job, to have a house, and so on, and so on, and so on. That knowledge becomes dangerous in relationship. Do you understand? If knowledge, which is remembrance, becomes important in human relationship, [in relationship] with each other, that very knowledge divides people. We will go into it. Just listen to it.

We are saying there is another way of learning. Shall I go on? [*Pause*] I am not trying to be clever, making you impatient, but I want to communicate so that you really understand this – understand it not only with your brain, intellectually but, also, with your heart. Understand with your mind, with your brain, [with] the quality of the brain that listens, and the intellectual capacity to reason logically, sanely but, also, to have this quality of affection, care, love, because those are demanded when you want to discover something new. You understand? When you want to find out something totally new there must be complete harmony, not just the intellect operating on its own, or the brain remembering all the past incidents, happenings, conclusions, and holding on to them, but also to have – which, perhaps, is the most difficult thing to have – care, love, affection.

So we are going to find out, together, if there is a different way of living which is learning and acting. Just see the difference between what I am going to say, and what we generally do: we accumulate knowledge, and from that knowledge act. There is a time interval – please listen – between the idea and the action. Right? That is, there is the ideal, and you are trying to put that ideal into action, so there is a gap between the principle, the ideal, the belief and the actuality. Right? Now we are saying that the interval of time between the ideal and action is non-existent.

It's going to be a little difficult, [but] please give your attention if you are interested. If you are not, carry on in your own way!

Please see what we do actually. We conceive an idea, and try to put that idea into action. So there is a time interval, a gap between [an] idea and action. This is clear – right? Would you disagree with that? Now we are saying that there is a way of acting, there is a way of learning, in which there is no time interval and, therefore, the learning is acting – not acting from previous knowledge.

I wonder if you see; I am going to explain it. Go slowly. First I want to establish communication between us.

A first-class engineer is very well acquainted with the piston engine, the internal combustion machinery, and he wants to discover something new. Naturally his brain is full of what he has learnt, full of the knowledge of the combustion engine. Right? And if he wants to discover something totally new, he must put that aside. He must have a mind that is free to observe, to listen, to grasp something that

may be just there. So the requirement for learning, which is not merely the accumulation of knowledge, is to have a mind that is not burdened with knowledge. And all our brains are burdened with knowledge. Just see the fact. The more traditional you are, the more you have read, read – it doesn't matter what you read – it is all stored up, it is registered in your brain and, so, you can never find something totally new. I was once with a friend, a very well known author, and we were talking; he was a friend of mine, and he said, 'You know, I have read so much; I have read all the Eastern philosophies, the Chinese and, of course, the European. I know all about communism, I've read Marx, and so on, and I have no space for the new.' Do you understand? A mind that is traditional, like most minds are, [filled with] something handed down from generation to generation: a custom, a habit, a ritual, a puja, you know, all that – how can such a mind find something new? Therefore, to find a way of learning which is not accumulation of knowledge, the other must be put aside completely. That means no tradition. Are you willing to do that? No, sirs; because tradition is very comforting. Caught in a routine, like a machine you go on, and on, and on.

So I am telling you something, which is: The mind, the brain, must be completely free of prejudice, of opinion, of belief, of all the things thought has put together in the brain. Do you understand this, and is that possible? Are you following? A professor, a scientist, if he wants to discover something new, naturally he can't keep on repeating his own knowledge; it is absolutely useless. He wants to discover, he wants to find something fresh, not [something] put together by thought. So, first, to learn – which is not mere accumulation of knowledge – the mind must be free to observe. That is, the mind, though it has got tremendous

knowledge, must be capable, have the subtlety, have the energy, to set it aside and be free so that it has an insight, an insight into what is actually going on.

Are you following? Am I explaining things clearly? If not, please tell me; I'll go over it in different ways.

We live in the past and, therefore, we are always destroying the present. The past modifies itself in the present and becomes the future, but it is still the past. (I wonder if you are following all this.) So our life, our daily life, is based on a routine; going to the office for the next fifty years – just think of it! And tradition, your sexual habits, your loneliness – all that is part of this enormous accumulation of knowledge. And from that knowledge, which is the past, we act. Now the speaker is saying there is an action which is not of the past, and that implies a mind, a brain, that has put aside all remembrance.

