

Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin

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FROM THE EDITOR

Included in this issue of the *Bulletin* is a talk Krishnamurti delivered in Madanapalle on the eve of the Second World War. It was initially an European War between nation states which shared a certain civilizational ethos, including the Renaissance and the Enlightenment philosophy that followed it in the 17th century. India was a colonised country yearning to throw off the foreign yoke and emerge as an independent nation.

Going against the historical process of nearly four hundred years, Krishnamurti in 1939 warned his countrymen of the dangers of nationalism. At the time, some accused him of being an agent of imperialism. Today, however, as history unfolds, India and the world face the consequences of dividing the world into nations, first with isolationist trade barriers and then with globalisation and its competitive trade practices.

Krishnamurti addresses his audience in the framework of political ideologies dividing the adversaries in the conflict. He is surprisingly well-acquainted with ideas both communist and fascist that inform the antagonists as they go into battle, as well as the crosscurrents of nationalist ideologies that they bring to these ideologies. Each state defines itself ideologically while simultaneously drawing individuals within its ideologically divisive fold. As a consequence, conflict becomes inevitable. More insidiously, the nationalist ideology pervades individual lives and draws them into the conflict.

A prescient Krishnamurti places communists and fascists in the same category. Neither ideology will result in a good society.

Whichever side wins, the war's end will see leaders compete for power; the social disorder will remain unchanged, and poverty persistent. Meanwhile, a great deal of blood will have been shed.

Krishnamurti's analysis of nationalism is sophisticated; it traces the various strands out of which the complex notion is constructed: the initial identification with the institution of the family, which he understands is an economic unit; its evolution into class divisions with the attendant distinction between upper and lower strata; and the role of the upper strata in the construction of nationalistic ideology on the basis of race or religion. Pride is the thread drawing these various stages together, which culminates in the shared feeling of superiority: 'My people – psychologically and economically – are greater than other people.'

That nationalism is not indigenous but an ideology imported from the more powerful West is clear from Krishnamurti's advising his Indian audience, even in 1939, to study its outcome on countries of the West. Have they, through 'nationalism', solved the problem of poverty? he asks.

At the start, we hear Krishnamurti say that he is not bringing yet another ideology to bear on the grim issues of violence. His is not an intellectual stance, 'I am saying that one should rather depreciate the intellect rather than value it. We must have the intellect to understand, but merely leaving understanding as a function of our intellect – which has nothing to do with our ordinary lives, our daily conflicts – seems, to me, utterly futile.'

His concerns, as he implies in the above quotation, is to subordinate the intellect to a more holistic way of looking at the world and at individuals. Individuals in their embrace of nationalist ideologies are not individuals; they define themselves in terms of

group identities. Krishnamurti's advice to his Indian audience in Madanapalle is as relevant today, more than seventy years later, as it was in 1939.

R.H.

Due to the unclear nature of future circumstances, no definitive decision regarding the annual KFI Gathering can be taken now. Please look up the official KFI website (kfionline.org) by August, 2020 for further information regarding the Gathering.

NATIONALISM, WAR AND PEACE

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): Friends, before I begin to introduce my subject, I want to point out to you that I am not speaking as a specialist, as a man who is a specialist in a certain thing. To me, life is not a process to be divided up into ‘religion’, ‘politics’, and so on; it is an integral whole. And it is from *that* point of view that I am speaking. Life cannot be divided up into any specific department, and if one does that, our problems – which are so complex, so innumerable – cannot thoroughly be understood.

And, also, Sirs, I would like to point out that in understanding what I am saying, one should rather depreciate the intellect rather than value it. We must have the intellect to understand, but merely leaving understanding as a function of our intellect – which has nothing to do with our ordinary lives, our daily conflicts – seems, to me, utterly futile. But the majority of us are so conditioned by fear that we would rather intellectually amuse ourselves and play with ideas, however dangerous they are, and merely leave it in the realm of the intellect. But for life to be understood, the intellect [should] become an integral part of life and not merely be a directing, warning, safeguarding instrument, thereby separating the whole of life into ‘politics’, ‘religion’, and so on.

