

Not This, Not This

The Yoga of J. Krishnamurti

The central theme of Krishnamurti's teaching is "Liberation here and now". He believes that the Infinite is with us in the finite, but we are unable to perceive it because it is shrouded by our I-consciousness. If somehow we are able to dissolve our I-ness we shall discover Truth, Reality, God—by whatever name we call it.

by SUDHAKAR DIKSHIT

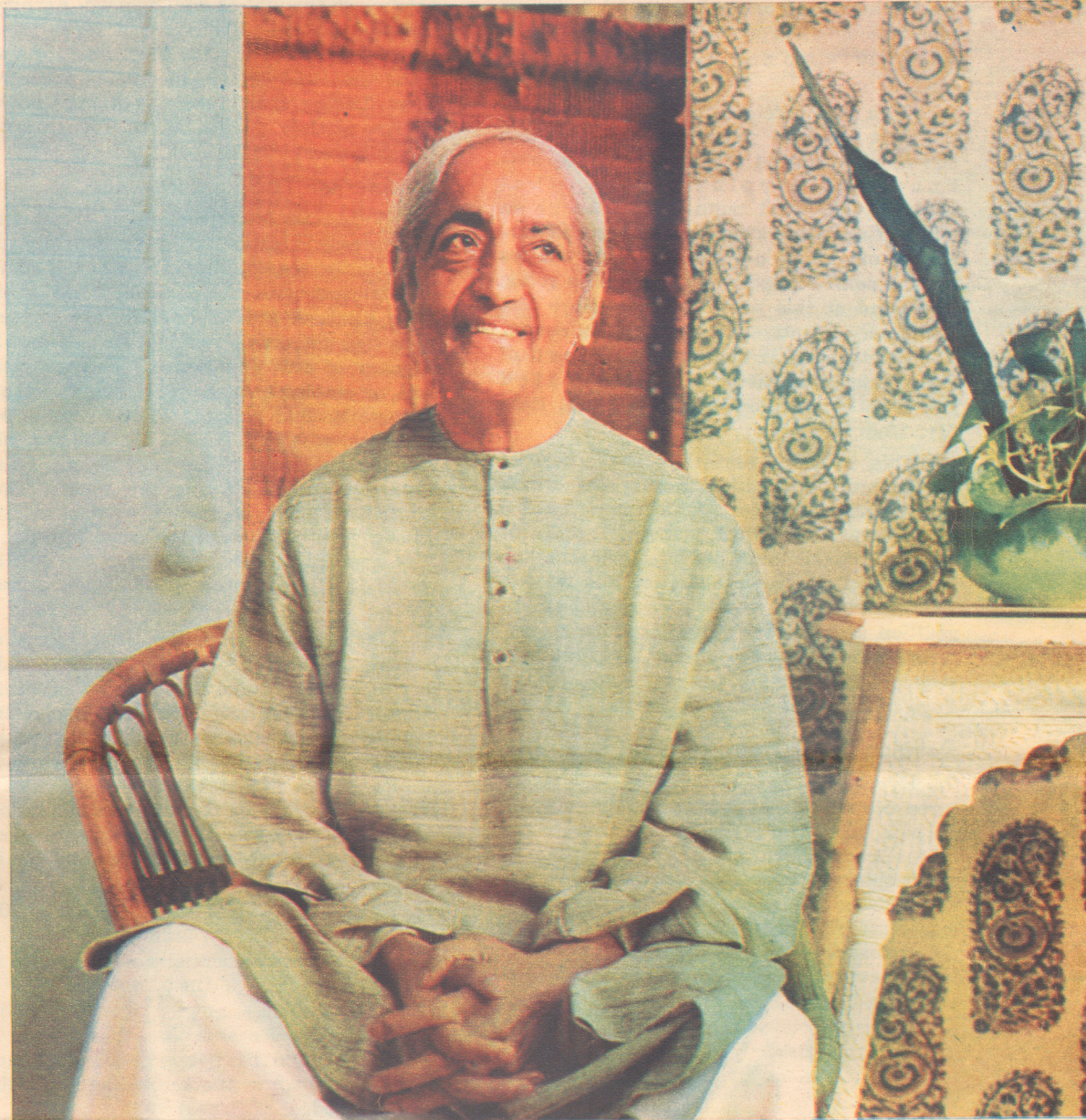
WHAT is I-consciousness? What is the I? The I, according to Jiddu Krishnamurti, is the personification of our desires and cravings, a conglomeration of our sense experiences which take the form of memory. Sense experiences, pleasant or unpleasant, affect our mental process in a mysterious manner, causing feelings and thoughts of attraction or repulsion, justification or condemnation, thus creating a sort of whirlpool of duality in which our life is caught up, with no chances of redress or escape.

