

J. KRISHNAMURTI

WHO AM I?

BY

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FOREWORD

Though ascetically slender and frail, Jiddu Krishnamurti is intense, extremely alert, and spiritually so awake that what he says potentially illuminates every corner of the human soul. In the presence of this world-famed thinker, lecturer, and writer, my own awareness and understanding have been increased to such an extent that it has changed the course of my existence. This book is an attempt to describe this experiencing as it has taken place. The change basically has been an expansion of awareness. Like the dawn, awareness creeps in imperceptibly and gradually grows and brightens. So we must start at the beginning. As we go through the pages together, may I suggest that you ask yourself the questions put by Krishnamurti and pause long enough to listen to your own responses.

Some of the conversations were published in the pamphlet, *Awareness and Meditation*. They've been integrated with all the other experiences in the book to make my story as complete as possible.

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CHAPTER I

OTHERNESS

“Where do you want me to sign?” Krishnamurti said as I handed him a pen and my copy of *At the Feet of the Master*, his first book.

At the moment the pages didn't seem to belong to me, so I expressed what I felt: “You decide, please. It's your book.”

And that is how I met Jiddu Krishnamurti. It was in 1921 and I was a sensitive fourteen years old, a student at Saint Christopher, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, England. The school had been founded by Theosophists. At the time of his visit, Krishnamurti was twenty-six years old, with golden skin, large brown eyes, and almost black hair. He was the adopted son and protégé of Annie Besant, International President of the Theosophical Society. He had been introduced to her by C. W. Leadbeater, a Theosophical leader and clairvoyant, who had discovered Krishnamurti in South India in 1909, and had immediately noticed something very remarkable about the young man. Annie Besant had then persuaded his impoverished father, who had 15 other children, to give her the guardianship of Krishnamurti. During the period of their visit to my school, Annie Besant expected Krishnamurti to come forth soon with teachings of worldwide significance. I looked up to him with awe, and *At the Feet of the Master* was a treasured possession.

I still have that bright blue book with a silver star on it and his signature carefully written inside, but since that day our relationship has undergone many changes, and I have had many experiences with him.

I became better acquainted with him during other visits to Saint Christopher, where he was on the Board of Directors, and from hearing him talk in London and at his Star Camps in Holland. He seemed to take a personal interest in me, and we carried on a correspondence over a period of many years.

One letter is especially interesting because of the light it sheds on his connection with Saint Christopher and its history. The school, situated in England's first planned city, was one of the few coeducational boarding schools in existence in those days. It was unusual in many ways: Dr. Armstrong-Smith, the first headmaster, had remarkable confidence in children and a great affection for them. In contrast to almost every other school in England at that time, there was no physical punishment. We were taught by a process of conditioning; however, I was later to free myself from this conditioning by the aid of Krishnamurti's teachings.

In 1930 the Theosophical Education Trust gave up the school, abandoning all responsibility, including the financial burden, to Mr. and Mrs. Lyn Harris, a Quaker couple. The Harris had attended one of Krishnamurti's camps at Ommen, in search of new students. He hadn't known they were among the 3,000 people there until I mentioned it afterwards. His impulsive reply was, “I wish I had known. I wish I had known.” The Harris had been critical of Krishnamurti because they held him to some extent responsible for the Trust's sudden abandonment of the school. I could see that Krishnamurti was aware of this, and wanted to speak to them personally.

Replying to a letter of mine mentioning the school's financial difficulties, Krishnamurti wrote: "...I am afraid I don't feel very responsible with regard to Saint Christopher's, as I was not fully awake then, when I was one of the so-called Directors. But all that is a long time ago, and I hope Mr. Harris will not hold me altogether guilty..." When I received the letter, I felt I must share it with the Harrises. Tension at the mention of Krishnamurti's name gave way to relaxation when I read aloud his words. I could feel a certain energy flow through me, and I knew I was being used as a channel.

I first sensed this particular kind of energy as a student at Saint Christopher. I felt an atmosphere there, an 'otherness' which has dominated my life. Perhaps I may call this 'spiritual energy'. I've always pursued this energy, and I've tried to live in such a way and in such surroundings as to be in tune with its vibrations wherever and however I could find them.

At first I looked mostly outside, but over the years I've learned to look more and more within. Sometimes I've lost track of this energy, but now I flow with it more consistently, and as I write this book, I feel this 'otherness' supporting and inspiring me. I hope you will be able somehow to sense what lies behind the words; I wish to convey something much deeper than words, an aura around and through the sentences—something intangible, yet as closely linked to the words of my book, as the tune of a song is to its words.

I found the same source of inspiration in Theosophy, so I joined the Theosophical Society and its Esoteric Section. It was not long, however, before I felt these spiritual vibrations especially in connection with Krishnamurti. After completing my studies at Saint Christopher, I attended Cambridge University. I went every summer to Krishnamurti's camp at Ommen, and he used to invite me to his pre-camp gatherings. I became exceedingly enthusiastic about his teachings—I 'hitched my wagon to his star'. Theosophy remained as a part of my background, but I dropped out as a member of the society.

At about this time, in 1929, Krishnamurti dissolved the Order of the Star, of which he was the Head, with its worldwide membership of over 100,000, offices in 47 countries, property in India, Australia, and America, and a castle with 5,000 forested acres in Holland. He maintained "...that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect... No organisation can lead man to spirituality." Each of us was—and is—on our own.

I was deeply moved when I made my first trip to America and attended Krishnamurti's camp at Ojai, California, in 1932. I had been intoxicated by: the power and rush of New York and its night life; the quiet immensity of the Grand Canyon; the majestic stillness and beauty of Yosemite; the fascination of Hollywood and its movie studios; and by the mass education of the University of California, Berkeley, where I was a teaching fellow in the physics department. I particularly loved the view of Ojai Valley's bright green orange trees nestled amongst its towering mountains: but it was the 'otherness' and mystical wonder of Ojai-with-Krishnamurti, which affected me the most.

His talks in Ojai always have an atmosphere not of this earth. People of all ages, races, interests, and positions come with eager expectation, some waiting for hours to secure favoured places near the speaker, and some travelling from distant countries, from Australia, South America, Finland, Spain and India. Punctually at the appointed hour a hush falls over the gathering, and a sensitive-looking, erect, aesthetic figure appears

quietly. With an air of an eagle poised for flight, Krishnamurti looks around at his audience before he begins to speak. He never uses notes, and he requests that his listeners make none so that they can listen with the whole of their attention. Photographs are discouraged and he gives no autographs. He speaks slowly and distinctly with a compelling sternness, and he is painfully aware when he isn't getting his message across. He has said: "I have only one thought and that is to liberate men from their narrow-mindedness and their limitations. I say there is a way of living intelligently, happily and without conflict. I do not propose to give you a system but to place before you certain ideas so you may find out for yourselves how to think truly."

"I wish I could convey to you," I wrote to my family in England, "the wonder of Ojai. I may sound 'up in the air', but I'm shedding tears at the moment because you can't enjoy its beauty, if only for a minute. Here, I'm a different being." And I was different—I was dominated by an intense desire to make Krishnamurti's teachings part of my life.

Understanding came in flashes. I experimented, and whenever there was an opportunity, I talked things over with Krishnamurti, whom those of us who knew him respectfully and affectionately call 'Krishnaji'. My life in this period was changing constantly. I fell in love with a girl whom I later married; Krishnamurti's comment was: "Shall I tell you? Let it all come—jealousy, everything. Spew it all out." And I did. Sometimes I found I could feel emotion without doing anything about it, except to watch it—an enlightening discovery.

Whatever the facts in my life, Krishnamurti would never say what to do or what not to do, and he never judged whether a thing was good or bad; he would simply throw light on the subject: he was a searchlight on my innermost being. For example, in reference to sex, he simply commented, "Those who experience it want more of it." And during one of several walks with him I ventured, "Reality seems so near, and yet so far." Pointing towards the highest mountain peak he responded, "There's the mountain top. Sometimes you can see it; sometimes it's hidden by a cloud."

I saw the mountain top quite often. So, on my return to England in 1933, I wanted to bring Krishnamurti's teachings into my educational work. What was happening in schools seemed so far removed from what I wanted my life to be: I continually asked myself, what is right education? I found it extremely difficult to live the teachings and at the same time do what I was supposed to do in my job, and I longed for an opportunity to do what I felt was right.

I went to visit Summer Hill. The director, A. S. Neill, has done a tremendous pioneer job and helped many students but I just couldn't find myself at home in the atmosphere there. One boy proudly showed me, "the only pane of glass in the school which isn't broken". Children were ruining living-room furniture by using it as gymnastic equipment. The place was dishevelled and unkempt. "It's like this because the students want it this way," a teacher explained.

