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A Key to Krishnamurti's Thought

Jean L. Mercier

KRISHNAMURTI'S written works are not easily spotted in booksellers' shops. In which section to find them: "philosophy" "psychology," "Oriental religion" or even "Esotericism"? The fact is that Krishnamurti is a thinker all of his own, an almost unclassifiable type of intellectual, an original "wise" man of modern times, still so typically Oriental for the priority he gives to practical realisation over theoretical knowledge. He is not the philosopher who interprets, even less the religious person who believes, but perhaps the "doctor of the soul," the therapist at pain to find a remedy to mankind's woes and sufferings.

The outcome of his life-long experiences is a remarkable and original synthesis of practical psychological insights. Our purpose is to find the key to this synthesis: indeed Krishnamurti's discourses were always short and limited, thus presenting only fragmentary aspects of his thought. But once the pieces are all put together, there emerges a perfectly coherent logical whole, a well integrated way of life that sends an irresistible challenge to the serious reader.

We shall first expound Krishnamurti's problem and method, then follow him in the analysis of what could be called man's empirical "inauthentic mode of living." We shall then describe Krishnamurti's understanding of the "authentic mode of living." Finally, we shall endeavour to situate his synthesis: for its affinity with Theravāda Buddhism is unmistakable. He himself, surely, would not have appreciated the comparison, but never mind: it helps us to understand him. Or should we rather say that it helps us to understand the old Buddhism in a modern way?

PROBLEM AND METHOD

Every man's life is a tissue of miseries, conflicts, anxieties, utter confusion: he is perpetually at war with himself and society, he lives in a climate of violence, he seems to be condemned to unhappiness from birth to death. Is there not a way out? Is this human condition unavoidable? Is there not a way that leads to peace? Can he not get rid of all violences and reach a state of bliss? This is the question.

The central issue of human life rests in self-knowledge, in the understanding of the structure of the self. Unfortunately, few people are serious about it. The large majority of people want to fulfil their desires of richness, fame, material and spiritual success. They do not seriously consider the fundamental issue of the psychical nature of their being, that is, the understanding of the self.

This requires a total revolution, not the kind of revolution advocated by sociologists, politicians, ideologists, religionists. Total revolution is not concerned with the change of society, the problem of the poor and the rich, of classes and castes. . . . Total revolution reaches the individual. It is futile to want social

change unless first there is a change in the individuals. A revolution can be authentic only if it affects the individual self. Other revolutions are secondary to that one. The question here is not to set the individual against the collective but to realize that the individual is the whole of mankind: each individual is totally responsible for the state of the world.

A preliminary point of methodology needs to be established. To understand his self and Reality, man needs to die to everything of yesterday; his mind needs to be fresh, new, unconditioned, unprejudiced. There must be no intermediary between self and Reality and this means practically that all guidance and authority must come to an end. Now by "authority" is meant first all the forms of outward guidance such as Traditions, Masters, Gurus, Saints. . . . But the inward aspect of "authority" is even more important to consider: we need to do away radically with our own opinions, ideas, cultural habits, accumulated knowledge. Our personal experiences must be forgotten if we want to look at Reality with honesty and innocency.

Why are people so eager to rest on the authority of their religious traditions, their Gurus, Saviours or Saints? They want certainty to resolve their doubts; they want clarity, but they fail to understand that clarity and security cannot be given by another. They do not perceive that the confusion is within themselves: only their own selves can lift the confusion. The Self only can liberate. In having recourse to others' guidance and authority, they succeed only in increasing the confusion.

INAUTHENTIC LIVING

The starting point of our observation of the Self: we live in relationship to things, people, ideas. . . . Relationship is part of our human essence. To understand oneself is to understand oneself in relationship and that means to understand our reactions to things, people . . . In a way, our reactions are our Selves. That is why life is a constant challenge, for our reactions demand responses. Now reactions and responses may be adequate or inadequate: a fact of the highest importance for inadequacy of reactions and responses is precisely the cause of endless human miseries, conflicts, violence.

