

Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin

Volume 21, Issue 2, July to December 2024

Rs 25/

FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue of the *Bulletin* are included a 1939 talk on belief in transcendent beings, such as God or Masters, and a dialogue from the early sixties between Krishnamurti and an intellectual seeking to change society. Together the two pieces illustrate Krishnamurti's position that a true search does not begin with conclusions.

The first piece, a talk, addresses an audience in Rishi Valley influenced by traditional Vedanta and Theosophy, and the second piece, (published in the *Commentaries on Living, III*) is a dialogue with an intellectual who seeks to reform the world based on knowledge. He is extremely well-read in the area of science and well-acquainted with esoteric practices in both Eastern and the Western worlds. He is convinced that 'Given a first-rate mind, and the capacity to accumulate knowledge, a man should be able to do immense good'; and, so, to be better equipped to reform the world, he is in search of greater knowledge. But he is taken aback when he hears Krishnamurti's view that 'Knowledge must be set aside to understand truth'.

While the dialogue clarifies what Krishnamurti means by 'knowledge' and by 'thought', the talk in Rishi Valley elucidates Krishnamurti's denial of effort in initiating search for spiritual truth.

R.H.

FOR A REAL MAN WHO WANTS TO ESTABLISH REALITY, A MASTER DOES NOT EXIST

J KRISHNAMURTI (JK): We are going to discuss, this morning, the ideas and beliefs that we possess. We have discussed the possession of property. Then, we discussed the possession of people. Now we are going to discuss the possession of ideas, beliefs, conceptions, etc.

Yesterday we divided our beliefs into two kinds. Those that have vital significance in our life or, at least, we think they have and we try to live according to those principles, as patterns, as ideals, and those beliefs which we may call 'scientific' and which do not play a fundamental role in our life.

So we need not discuss those beliefs which have very little significance. We are going to discuss those beliefs, those patterns of conduct according to which we are trying to live, that is, those beliefs and conceptions which we think are true, and which we turn to, in conscious moments or in moments of great difficulty.

This division seems to be necessary to make our discussion clearer.

Why are we discussing these things: possession of belief, properties, people, etc.? Let us find out. Did we not see that when we possess things, our relationship to another must be mechanical?

And we went into the question of relationship. And relationship, if it is merely a custom or tradition then, in our marriage, also, the relationship must be mechanical.

When our relationship with another is based on property, ownership, or values of dominance they, also, must produce a mechanical reaction.

I do not know if you follow me. We want to discuss beliefs which act as a lever to overcome conflict; that is, the very nature of our beliefs. We have beliefs, conceptions, and ideals which are used in order to overcome the present conflict.

AUDIENCE (A): Sir, beliefs satisfy us.

JK: Is that the reason why we have beliefs? Can't we take what we know, or mean now by 'beliefs' as 'the acceptance of things as being true'?

A: Yes, Sir.

JK: You may accept somethings as being true through tradition, and I may say, 'I accept because it is my own experience'. Now: What are the various kinds of beliefs? That is, there are those beliefs, values which we accept as true through tradition, and those beliefs and values which we consider are our experience.

How can we experience anything originally unless we uncondition the mind? Suppose I am brought up in one conception, that is, as a Hindu with all the limitations, superstitious ideas, and with all the implications of that. That is, when I am a child all these ideas are imprinted on me, and I accept that as part of myself. From that conditioned state, I react, and which I call 'experience'. Is it not?

This is only the reaction of the conditioning. Therefore, you have to understand the significance of the word 'experience' before you say you believe in it.

I want to see the difference between my experience and the conditioned experience. When you say that is ‘my’ experience, you can’t go beyond that; there is no further discussion. It is a repetition of a previous conditioning and, therefore, it is not ‘yours’. In other words, if you say, ‘I have an experience of God or Truth’, it must be entirely unconditioned, entirely first hand. But, before we come to that state, you must know the conditioned state in which we are, and that is what we are discussing.

Now: we are discussing in order to find out what beliefs are and why we have beliefs and if it is necessary to have beliefs at all, and whether one cannot live without the background of beliefs which condition the mind.

A: I believe in the existence of God.