I'll show you; I'll go into it and you will capture the meaning of it.

[There's] no remembrance and, therefore, it is capable of observing instantly and acting instantly. The very observation is the action. [It's] not: I have learnt and, then, act; that implies a time interval. In that time interval all other factors enter. Therefore in that interval there is contradiction, there is pain, and so on, and so on. Whereas what we are saying is: To have an insight into the whole structure of my consciousness, of your whole consciousness, and that very insight is the action which dispels the content of consciousness, which makes up consciousness.

I hope you understand all this. I doubt it!

Look, sirs: What is action in your life – if you look at it? I am sorry to go back to it; I must until this is absolutely clear. It is based on memory, on knowledge, or a motive based on some self-interest, and so on, and so on. Knowledge has its place. But in relationship with each other, has knowledge any place at all? This is very important to find out. In relationship there is mere memory, [but] is memory, remembrance, love? When you say, ‘My wife’, it’s a remembrance. You have the image of her – or of the husband; you have an image of her [or of him]. That remembrance is the outcome of past incidents, experiences, memory, and in relationship, when there is memory, there *cannot* be love. Logically.

So, we are saying: To have an insight is not a continuation of memory or remembrance. I am going to explain what that means. I am not a specialist on the brain; I have watched it in oneself; if you watch, you don’t have to pick up a single book; you can see it all yourself. Our brains have the capacity to register: register an incident, an event, a happening, an insight, a flattery, a hurt; it has the capacity to register as a computer. As long as that ‘computer’ is in operation, there is no sense of freedom to observe. Please listen to this. If the brain is registering and, therefore, retaining it as memory and acting from that memory, then that action is born from the past. That’s logic; that’s so. And, so, between the action and the past there is an interval; therefore there is conflict, therefore there is adjustment, and a sense of constant struggle to approximate. Now can the brain – please listen to this, please give two minutes of attention – can the brain register only what is necessary and nothing else? What is necessary is your

physical needs. What is necessary is to have knowledge to act in daily life: where you live, what language you speak, how to

drive a car, how to design a house or design a machine to kill other people! That is the function of the brain: to register – and, we said, register only what is necessary. Psychologically don't register anything – try it; do it! – because that is where the trouble begins. I am attached to you psychologically, inwardly. Because you give me money, you are my this or that, you give me satisfaction, comfort, sex, and all that, I am attached to you psychologically.

The attachment is *totally* unnecessary; whereas the other is necessary. Do you follow all this? So can you see the importance of keeping knowledge in its right place, and psychologically [to] have no knowledge at all? (You don't understand all this, [but] there is a great deal of fun in all this if you go into it!) So your brain is capable of registering what is necessary, and psychologically nothing. So the brain is free – you understand? – because it has settled what is necessary (not extravagantly necessary, [just] what is necessary). And psychologically it has no content – you don't see the beauty of it – and, so, the brain, being free, can perceive instantly, and act; the very perception is action.

Now I'll show you something. You probably belong to some kind of religious organization, [and] your particular organization is different from another particular religious organization. Right? So there is conflict between the two, or you tolerate the two, or you adjust between the two; but there is *always* the two and, therefore, there must inevitably be conflict. All religious organizations have this element. Now: to have an insight into it and [so] never belong to any religious organization – do you understand what I am saying? The very insight dispels the illusion of belonging to something: a religious organisation. That is insight: which is, to observe

completely free, so that the whole nature of organisations is revealed, and it is finished. You never again belong to any single religious organisation or, even, a political [organization] – perhaps much more important nowadays, because you are dealing with man as a whole. It is a global problem, not the problem of India, or America, or Russia; it is a global problem, which is the human problem.

Now if I have conveyed this to you, if the speaker has conveyed the reality of this insight, please be careful with it because it is not a continuous thing that you keep going – then it becomes memory. Then you are gone; it is finished. You can't use it for personal use – you understand? To have an insight into your fear, to have an insight into pleasure, into death so that you see the truth of it – [and] not your belief, not your prejudice, not your conclusions, not your imaginary, illusory projections, but the actual truth of something – that is the way, the way of learning which is from moment to moment. Love is that.