Most of the time, we are not related and we do not react to things and people, but only to the images, symbols and ideas we have formed of them. We are related to ideas and not to Reality. We live in the abstract world of our thoughts and images. When we meet someone, we say that we "recognize" him and that means that he is not new; he is for us the old idea we have formed about him in the past. And so on, all the time, we "recognize" things and people and our look is never fresh, never new, never related to the Real, the Actual. Our knowledge is always abstract, prejudiced, never concrete. This means that we use things and people for our satisfaction; we are in contact with the satisfaction that things and people give us.

Images and ideas—which prevent the right relationship with Reality—are produced by thought, and all our thoughts together constitute what we call our "experience." Thoughts and experiences are the reviver of the past, they secure the continuity with the past, they never deal with the new or the actual, their function is to "recognize"; they help us to conceptualize or verbalize our

memories. We perceive something new, but if thoughts and experience interfere, the new loses its freshness and becomes old already. A man guided by his thoughts is no longer free and independent; he loses contact with Reality and lives in a world of his own.

Because we express our thoughts and experiences in naming and verbalising through language, it is important to realize that the language we use most of the time is the language of the dead, the past, and through it we cannot understand the new, the living present.

Because of thoughts and experiences, we are unable to look at things dispassionately: we judge, we condemn, we approve, we justify. We are prejudiced, we revive the labels produced in the past, we constantly compare and evaluate the present with the help of the past which is dead. Because of this process of thought-interference, we find ourselves thoroughly conditioned. We see everything through our conditioned eyes; we condemn ourselves to live in the prison of our conditioning: old doctrines, old ideas, old dogmas. We are looking at life now with the eyes of the past. Though living, we behave as if we were dead human beings!

It is easy to see the connection between thought and desire. Desire begins with thought which breeds it. Our normal reactions of seeing, sensing, perceiving are perverted by thought which is the memory of the past: pleasurable or unpleasurable memories accompanied by the desire to repeat or not to repeat past experiences. All our conflicts and miseries arise out of desires, and there can be no peace and final bliss without the end of all desires. Man's will, whose essence is desire, is never at rest, never passive but wanting continuity with the pleasurable past or seeking fulfilment for the future in one way or another. In any case, the will shuts off the spontaneous responses to the actual movement of life. Like the intellect, the will is an obstacle to the understanding of the Self.

The will constantly urges us to achieve goals and gain results. We wander from one goal to another, with the hope one day to reach the supreme bliss. In fact we should perceive the futility of all results and goals: are they not the product of desires, and the desires the projection of past memories, thoughts and experiences?

The desire to achieve results breeds frustrations and conflicts, causing misery and confusion. Conflict may be outward, such as conflict with the neighbour, the wife, the employer, but it may be also inward, and it is the conflict between what we are and what we want to be, between the actual and the ideal, i.e., the basic conflict between Reality and myth. Ideals always clash with Reality; they are mere illusions, and there can be no understanding of an illusion. We can understand what is and also the process through which an illusion has crept in. We cannot understand a myth but only why we believe in myths.

Perceiving the gap between what we are and what we want to be, between the real and the ideal, we try to build a bridge between them. Let us call this bridge "consistency". We usually admire people who are consistent, those who stick to their ideals and myths, come what may. We call them staunch believers or even saints. But the insane is also consistent, thinking he is Napoleon, identifying himself with his ideal. The desire to be consistent—whether of the insane or the saint—gives a peculiar strength and satisfaction: it gives one the feeling of being sincere and faithful to the ideal: we feel secure, we no longer live in uncertainty.

The trouble with the consistency of those who stick to their ideals is that they miss the actual; they live in illusion, in untruth, outside the reality of their Self.

But people are not even satisfied with being consistent; they want to identify themselves with the sect they belong to, the party, the country, the religion, the Guru. They do not see that this identification attitude puts an end to their creativity, their freedom. For them who have "identified" themselves, the journey is over; it is the end of enquiry and discovery. They do not see that the identification process through which they pretend to be another Self than their own Self, is sheer hypocrisy. Why do so many cheat themselves in this way? In fact they are afraid to face their Self, and they need the protection of another, be it a person or a group.