JK: Then what, Sirs? It is not a question of what I believe. All that I say is that one must come to realise God; and that a man who clings to belief cannot get at Reality, because Reality is original.

When we talk about ‘belief in God’, what do we mean? Why do we want a belief of that kind? It is merely a tradition, a custom we have learnt from our parents, from the environment, from society. That is, a person may be from an atheistic society which imprints the belief that there is no God. And you say, ‘I believe in God’. After all, that belief is the result of a tradition. It has been handed down to all of us.

Now, having that idea implanted in our mind, we resort to it in moments of conflict. Why do we do that? In other words, God becomes the idea – God being perfection, nobility, purity, love, kindness, goodness, peace, omniscience, etc. That is, we clothe the idea with all the things which we are not. That is, we give to

that idea the opposite of what we are. One is evil, one is ignorant, one is envious, and so on, and we believe that the opposite of that is Reality, which is God.

Please follow the point. It's not that I have a fixed ideology to which I am trying to drive you all. In other words, the conflict in which we are drives us to create an opposite image, so that the opposite may help us. In my relationship with another there is conflict, and to overcome that conflict, I resort to or invent or traditionally accept a belief which will help me to overcome that conflict. That is the process the intellect goes through. So is not your belief in a God the result of conflict in life and that you must have somebody to help you to escape from that conflict?

A: Not necessarily.

JK: Why do you say that, Sir?

A: As a boy I had very little conflict.

JK: Or, it is a very pleasant thing, a beautiful conception. Either you create the image of God because there is conflict, or you may be unconscious of conflict and you create something beautiful in order to worship that. First, there is the conflict, and to escape that conflict, the intellect has to invent a God or an idea. This is obvious.

To find what is true to ourselves is the problem that we are discussing. Do we not create ideals, beliefs, out of a desire for comfort? There is the belief of perfection-through-time, evolution; there is the belief of reincarnation; there is the belief in nationalism; the belief in Masters leading you to perfection; the belief in karma. Take the simplest of these ideas – the belief that

someone else will lead you to truth, which is the idea of the Guru and the Master. Sir, either you fundamentally go to a guru or a master in order that he leads you to perfection or truth or that he might give you an awakening.

So, what does that mean? What is implied in it? – That you are, psychologically, not in a position to use your integral, critical power. You do not doubt the capacities of a person who is giving you what you want.

You go to the guru to lead you blindly, and you must follow, whether you like it or not. So through your wants, you destroy your critical capacity. There are physical gurus and unseen gurus. How do you know that they have realised Truth? Either you judge by a tradition or apply a measure, and if that person measures up, fits, you say, ‘He is a guru’. Or the guru has a reputation. When you say, ‘He has realised Truth’, what do you mean by knowing Truth or knowing God? When you say that he knows something, what does that mean?

A: Undergone some experience.

JK: When you say that you ‘accept’ him, you are not thinking. We are dealing with psychology and not with science. That is, your house is static, and the road to that is static. In the same way, you say that you have realized Truth. What does that mean? – It means that Truth is a static thing. When you say, ‘There is God, Reality and the path is there to it, all that you have to do is to follow it, and you will get it’, it means that Truth, Reality is static. Therefore, the guru can only know either past things or dead things and not living things. If I say, ‘I know something’, it is over; I can’t know something that is vital or living.

So begin with the thing that you know and you will come to the point that you don't. We are trying to analyse the word 'knows'. All that you are concerned with is that you are in conflict, and you want to escape from that conflict. I am in conflict, and I treat you as a guru because you promise to help me to get out of the difficulty. What does that mean? I depend on you to help me to get out of the trouble. So, the moment you depend on me, you are my slave psychologically, whether you like it or not. Now, the question is: Can anyone help you to overcome your conflict?

A: Of course not. He only suggests a way.

JK: You say: No person can help you to overcome the conflict, but a 'way' can help you to overcome the conflict! You follow this, Sir? What do you mean by 'a method' that overcomes the conflict?

A: It is a working hypothesis which, if I act upon, produces a result.

JK: A hypothesis means you are experimenting, not knowing the result, but you want the result to be 'overcoming the difficulty'.