Sense experiences get crystallised into what Krishnamurti calls psychological memory which projects the past into the present and tarnishes it with numerous preconceived notions and prejudices. Psychological memory makes us view the present through the screen of the past; it also projects into the future in the form of hopes and fears which, of their very nature, are illusory in character. This accretion of psychological memory, the I-complex, with its I-assertions, I-aims, is what Krishnamurti calls the "conditioned mind".

The Gordian Knot of I-Consciousness

According to Krishnamurti, we can never perceive the Truth, Reality, with a conditioned mind, just as we cannot see the whiteness of a white object with red glasses perched upon our nose. We cannot attain liberation until our I-consciousness is dissolved, until the bewildering duality of the I and not-I, subject-object, ideal-actual is laid to rest for ever, until our mind is unconditioned.

How to make our conditioned mind unconditioned? How to disentangle the Gordian knot of the I? Krishnamurti holds that the way beyond the I is only through the knowledge of the I. The way suggested by him is eminently practical, if correctly understood and sincerely followed. For such an attainment he suggests what may be called a threefold path, comprising: (a) extensive awareness, (b) freedom from psychological memory and (c) stillness of the mind. He insists on our total transformation, not through prayer or penance, but through introspection, self-criticism and self-analysis, which ultimately will dissolve all self-created illusions and delusions, all divisive



—Jitendra Arya

thoughts of duality, all pretence, hypocrisy and cant through the revolutionary process of doubt, challenge and rejection. In short, the way shown by Krishnamurti aims at attainment of the Sublime-Positive, the Ultimate Reality through a process of relentless but creative negation.

In one of the Upanishads, *Brahman*, the Supreme Self, is described negatively. *Neti, neti*—not this, not this—says the Upanishad. This is not *Brahman*. That is not *Brahman*. Krishnamurti's approach, though not inspired by the Upanishad, is very similar to it. Let us try to explain this negative approach of his as briefly as possible.

It cannot be denied that all human beings are ever in search of happiness in some form or other. As children we play with toys and feel happy. After a few years we outgrow the toys and seek happiness elsewhere—in sports, physical sensations, sex, etc. Later, we outgrow these also and seek hap-

piness in power, self, name, fame, race, religion, etc, which also cease to give us happiness at a certain stage in life. But our quest for happiness continues unabated, though its centre of attraction keeps on shifting from time to time. The hunger is never satiated. The craving is never satisfied. There is no end to this quest.

Suppose one day we take to introspection, to self-analysis and self-criticism. We then see before our eyes the moving panorama of our past happinesses which, after all, did not make us happy. Toys? No. Sex, power, position, riches? No. Not this, not this—we say to ourselves. We become aware of the utter futility of the innumerable forms of happiness which deluded us in the past. Thus self-criticism gives birth to "awareness".

Awareness, we now see, is the result of rejection of our mental images—opinions, views, values, judgements. When the gamut

of our analysis and criticism covers all the images of our mind, awareness becomes extensive. It causes complete disillusionment and a deep discontent with all that we did, thought or felt. In this state our mind becomes alert and extra active; it sees things as they are, without accepting or rejecting them. Our mental functions of justification and condemnation cease to be, because the psychological memory, the sense of I-ness from which they arise, has ceased to be, its place being taken by discrimination—acute, alert, uninvolved and free of all conditioning.