The most usual form of identification is religious belief. Belief begets the religious experience. We always experience what we believe and this invalidates the experience. The belief is always first, and then the experience follows. The only interesting question here is not what we believe but why we believe. Fear of the unknown and lack of security produce belief. In religion we are ready to serve the Master or follow the Saviour and the Guru, willing to renounce the Self, to identify ourselves with the Other: it gives pleasure, security and peace. What queer people we are! Truth and beauty are here, and we go all the way to other shores to find a Master and a Guru! We do not know ourselves, but we are ready to go all the way to grasp mysterious utopias offered by religions! We replace actuality and reality by the myths of belief because they warm us and give us hope. In fact beliefs are the greatest obstacles to understanding; they are the worst type of conditioning.

Moreover, beliefs and religions divide people into many antagonistic creeds, doctrines, dogmas; this situation increases the conflicts, wars and miseries of mankind. Far from bringing peace, they bring hatred.

The Self dominated by thoughts and desires is an endless striving to become, to fulfil itself, to identify itself through all kinds of activities. In fact the fear of being nothing drives the Self into activities. We want to cover the inner poverty of the Self by way of fulfilment, but fulfilment is desire and every desire can only bring pain and sorrow. Every effort made to become, to achieve is a movement away from Reality. Self-fulfilment is escapism; it can only bring frustration.

One must face the emptiness, the nothingness within: there must be an experiencing of that nothingness, though there should be no experiencer (a point to be clarified later), no Self to desire to experience the nothingness. There should be an end to the (old) Self: the Self that consists of thoughts, memories, desires, striving for fulfilment through activities. That Self must die for the new (Self) to be.

The Self is constantly "doing things," and the mind is the restless occupation with the past, the present and the future. In fact our mind must be busy with something: we take this occupation for signs of life; in fact it is the opposite: it is an escape from life. We confuse our "being" with our "acting," our being busy and occupied all the time. He who is not occupied, is nothing, so we think, not realising that it is the death of occupations and agitation stimulated by thoughts and desires that is the beginning of creative silence and wisdom.

The desire to become and fulfill, which inhabits us, means our total lack of concern for Being, the Actual, the NOW of life. For to understand Being, we have to free ourselves from Becoming. Being and Becoming are contradictory. Being

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is timelessness. Becoming is time, and time is the uncreative continuity, the repetition of the same, the modification of the old. In Time and Becoming, there is no place for real transformation, novelty or creativity. Being on the other hand has no continuity; it is the ever new, from moment to moment, the ever fresh and creative. Being is the now and to understand that is to be free from time. We usually think of the Self as a permanent entity, a becoming that keeps its identity throughout the temporal succession of past, present and future, but this is an illusion that must be discarded to understand that Reality is the timeless, ever new Being, from moment to moment. The temporal Self must vanish to give place to Being.

Fear is the uncertainty in this process of becoming. The mind that lives in the continuum of past, present and future, is the maker of fear. The gap between what I am and what I want to be on the basis of what I was is the cause of my apprehensions. I am poor. I want to be rich. I am ignorant. I want to be learned. . . . The desire of fulfilment brings fear. In fact we fear what we do not know and the future, our goals and aims, remain always unknown to the mind. There will be fear as long as the mind strives to know the unknown. Thus the worst fear is the fear of death because death is the great unknown.

The mind invents all kinds of explanations of death through beliefs in reincarnation, resurrection, immortality . . . satisfying, but illusory answers. They do not help to understand the problem. They help only to perceive man's craving for hope. But hope contains the seed of its opposite: despair. Hope and despair: our mind always thinks in pairs of opposites. True understanding means first to be free from opposites. Both attitudes of hope and despair originate in the fear of the unknown that is death, but fear cannot lead to understanding. One must approach the problem of death with a new understanding, which is simply that death being the unknown is itself no problem at all: the problem is for our mind to get rid of thoughts, desires, memories and cravings for achievements. Then there can be no fear of death but a serene welcoming of it. As long as our mind keeps on desiring to understand the unknown, fear will persist.

Man is in constant search for the permanent and the stable, call it God or Atman or the "World of ideas." Being in agony in the midst of the impermanent, the ceaseless activities, the restless striving, he pursues the illusion of permanency, the ideal and therefore the unreal. He perceives the impermanent Reality as painful: in fact he does not understand it, and this misunderstanding causes pain and misery. The truth is that every search is an escapist attitude, a desire to run away from Reality, the Actual. We should stop searching to give attention to what is. Only where there is no search, can there be bliss and joy. There is joy when there is living in the Now, the transient present. Transience is joy.