Surely the 'way' is obedience and discipline. You say that by disciplining yourself you can overcome that conflict. Have you ever tried it, Sir? Don't we confuse psychological things with physical actions? You are greedy, so you say: 'Don't think of greed, but think of charity'. Have you done it? Have you disciplined your mind in that way? Have you ever tried? What is the result? This is an important question. Do you not see the implications in it? All that you are seeking is for somebody that can help you to overcome the conflict.

Who is your guru – is he physical or beyond in the Himalayas? Either you have a physical guru, or you have a Master or a Higher-self, whom you consider as the Guru.

A: I have found a man who says that he has a guru.

JK: You have faith in the intermediary.

A: Yes, Sir.

JK: You are concerned in overcoming the present difficulty with the help of the Master, through the intermediary. But your concern is to be free from confusion and pain. If that is so, why do you want a guru?

A: Because I do not know how to overcome the difficulty.

JK: But if you know, you don't go to a guru. Because you don't know, you go to a guru. So you don't know what causes confusion, and you go to a guru thinking he will help you.

A: I do not understand the mystery of life.

JK: When you say you are confused, the confusion is partly due to your not knowing why certain things, such as, inequalities, sorrow, etc., exist. Let us take sorrow. We are discussing psychological sorrow. Is not sorrow a state of uncertainty? Because I do not see him, there is psychological disturbance. What does that mean? We don't like disturbance, which we identify with sorrow. Sorrow is merely a state of disturbance. We dislike the state of disturbance, and we go to somebody to overcome that disturbance.

Disturbance is uncertainty, and all that I am seeking when I am disturbed is satisfaction. I seek mental satisfaction, and the guru gives me a nice narcotic or discipline, in an effort to overcome the pain. Either you have a physical guru or you enter into another category of gurus, that is, Masters. What do you mean by ‘Masters’?

A: We have not pinned our faith either on the guru or on the Master.

JK: Belief in a Master is a second-hand belief. There are those who have ordinary, physical gurus. And there are others who say that their Masters are living elsewhere; their gurus are those whom we cannot see.

Now, you have pinned your faith in the intermediaries. What does that mean? How do you know that they know?

A: I take it for granted.

JK: What for? – Because you are in misery, pain, you accept somebody of whom you are told? How do you know that the intermediary is not in illusion?

A: I do not know.

JK: How do you accept, then?

A: There are certain standards about an intermediary.

JK: You say that you represent God. How do I know that you do? That is, there are certain systems, or I like what you say, and I find satisfaction in what you say. Is that all you seek: a Master, a guru,

an intermediary who will help you to overcome the conflict? Can anybody help you to overcome it?

A: I have not tried that, Sir.

JK: I must first understand what conflict is before I begin to move. I am in conflict. Before I say that someone will help or not help me to overcome that conflict, I must know the nature of the conflict.

A: We know that there is sorrow. We do not know the cause.

JK: Supposing my son dies. I am in sorrow: You must see what the implications are. You do not know the cause, but before you go to another you must find out whether it can be overcome.

A: That is why we go to him.

JK: Before you say that another can help you to overcome your sorrow, you must understand what sorrow is. Supposing my son dies. I become lonely. I object to that loneliness; that objection is called 'pain'. It is not because my son is dead but because I am left alone – that is the reason why I suffer. I go to a guru; he will tell me about reincarnation, and all that. I am still lonely, only I have forgotten it. The guru has helped me to forget the loneliness, but he has not taken it away.

A: He's helped to remove the gap.

JK: What gap? – That it's a mental illusion? But sorrow is a fact; it is not mental illusion. All that he helps you to do is to forget. The fact is that you are still lonely, and you have covered it up. So what is the good of going to a guru? Will they help you to overcome? All that they can do is to give you an explanation to forget it. I

have four children. My eldest son dies, and I feel the loneliness. I go to a guru. He gives me an explanation and I forget it, for the time being. My second son falls ill. I again get the sorrow; it is there. You cannot mesmerize yourself, and say, 'It is illusion', and so on. He is giving you a drug. Instead, you could take whiskey, go to a cinema, run after women? There is the loneliness. Can your Masters help you to overcome that? If you do not think of your real life, you have these Masters.