Neill invited me to his own living-room which he carefully kept locked. He asked me if I would like to be a teacher there, and I had to decline. His definition of freedom is to do whatever you like as long as it doesn't interfere with the freedom of others. It seems to me this means to be a slave to one's own desires—smoking, drinking, swearing, whatever one feels like doing. And removal of the teacher's influence leaves the student at the mercy of other influences—commercial, political, and the influence of other stronger students. I question whether this is truly freedom.

I felt that my best hope was Saint Christopher—perhaps some of the spiritual vibrations were still there. So I talked things over with the Harrises.

I see from the notes I made at the time that I pointed out to them that education then was based on certain ideas about what is good or necessary or needed for the future. Teaching was mostly a process of imparting ideas, beliefs, morals, ideas, information, skills, habits—with bits of creative work somehow finding their way in.

Instead of planning the course of study beforehand, I wanted to be free to offer to my pupils whatever seemed to arouse their interest. I was particularly interested in young adolescents—I felt that education generally failed most with this age group. I wished to allow them to function as much as possible from their own creative centres. They would be encouraged to live in the present, instead of to prepare for the future. I hoped to provide the atmosphere of an art room or research laboratory.

Mr. and Mrs. Harris took me seriously, thought about it, and talked about my wishes with those parents whom they felt were most likely to be open to my approach. But the parents' response was that they did *not* want their children 'experimented' upon. And that was the end of that.

The next year, in 1934, I attended a New Education Conference at Oxford University. I spoke before everyone there, saying again the things I had said to the Harrises. I pointed out that education based on the child's interest was taking place in a few progressive schools with very young children, but not with adolescents. Everywhere the subject-examination system was clogging and dampening the development of the individual. I said I would rather wash dishes than force information on unwilling students. I was prepared to wait.

And I have. I did create opportunities for children within the framework of several schools, but I have waited some 36 years for a chance to originate a complete project along the lines I had envisioned.

I was not until 1936 at Ommen that I had the opportunity of talking to Krishnamurti about my problems. He had been in South America and I hadn't seen him for three years. Meanwhile, I had had to teach 'subjects', though at least to students who were interested in them.

Here is our conversation as I wrote it down afterwards. The words are there, but the feelings and the atmosphere are non-verbal. They are in the 'psychic interview' which exists as a companion to the dialogue.

Krishnamurti, who speaks in low tones with an Oxford accent, welcomed me into the hut where he had been interviewing people, and we sat down on chairs opposite each other. I had certain longings and anxieties that I wanted to discuss with him: I was still very nervous; I was concerned about my work in education. I looked up to Krishnamurti as my teacher, even though he had said: "I do not want followers. I abhor the very idea of anyone calling himself my disciple. Be rather the disciple of that understanding which is the fruit of ripe thought and great love; be the disciple of your own understanding."

His time was limited, there were many people who wanted to see him, so I began right away. "Is my strong desire to have a private talk with you at least once a year healthy? I have such intense urges to see a great deal of you—or, should I wait until I'm a little older before expecting to see more of you? I hope to grow out of this need, but at present it makes all the difference."

Krishnamurti listened very attentively and then said, “You come so that we can think together, don’t you? Therefore it’s healthy.”

“These urges to see you are very strong, and there are many others who feel the same.”

“I know.”

Thus encouraged, I went on to the next question, “Do you know I am very keen on doing something in education? The time hasn’t come yet, but I’m preparing as best I can.”

“Do you keep in touch with what other people are doing?”

“Yes, I’ve done a lot of that in the past. At the moment, I’m successfully preparing students to do well in exams. I hope later something will open up so that I may put into effect my ideas. What about the feeling that I may do something special in education, and that up to now I’ve been preparing for it?”

“Don’t think about it. That’s the old Theosophical idea, that one is something special. Do not think about it. If you do, it won’t happen; if you don’t, it may. Don’t prepare for anything. Go after what interests you. Do not have fantasies about the future.” Krishnamurti became very excited and he used his hands to express his feelings: “Fantasies never come true. I noticed the same thing in your first question. Do not build dreams about the future.”

“My position in education is quite accidental.”

“Yes, let it be that way.”

“In the same way I have ideas that I may go to California again and see more of you there.”

Krishnamurti shook both fists at me and it felt as if he almost jumped out of his chair. “Do not do it, David. Let things happen. Do not think about it. Fantasies never come true. Rather than build dreams, go and sleep with a woman. Do something which interests you.”

Well, I was interested in putting more questions, so I continued, “Are you still interested in Saint Christopher School and its future?” I had vague hopes he would come and visit Saint Christopher again.

“I collect people around me and concentrate on them. If they like to do something in education, politics, or whatever it is, that is their affair. Naturally, I am very interested in education.”

(This was Krishnamurti’s attitude at that time: he left education to others. With the passage of time, however, he has become more and more involved personally. He has certainly done so in India, and his recent sponsorship of Brockwood Park, England, and his intention of starting a school in America, are almost a complete reversal of the stand he took in this interview.)

I had one more question which I quickly put: “I have worked hard on my eyes with eye specialists, but I feel a few words of discussion with you would help. I don’t seem to want to see with both eyes at the same instant, that is, focus on the same point simultaneously—probably fear? My left eye isn’t as awake as my right eye and it oscillates. Or, should I not bother about my eyes, on the assumption that they will get better as interest in my work grows?”

“I have noticed that your left eye oscillates sometimes—but *now* you are interested and your eyes are still; your left eye isn’t oscillating. Do things in which you are

interested. Look at the time!” We had been much longer than the time scheduled for each interview. Quite a number of people were waiting outside for their appointments. As we reached the door he said, “You had better slip out quickly in case one of these people throws a brick at you!”

The oscillations of my left eye were due to nystagmus. This and coordination of the eyes have generally improved as my interest in living and my understanding of life have increased; now both conditions are cured, as tested by optometrists. Ironically, I’ve come to need reading glasses for another reason—my age.

Actually, most of my dreams have more or less come true, though not exactly in the form in which I had imagined them. Somehow I knew some things about my future for which, in a way, I was preparing; but dreaming is an indulgence, and doesn’t of itself cause things to happen. One must act.

Krishnamurti said something somewhat different about fantasies much later in Madras, India, in December of 1959. We were seated in a room by ourselves in Vasanta Vihar, Adyar, and we were discussing the difference between change and adjustment.

Krishnamurti said, “Be aware of what change is and what adjustment is. Notice when you are adjusting.”

Noticing requires alertness, and I had found that dreams were a distraction from this, so I said, “One of my difficulties is that I dream.”

“Why shouldn’t you dream?”

“Perhaps I want to think seriously about something, but after a while—”

“You go to sleep. Probably you are not interested. I am interested in what I am doing—discussing, listening, looking at the birds; so I cannot go to sleep. If you feel like sleeping, why not do so?”

“I do. You mean, don’t have a guilt complex about it?”

“Why have a guilt complex about anything? If you fight something, you give it life.”

“Sometimes I go to sleep because of boredom, but other times it’s because I cannot face something completely.”

“It is a form of defence. The shock of seeing something is too much for one.” Experience has shown me that what he said is true.

During the nineteen thirties my friendship with Krishnamurti grew. Besides reading his books and listening to his talks and having private conversations with him, I also had experiences of him in a variety of situations—at a movie, in an underground train, at a restaurant, playing with a baby—but it was not until I moved to California in 1939, that interest and opportunity opened the way for a deeper understanding of his teachings.

CHAPTER II

SELF-KNOWING

During World War II Krishnamurti didn't travel, so he stayed in Ojai for seven years. After I came to America I used to go and see him every year. In his presence there was a deep awareness of the world's sorrow: he was most concerned about the war, which he called 'dreadful'.

"How difficult it is to live nowadays," he said over and over again in various ways. And again he would say, "What a crazy world we live in."

I added, "And it won't be over when the war is finished."

"It will be worse!" he exclaimed.

He expressed his feelings about the war by registering as a conscientious objector, though later he found out that the draft didn't apply to him as an alien visitor.

When I brought my family to visit him, he would often play with our two young sons. The children were very active, always in motion, and I noticed that my mind was even more restless; it never seemed to be still. During a conversation in 1942 I mentioned this to him, "My mind is restless, always thinking."

"It is important," Krishnamurti said, "to have a calm, clear mind. Find out why the mind is restless—anxiety about the future, regret of the past, day-dreaming, habit as a result of a busy life."

"When I try to find out why, I am conscious for only a second."

"Never mind. That awareness will grow."

During the years since this conversation, the 'second' has lasted much longer. I don't know how long these moments are because they are timeless. They seem to occur because I listen and look inquiringly. Of course, they don't continue indefinitely, and it's the mind which calls one back to thinking. Sooner or later it must, if one is to go on living in the physical world.