Man must cease to live for another "shore," for the important is not the other shore but the river of everyday living, here and now. Life is not a passage to immortality, Brahman or God, all myths invented for security. Life is the actual and we must understand it here and now.

AUTHENTIC LIVING

To live authentically, we must understand ourselves, and this means first to observe ourselves in relationship with people, things and ideas. We must establish the right relationship, not the one based on past memories or future fulfilments

and achievements. Wrong relationship make of our life a constant battlefield, a perpetual conflict between what is, what was and what should be. Now the condition for right relationship is independence from all conditioning. To understand reality, man must get rid of all inward and outward influences: this is possible only in a state of solitude or "aloneness."

Solitude—aloneness makes the mind ever fresh and new in contact with the Real. It means to live with and in the actuality of things and people. For instance, we are jealous or envious: we must not condemn or justify the feeling, not judge it, but observe it and live with it, like living with a snake in one's room. We need only to observe, be aware in order to understand. Solitude is not isolation, which is a negative attitude of resistance to reality, when for instance we live in the ivory tower of an ideology. We isolate ourselves because we are afraid; we need to protect ourselves against other people and other ideas. On the contrary, solitude—aloneness—is the very condition of freedom.

The freedom achieved by solitude is the state of mind that rejects dependence, conformity, ideology, tradition. It means the liberation from authority, Masters, Gurus, past knowledge, memories and experiences. With such freedom, we are able to observe, to see, to look and perceive, to relate with the actual, the present, what is. We stop looking at things with prejudiced eyes: we reach a state of "innocency" and "simplicity."

To be free, there must be the death of psychological time. Our thoughts, memories, experiences contaminate our action: they transform our action into activities. Activities are in conformity with past ideas and traditions or they are directed to goals and results. On the contrary actions are immediate, dealing with the actual, unrelated to time. But because actions are uncertain, "risky," we make them conform to ideas and ideals, which give pleasure and security. When time interferes with our actions, they become "activities" where past and future clash with the present, and this inevitably causes conflict, sorrow, misery. It is thus clear that time produced by thought and desire prevents the enjoyment of the living present. Without the death of time, there can be no creativity. Our being is darkened by the memories of yesterday. Every morning in fact should be fresh and clear, free from the darkness of yesterday and the illusion of tomorrow.

Right relationship is relationship with what is, the factual. A fact is approached unemotionally, with spontaneity, innocency in a non–judgmental manner. With this approach, there can be no conflict, no clash of opposites: we simply record what is. This is "truth": the understanding of what is, the Real from moment to moment, which cannot become something different, which is beyond time, change, progress: the timeless, the immeasurable.

Only in spontaneity, can there be the discovery of what is. True learning has nothing to do with accumulation of knowledge or expansion of experiences. We can learn only in freedom, and spontaneity. This requires an acute sensitivity: the mind full of ideas, information and projects has lost its sensitivity to the actual. It is incapable of learning and creative understanding.

Discipline, asceticism, renunciation, virtues are the very opposite of spontaneity; they prevent discovery and creativity. Moreover, they are all resistances created by fear. Thus they cause further conflicts. Indeed they are means to an end, they are "bargains". In fact means and ends are one: the end is determined by the means. Violence as a means to peace breeds only violence. Discipline and

asceticism, which are forms of self-defence, compulsions, suppressions, can only breed further conflicts.

Understanding is not a mental process. To understand there should be no interference of thought, but simply awareness without justifying, condemning, choosing. This means that for right understanding, there should be an end to the thinker, the observer, the experiencer, the chooser. And why so? Who is the thinker and who is the experiencer if not the dead past observing and experiencing the living present: the past which touches the present! Should it not be rather the living in contact with the living? The thinker or the experiencer, being in the drag-net of time, belongs to the past; he is the past meeting the present, the fragmentary meeting the totality. This situation prevents the understanding of the now. To receive the new, experience and thinking must cease: then only can there be understanding.