A: It is a question between my Master and myself, Sir.

JK: This gentleman says that the question is between himself and his Master, and not to be discussed in public. So there is an end of the matter. When he is in great distress he will shut his eyes, and the guru comes and helps him. For a real man who wants to establish reality, a Master does not exist.

Now the point is this: There are some of you to whom belief is strong. You have people acting as a dope or as an intermediary to overcome sorrow. But when you examine it, sorrow is still there, only pushed aside for the moment.

People who are in sorrow may not have a guru or a Master, but they may have an ideal. That is, you suffer, and you create an ideal and try to live according to that ideal. What does that mean? One goes to a physical guru, the other to a Master, another creates an ideal and says, 'I am going to concentrate on it'.

A: An ideal means what cannot be achieved.

JK: Why do you want an ideal? Why have any ideals? What is an ideal and why do you want it? I am suffering and the ideal is non-

suffering, and I am trying to overcome suffering by happiness. That is, there is the ideal and there is the fact. Now, who is the intermediary that is making an effort to overcome sorrow by happiness? You see the point, Sirs? There is the struggle. There is the person who tries to bridge the struggle with the ideas of God, Truth, and inspiration. God – is that the ideal? There is effort and pain that is the whole content of our consciousness. That is our consciousness.

We shall discuss it tomorrow.

Rishi Valley
February 15, 1939

A MIND CAUGHT IN TRADITION CANNOT PERCEIVE WHAT IS TRUE

The hills across the lake were very beautiful, and beyond them rose the snow-covered mountains. It had been raining all day; but now, like an unexpected miracle, the skies had suddenly cleared, and everything became alive, joyous and serene. The flowers were intense in their yellow, red and deep purple, and the raindrops on them were like precious jewels. It was a most lovely evening, full of light and splendour. The people came out into the streets, and along the lake, children were shouting with laughter. Through all this movement and bustle there was enchanting beauty, and a strange, all-pervading peace.

There were several of us on the long bench facing the lake. A man was talking in rather a high voice and it was impossible not to overhear what he was saying to a neighbour. ‘On an evening like this I wish I were far away from this noise and confusion, but my job keeps me here, and I loathe it.’ People were feeding the swans, the ducks and a few stray seagulls. The swans were pure white and very graceful. There wasn’t a ripple on the water now, and the hills across the lake were almost black; but the mountains beyond the hills were aglow with the setting sun, and the vivid clouds behind them seemed passionately alive.

‘I am not sure I understand you,’ my visitor began, ‘when you say that knowledge must be set aside to understand truth.’ He was an elderly man, much travelled and well-read. He had spent a year or so in a monastery, he explained, and had wandered all over the world, from port to port, working on ships, saving money and gathering knowledge. ‘I don’t mean mere book knowledge,’ he went on; ‘I mean the knowledge that men have gathered but have

not put down on paper, the mysterious tradition that's beyond scrolls and sacred books. I have dabbled in occultism, but that has always seemed to me rather stupid and superficial. A good microscope is vastly more beneficial than the clairvoyance of a man who sees super-physical things. I have read some of the great historians with their theories and their visions, but ... Given a first-rate mind and the capacity to accumulate knowledge, a man should be able to do immense good. I know it isn't the fashion, but I have a sneaking compulsion to reform the world, and knowledge is my passion. I have always been a passionate person in many ways, and now I am consumed with this urge to know. The other day I read something of yours which intrigued me, and when you said that there must be freedom from knowledge, I decided to come and see you – not as a follower, but as an inquirer.'

To follow another, however learned or noble, is to block all understanding, isn't it?

'Then we can talk freely and with mutual respect.'

If I may ask, what do you mean by knowledge?