A year later, in 1943, vacation time again brought us to Ojai. Usually Krishnamurti was willing to talk to me about almost anything, but he always gave much more of himself when discussing the fundamentals of his teachings. He was particularly willing to share his thinking with those who came to see him at that time, because he didn't give public talks during most of the war. As soon as I had a chance to talk with him I tried to start our conversation on a basic level: "You know my great interest in thinking. I have no definite question, but could we talk about it?"

Krishnamurti paused to collect his words, then he said: "To find out what is true thinking, we have to examine ourselves. It is absorbingly interesting."

"Do you mean to look at ourselves from outside as someone else would?"

"I have to explain this thing very carefully. It is very revealing to examine the thought the mind has at any moment, and to find out why the mind has that thought. One who is a nationalist cannot think rightly about nationalism. His thinking would be prejudiced—he will be merely justifying himself."

This seemed to be very clear, but there were other things which were much more difficult to understand. "Why do you choose nationalism? I feel I am free of that. Why not choose something which is more of a problem to me?"

“I am free of nationalism, but I have to think about it just the same so that I can help other people. What I’m saying can be applied to any problem. If we are jealous, vain, possessive, or quick-tempered, then the first thing we have to do is to be aware of that state. Suppose the mind is thinking of shoes. Why is it thinking of shoes? If I need shoes, then it’s all right. If not, then why is it? Perhaps I’m vain, possessive, or I can think of a half a dozen other reasons. If you are dependent on your environment, then you are thoughtless about that environment—your wife, money, or whatever it is.”

“Do you mean by being dependent, that a certain urge or feeling within is immediately associated with somebody or something outside without any question or deep thought?”

“Yes. Have you ever watched your mind, for example in a train? What is it doing?”

“It’s going over the past.”

“Or the future. It’s important to examine every thought and feeling—continual awareness.

“I get up at 5.30 every morning. Then I sit and think for an hour. After that I do some Hatha Yoga exercises, followed by some more thinking. If I didn’t do mental activity like this and the interviews I give, I would go to seed.”

“What time do you go to bed?”

“I go to sleep at about 9.30 or 9.45. I keep very regular hours.”

This is what he did when he was free from travelling and lecturing. I felt he was telling me all this because he thought I should do well to have a similar schedule, so I said, “I would find it difficult to get up so early, as I must get sufficient sleep.”

“I think one must force things a bit. You should give up some of your social life and go to bed early enough.”

The interview was suddenly over. “The chickens are calling and I must go.” Krishnamurti and the others living with him at Ojai were looking after, not only chickens, but also a cow, bees, a vegetable garden, and orchards. He got up and put his arm around me and said, “Goodbye and good luck. I hope I will see you again soon.”

And I hoped so too. It’s interesting that he refers to his ‘thinking’. Maybe he was wary about the use of the word ‘meditation’ at that time, as he wished to avoid being misunderstood. In later years he used the word often, giving his own meaning to it, and in 1969 he wrote:

“Meditation then is not the pursuit of some vision, however sanctified by tradition. Rather it is the endless space where thought cannot enter... in that space is the benediction that man seeks and cannot find. He seeks it within the frontiers of thought, and thought destroys the ecstasy of this benediction.”

In a little less than a year, I was back with him. Our conversation took place in a small, severely plain sitting room, set aside for such purposes and kept separate from the rest of the rambling house overlooking the Ojai Valley. Just how well did I know myself? Was I fully aware all day and every day of what I was thinking and feeling? As a result of this questioning, I had made some interesting discoveries which I wanted to discuss with him, so I began,

“With regard to thinking, may I say what I do?”

Quickly showing interest Krishnamurti said, “Certainly.”

“When I see myself thinking of something, I look at it. I look at the feeling associated with the thought. I let it grow. The effect is to arrest the stream of thought and cause some illumination, but I don’t seem to be able to go any deeper.”

“Instead of stopping the thought process, watch it like a movie. This is to be distinguished from letting it flow unconsciously; instead, try to do it consciously. This is a very difficult thing to do.”

Yes, it is difficult. The mind cannot do it. Light dawns, and the more it grows, the more one finds oneself watching. Just as the sun shines from its own energy, not ours, the dawning and the growing are done, not by the mind, but by Light itself. Our job is to dissolve the clouds of illusion.

Krishnamurti continued, “Has anyone told you about any of the things I have been saying in my talks?”

“Some of them, but it’s difficult to understand completely through another. May I describe the thing I think I have understood the best?”

“Yes, go ahead.”

“The mind is like an iceberg. The visible one-tenth corresponds to the conscious mind and the other nine-tenths corresponds to the unconscious mind.”

Krishnamurti immediately made a correction, “Project the unconscious into the conscious mind.”

“I’m afraid I didn’t understand that part of it. What do you mean?”

“It wasn’t complete. Take nationalism, for example. When all the avenues have been explored with the conscious mind—it gives a sense of security, satisfaction, pride—then let the unconscious project itself into the conscious. There is a huge inheritance which, if we watch it, will filter through into the conscious—I am a ‘Hindu’, and so on—until the whole of the unconscious mind has also been unravelled.”

This gave me something to experiment with, but I wanted to continue reporting some of my past experiments, so I said,

“In order to know myself better I’ve tried writing down my thoughts and feelings. I wrote about the rushing stream, the majestic mountains, the song of the birds, as if writing a letter to someone...”

Krishnamurti responded quickly. “No, not that. What do you *think* of the birds? What is your reaction?”

Still tense, I was unable to think what he meant. “Please explain more fully.”

“It is important to think rightly in order to release something creative. To think rightly you must know yourself. To know yourself you must be detached, absolutely honest, free from judgement. It means continual awareness of one’s thoughts and feelings during the day without acceptance or rejection, like watching a movie of oneself.

“In order to watch more closely, it’s necessary to slow down the mental process. Close examination will automatically do this, like slowing down the movie. It will help at first to write down one’s thoughts and feelings. You cannot write all of them, but as many as possible.”

“In a shorthand manner, not necessarily intelligible to anyone else?”

“Yes, two words are enough to remind one of a thought.”

“I would be afraid someone might read it. I suppose one could make sure no one could understand it.”

“Yes, or burn it. Also, during an activity, such as washing dishes, you can’t write, but the process of watching is going on. Afterwards you can write down your thoughts.”

I was less nervous and gaining in confidence. I said, “Most of us are aware only some of the time. Are you aware all the time?”

“Not quite that. Now that I’m talking to you, my attention is on you, but the photographic process is continuing. Suppose I say something false, then afterwards I’ll say, ‘By Jove, I said something false to David!’”

I was beginning to understand more quickly now. “Then when you are talking to someone you are not aware?”

“When I am giving a lecture my whole attention is on the audience, but the recording process continues; afterwards I can look at my inward reactions. If I’m talking to someone about something that occupies merely my superficial attention, or if I’m doing something such as washing dishes, then I’m aware of what’s going on inside of me; but I can’t give my whole attention to think about it until I’m alone.”

The quickening of my interest prompted me to ask, “And when we’ve written down our thoughts, what then?”

“At the end of the day you can read what you have written, honestly and impartially. You begin to see yourself; you can examine all the different samples. At first you will be ashamed, but that will pass. You will become interested in trying to see what lies behind these thoughts and feelings.”

“Yes, I can see that.”

“Once begun and given the right environment, awareness is like a flame.” Krishnamurti’s face lit up with spiritual vitality. “It will grow immeasurably. The difficult thing is to activate the faculty.”

Then and there, a tiny flame of awareness kindled within me and my inner self became visible. Was this a momentary state? Under what circumstances would it flourish? I said, “What do you mean by the right environment?”

“Not being too tired; having enough time to be aware. ‘Work’ on it and give it enough fuel—the fuel is one’s life.”

Krishnamurti paused to see my response. I could tell how keen he was for me to understand, but I wasn’t used to such concentrated, dynamic thinking and we had to stop.

The intensity of the interview stayed with me for several days and I worked at the process of self-knowing; however, it was far from easy. Habits of condemnation, justification, and anxiety acted as distractions from awareness and prevented objective observation. I felt I needed more help.

A week later I invited Krishnamurti to a picnic at a resort where we were staying during our vacation in Ojai. He and I sat on some large white rocks and watched my family swim in the clear blue river.

After lunch I asked Krishnamurti more questions about awareness. “In watching my reactions I usually find craving in some form or other, for instance, envy. I see it. It comes and goes, but I don’t seem to be able to think any deeper than this.”