So what is our problem at the present, or at any time? We see, do we not?, the extraordinary conflict not only in the individual but in the world. We see the wars, unemployment, national aspirations, and the conflicts between the various ideologies of the Fascists, Communists, Socialists, Imperialists. And we, also, see the individual caught up in innumerable beliefs not only within himself but, also, with an environment that condition him to act or think in a certain way. So is not the problem how to act in this world – that is, whether there should be mass-action or individual-

action? That is, we see in this world unemployment, exploitation. We see the means of production in the hands of the few, which results in national barriers and which eventually results in wars of different kinds: not only economic wars, but actual bloodshed which is happening all over the world. Then there is the national unemployment within the country, the class of people that own and the class of people that do not own; and there is the class that is supposed to be more intelligent so that it can dominate, rule, and guide. We see, also, in this structure of society, a morality based on 'possessiveness' not only of property but of persons and of ideas. There are people caught up in beliefs – either they are Muslim, Christian – each trying to 'correct' the other. Hence, there is the continuity of conflicts between the various beliefs!

This is the social structure throughout the world. And realising all these tremendously complex problems, what are you as an individual to do? So, that is the problem; however complicated, or however greater the ramifications, that is the problem.

Realising not only the appalling chaos, brutality, and cruelty that exist, but also realising the various ideologies that exist and which assert that by following these ideologies these problems will be solved – what are you as an individual to do? How are you to act? What are you to think, and how are you to face the whole problem of living? That is the question. Are you to act as an 'individual', or are you to act as the 'mass'?

I do not know if you have thought of the problem at all; so, if you will allow me, I will enlarge it a little.

You see the economic confusion. And a new religion, the religion of 'nationalism', has come into being, through which, it is asserted, that the problems of starvation and unemployment will certainly be

solved. Or, it is the fashion to say that by an economic plan, a revolution, by mass-action, by following a new ideology, this question of living – the question of the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’ with their moralities, with their class divisions – will cease. That is, by having an ideology, a plan, a conception of what society should be and by realising that there must be mass-action, the problems will be solved. There must be political leaders, dictators – either the dictatorship of a certain class, the few, or the dictatorship of one – in order to produce a perfect state so that you, the individual, may have an opportunity to live creatively and integrally in that society. The whole idea of mass-action is to produce through revolution according to a plan – which the individual is incapable of producing by himself – a new society. And to produce such a plan, such a society, you can have only mass-action.

Now what do we mean by the mass-action? What is the ‘mass’, and what does mass-action produce? Surely, mass-action is temporary; it is not lasting action. If you want a revolution, which is a temporary result, you must have mass-action. With mass-action you have a transient result. That is, by instigation, by propaganda, by certain ideas continually being driven into your minds, you will, as a mass of people, act – and that act will produce, it is hoped, a definite result. Surely, mass-action – whether political, religious or moral – is temporary action, is it not? When you act as a ‘mass’, you are acting not as ‘true’ individuals, not as thinking, thoughtful people, taking your own responsibilities, acting integrally, wholly comprehending the whole, that is, all the circumstances, but you are merely looking to an immediate result. And an immediate result (which is what generally happens through the mass-action), though for the moment comforting, for the moment satisfying, though for the moment appearing to dissolve all the difficulties, is the creation of an irresponsible environmental situation.

You, acting as the ‘mass’, may destroy one particular system, one particular form of government, one particular class but, after the action has taken place, there are those people who want to use the organisation created by the mass for power. This is shown historically through the ages; you can observe it. In the newspapers you can find this fact, namely, that when the mass acts, it produces a momentary change – perhaps a better organisation – which a few individuals then, with their cunning brilliancy, use and usurp for their own purposes, for their own power, for their own glory.