With such extensive awareness we reach the first stage of self-knowledge. Through our newly-acquired discrimination we now know what happiness is not, what virtue is not, what truth is not. We go on eliminating image after image saying to ourselves: not this, not this, not this, till we reach a point beyond which there is no going. The mind at this point is fully aware and completely negative. It is still, it is empty. The empty mind is the mind stripped of everything, even the self. It is liberated and is in communion with the Truth, Reality, God.

This, in barest essentials, is the core of Krishnamurti's teaching, a teaching which transforms man from within, and that too through his own effort, without the aid of religion, rituals and prayers; without the guidance of the proverbial guru, the master. This teaching is an exploration of and an expedition against the "I-ness" and "my-ness" through the dialectics of not this, not this. This unique teaching we prefer to call the Yoga of Krishnamurti.

Religion Is "Frozen Thought"

Krishnamurti never quotes any scriptures. He does not draw upon any religion, for religion to him is the "frozen thought" of others leading to organised exploitation of man's spiritual needs. He does not lean upon any gods or goddesses; in fact he is an arch iconoclast. He has never studied any books on philosophy. He has, within our knowledge, never used the term "yoga" while expounding his ideas in his talks or writings. Then why associate this word with his teaching, one may ask? We have a justification for such a use, as the following lines will show.

The legendary founder of the yoga system, sage Patanjali, in the very first aphorism of his *Yoga Sutras* defines yoga in the following words: "*Yogas chitta-vritti-nirodhah*". (*Chitta*—mind *vritti*—movement, modifications, *nirodhah*—stoppage, suppression, inhibition.)

He describes yoga as the stoppage of the movement of the mind. In the second chapter he enumerates the eight constituent parts, or eight stages of yoga. These are: *yama*—self-restraints, *niyama*—fixed observances, *asana*—prescribed postures of the body, *pranayama*—regulation of breath, *pratyahara*—abstraction, *dharana*—concentration, *dhyana*—contemplation and *samadhi*—state of blissful trance. Further, he describes the *yamas*, self-restraints, as a five-fold discipline comprising: *ahimsa*—harmlessness, non-violence, *satya*—truthfulness, *asteya*—honesty, *brahmacharya*—sexual continence and *aparigraha*—non-acquisitiveness, non-possessiveness.

Patanjali's yoga is a severe and rigorous ethical code which aims at eliminating all

mental activity that causes unhappiness in the life of human beings. The five moral qualities incorporated in the *yamas* provide a code of right conduct as conceived by Patanjali. *Ahimsa* eschews not only killing, but cruelty and injustice in thought as well as action. *Satya* is not only truthfulness, but avoidance of pretence, equivocation and exaggeration. *Asteya*, which literally means non-stealing, covers all forms of misappropriation in thought as well as deed. *Brahmacharya* is not only avoidance of sexual pleasures, but also of sensual pleasures, for they make the mind captive in diverse deceptive ways. Lastly, *aparigraha* is not only not to possess worldly goods, but to have a sense of non-possessiveness.

Traditional Yoga

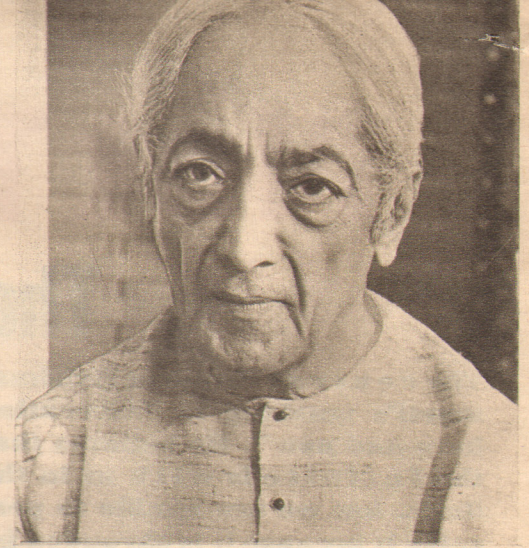
Pratyahara is abstraction, or elimination of impressions produced by the worldly objects on the senses. The mind when it comes into contact with the outside world forms three kinds of mental images: (1) impressions that get assimilated into the senses, (2) memory of past experiences, whether pleasant or unpleasant and (3) mental images of hope or fear relating to the future, but based on past experiences. *Pratyahara*, abstraction, eliminates the impressions that have got embedded into the senses. Thus *pratyahara* aims at mental control of the senses, a withdrawal of the mind into itself. It is a wilful process to shut out the outside world; it is control of the *indriyas*, sense-organs.