He looked at me gently for a moment and then said, “You are the result of the past—your body, your feelings, your thinking. Your body is just a copy. Any feeling, for example, envy or anger, is a result of the past. Whatever you do about that envy, such as repression, trying to make it into something, or some other action, is also the result of the past. So you are merely moving within the circle of experience.” He drew a picture in the sand to show this, a circle with marks inside, one for envy, and another for the action taken. “You must ‘work’ on this; think about it, meditate, try to see it in all its aspects—calmly, detached, as looking at a new and unknown animal. You are interested in its shape, its habits, and so on; you don’t know whether it’s poisonous or not so you have no

reaction. That's meditation, trying to free oneself from the past, transcending the past so as to discover the unknown, the timeless; otherwise it's merely moving within the circle of the past.

"You must meditate on this until you can feel it throughout all your being, not just one layer, *all* the layers." Krishnamurti's entire body expressed what he was saying. "Then there will be a great calmness, infinite peace.

"Write this down as I have said it. Then look at it and watch your reactions to it. Think about it. Try to find out what you think about it. It will come to you later."

His words had a quietening effect. There was a long silence during which we sat motionless. *Anything* one did was useless; yet, there was still an inner movement. I wanted companionship of some kind—personal, impersonal, spiritual, or divine—I just didn't want to be completely alone. I said, "The desire for affection or the fear of losing it lies at the back of many of my thoughts and actions."

"What is it you desire? It's not affection." He waited for my reply.

"You mean it's not affection in my own heart, but something from outside?"

"Exactly. You are trying to fill a void within. It's like attempting to fill an empty, leaky bucket which can never be filled."

"One has to keep putting something in every day."

"And still it fills only a thin layer; it satisfies only superficially. It never completely or permanently fills the whole vessel. So why do you go on doing this?" Krishnamurti gave an inquiring look, carefully watching my reaction. "You are not really experiencing this. If you really saw this you would be thrilled. You would have a tremendous sense of relief—'Thank goodness I don't have to go on doing this!'"

I could feel *his* sense of relief, but not mine. "Why do I experience it so superficially?"

"Yes, why?" he asked.

I was determined to be honest with my replies. "Because I am dull, not sensitive enough."

"Yes. So find out why you are dull. Investigate everything: diet, inheritance, your English background, imperialism and so forth; your activities; perhaps you are surrounded by thoughts about yourself, memories, comparisons, escapes, dreams, and so on—examine everything. Really tackle the whole thing. If you just sit back and say, 'Well, I am dull,' and do nothing about it, then you are old." He sat back with a dramatic, nonchalant attitude; then leaning forward and focussing his luminous dark brown eyes on me, he said, "It should be a matter of life and death."

"Why am I dull *now*?"

"I think it's because you are depressed."

"Yes, that's true. I know why I'm depressed." I was feeling discouraged about my job in a factory, a job which took all my energy. To process food was the most constructive occupation available for me during the war.

"You can easily trace out the cause of it, but the depression doesn't help, does it? So why are you depressed?" He smiled as he waited for me to put the question to myself. "Directly you ask yourself 'why?', really look at it, then it's gone. You are on the mountain top."

"One clings on to the depression. Why is that?" I felt the depression going but part of me seemed to hold on to it.

“Because it’s better than nothing. You don’t want to be empty. David, why don’t you really tackle this question of the void within? Why do you continually fill it with sensation—comforts, beliefs, comparisons? If you have a leaky, broken bucket, what do you do with it?”

“Throw it away!”

“Yes, sir. You do not go on using it!”

This dialogue had a tremendous impact on me and even now as I write I find the words still very much alive. This was the beginning of a concentrated series of interviews with Krishnamurti. At the end of that period of my life, I had come to a higher realization of what I am, and the purpose of life.

CHAPTER III

SENSITIVITY, AWARENESS AND LIGHT

It's interesting to note the sequence of my development. I had begun by asking Krishnamurti for his autograph, and then through Theosophy until I came to the questions: What do I really want? Who am I?

I became aware of my sensitivity to people and to environments, and I realized the importance of this. I sensed the 'atmosphere' when I entered a room, a church, or a street, and I discovered that the vibrations of certain places and certain people meant a great deal to me—I seemed to need them for my growth. Of course, I found other places and people that I did *not* need, places and people to be avoided if possible. I became discriminating in my diet. I watched the whole cycle of eating and digesting and the effects of different foods.

I began to learn how to let my feelings flow, watching without suppressing or condemning them. In this way I got to know and understand myself quite well.

I was eager to continue to learn, to continue the progression. What would be the next step? When I went to see Krishnamurti next, in June, 1945, I told him that I had been writing down my thoughts for a year. His response was to question me: "What did you find? What was the result?"

"At times it has been very interesting and it helps concentration. I know better what the mind does—it rearranges the past, plans for the future, which is also rearranging the past, and sometimes has fantasies which I know will never take place. Now I don't seem to be getting anything more out of the writing."

"Why don't you stop writing for a while? Now that you have the concentration, why don't you just sit and think things over? Find out what lies behind your thoughts, and then what is behind that, and so on."

Over the years since then I've gone a long way with this particular piece of advice, going deeper and deeper into a world far beyond words.

But at the time of this interview, I was still rather vague. "I have some interest, but there's no flame of awareness."

"Why don't you push that interest?"

"I'm not sure I've developed the necessary concentration."

Now I see this as a lack of confidence in myself. Krishnamurti said, "Perhaps you are not setting about it in the right way. Suppose you are envious and watch it, doesn't it stop?"

"Yes, but if there are other things besides envy, the reaction continues. Can one always interpret reaction?" I was starting to go beyond words.

"No, you cannot always analyze it."

"I mean sometimes reaction is just there, and all one can do is watch it. Perhaps later, one can see what it was."

"Yes."

"You know, I wrote down last year's interviews with you. I've meditated on them—a sentence or a paragraph at a time—watched my reactions, thought about them, and I've asked myself questions. I have found this illuminating. Now, I need something fresh."

Krishnamurti always seemed to be ready with something fresh. He said, “Perhaps you have squeezed all the juice out of it. Why don’t you lie fallow and stop digging for a while? Just as there are four seasons, and in gardening the ground lies fallow during the winter, so I suggest taking a rest from probing. At the same time keep away rubbish, tin cans, and so on.”

“How long do you suggest I do this, a week, a month, or what?”

“You will know for yourself. When I was learning Spanish, I stuck at it hard every day.”

“You mean just before your South American tour?”

“Yes. Then one day I found myself getting stale; so I gave it a week’s rest. After that, I came back to it with a new freshness.”

“That’s true, of course, of learning anything. For example, after studying one goes and plays tennis or something.”

“Yes, every day I go through the seasons. I get up early, meditate, think things over and so on...”

“Dig deep? Find out why?”

“Yes. Then in the evening, I forget all about it, though I am still watching... I am still aware.” Krishnamurti paused. There was silence for a few moments. “Now you are more interested, more awake than when you came in. Your depression has gone.”

“I have seen something new.”

“Yes. I have shown you something which actually you should have seen for yourself. Also, you have been stimulated by my enthusiasm. Even if you have only scratched the surface so far, lie fallow for a while, enjoy the mountains.”

“But not play a lot of tennis and other activities?”

“No, that would be a distraction. We can see each other again soon. Would you like to go for a walk?”

He took me along one of his favourite paths, one of the hundreds of hiking and riding trails that honeycomb Ojai’s rugged mountains and colourful canyons. Soon we were overlooking the valley, a series of glorious views preceding one after another into the distance; then down over a field, and back through orange and lemon groves. It wasn’t until three days later that we continued our conversation.

“Was the public discussion you led yesterday, stripped of the distractions, a typical process of meditation?”

“Yes. At first it’s like a mountain in the distance. Then, as you approach the mountain, it becomes larger and larger until finally it is so enormous you can see nothing but the mountain. This morning I meditated for an hour. It was tremendous fun.”

“To do that, one has to be willing to give up *everything* that’s not really needed.” What I meant was, that one must think and inquire and meditate in the present, and not be distracted. If one puts something else first—money, success, sex, whatever it is—and leaves the ‘mountain’ to be attended to later on, then it’s the other which one finds and not the ‘mountain’.

Of course, one may have whatever things are needed for climbing the mountain, but they must remain secondary, and never become ends in themselves.

“Of course. Out of Saint Christopher and all the rest of it, you are one of the few who has really stuck to it. So pursue the thing and try to make something out of it.”

“When I am with you it seems just around the corner, but when I’m working in a factory it seems so far away.”

“One has to work tremendously hard at the thing.”

I thought a minute, then added, “It’s a question of experimenting to find out in what way to make an effort or not make an effort, continually trying different things.”

“Read, meditate, write, lie fallow and so on.” (By “read” Krishnamurti meant reading the book of the self, the process of self-knowing, of being aware.)

“One thing I have to do is quit my present job. So many hours in a factory put me to sleep.”

“Yes, it dulls the mind.”

“I should like to come and live in Ojai.”