It is therefore necessary to go beyond the duality of experiencer and experienced, observer and observed. The observer must become the observed; the experiencer must become the experienced. Then there is no longer observer and observed, experiencer and experienced, but only observing and experiencing. The duality and opposition of subject and object must give way to the timeless ecstasy of experiencing. The thinker as well as his thoughts must come to an end. Indeed the thinker is not another entity than his thought. We are our own thoughts and our own desires; our thoughts and desires create us as a separate, permanent entity: the Self. But to be rid of misery, conflict, and to obtain peace, thoughts and desires must disappear, and therefore the thinking and willing permanent Self too must disappear.

What is left then? The answer is: passive, alert watchfulness, awareness (in which the thinker and thoughts are no more) of what is, the actual, a state of mere observing and experiencing without ideas, memories, goals. The mind now is empty and unoccupied, totally free, sensitive to Reality. Then there is stillness and peace. This is the end of thoughts and desires, of the thinking, experiencing Self which is the cause of all miseries and conflicts. That SELF must end for the new to be. The death of thought and desire is the beginning of life, silence, meditation, passive, alert watchfulness.

This is meditation: a merely attentive observation, a seeing of things as they are, both inwardly and outwardly, without any interference of thoughts, a direct perception without recognition, judgment, justification or condemnation, a mere observing without naming or verbalising.

When the heart is empty of the things of the mind and the mind is empty of thoughts, then there is love. That emptiness is the condition for love. Love is a state of being in which thought is not. Thought is always the breeder of conflicts and oppositions, and a heart filled with thoughts is ready to judge, condemn, oppose, reject and hate. Thoughts are always a reaction, therefore the cause of conflicts, while love is action, direct, vulnerable, sensitive, spontaneous contact with Reality.

We are a bundle of problems and miseries. Where lies the ultimate wisdom? Should we start our life again, have another try along different paths? Should we want to achieve a more perfect form of self-fulfillment? Wisdom in fact begins with the cessation of all search; freedom comes when there is no longer concern

to achieve any goal. It is only when our search and endeavors come to an end, that we can begin to pay attention to what is, the timeless, the immeasurable. Wisdom resides in the passive, alert awareness of Reality, here and now: seeing, perceiving understanding the false as false, the truth as truth and to see the truth in the false . . . Then there is joy and bliss from moment to moment, creativity and freedom.

What is Truth? First of all, Truth is the unknown. It cannot be known. If it is known, it is not the truth. How can one measure the immeasurable? We measure reality with our thoughts, ideas, and words; and they are all fragmentary and partial. Knowledge does not give the truth, though, for sure, knowledge is part of life, but the trouble is that we take it for the totality; we think that it can solve the problems of life. Knowledge may be essential for certain limited areas of existence, but it is of no use in understanding Truth.

There is Truth when one sees the totality, which is impossible with thought and knowledge. We say that we "search" for the Truth. But the search for Truth is the denying of Truth. Truth is not something to be known. No effort of intellect or will can bring us closer to it. We see the Truth when we are passively aware. Truth is seen now or not seen at all. It has nothing to do with time; it has not to be conquered or gained. Either we live now in the Truth or not at all. Truth is revealed in one instant of total passive alert awareness of what is: this is a discovery from moment to moment.

KRISHNAMURTI AND BUDDHISM

Krishnamurti's synthesis, which has been systematically expounded above, would perhaps gain in understanding if one could find points of comparison with other similar views on man and his destiny. Where to situate Krishnamurti in the galaxy of past and present philosophico-religious systems? The fact is that he himself avoids all references to other thinkers; he never quotes from other sources; he never wants to give weight to his opinions through anything else than his own experience. In this he is logical with himself: does he not want to be free, independent, unconditioned from past and prevailing ideas? Surely Krishnamurti would have abhorred any attempt at labeling him. Still this cannot invalidate the attempts of others to establish points of similarity between his *Weltanschauung* and other currents of thought. The most compelling comparison that comes to the mind of Krishnamurti's reader is with Theravāda Buddhism: an unmistakable similarity in the approach to the human problem, in the methodology used, as well as in the pragmatic solution that is proposed.