Dharana, concentration, is a single-pointed application of the mind to the object of concentration. The mind in concentration has to do away with, or dissolve the memory of past experiences. When, through *dharana*, the memory of past experiences is fully conquered, the *sadhaka*, the seeker, reaches the state of *dhyana*, contemplation, which will subjugate the third type of mental contents, hopes and fears relating to the future.

Lastly, let us deal with *samadhi*, the state of trance which is the culmination of *dhyana*. *Samadhi* is actually not a trance or a state of mental inertness, but the state of supreme awareness, replete with the true inner life of peace and bliss. It is a state in which the mind has transcended itself and has merged into the self-efulgent Truth, Reality, God.

The course of classical yoga is rather tortuous and arduous as compared to what we prefer to call the Yoga of Krishnamurti. It is not necessary to show that the objective of both is the same, namely, liberation. Krishnamurti's approach, however, is direct and simple. He does not lay down a bewildering maze of paths and by-paths, he does not prescribe a rigorous discipline bristling with restraints and injunctions. He does not behave like a spiritual dictator, guru, master or mother whose word is law. On the contrary, he walks with us on the path as a fellow pilgrim ready to share with us what he is experiencing from moment to moment.

Krishnamurti covers in one word, "awareness", the entire field of mental phenomenon described and discussed by Patanjali at great length. Awareness, as we can see, is "pratyahara" plus "dharana" plus "dhyana". When the mind is truly aware the impressions that get embedded into the senses wither away, memory of past experiences is dissolved and the illusory hopes and



—Jitendra Arya

fears relating to the future disappear. The moral qualities prescribed by Patanjali under the "yamas" are already transcended with the dissolution of the I-sense which preceded awareness. In the state of awareness—alert, extensive, choiceless—the mind is emptied of everything; it is completely still, it is at one with the Infinite, the Truth, Reality, God. This state surely is not different from that of "samadhi", as conceived by Patanjali.

This brief comparison of Krishnamurti's teaching with the fundamentals of the classical yoga clearly shows that we are justified in calling it the Yoga of Krishnamurti. Also we are of the definite view that in the context of the life today Krishnamurti's yoga can yield better and quicker results than any other system of yoga, howsoever hoary or authentic.

Slaves Of Our Cravings

In the world of today with all its technological and economic development, when man is unhappy in the midst of multifarious pleasures, there is perhaps no other teaching except that of Krishnamurti that can liberate him from the prison he has built around himself through his own ignorance. Engaged all the time in stomach-and-pocket activities, modern man is a slave of his own cravings, euphemistically called ambitions, aspirations, aims, ideals—which, alas, because they are seldom fulfilled, cause deep distress and unbounded frustration.

His is an existence of constant conflict between the world within and the world outside. Unable to synthesise the two, he does not know what to do with his life and in what way to get some peace, if not happiness. He is afraid, without knowing that it is his own sense of possession and identification, his my-ness that is the cause of fear. He is unhappy, without knowing that his unhappiness is due to the battle between the I and not-I, two opposing elements, both created by his mind. He does not know that the arch villain is his own mind, which makes him see only what it wants him to see. For it is the mind which imposes qualities and values upon fellow-beings and upon the actions, as well as upon all things and events, and makes him believe that they must be as he sees them. It is his mind that puts masks of its choice on the faces of men and clothes the reality with the disguises of its selection.