“Byron and Walter are here.” These are two of our old friends: if they could find a way of living in Ojai, why couldn’t I?

What disturbed me was the atmosphere of the factory where I worked, but it did give me the opportunity to watch the effect of awareness in my life. As I disentangled myself from the past, the first thing I shed was college conditioning, then school influences, and finally some of my childhood fears. As I faced things and began to look at myself honestly, I became less nervous; yet, there remained other layers of conditioning, particularly the inherited, unconscious influences of my English and Scottish background.

We moved to Ojai near the end of 1945. We found ourselves in an expanding group of people interested in Krishnamurti’s teachings. We would discover whether it was possible to live a completely free and enlightened life; it seemed very difficult to support a family and at the same time be fully awake spiritually, but I had experienced enough awareness to be eager for a great deal more.

Soon after our arrival I went to see Krishnamurti. I had been working on what lay behind my thoughts.

“When I watch the mind wandering and find out what emotions lie behind the thoughts, I always find caving. There it is, whenever I look, the same thing underneath, perhaps a different colouring, but the same hunger.”

“What else?”

“That’s as far as I can go at present.”

“Isn’t there also something compelling you to search and find out?”

I looked inward. I was quiet for a moment, then I answered, “Yes. That’s what makes one question things. The trouble is I don’t watch enough, only some of the time. It’s as if I were drugged.”

“Find out *when* you are awake and when you are not, what circumstances.”

“I am more awake inwardly when I’m alone”

“Then be alone more. Why not sit and think for an hour until you are exhausted?”

“Then I become dull again through activity such as nailing on shingles.”

“But you can go on thinking all the time.”

“I tend to be absorbed until something shocks me—perhaps I become impatient with the children. Then I wake up and ask why, but it’s too late!”

“Then the next time you are not angry.”

“Only if I’m awake and watching.”

“Of course.”

There had to be a way. I was groping. I said, “I feel I should get a better view and really look at craving.”

“That is like being in the valley and wanting to look at things from the mountain top. But you are not there; you are in the valley. Be honest with yourself.

“Now, you are discontented, dissatisfied. That means you are seeking satisfaction, doesn’t it? First one thing fails to give the satisfaction for which you had hoped, and so you try another and then another. But it’s the same process of seeking satisfaction, though the intellect may say that you are not seeking satisfaction. Ask yourself, ‘Is there satisfaction?’” Krishnamurti paused while I thought about what he had asked.

I could not think it all through right away, and in my discomfort, I said as much.

“Yes, you must push and push and push. Now, as always, you are becoming more awake. I am acting as a stimulant. Later on, you will be stimulated by your own thinking.”

This is true. Now, I am inspired by my own thinking and meditations. At that time, however, I still depended on him.

During our first year at Ojai Krishnamurti worked intensely—he held discussions with small and large groups, gave talks and interviews, and encouraged people to meet for discussions without him, which we did seriously and enthusiastically.

Meanwhile, I taught folk dancing in Ojai and nearby cities, taught mathematics in schools, and repaired roofs. As I worked, I felt that to give part of myself to earning money, another part to eating, another to discussing, and so on, was fragmentation and incomplete living. I had the feeling from listening to Krishnamurti that it was possible to live fully all the time without division. I wanted to take full advantage of the remaining time he had in Ojai, so I made arrangements for several interviews.

I began, “Do you think it’s a good idea to concentrate on illumination during the next four months, until you go away?”

He looked at me inquiringly. “What do you mean by concentration?”

“Put other activities in second place. Do only those things which don’t stand in the way of concentration.”

“I think one needs to do other things. One cannot concentrate for more than two or three hours spread out during the day. If you tried to concentrate for twenty-four hours, you would have a breakdown. Concentration has its dangers.”

“Of course, I intended to do other things.”

“These other activities act as a testing ground. Meanwhile, awareness is going on in the background, all the time. You will come back to the concentration much fresher.”

Krishnamurti’s point about our inability to concentrate for more than two or three hours spread out during the day is important. I came to realise it was no good trying to do the impossible. I had to find the right balance—meditation, thinking, feeling, physical activities, being alone, being with others. There’s no formula, each person must find his own balance.

The problem of awareness was still uppermost in my mind, so I opened that subject again: “I’m aware sometimes, but most of the time I’m not really conscious of my feelings and thoughts.”

“Do you notice the times when you are more awake?”

“Yes, but I become completely engrossed when teaching or dancing.”

“Isn’t there part of you which remains aloof and watching?”

“Only at moments.”

“Are those moments increasing in duration?”

“Yes.”

“Therefore you are more awake, however imperceptibly. Do you not find fundamental discussions such as this illuminating?”

“Yes, I find them stimulating.”

Sitting very erect and speaking with great clarity and an affectionate manner, Krishnamurti said, “Do you find them just stimulating or are they illuminating? There is a distinct difference between being stimulated and being awake. Being awake is like a flame illuminating everything within.” He waited patiently, yet alertly. “Do you really see this? First see it verbally. Then feel it out—being stimulated and being awake. Now go into it deeply, seeing its full significance.” His whole being spoke to me.

“I see the difference, but other things come into my mind.”

“Never mind about the other things. Really look at this. Really see the difference between illumination and stimulation.”

There was silence. My nerves were calm. I felt the touch of something vital and tremendous. “I’m afraid there’s much resistance inside me.”

“Yes, but see the enormous importance of illumination, even if it’s for only a second.”

During the silence that followed I became aware of an aliveness which seemed to exist quite apart from either of us. But the expansion of consciousness taking place was too much for me—suddenly I was almost asleep. I asked about this.

“You are not used to this concentration.”

“I do see the importance of illumination, but there are other things coming into my mind I had prepared to ask you. I’m always doing that—preparing for the future.” I realised that this happened because I was anxious, and also that it blocked my openness to something new.

“All right, you see the futility of the mind always preparing. After this you will be less inclined to do so much. The thing that matters is to see the importance of light.”

My mind was still burdened with questions which I thought I had better expose even if they were ‘wrong’.

“Is it better to meditate with the eyes open or closed?”

“It depends. But the thing that matters is to see the importance of light.”

I could see the truth of this, but I was afraid I might not always. “What makes one dull again after being aware?”

“Your mind is already greedy for more. It wants to hold onto the light.”

Once more there was silence. I saw that in worrying about how to keep alert my mind was seeking a continuation of the experience and that this action was itself a cause of going to sleep. In this way the interview was a meditation, a process of self-knowing. I experienced an intensification of hearing, seeing, and feeling, and my questions felt like interruptions during a concert or sunset. “So you mean just watch awareness, watch it grow, and never mind about the other things?”

“Yes. Experiment with it for a while. Be interested in light apart from David Young. You are more awake than you think you are.” Krishnamurti leaned forward and looked straight at me. “When you do something such as teaching, gardening, or dancing, you don’t give all your attention to it—perhaps thirty per cent. What happens to the other seventy per cent? If you don’t know, it must be hidden.”

“One notices one’s reactions and other people’s.”

“Yes. In other words this watching is going on all the time.”

“A continuous meditation?”

“Yes. Listen as if listening to the rain.” It was pouring outside. “Suppose we call this phenomenon concentration: hear what it has to tell you, rather than your speaking to it. It will tell you much more than you can tell it. Of course there must be some tension on your part; there must be interplay. For example, you work on your own and then you come to hear what I have to say. If you didn’t work at it, anything I said would be just a waste of time. When you listen, then do so without trying to get something out of it.”

“We want something, and that hinders us from truly listening and watching.”

“Yes. You are reading a book. Read every page. If you read a book on science, it tells you more than you can tell it; doesn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“Then whatever it is—greed, craving, anger—see the whole process. For instance, read the book of sensation; read it all—about the villain as well as the hero, and not just about the hero—so you will know all about it. How else can you know the whole story? Find out the whole story of pain and pleasure. Look and see when you are sensuous.”

“You mean sex?”

“Sex is just one small part of it. Take sensuality in its most general sense—eating, sense of power, achieving, taking sides—in fact craving in all its forms. We have to watch very carefully all the time.”

“In other words, look at craving or whatever it is as if it were not part of me?”

“Yes. It’s absorbingly interesting, isn’t it? Suppose we look at a picture; we judge it, criticize and so on, instead of really seeing what it has to say.”

As result of this interview, I came to a much better understanding of how awareness operates. It became more of an actuality to me—to gather information about oneself is merely to accumulate memories, but to observe the movement of action is a living process.

By listening very quietly when alone and unoccupied, not only to outside sounds but also to my inner being, and by watching very carefully any feeling, any scrap of light, however small and apparently insignificant, I discovered a luminous intensity existing quite apart from the busy mind. At the same time I continued to feel as if I were groping in a fog, so as soon as I was alone with Krishnamurti again I plunged into the heart of my problem. “After watching my mind and feelings, I seem to reach a fog or veil.”