Buddha's revolutionary stand against the orthodoxy of religious Brahmanism manifested itself clearly when he rejected the authority of the Sacred Vedas: truth henceforth must come from the Self, from personal enlightment and spiritual experience. Buddha proposed the new path of Self-help which requires no faith, no creed, no doctrine. Krishnamurti makes similar demands: the precondition to understanding is the liberation from all conditioning: traditions, religions, ideologies.

The beginning of wisdom for Buddha is the acute perception of human misery. Can one obtain peace and bliss, and how? "Two things I teach," says the Buddha: "misery and the cessation of misery," or in the concise Sanskrit formulation: Samsāra and Nirvāna. Samsāra is concerned with man's empirical inauthentic

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mode of living, and Nirvāna designates the state of authentic living. Buddha and his earliest interpreters of Theravāda Buddhism are not interested in metaphysical or cosmological statements: theirs is a thoroughly pragmatic approach. What they have to offer is not a new philosophy but a therapy to the ills of suffering humanity. This is precisely the aim, purpose and intention of Krishnamurti: to teach man how to live, to show him the path of bliss.

Still, though Theravāda Buddhism presented itself as a Praxis, it could not avoid elaborating a few "doctrines" in support of its claims on the behavioral level. We shall mention here three basic typically Buddhist (Theravāda) views—for there are obvious traces of each of them in Krishnamurti's synthesis: the first is Pratītya-Samutpāda or the doctrine of Dependent Origination, the second is Nair-ātmya-Vāda or the doctrine of No-Self and the third one is Kshana-bhanga-vāda or the doctrine of momentariness.

A. Pratītya-Samutpāda tells us that in the empirical world dominated by thoughts and desires everything is relative, conditional, dependent and impermanent. "This arises because of that," all phenomenal happenings have a cause and this cause can be known. There is suffering and pain. Why do we suffer? Because of desires. Why do we desire? Because we entertain thoughts and ideas of the past. Why do we entertain such thoughts? Because we are conditioned; because we believe. Why do we believe? Because there is fear. Why is there fear? Because . . . etc. This is the typical Krishnamurti way to proceed for the liberation of the Self. This is what the Buddhists call Samsāra, the vicious circle of causation. Failure to grasp Pratītya–Samutpāda is the cause of misery, but its awareness leads to the cessation of misery. Ignorance is bondage and only awareness can save from the infernal circle of man's restless chain of thoughts and desires.

B. The early Buddhist doctrine of Nair-ātmya-vāda—rejected later by all the schools of Mahāyanā Buddhism—claims that the "I," the container of thoughts and desires, is the root cause of human miseries and contradictions. Bliss and peace can be obtained only at the cost of being rid of the Self. No doubt, the Self is an undeniable empirical reality, as real as the enemy one faces in battle, but the process of liberation can only begin with the realisation that the Self is the enemy to destroy. Nirvāna is the new life where the empirical Self has vanished, a blissful state devoid of thoughts and desires, an Ego-less state of life. Krishnamurti echoes the same views: "There must be an end to the Self so that the new may emerge." What new? the new Self? He does not say so, for a very good reason: the end of the empirical Self as a psychological reality means the emergence of a new mode of living which is impossible—or even irrelevant to describe in terms of metaphysical language. This much has to be said: that the Ego-centered mode of living must give way to an Ego-less mode of living. The empirical Self pictures itself as a permanence in becoming, a continuum in time, an evolving entity rooted in the past and stretched towards the future: it is thus the unfortunate breeder of past memories, ideas and desires, the main obstacle to authentic living, to genuine relationship to the actual Reality, the cause of all human conflicts and miseries. That Self must die for life to be joy, peace and bliss. This is certainly the Nair-ātmya-vāda view of Krishnamurti, and if one feels reluctant to accept this view, it is because one fails to see that its truth is only psychological and pragmatic. Whether the Nair-ātmya-vāda of the Theravāda Buddhists was intended to be a theory about the human essence, is a debated

question. For the Mahāyānists and others, the metaphysical negation of the Self—as illustrated in modern times by the stand taken by D. Hume—looked preposterous and absurd. But Krishnamurti is not interested in these metaphysical discussions: he is not a theorizer but a therapist concerned with removing the ills of human life.