'Yes, that's a good question to begin with. Knowledge is everything that man has learnt through experience; it is what he has gathered by study, through centuries of struggle and pain, in the many fields of endeavour, both scientific and psychological. As even the greatest historian interprets history according to his learning and mood so an ordinary scholar like me may translate knowledge into action, either 'good' or 'bad'. Though we are not concerned with action at the moment, it is inevitably related to knowledge, which is what man has experienced or learnt through thought, through meditation, through sorrow. Knowledge is vast; it is not only written down in books, but it exists in the individual as

well as in the collective or racial consciousness of man. Scientific and medical information, the technical ‘know-how’ of the material world, is rooted principally in the consciousness of western man, just as in the consciousness of eastern man there is the greater sensitivity of unworldliness. All this is knowledge, embracing not only what is already known, but what is being discovered from day to day. Knowledge is an additive, deathless process, there is no end to it, and it may therefore be the immortal that man is after. So I can’t understand why you say that all knowledge must be set aside if there is to be the understanding of truth.’

The division between knowledge and understanding is artificial, it really doesn’t exist; but to be free of this division, which is to perceive the difference between them, we must find out what is the highest form of thinking, otherwise there will be confusion.

Does thinking begin with a conclusion? Is thinking a movement from one conclusion to another? Can there be thinking, if thinking is positive? Is not the highest form of thinking negative? Is not all knowledge an accumulation of definitions, conclusions and positive assertions? Positive thought, which is based on experience, is always the outcome of the past, and such thought can never uncover the new.

‘You are stating that knowledge is ever in the past, and that thought originating from the past must inevitably cloud the perception of that which may be called truth. However, without the past as memory, we could not recognize this object which we have agreed to call a chair. The word ‘chair’ reflects a conclusion reached by common consent, and all communication would cease if such conclusions were not taken for granted. Most of our thinking is based on conclusions, on traditions, on the experiences of others, and life would be impossible without the more obvious

and inevitable of these conclusions. Surely you don't mean that we should put aside all conclusions, all memories and traditions?'

The ways of tradition inevitably lead to mediocrity, and a mind caught in tradition cannot perceive what is true. Tradition may be one day old, or it may go back for a thousand years. Obviously it would be absurd for an engineer to set aside the engineering knowledge he has gained through the experience of a thousand others; and if one were to try to set aside the memory of where one lived it would only indicate a neurotic state. But the gathering of facts does not make for the understanding of life. Knowledge is one thing and understanding another. Knowledge does not lead to understanding; but understanding may enrich knowledge, and knowledge may implement understanding.

'Knowledge is essential and not to be despised. Without knowledge, modern surgery and a hundred other marvels could not exist.'

We are not attacking or defending knowledge, but trying to understand the whole problem. Knowledge is only a part of life, not the totality, and when that part assumes all-consuming importance, as it is threatening to do now, then life becomes superficial, a dull routine from which man seeks to escape through every form of diversion and superstition, with disastrous consequences. Mere knowledge, however wide and cunningly put together, will not resolve our human problems; to assume that it will is to invite frustration and misery. Something much more profound is needed. One may know that hate is futile, but to be free of hate is quite another matter. Love is not a question of knowledge.

To go back, positive thinking is no thinking at all; it is merely a modified continuity of what has been thought. The outward shape of it may change from time to time, depending on compulsions and pressures, but the core of positive thinking is always tradition. Positive thinking is the process of conformity and the mind that conforms can never be in a state of discovery.

‘But can positive thinking be discarded? Is it not necessary at a certain level of human existence?’

Of course, but that’s not the whole issue. We are trying to find out if knowledge may become a hindrance to the understanding of truth. Knowledge is essential, for without it we should have to begin all over again in certain areas of our existence. This is fairly simple and clear. But will accumulated knowledge, however vast, help us to understand truth?

‘What is truth? Is it a common ground to be trodden by all? Or is it a subjective, individual experience?’

By whatever name it may be called, truth must ever be new, living; but the words ‘new’ and ‘living’ are used only to convey a state that is not static, not dead, not a fixed point within the mind of man. Truth must be discovered anew from moment to moment, it is not an experience that can be repeated; it has no continuity, it is a timeless state. The division between the many and the one must cease for truth to be. It is not a state to be achieved, nor a point towards which the mind can evolve, grow. If truth is conceived as a thing to be gained, then the cultivation of knowledge and the accumulations of memory become necessary, giving rise to the guru and the follower, the one who knows and the one who does not know.

‘Then you are against gurus and followers?’