He understood instantly and said, “Doesn’t the veil recede a little bit each time?”

“Sometimes.” There were circumstances when it was much harder to be aware. “Doesn’t alertness depend on one’s physical condition? If one is ill one isn’t so awake.”

“Of course it does. If there’s pain naturally one cannot think of anything else.”

“Or no energy...”

“Yes, that’s it; one lacks energy. So one has to watch one’s physical condition, being careful about diet, not getting too tired, and so on.”

“You mean try out the effect of each food?”

“Yes, experiment with foods and watch the body’s reactions to different kinds.”

“If one is tired?”

“Then push the alertness.”

“You mean in spite of one’s condition?”

“Yes, but one can only go just so far and then the body cracks up.”

Going back to my original thoughts I said, “How can I make meditation more intense?”

“What do you do?”

“I watch my feelings and thoughts and listen to every inner movement.”

“So one watches the emotions and the mind with all its wanderings. To do that one has to be very alert, doesn’t one?”

“Is one aware of everything at once, or does one’s attention wander quickly from one thing to another—thoughts, emotions, actions, sounds?”

“This thing is difficult enough as it is. Do not make it any harder. One has to be alert, physically, emotionally, verbally, mentally, everything all the time. It’s like a house with different rooms, different activities going on; yet all are one unit.” Krishnamurti’s face expressed affectionate concern for me. “I think you need time to yourself in the morning, and then again in the evening, perhaps a walk. When I say alone, I mean alone. If you haven’t a room to yourself, go out under a tree somewhere.”

“The difficulty is to use the time properly.”

“Expose all your problems. Spew out everything, jealousy, everything. Play with it. Then you will no longer be nervous or angry; you will be awake, alert, quiet inside.”

As always I was deeply affected and I left feeling I had a lot to work on, for a long time.

CHAPTER 1V

STOPPING THE MIND

Soon after the last interview, about fifteen of us at Ojai held a series of weekly discussions with Krishnamurti. We sat in chairs arranged in a circle. We would think together, and everyone took part, though some had a lot to say and others very little. Krishnamurti would listen to all that was said and then share his thoughts.

We were a very interesting group, all friends: Felix Greene, who later became famous for his work on China and Vietnam; Elena Greene, who was to become a teacher at Brockwood Park England; Byron Casselberry, life-long worker for Krishnamurti Writings; Mignon Casselberry, with whom I worked later when she was Registrar at Happy Valley School in Ojai; D. Rajagopal, for forty years editor of Krishnamurti's writings and organizer of his talks; Rosalind Rajagopal, to become the Director of Happy Valley School, and their daughter, Radha, one of Happy Valley's first students; Dr. Hugh Keller, who very soon after this cared for Krishnamurti during a long and serious illness; Marjorie Keller, who was to help me create the New Education Foundation; Louis Zalk, President of Happy Valley Foundation; our hosts, James and Annie Vigeveno, long-time workers for Krishnamurti Writings, and their daughter, Gabrielle, another of Happy Valley's first students; my wife, Betty, and her mother, Ethelyn Kennedy, and myself. Enrique and Isabel Biascochea, from Puerto Rico, joined us for the later discussions, and Aldous Huxley took part on at least one occasion.

We talked about reading the book of the self, all the pages, the ugly as well as the beautiful, the painful as well as the pleasurable. Reading meant observing, listening, finding out, reading 'what is', looking at whatever is there. And if we strive after enlightenment, awareness, light, or liberation, however subtly, then we're not reading—we're concerned with the next page, instead of the one in front of us.

We seemed to progress with some topics—for instance, with discipline—but somehow we didn't change radically. Light came now and then, but there was no fire or explosion. Here's a summary of a discussion which took place after we had been talking for several weeks.

Krishnamurti: "I think it's important to examine anew as to what our intentions are, just as if we were meeting for the first time. This discussion group doesn't seem to be doing what I hoped it would, so that unless our intentions are clear, I do not think there is any point in continuing to discuss."

M (Member of Group): "Suppose we experiment by being more frank with each other and thereby help each other wake up in that way."

K: "Your intentions may be serious, but perhaps mine are not. Unless our intentions are the same, we do not meet."

M: "I know what my intentions are, but it may be difficult to verbalize them"

K: "I think we can find out our intentions."

M: "By watching ourselves during the week, our reactions to events, we can observe our intentions."

K: "I may want to go through that door, but you may want to go through another; so that we may be wasting our time. Do I want to dissolve the ego or go on expanding it? Is this a burning question that must be answered?"

The ego was looked upon as a kind of fortress full of 'I' activity—craving, striving, trying to stop craving, attempting to end sorrow, making an effort to still the mind, crystallizing truth.

M: "I may *say* what my intentions are, but the only way I can really test it is by my actions."

As usual Krishnamurti had a way of getting to the heart of things. He said, "In other words, am I truly serious?"

M: "Can't we easily deceive ourselves and think we are headed north, but actually we are going south?"

K: "Surely we can discover the truth as to which path we are treading, through moment by moment observation."

M: "If one has been expending the ego all one's life, what makes one stop doing this and start the other?"

K: "Let us examine that question. I have been going north; I am soaked in the inheritance of centuries, habit and so on; suddenly, I change and start going south. What is it that causes such an internal revolution?"

M: "Surely we have had experiences that have changed our lives; there has been some revolution."

K: "I am not talking about the past. Let us start afresh and see if we can experience now at 4:45 p.m., April 6, 1946, an answer to this question."

M: "Suffering will bring the necessary experience."

K: "Millions of people are suffering, but that doesn't make them change. What is the experience that will cause this internal revolution? Or rather, what is the state of mind and heart that will lead to that experience?"

M: "How can I answer that question as long as I'm continuing in the old path of ego expansion and contraction?"

K: "Surely one must stop, even if only for a few seconds."

M: "Then the question is how can I stop striving?"

K: "I don't think so. It is not a question of how to stop. The original question, if put seriously, will itself cause the stopping."

I had found out that whenever I asked myself what makes one stop ego-expanding and start the liberating process, or any fundamental question causing inquiry within, my mind would maybe slow down and stop for a few seconds. By causing me to question myself in this manner, the discussions did have a deep effect on me.

A week later we continued. One member of the group said, "It is a profound shock to realize that only by the grace of God will Truth appear. In other words, there is nothing I can do to bring Truth. At the same time, is there anything I can do, or not do, in preparation so there's more chance of Truth dawning?"

K: "Have we reached that stage? Does the group realize that everything the ego does is still part of the ego activity? I mean, do we experience that now? If so, what happens?"

Krishnamurti was right—we had not yet reached that stage. Now, I know that when I bring my own world to a standstill, there's another world waiting for me, one of light, however dim or bright it may be. And I can slow down my world of feelings and thoughts

by inquiring, relaxing, observing, listening. The experience of knowing this isn't a shock, but a relief and a great joy—I do not have to strive after light.

M: “When we see the ego performing, insofar that it is conscious and we see the truth of it, that part stops. It is the unconscious part that remains. We know it's there by inference, by circumstantial evidence, but we don't experience it.”

K: “So, the question is how to be aware?”

M: “Yes.”

K: “If I am in the ego fortress and say I need some awareness, isn't that still wanting something, namely awareness?”

At this point, four members of the group spoke in turn.

M: “What is this awareness we are speaking about? Do we think it is something magic that cures all?”

M: “There are two kinds of awareness: one is superficial and merely recognizes that I am a liar and is therefore not effective; the other sees and knows all the truth about lying and consequently frees one from lying.”

M: “If the ego is all the time ‘going north’, what makes it completely change and stop doing so?”

M: “Surely we have already made up our minds about that and decided to go South.”

K: “If the mind decides to go South, then it is still part of the mind and therefore part of the ego.”

M: “In other words, every movement of the mind is self-centred and therefore ‘phony’. Even the part that observes itself is still part of the mind.”

M: “I think there's something which observes which is not the ego. There are thoughts and feelings, and then besides that, something which can observe and be aware of these thoughts and feelings. This observer is not part of the ego's fortress.”

K: “Surely it is. Any part of the self, thoughts, feelings, lower mind, higher mind, higher-self, observer, or whatever you call it, is still of the self. Therefore, it is important to know all about the self. We are back to the original question of how to be more aware.”

M: “Is it the ego that inquires about itself, knows all about its fortress and so brings an end to its striving, in other words commits suicide?”

K: “It's not a question of committing suicide.”

M: “If I know I'm dreaming, I stop dreaming; or if I know all about smoking and understand all my motives for smoking, the truth will set me free.”

K: “In other words, we are back where we started ten weeks ago, namely the importance of reading the book of the self. It is just as well to start at the beginning of the book again—perhaps we missed some of the pages when we read before.”