C. Linked with the Nair-ātmya-vāda view that there is no permanent Self, is the other Buddhist view of Kshana–bhanga-vāda, or the theory of momentariness. Whatever is existent is momentary. The denial of the permanent Selves is only an application of the denial of any permanence whatsoever. This doctrine became part of the later Buddhism when metaphysical preoccupations began to "contaminate" the strictly psychological attitude of early Buddhists. It was claimed that at every moment all objects of the world are suffering dissolution and destruction, but yet things appear to persist. Thus Reality is from moment to moment; it is not a continuum from past, present and future, but the emergence of new things and new states that cease to be at every moment. The consequent is totally new and does not preexist in the antecedent: the discontinuity of old and new is total. Hence the real is ever fresh and new, never a repetition or a modification of the past. This view is supported by the A-sat-kārya-vāda doctrine of cause and effect that states that the consequent effect is never contained in the antecedent cause, but simply follows it.

Kshana-bhanga–vāda has unmistakable traces in Krishnamurti's thought, though certainly not as an explanation of the nature of things but as an understanding of "psychological" time, which is at the root of all human miseries. For him indeed conflicts exist because of desires and desires exist because of memories, thoughts, ideas which are all of the past. Through thoughts and desires, man lives in time which brings fears, worries, sorrow. To wonder whether thoughts and desires can come to an end, is to wonder whether one can put a stop to time: the dead past and the illusory future? Or to put it more positively, how can the mind be made fresh, new and innocent? As long as man confuses his reality with his temporal Self, he is in agony before the impermanent; he searches for the permanent and the stable, which is the ideal and thus the illusion. This longing is futile and far from bringing peace, it produces frustration. The fact is that there is impermanency, and the mind is aware of it and that is why it craves for permanency in all its relationships. Can the mind die to the known which is demanding to be made permanent? To die to the known is to have no continuity with yesterday, no continuity with tomorrow. Then there is no more feeling of "becoming," the process of psychological time comes to an end; there is stillness and passive awareness of the transient, of the actual from moment to moment. No reaction, no recognition, takes place but simply action from moment to moment, pure creativity. There is the mere experiencing of the new, when the mind is completely still, without any pressure or influence. This is creative Being, this is Reality which has no continuity, this is the Actual ever new, ever fresh from moment to moment, the transient: the still mind, passively aware, enjoys bliss and peace in this experiencing.

"Momentariness" has thus an important role to play in the understanding of Krishnamurti's practical wisdom: one needs only to remember at every step that it must be given a psychological interpretation. More than that would be unjustified extrapolation. As far as early Buddhism is concerned, it is not always easy to

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completely dissociate the psychological from the metaphysical, as is clear for instance in the universal "belief" of Buddhists in rebirth and therefore in some kind of "immortality".

Such belief—so obstinately held by the early Buddhists—can have no place in Krishnamurti's psychological understanding of man. In avoiding all incursions into the field of metaphysics and religion, he shows himself more logical and rigorous with the initial intention of being just a "therapist" than Theravāda Buddhism.

Reading the modern Krishnamurti, one enjoys the privilege of rediscovering the unsullied wisdom of the original Buddha: a thoroughly pragmatic way for the awakened Self to live in this world though remaining uncontaminated by its untold miseries, enjoying the bliss and beauty of "the lotus flower, which though it has its root in water, remains untouched by it."

KRISHNAMURTI: AN EVALUATION

In conclusion we would like to face squarely the question: is Krishnamurti's therapy to remove the ills of the human condition workable? Can it succeed? We have used above the image of man as an emergent lotus, high above the surface of this temporal world. But another image comes naturally to the mind: the one of a floating water-lily. Which of these images is the more appropriate to determine man's status in the world: lotus or water-lily? Are human beings able to rise above the flowing streams of thoughts and desires? Can they hover as it were above the surface of the ever changing infrastructures? Can the so-called contamination by the world be avoided? Should one not say on the contrary that man is a "being-in-the-world-and-at-the-world"? Is there any sense to demand of him that he be "out-of-the-world"? Like Buddha, Krishnamurti aims at putting an end to man's miseries, but the remedy proposed is so radical as to suggest nothing less than man should renounce his humanity. This is the fundamental question raised by Krishnamurti's vision of human life. On the theoretical answer one can give to it, will depend the viability of the practice.