*– Madras, 31st December 1978*

## **Living the Teaching in a Secular World**

## **A Brief Summary of the 2013 Gathering**

Around two hundred and fifty people attended the four-day Gathering at Rishi Valley that ended on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November. The Gathering theme, 'Living the Teaching in a Secular World', was intended to be a joint and open-ended exploration of the place of Krishnamurti's teaching in the contemporary world.

In her introductory remarks, Radhika Herzberger examined the rationale for the gathering, explaining the title, what it means to live Krishnamurti's teaching in a world that has been secularized, in other words, in a world that has lost its moorings in religion. A religious life today has no role in public affairs, which are governed by law, individual rights and economic growth. Given this state of affairs, pertinent questions are: how do you live a spiritual life in a world that has relegated religion to the private individual sphere? And, are Krishnamurti's teaching relevant only in the private realm?

The following is a brief account of each day's proceedings:

The Gathering opened with the screening of the first video-recorded talk by Krishnamurti, delivered in Madras on 31 December 1978. Apart from its relevance to the main theme, the video reveals facets of Krishnaji's personality – his radiance, his compassion, and, above all, the grace and beauty of an 83-year-old sage distanced from the world he is in love with.

In order to comprehend the totality of life, Krishnamurti urges his audience to begin with the outer world, 'You must begin

with the outer and come inward ....' By the outer he does not mean the natural world revealed to the refined senses but to a world defined by ideological conflicts. It is a world, for instance, in which, 'Four hundred thousand million dollars are spent on armament each year,' by nations divided by ideological fervour.

In Krishnamurti's eyes, the inner and outer worlds are linked; they are like the waters of the sea – the tide going out and the tide coming in. Not that individuals are personally responsible for all that has gone wrong in the external world, only that insofar as each individual is driven by the impulses of ambition, anger, and competitiveness, he or she is complicit in its affairs. Because the inner and outer are conjoint human beings are responsible for the world in which they live ...

After urging his audience to note the conflicted divisions in the outer world, Krishnamurti moves into learning about inner life, more specifically to a way of learning which is not cumulative. This novel way is listening with passion, and with all your faculties in harmony – not the intellect operating on its own, the brain remembering past experience with a distracted attention and the mind devoid of affection; it is listening with detachment 'as you would to that bird'. Listening in this way is learning in freedom, and with freedom comes responsibility to change the world.

The audience is left with questions: What is listening in a world that is defined largely by secular principles? Is it merely a private affair?

The second day began with Dr P. Krishna sketching within a historical context the emergence of the secularized world. The

conflict between religion and science surfaced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. When Galileo, the 16<sup>th</sup> century astronomer, successfully challenged the doctrines of the Church, among them the view that the sun circles the earth, he was able to establish a source of truth independent of Church dogma. Dr Krishna's historical account illustrated how observation and experiment establish independent criteria of truth, displacing the dogmas of religion. The triumph of science over religion, which followed after Galileo, made way for a secularized world, in which truth is not only not the monopoly of religion but the very idea of religious truth falls within the scrutiny of the rational intellect.

Dr Krishna then drew Krishnamurti into the historical framework he had sketched, concluding that, since Krishnamurti's thought is not based on any belief or dogma but posits spirituality as a quest for truth, there is no contradiction between scientific enquiry and Krishnamurti's spiritual search; each is an investigation of truth, albeit in different areas of human endeavour.

The video (Madras, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1980) viewed on the second day moved the theme of responsibility forward but in a surprising direction. The talk given at Madras on 27<sup>th</sup> of December 1980 focuses on India, and on the responsibility of his Indian audience to 'salvage' their country. Krishnamurti makes it abundantly clear that he is not speaking as a nationalist, but as a person who feels that it is the responsibility of his largely Indian audience to ask the question: 'How can we, as human beings, living in this country, save this country, salvage it?'

The phrase 'we, as human beings' posits that the question has not to be asked from the view of the centred individual but

from a much larger perspective: ‘We are operating from the centre of the self, the “me” first, and so each one is fighting the other, convincing the other of his own particular point of view’; however, he asserts, ‘there is no redemption for the individual.’ Krishnamurti’s manner of framing the question removes it not only from a nationalist’s position but also from the individualistic one.