M: “I am glad this question has been raised because I haven't felt anything vital taking place. There is too much activity merely on the ideas level, and we are all too polite, like a tea-party without being sufficiently frank with each other. I have been present at much more alive discussions on other subjects; for example, a group of radio technicians trying to solve a problem. There was silence for fifteen minutes, and then when someone spoke, all attention was given to what was said. There is something dying inside of me. We seem to be afraid of exposing ourselves.”

M: “Perhaps these discussions aren’t alive because nothing serious is happening now while we discuss, but perhaps we might try exposing vital experiences we have had during the week, and bring the awareness of those experiences into the discussions now.”

K: “How can we bring awareness of another time into the present? Surely that’s impossible.”

M: “If anything happened during the week, that would show itself in the discussion. The memory of the experience isn’t important.”

K: “The question is, are we speaking directly from experience or are we merely playing with ideas?”

M: “When we say we don’t wish to continue expanding the ego, that may be a verbal assertion. A tree that grows doesn’t stop growing just because we say it has stopped or make up our mind that it has stopped.”

K: “What is the relation between what we say and what is happening inside of us? Are we or are we not continuing to expand the ego? What’s wrong with expanding the ego?”

At this point I said, “May I answer that question in a way which is neither yes nor no. There is a disturbance going on inside of me which I feel is futile—”

K: “Stop right there. Why do you say it is futile?”

D.Y.: “I have to call it something. I was describing what was happening inside. There’s something uncomfortable, a whirl which one feels shouldn’t be there or should be different.”

I had a feeling which I didn’t completely accept and I wanted to change it. My response now would be, why try to change it? Why not just observe it as it is?

K: “Do you feel it is futile because the teachings say so, or do you do so independently?”

D.Y.: “One of our inhibitions is that instead of exposing ourselves, we are trying to say the right thing or afraid of saying the wrong thing.”

K: “Is that our difficulty?”

D.Y.: “It’s one difficulty, but not the major one.”

K: “There are two rails inside of us. One, the ego expanding, and the other, the teachings of the Buddha, the Christ, the Saints, and so on, which say do not expand. Are we aware of these two rails?”

M: “What do you mean, are we aware? Couldn’t that be something to pursue, ‘I must be aware’, and so on?”

K: “Of course it could be. It’s not that I should be aware, am I aware of these two rails?”

M: “What happens when we are aware? What do we mean by awareness?”

M: “Sometimes I find myself carrying on a conversation inside and when I notice it, it stops.”

K: “All right. When we are aware of something, conversation, jealousy, for one split second at least it stops.”

M: “If I’m day-dreaming, and then suddenly realize that I’m doing so, I stop, but only for a few seconds; then the mind is active again. So, should one then dig further?”

K: “If the mind is still active, if you feel you have to dig further, you haven’t stopped. One is aware, *that’s all*. Let us watch during the week and notice these moments. When one is aware of something going on, it stops.”

M: “That means for one second at least one is nothing. Can we entertain the idea of being nothing?”

K: “Let us try that now. We said we would experiment. Can we be nothing, if only for two seconds?”

D.Y.: “How can I be nothing when there’s a whirl going on inside of me?”

K: “Isn’t there an opening somewhere into which the notion of nothing can appear? Don’t try to *become* nothing, just *be* nothing now...”

There was silence for about a minute during which we all tried—in vain—to be nothing. To be nothing for a few seconds is for the mind to come to a standstill for a few seconds, and we weren’t ready for that yet.

K: “I’m afraid you are all merely making pictures of nothing. But it was an interesting experiment wasn’t it? We found out something, didn’t we?”

M: “We found out how full we are.”

K: “And also that we cannot entertain the idea of being nothing.”

As we all went home, I realized we were stuck with being something because we just couldn’t face being nothing.

Our next discussion was the last time this particular group was all together. Krishnamurti said, “We said at the beginning of these discussions that we would be serious and experiment. I wonder how far we feel we have done things and whether any revolution has taken place.”

M: “There’s a general feeling, I think, that we have not been successful. There has been little change, even seeds sown, but no fire has been lit. Why don’t we work at this self-knowing process harder all day? I feel every evening that I haven’t done a full day’s work at this. Could we take the point where we finished last week and see how far we have experimented with it during the week? We said that when we suddenly notice something taking place inside—an imaginary conversation, jealousy, or whatever it is—that at least for one split second it stops. Personally, I have found that by watching this process, there has been an overall effect, namely, these moments have increased in frequency. It’s like a train journey with many tunnels; suddenly one finds oneself out of a tunnel and then again one is in another tunnel. What is the state of the mind and heart that brings an end to the tunnel, and what causes the beginning of the next tunnel?”

K: “Your question is then, how to keep out of the tunnel?”

M: “Isn’t that a desire and therefore still part of the tunnel?”

M: “Why must we always brush aside the desire for God? Can’t that flame help us get out of the tunnel? Why is ninety-nine per cent of our discussion about the mind and its activities? Can’t we talk more about God?”

K: “We didn’t brush aside the desire for God. That is assumed; but having once said it, there is no point in just repeating it. We saw, didn’t we, that Love, Enlightenment, Stillness, or whatever you call it, is something completely outside the mind, which is incapable of experiencing it. So that in order to find Truth, one has to stop the thought process altogether. How can we find God as long as there is a noise inside?”

By ‘noise’ I think Krishnamurti meant all the occupations of the mind—anxiety, conflict, condemnation, and so on.

M: “The flame keeps burning and gives impetus to the search for Truth. It is deadening to just talk about the mind.”

K: “We find that self so dull that, instead of facing that, we seek stimulation. You were saying, in other words, that stimulation, as a result of experience, which includes going to church as that can be stimulating, helps find God.”

M: “I find that discussions with Krishnamurti have an effect which keeps me working hard at the search for some period of time afterwards.”

M: “I have had moments of overwhelming devotion suddenly overcome me—while I was gardening or something—and the effect has stirred me for some time.”

K: “Through accident, unexpectedly, one has an experience; a bell is rung inside and it goes on ringing. You are saying that the memory of that could help one find Truth.”

M: “My experience is, no. The memory, even a second afterwards, is the very next tunnel that one enters.”

K: “The experience is so exciting for the mind that it immediately seeks a way of perpetuating it or repeating it.”

M: “The experience stirs us in our search for God.”

K: “Who is it that puts the question and does the search? It is the mind, isn’t it? So it is the mind talking about God, which it can never experience.”

M: “Then is the only function of the mind to build a house and plan a dinner?”

K: “That is the other extreme. The mind can learn all about itself and its strivings.”

M: “How can we stop the mind so as to be open for experience?”

K: “That is still the mind talking about the other. By gradually learning more and more about itself, being aware of its futile activities, it stops—not because of a desire for Truth, but because it sees that its ceaseless whirl is silly.”

M: “Then there’s no point in discussing.”

K: “On the contrary, our discussion has shown us something. Hasn’t it been a revelation to you?”

M: “Are there any environments or conditions or activities which increase the chances of stillness appearing? As there are certain jobs, such as that of a lawyer, which use the mind to such an extent that stillness is impossible; is there anything else one can do besides careful choice of a job?”

M: “Surely, if one is serious about the search, one would not choose a boiler factory for example.”

M: “One can have a boiler factory in one’s own mind or home!”

K: “How is it that one comes to ask the question? Does one think that the right environment will cause stillness? Who is it that asks the question? Surely, it is the mind seeking enlightenment which is something it can never experience.”

This series of discussions ended here, but not our search for the Truth. Our minds were still asking questions which could only be answered by further inquiry and experimentation. For some of us this led to serious new work in education.

CHAPTER V

FRESHNESS AND VITALITY

The small group discussions were one of several connected events at Ojai which now gave rise to something new and more concrete—a school.

The time was ripe for such a project: Krishnamurti's seven-year residence at Ojai had inspired many people interested in his teachings to come and live in the valley; enthusiasm in his work had been heightened by public talks and discussions; and land and buildings in Meiners Oaks belonging to Krishnamurti Writings, once used for Krishnamurti's Ojai camps, were available for a school campus. A sponsor was found in the Happy Valley Foundation, a non-profit cultural organization established by Annie Besant in 1927, which so far had done little else beside farm a walnut orchard on a small part of its 465 acres of beautiful land in Upper Ojai. There would be a boarding and day junior and senior high school on part of the Meiners Oaks property, with the plan of moving to Upper Ojai later.

I was asked to join the staff in the middle of the first year; I immediately became aware of the presence of that energy, that 'otherness' which has led me since boyhood. I knew I was meant to be there and I needed no further security.