The understanding of the humanity of man, of the essence which makes him what he is, implies inevitably a reference to his temporality. Few have described this dimension more thoroughly and insistently than Heidegger. Man is the unity of past, present and future. What constitutes the concrete man here and now is inclusive of all his past facticities as well as his future possibilities, death included. It is not enough to say that he is in time; he is time. He is all in one the beginning, the middle and the end so that "when born, he is already old enough to die." Authentic living demands that man be constantly aware of his status of "being-for-death": this ultimate possibility of his being will necessarily colour all his actions and projects. On the contrary, the inauthentic man lets himself be distracted by the actual satisfactions of daily living: attached to the fragile present, with eyes closed to the inexorable flux of his temporality, he is unable to perceive the radical absurdity of his "being-for-death."

For Heidegger the phenomenologist, temporality belongs to the essence of being-man. This situation has to be accepted stoically with lucidity and knowledge that time means death and that there is no way out. Krishnamurti, on the contrary, does not present himself as a philosopher who merely analyzes and

describes: he emphatically believes that there is a way of "salvation," a wisdom that can liberate man from the miseries of his temporality. For him, man is a prisoner that must be set free: it is not enough to describe the prison.

The bringing together of Krishnamurti and Heidegger is of interest here on account of the fact that they both affirm that man's miseries are caused by his temporality. As long as man is "time," his life is a tragic adventure, an unhappy journey dotted with untold sufferings and contradictions and ending with the fatality of death. As long as he is immersed in the flow of thoughts and desires, as long as his mind is pregnant with past memories and future projects, the obsession of his being-for-death subsists: there can be no peace, no bliss, no "salvation." While for Heidegger man is the prisoner of his temporality which is an integral part of his essence, Krishnamurti challenges this point, claiming that some sort of supra-temporal Nirvāna state can be lived in the midst of temporality. There is a way of being in the world as if being out of the world, a way to be in history as if being out of history. Man is capable of reaching the state of "jivan-mukti": liberation in this life, here and now through the state of passive alert watchfulness of the Actual, without ideas, memories, goals and projects. In this new mode of existence, the mind and heart are free, sensitive to the Real, open to love: they are dead to time but alive to the Timeless and the immeasurable.

Temporality is for Krishnamurti that which can and must be surmounted: it is the enemy to slay, to put an end to man's misery and enjoy the bliss of the discontinuous, momentary Reality. Man can escape from the prison of time, and, though he be in the world, he can live as if out of the world. The water-lily can vanish in smoke to reveal the unsullied lotus . . . .

Condemned to death or "jivan-mukta," no one in fact need be compelled into this dilemma. There is a third option voiced by those who deem it impossible to understand man's essence without reference to a Transcendent Reality. Here the end of man's misery lies in the acknowledgment of the possibility of this Transcendence. In his despair, man invokes the absolute Transcendence with hope. The new dilemma is now between hope and despair. Left to himself, the temporal man is being for death without hope. But he who makes himself available and open to the mystery of an absolute Transcendence beyond the limits of space and time, assumes his temporality with the trust that this present life is the preliminary stage towards an enduring, eternal communion with the ultimate Reality. Here man's aspiration for the Infinite, far from being illusory, is taken in earnest: man's temporal life is only the river that leads to another shore.

For Krishnamurti, "there is no other shore, but only the river that is this present life, the every day living." By the same movement he rejects the despair of the man condemned to ineluctable temporality and the hope of the man who invokes the Transcendent. For both attitudes of hope and despair are "reactions" that originate from the fear of the unknown. The passive contemplator of the actual Real has no regrets and no expectations: he simply sees and perceives the newness of every moment. All the rest is illusion and fear caused by the illusion.

One may finally wonder whether the neutral look, the passive, indifferent observation, the pure awareness without commitment advocated by Krishnamurti are humanly possible life–situations? Are these not another form of illusion and a more grievous one than the hope and despair he denounces? Can a haven of eternity be created in the midst of temporality? Has he done justice to the

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humanity of man in offering a way of life that looks more like an impossible "angelism" than a viable humanism? Can one suppress human desires and aspirations without suppressing man himself? Is the inner dynamism of the human spirit to be counted only as a negative and harmful possibility of the human essence?

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