India can be salvaged, he suggests, if there is a group of incorruptible people which stands like a rock while the waters of history swirl past. It is a striking metaphor often employed by Krishnamurti to signify both steadfastness and a transformation of the surrounding environment that the steadfastness creates. Whether each individual in the group has ceased to be self-centred is left open.

On the third day, Mr Rajan Chandy picked up the thread Dr Krishna had introduced. Mr Chandy framed his argument within the context of a secularized world, claiming that the freedom society had won from the power of the priesthood had robbed society of ‘virtue’. In a world where individuals are concerned chiefly about their own material well being, society had lost the virtues embedded in a religious view of the world. Traditional Indian thought, as he explained, defined the aims of human life as *dharma* (right conduct), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure), and moksha (liberation). When there was a conflict between *kama* or *artha* and *dharma* the claims of righteous conduct were meant to prevail. Modern societies, Mr Chandy maintained, have lost its moorings in *dharma*, as a result the pursuit of pleasure and the accumulation of wealth had become driving forces in human life. Violence, extinction of species and global warming were the direct consequence of these self-centred goals of a secularized society.

The video that day, recorded at Saanen on July 9, 1979, presses forward the idea of working together to change the world. Krishnamurti's talk is philosophical, its tone direct and confident as he begins with an 'impossible' question':

There are two different kinds of thinking: one, thinking about something, about a problem, about a personal issue, or about the world, and so on. That is, thinking about something. And is there another kind of thinking which is not about something?

The question is possibly an invitation to perform a thought experiment. Krishnamurti goes on to assert that neither meeting as equals nor thinking together is possible without uncovering 'thinking which is not about something'. 'It is important that we come together in our thinking so that there is no barrier between your thinking and my thinking, his or hers. Can we do this together?' Working together and thinking together are in this way linked to the issue raised earlier, of a body of persons who stand together with integrity like a rock; and because they stand together and think together they are in a position to change the world.

The last video (a recording of a discussion between J Krishnamurti, Pupul Jayakar and a few others at Rishi Valley, 19th December, 1984) addresses the question Krishnamurti dwelt on in the 1978 video, viewed on the first day, wherein he advised his audience to begin 'with the outer and come inward'. By the 'outer' here he meant the ideologically conflicted world. In this last video we hear Krishnamurti shift his perspective and address issues of where to begin from a different slant. The 'outer' in the former

video begins with the observation of an ideologically conflicted world in the latter video to begin with the outer is to observe the world with all the senses in their fullness, cleansed of the man-made conflicted world. Compassion or the ability to 'wipe the tears of another', however, remains a mystery,

The Gathering closed with Mr Kandaswamy's description of the difficulties ordinary human beings face in understanding Krishnamurti. He next sketched the culture of the village where he grew up and the three personalities who dominated the essentially pre-modern cultural landscape. The description highlighted the fact the pre-modern period in India was inhabited by individuals with virtuous as well as flawed personalities, but that something significant had been lost in the last half century. Quoting Ramalingam (also known as Vallalar), the Tamil saint cum poet cum reformer, who said: 'I have opened a shop offering rubies and emeralds but found no customers,' he alluded to liberation or the last aim of life mentioned by Mr Rajan Chandy; the lines Mr Kandaswamy quoted implied that the search for liberation was what gave meaning to the whole of life.

The talks by Dr P. Krishna, Mr Rajan Chandy and Mr S. P. K. Kandaswamy addressed deeper facets of Krishnamurti's teaching. An important challenge to his present and future audiences that the proceedings brought to the fore is whether the spiritual life, which has been relegated to a private world, can once again extend its reach in the world through a 'right relationship with ideas, with property and with nature'. The challenge implicit in the descriptive title of 'World Teacher' bestowed on Krishnamurti by Dr Annie Besant is not any longer Krishnamurti's to establish but the world's to work

through.

The proceedings of the Gathering are available at  
[www.rishivalley.org](http://www.rishivalley.org)

R.H.

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From the year 2013, the KFI has begun to publish the *Bulletin* only twice a year instead of thrice, as has been the norm in the past years.

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

Published by Dr V. Aravindan 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.

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SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

Annual Subscription (India)	Rs 75.00
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Registered with The Registrar of Newspapers for India  
Under No:TNENG/2003/12845

Published by Dr V. Aravindan 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.