Control of the mind has been and is the greatest problem of man. Different teachers and different religions have shown different ways. Man has tried them, but the mind remains unsubjected. Of the spiritual practi-

ces prescribed to control the mind the most widely known and most popular are prayer and meditation. Can the mind be controlled through prayer and meditation? Krishnamurti's answer is: No. What is prayer, if not duality? Somebody prays and another grants his prayers. Prayer is an exposure of our destitute condition, for we beg for something we sorely need. So, prayer is a craving. And meditation on some idol or idea is a sort of contraction or limitation of the mind, because it excludes everything except the object of meditation. The excluded images, thoughts, keep on arising in the mind causing conflict and thus defeating the very purpose of meditation, which is peace or stillness of the mind. Also, while praying or meditating we want a result. And Truth, God, is not a result.

This apart, through these practices we attempt to force the mind into stillness. But if the mind is forced there will be resistance and conflict. The mind cannot be transcended through suppression; it must be unfolded and understood. A mind that has become empty becomes still, not a mind that is forced to become still. According to Krishnamurti Truth, the Unknown, can be attained only when the mind is completely free of the known, when thinking ceases and the timelessness of the NOW pervades the emptiness of the mind.

There are many who believe that a study of the scriptures and books on philosophy or participation in religious discourses will, in due course, purify us spiritually and the lower self within us will get ennobled into the higher self, thus preparing us for God-realisation. Krishnamurti rejects the idea.

For him there are no such entities as the lower self and the higher self. These are nothing but products of the mind, mere images. All books and discourses only feed the mind with fresh conditionings. Books and discourses are but thoughts and beliefs with a background of a certain creed or class. All beliefs, all conclusions narrow the mind imposing on it new restrictions and resolutions; they cause hindrances in the way of direct understanding. More important than all books and discourses is understanding of one's own self through the process of self-analysis and self-criticism. Such understanding is the beginning of true meditation.

Know The False First

Krishnamurti makes a fervent plea for understanding what is false, for when we know the false the true will reveal itself. Understanding according to him is the gateway to Truth, Reality. Paradoxically, it is our mind, whose business it is to understand, that stands in the way of understanding. Our mind, the sole instrument of logic, behaves in an illogical and erratic manner, causing digressions and misrepresentations, illusions and delusions. Our mind is ill due to the infection of conditioning. It has to be cured first.

Unfortunately no doctors of medicine, psychology or religion have come forward so far with a prescription that may cure the conditioning of the mind effectively and permanently. Only Krishnamurti shows how it can be done, how we can do it ourselves, unaided.

He goes to the very root of the malady, the root cause of human suffering. Accord-

ing to him the I is the source of all suffering. Fear, greed, jealousy, hate are only manifestations of the I, which plays numerous roles and assumes countless disguises. I am so-and-so. I possess this and that. I am superior, so is my religion, my country, my race. And so on. It is our psychological memories intricately interwoven into a complex pattern that appear as the I. Krishnamurti says that when we pull down the I-walls that imprison us we shall stand face to face with the Reality, for the Reality is not apart from us; it is within us; it is in the I itself, when it is shorn of the shroud of conditioning that hides its pristine light and glory. When this state is attained all suffering ceases and true life dawns with its all-embracing love and supreme bliss.

According to Krishnamurti man can find Truth, Reality, God only by himself and not through the agency of another. Life to him is a creative action, something timeless and immeasurable, "a pathless reality", which can be attained but cannot be described. Man liberated is life itself, timeless and immeasurable. Like the Infinite the liberated man has no qualities, for qualities can exist only in duality which he has transcended. He lives in the NOW, which is timeless and directionless. He is truly immortal, for he is I-less. He is at one with Eternity, God.

The Yoga of Krishnamurti, in short, is integration at its highest. It lays bare our self-deceptions, dispels the lure of sham and teaches the indissoluble unity of all the spheres of life. Krishnamurti teaches LIFE and he lives his teaching, as a true yogi should.

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