It’s not a matter of being against something but of perceiving that conformity, which is the desire for security, with its fears, prevents the experiencing of the timeless.

‘I think I understand what you mean. But is it not immensely difficult to renounce all that one has gathered? Indeed, is it possible?’

To give up in order to gain is no renunciation at all. To see the false as the false, to see the true in the false, and to see the true as the true – it is this that sets the mind free.

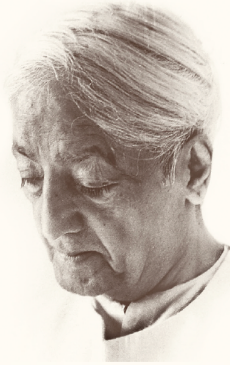
– *Commentaries On Living: Series III, Chapter 1*

Mark Lee 1940-2024

Mark Lee stands tall in the Krishnamurti world today. As a Rishi Valley teacher for eight years in the sixties, as the first principal of the Oak Grove School in Ojai, as chief editor of the Complete Works project, as Krishnamurti's biographer and, finally, as a Trustee of two Krishnamurti Foundations (the Krishnamurti Foundation of America and the Krishnamurti Foundation India), Mark's contribution to Krishnamurti's person, Krishnamurti's teaching and his institutions spanned the whole of his adult life.

Mark was attending the Saanen Gatherings in the mid-sixties when K first met him walking on the road in Gstaad and invited him to lunch at Chalet Tanegg. Over a series of lunches, K asked him to join Rishi Valley School as an English teacher. Mark accepted intending to spend six months in the Valley, but remained for eight years during which period he married his beloved wife Asha and won the hearts of a generation of students. 'Markleesir', they addressed him in a single breath, as he taught them some of the classics of English literature, and helped build a radio on which they broadcast the news of the week.

Mark's tenure as a Trustee of two foundations was marked by a spirit of generous friendship. Trustees of the Indian Foundation looked forward eagerly to his presence at the annual meetings in January.



If one can observe holistically, observe the whole movement of life as one, conflict with its destructive energy not only ceases but out of that observation comes a totally new approach to life.

J. Krishnamurti

KFI Annual Public Gathering, 2024
9th-12th November, 2024
Krishnamurti Foundation India, Rajghat Fort, Varanasi, India

Meeting Life: An Enquiry Into The Fragmented Self

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Other Particulars Of The
Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin
FORM IV**

1. Place of Publication: Krishnamurti Foundation India
'Vasanta Vihar'
124, 126 (Old-64/65)
Greenways Road
Chennai – 600 028.
2. Periodicity of Publications: Once in six months
(January and July)
3. Printer's Name: N. Subramanian
Whether citizen of India: Yes
Address: Sudarsan Graphics Pvt. Ltd
4/641, 12th Link Street
3rd Cross Road, Nehru Nagar
Kottivakkam (OMR)
Chennai – 600041.
4. Publisher's Name: V. Aravindan
Whether citizen of India: Yes
Address: Krishnamurti Foundation India
'Vasanta Vihar'
124, 126 (Old-64/65)
Greenways Road
Chennai – 600 028.

5. Editor's Name:
Address:

Dr Radhika Herzberger
Krishnamurti Foundation India
'Vasanta Vihar'
124, 126 (Old-64/65)
Greenways Road
Chennai – 600 028.

6. Name and address of individuals
who own the newspaper and partners
or shareholders holding more than
one percent of the total capital:

Krishnamurti Foundation India
'Vasanta Vihar'
124, 126 (Old-64/65),
Greenways Road
Chennai – 600 028

I, Dr V. Aravindan, hereby declare that the particulars given
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Dated: July, 2024

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BULLETIN
KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA

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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 Sudarsan Graphics Pvt. Ltd, 4/641, 12th Link Street, 3rd Cross Road, Nehru Nagar, Kottivakkam (OMR), Chennai – 600 041.

**KFI BULLETIN, ENGLISH
SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

Annual Subscription (India)	Rs 50.00
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DATED _____ ISSUED BY _____

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 Sudarsan Graphics Pvt. Ltd, 4/641,
12th Link Street, 3rd Cross Road, Nehru Nagar, Kottivakkam (OMR),
Chennai – 600041.