So, there is the mass-action and the question whether you should act as the mass. What is fundamentally involved in mass-action is that though you may momentarily produce, create, what you may consider of lasting value, all that you have done is to have got [individuals to act] as a mass – which is to act irresponsibly and, therefore, create an irresponsible environmental situation. Surely such an action does not produce any fundamental change in the world. But, unfortunately, we all want immediate results.

Take a man who is unemployed, who is seeking a job after passing his B.A. (which, from my point of view, is futile and stupid). What happens? You are unemployed; you want immediate change and, therefore, you allow yourself to become the ‘mass’, but you do not know what it involves. It involves the subjugation of yourself to a certain result. And we think, unfortunately, that mass-action is more necessary, more lasting, [than individual-action]. It *may be*, for those who are unemployed but, if they observe very carefully, they will see that such a revolutionary act brings about mere [momentary] change, and does not produce a lasting, fundamental change in the world. So how are you to act? – Surely as an individual; and that is my point. To bring about a change, the change that, inevitably, is required in the world, you must *not* be the mass.

You are both the mass and the individual. That is, you are the mass with all its psychological standards, with all its traditional values, with the environmental influences that hold you. When you break away from that and act with full responsibility, then such an act is a lasting action – though such an action does not, perhaps, immediately produce a much more lasting society in which human beings can live happily, and not be at each other's throat. So how are you to disentangle yourself from the mass and become human, become an integral being who perceives the present chaos and, therefore, is capable of acting intelligently – which is spiritually?

For me, there is no such thing as 'isolation'. That is, as long as there is living, existence, we all are related. There cannot be isolated-action. That is, Sirs, to live is to be related. And because we find in that relationship great conflict, we want to withdraw. Either we withdraw and become a *sannyasi*, or we withdraw into a social or political party (as joining a society, a group of ideologists, frees us from responsible-action), or we build ourselves an ivory tower in which we live intellectually (that is, we live in an intellectual, rational world). All these are various forms of isolation. So what we have to understand is relationship, for society is the relationship between two people.

Your whole attitude, unfortunately, towards society is that of the individual with an entity which is mechanical, an entity that has no direct relationship with you as an individual. For you, society is merely a mechanical function, whereas, to him, [K], society is the relationship of two people multiplied. Therefore, if you and another – you and your wife, you and your father – can understand relationship rightly, then your relationship with society is understood. Then your problem is not between yourself and the so-called society but between you and another – whether that other is in an intimate relationship with you or farther removed from you.

Surely the problem is whether you can live in this world happily, creatively, integrally, and not merely biologically. Can you live in this world without this continual battle of relationship – relationship being a crystallised value, which continually asserts certain values on the mind? Can you live in this world without this continual battle of relationship not only with another, but also with the environment? So can you – the individual – and I, you and your father, society, live happily? If you solve that problem, the whole problem of living is solved.

How is conflict to be dissolved? Can that conflict be dissolved by mass-action, or only by you as an individual – [that is, you, as an individual] realise what creates that conflict and, therefore, you will be free from that? Can conflict in relationship be dissolved by mass-action – mass-action being the action of the many – or is it to be dissolved by individual-action – individual-action being your becoming aware, as an individual, what the process of this conflict is and, in becoming aware of that process, you destroy the cause of conflict and, therefore, live as an integral human being in this mad and chaotic world? You understand the implications – don't you, Sirs?

When you talk about mass-action freeing the individual from conflict in relationship, what is implied? Surely [mass-action freeing the individual from conflict in relationship] is not possible, because conflict comes into being when there are, in the relationship between two people, values which are based on dominance. When you dominate another – psychologically, physiologically, and economically – you are bound to create conflict. Perhaps a new organisation, through mass-action, through legislation, may remove economic domination. But psychologically your whole intellectual values are based on power; and as long as the pursuit of power exists, you must create conflict

in relationship. That is, look at your relationship with your wife and your father. What is that based on? – Essentially on domination, on possessiveness, no? We try to cover it up by nice sounding words such as ‘love’, ‘affection’, ‘companionship’, and so on. But our whole social structure is based on domination; it is based on that and, so, how can you, as individual, find happiness in relationship when you want to dominate another? After all, why do we dominate? – Because we want satisfaction; and our moral laws and ethics are based on the righteousness of domination. Surely, until we as individuals fundamentally alter, there will be no peace in the world.

And if you cannot, in relationship, be free from domination, surely you will create a society whose values will be as they are at present: values and moralities based on possessiveness. [For you] ‘It is perfectly right to hold property’, and you have built a society to help you to hold that property; ‘It is perfectly right to hold your wife’, and you have values, morality, religious sanctions based on that. So there is not only the economic problem. Surely this is your problem – whether you are interested [in it] or not, whether you are conscious or unconscious of it. If you consider your relationship with another, then you will solve your relationship with God, with Truth but, unfortunately, you first want to establish, solve your relationship, with the Higher, with God!

How are we going to establish our relationship with another? Our establishing a relationship with the Higher, with God, is merely an escape! So our organisations have become convenient retreats; they offer all the satisfaction that we want and, so, we escape from what-is, the Real. And I say: If you understand your relationship with another, with society, wholly and integrally, then you will understand the relationship with Reality. It is no good seeking a relationship with God unless you seek the right relationship with

your wife. But if all of us think in this way, unfortunately [we will be up against] the mass of traditional opinions, the mass of religious opinions which state, 'You must seek the Higher'. Surely, to go far you must begin near, to climb high you must begin with the low. And Reality, God is not an escape; It is an experience that only comes to you when you establish your relationship with another. And right relationship is established when there is real freedom from fear, and from values based on decisiveness. When you are liberated from those values of decisiveness and dominance and, therefore, of fear – when you are free of all that – then you will know what creative living is. It is the living of Reality, and in that state alone you can solve the innumerable problems that confront us every day.

QUESTION (Q): You say that a World Government and not a National Government can give a lasting solution to the problems of poverty. As this transition may not take place perhaps for centuries, is there not an implication that, in the meantime, you do not mind the sacrifice of the millions who are starving at present? How else do you suggest dealing with the immediate problem?

JK: Let us see what 'nationalism' has done to the world before we proceed further. We can see what is happening in Europe. Each country asserts itself and says, 'My people – both psychologically and economically – are greater than the other people'. Nationalism comes into being when you seek to continue the institution of 'family', or seek to establish a certain family as 'special' or having a specialised function. (A family is *not* just 'having children'; it is an 'institution'.) That is, first, there must be, economically, the institution of a 'family'. And to continue it, there must be a 'class' and then the nation. This process creates different economic 'classes', different forms of 'race'; this, therefore, creates nationalism. What does nationalism mean? – Economic

barriers, so-called prestige, honour through bayonets, airplanes, battleships. Each country throughout the world saying, ‘My people first’ – surely all that is the result of nationalism!

You need not doubt my words; you can, as well, look into the newspapers! One must, they say, ‘In order to look after your own people, find forms of governments or institutions that will through ‘restrictions’ and ‘tariff walls’ economically protect your people, your own class, protect the interest of a particular family’. Each nation is doing this and, therefore, there must be economic war – which eventually results in bloodshed and, thereby, increased poverty, increased unemployment.

Surely, you are seeing in Europe greater unemployment and greater suffering; the question of starvation has not been solved; it is still there. So, before becoming nationalistic, see that the others – through their nationalism – have not achieved [what they set out to achieve]; they have not solved problems; they have not brought about peace. See that, on the contrary, there is greater hatred, unemployment. Yet, the new religion of nationalism is rampant!

You can solve the problem only by not having nationalism at all, by not having various governments – as the English, American, German governments, and so on – but by having only one Government for the whole people. *That* is the only sane way of acting, feeling; every other form is destructive and only leads to bloodshed. Yet you are clamouring for nationalism! ‘But how else will you solve the problem of starvation?’ you ask. By becoming nationalistic and by creating tariff barriers, economic restrictions, you may, temporarily diminish unemployment. But in the very process [of imposing barriers], you are creating the continuation of starvation and destruction! So, how else would you solve this problem except by forgetting whether you are Muslim or a Hindu

or a Christian, or a German, and so on? How else would you solve this problem except by forgetting all these stupid barriers and becoming human beings who are not class-minded, not religious, or sectarian? One must be free from all these things. Only then, when there are no nationalities, no forms of division of people as the 'high' and the 'low', will you produce a happy, sane world in which there will be no starvation.

You will say, '*That* will take a long time; the reality is that we want food, immediate employment'. I know you all want that, but even if you have nationalism, you are not going to have food tomorrow. Your question, problem, still remains. So you cannot solve this problem immediately. Immediately means 'now'. Can you be fed now, employed now? – Certainly not! Whatever form of government you may create, there is no [such] answer as the 'immediate answer'. The 'immediate answer' is merely the political answer, which is the cheap answer! But the 'fundamental answer' is this: to be free of all the conditionings of an absurd society and, therefore, to be human beings in a world that has plenty. The world has the technical means that can supply plenty to all. Only, unfortunately, those who dominate through their mass psychology, want to have the new religion, namely, nationalism. Unfortunately, they dominate and have the means of propaganda; hence they control and, hence, you are bamboozled!

If you really thought about peace and about happiness, nationalism cannot exist. The joy of human existence is destroyed by the absurd barrier of countries. And, yet, you insist on perpetuating it, because you are merely looking for an immediate answer. But the only answer is the fundamental answer: to be free of all nationalities, all class, and to think anew about these problems. If you really feel it, your action is immediate. And your immediate

action will, therefore, produce a new world. Your mere Utopian conceptualizing is utterly futile.

Q: You are one among thousands who claim this town as their birth place, but whereas you have attained such a high position, the rest of us are lost in insignificance, down the valley. How can we make the best use of the common opportunity?

JK: Sirs, are you jealous of my 'position'? But I have no position. I mean this, really, because I do not regard life as an achievement; I do not regard life with an attitude of ambition; I do not think of becoming something else. But the majority of you, unfortunately, want to be something else. *That* is all the difference. Surely, Sirs, one can live here at Madanapalle and, if one is not ambitious, if one does not want to be something else, you will know how to fulfil. And when you fulfil, then you will know that opportunities are not for the few but for the many. Don't you see, Sirs, that our whole outlook with regard to life is one of successes, achievement, and the worship of those people who have achieved? You all want to become either saints or political leaders or local big lawyers; therefore, you live in a world of destructive conflict.

I know this will have no meaning to you, but don't you see that in going *without* hope you find hope? There is the hope, but if you merely cling to life as the means of achieving something, that is, success, then you become a local, well-known non-entity! Though you may have millions of rupees or whatever it is [that you count as 'success'], if there is not that happiness in one's life, what is the value of your [being a] big noise? And you can only learn to be happy in trying to become aware of the activities of your intellect. When you have no ambition to become a Collector or someone in the I.C.S., or are not seeking honours from the Government, when

you are not doing any of these things, you will live in a right relationship with human beings and you will know what Reality is.

Reality is not an achievement got out of ambition; it is not the result of success. But, unfortunately, you want success, you want to be great, to be this and that. This means that you want power and that is why you go to Masters and gurus. And all this means you are incapable. You cannot get a job; therefore, you want security somewhere else. You want security, power in another part of your consciousness and, therefore, gurus have become the curse of this land! So, there is an opportunity here – *not* to become something but to live integrally and happily. Surely, if you have done that, the world is yours; you will know, have, the right relationship with your wife and children and, therefore, with the whole world. You cannot get these things in any book. And I have not read any books: psychological or spiritual. So, do not try to achieve great things, but live so completely that you will see how God or Truth is there in everything.

*Madanapalle
February 19, 1939*

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