I taught dancing, mathematics, English, and became Director of Studies. Of all the activities I began—some of which have continued through the years—perhaps the most significant one was the daily morning assembly with its music, its reading aloud from the world's scriptures, and its silence. Yes, it is silence which gives the best opportunity to see and feel one's inner life. "When I miss assembly," I have heard students say, "I always feel I've missed something important."

When he was in Ojai, Krishnamurti sometimes held discussions with the teachers and students. I used to wish he would do this more often, and I could never understand why he didn't. In later years, when I asked him, he said that he hadn't felt he was wanted sufficiently to justify his talking any more than he actually had.

But Krishnamurti's influence on the school took many forms: for instance a conversation with a new teacher, which took place at a gathering in his Ojai home in 1947. We were talking about how to hold serious discussions on fundamental issues when Krishnamurti said, "I would tackle the discussions as if self-knowledge were a completely new problem and as if there were no books to tell us what to do."

Speaking from a Theosophical background, the teacher asked: "Why not books? Why not study the beauty and order in the universe, its laws and so on?"

"Then what?"

He continued with his Theosophy. "If we know a law, we know better how to act. For example, if we know that fire burns, we don't get burnt."

"What happens after we have learned all these things? What is the ultimate objective?" Krishnamurti could be quite Socratic in his questioning.

"Happiness."

“All right. Can’t we have happiness now? Does happiness necessitate time, evolution, reincarnation and all the rest of it?”

Now it was the teacher’s turn to ask a question. “I suppose not, but if we see the truth and beauty of life, won’t that help?”

“Who does the seeing? What is seen depends upon the instrument that does the looking: if this is distorted, then the visions of truth will be distorted—the truth seen depends upon the observer. Suppose I have no knowledge, no books, but I want to find out. The Buddha did it by himself; the Christ did; so why can’t I do so too? What would such a man see?”

“He would see order in the world.”

Krishnamurti answered quickly, “Or disorder, its opposite. Why do you choose just order? Because order gives you pleasure and disorder gives you pain; isn’t that so? In other words you are not seeking Truth at all. You are merely seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. Why assume that Truth is pleasurable? It might be very painful. This is all a revelation, isn’t it?”

“Then do you deny all knowledge?”

“How can I? It is there. But, why is there identification with pleasure? Because without identification I would be nothing, and I am afraid of being nothing.”

“O.K.”

“No. It is not just O.K. Surely, it is a tremendous revelation. Why is there identification? I am an American, my name, my family, and so on. I exist only through identification, and without identification I would be nothing. If I am nothing, then I am open; my vision is undistorted; then there’s the possibility of discovering Truth.”

As the school developed Krishnamurti posed new questions to the teachers. At one meeting he asked, “Is it possible to provide an atmosphere that will enable the student not only to free himself from the conditioning with which he arrives, but also to see and understand all influences in the present, including the influence of the teachers, and so be free of all influences and conditioning?” It’s impossible to bring up a child without his being influenced, but perhaps he could learn to be free. Then he added, “It is important to study in order to investigate all influences, but, if mere book knowledge is acquired, then there is no creativity.”

One of the teachers said, “If I see the child is being influenced by another student or person, can I help him to be free of that influence without allowing my background to influence him?”

Krishnamurti said, “I may have to stop him sometimes, carefully explaining why, yet all the time encouraging investigation so as to be free of all influence.” It is, of course, very difficult to help another to be free when one isn’t free oneself. The understanding we arrived at was just to do the very best we could and learn together with the student.

At another discussion with the teachers, Krishnamurti asked: “If I were a boy, what sort of a school would I want to attend? I think I would want to have first-class teachers who would awaken interest in everything. Such a teacher has to be creative and inventive in his teaching; he must be interested in his subject, the pupils, and in teaching the pupils. Are we such teachers?”

“If I were a boy, I would want a friendly atmosphere in which I was afraid of neither the teachers nor of the other pupils. We seem to have such an atmosphere, but don’t we

also need keenness, alertness? Is there such alertness? Are we continually investigating? If not, what is preventing alertness? What makes me dull?

“If I take refuge in a belief, in an idea, in a habit, a certain psychological relationship, then that breeds dullness, so I must find out; and I must be aware of the idea of mental keenness itself being a refuge.

“The atmosphere of friendliness at school happened; it was not planned, otherwise it would have been merely sentimental. If we are aware of the need of mental alertness, it may take place; but it will not do so if we pursue it as a goal.”

I was inspired by these ideas and did the best I could under the circumstances, but I was over-burdened with my teaching duties. I seldom took a day off, and did not even rest in the summer but taught swimming to earn money. I felt an endless pressure of everyday problems, and at night I would lie awake worrying about all the things that ought to be done. Vitality and freshness seeped out of my life.

My need to find inner freedom from pressures and influences became urgent. I hoped that if I acquired a better understanding of meditation it might help me, and with this in mind, I arranged to talk with Krishnamurti during his next visit to Ojai.

After we had exchanged greetings, he sat quietly and waited for my question. I said, “I’ve experimented with meditation, and for me the most effective time seems to be when I genuinely inquire, but too often the mind wanders unwatched.”

“Since you’ve experienced this creative release of genuine inquiry, why don’t you do it all the time?”

“That is my question.”

“Yes, but we’re doing it now. Why don’t you do it more?” He waited for me to put the question to myself.

“Is it because you are lazy?”

“I suppose that’s true; there is inertia. Much of the time my mind is concerned with problems or I’m preparing for the future; occasionally I’m lost in fantasy.”

“Let us look at the facts that are preventing genuine inquiry. You think of problems which could be done later; you are lazy, sluggish, waiting. Those are the facts. Never mind about any explanation as to why you do these things. Let the facts tell the story; the explanations will not alter the facts. Here are the things which are preventing inquiry and over here is the fun of investigation which you know. Just look at the facts. Really see them.”

“Especially when I am alone, meditating?”

“Yes, intensify the inquiry. Of course you cannot inquire all day, but you can be alert. You will find lots of energy. Push the inquiry so you are really vital, not so David Young can be somebody, but for the sake of inquiry itself. Would you like to go for a walk?”

I accepted the invitation as I have on many other occasions. We walked at a brisk pace through the groves and talked about what was happening in the world, but mostly we enjoyed nature silently. Together we looked out over the beautiful valley, at the setting sun. Always at this blessed hour there is peace—opportunity for meditation.

Whenever I listened to Krishnamurti I had the sense that paradise was just around the corner, that if we did as he said we would be there. My inclination was to use his words as a formula to be followed and to be improved upon as he clarified it with new phrases. The task, however, was impossible. There was a constant conflict between what should

be according to the formula, and what actually was. Obviously, I was going about it the wrong way.

Then one day I rediscovered the ability to look at a feeling without judgement, without doing anything about it. This opened a whole new world for me, and showed me the way to a kind of meditation quite different from the usual practice. Often, 'meditation' means repetition of a mantram, a phrase, a chant, or else concentration on an image or on an idea. These methods are not without results, but they tend to be mechanical. On the other hand, inquiry into what is, a perception of the truth, is ever fresh, ever vital.

Again I came to a period where my meditation periods seemed wasted because I used to dream most of the time. I was also extremely busy with school, and I became so discouraged that I stopped setting aside a time for sitting still alone. Meanwhile at school the pressure of work mounted and mounted. I became very involved and took on too much. Often, right in the middle of one thing, it was necessary to leave it and do something else, and then, in the middle of that, something even more urgent demanded attention. Much was left undone, and I would awaken at night and think of all the jobs crying to be done. I could go to sleep again only after I had written down all the items. I finally had a chance to talk over this problem with Krishnamurti.

As soon as we were alone together I said, "My mind is endlessly busy, mostly with school problems, sometimes with family problems. Of course, it has to be occupied much of the time to prepare, to think of how best to do things, to remember everything that has to be done; but, there's no end to it all. If I try to meditate, my mind starts preparing for the next day. If I go for a walk, my mind enjoys the beauty of the scenery for only a small part of the time; most of the time I think about school business. During the night I wake up, think of ideas, worry about things I have to do the next day. I obtain some relief by writing things down, but I wake up frequently during the night."

Krishnamurti quickly saw the picture and said, "So your mind is like a machine endlessly occupied. It never stops, never rests. Except for occasional fleeting moments, for occasional ideas, there is no space, no tranquillity, no stillness. Consequently, you do not start the day's work fresh; you are worn out. Why is your mind endlessly occupied?" He pause while I put the question to myself and then said, "Surely, because you enjoy it."

"You mean that it's an indulgence which I don't want to give up? I'm too anxious?"

"If you stopped being occupied, what would it feel like?" Again, he waited for me to think about his question and said, "You would be lost, frightened."

"Because I don't do as good a job of teaching as I feel I could, my mind ever-prepares for the next day."

"If you are keen to do a first-class job, surely you must be fresh. Do you see the importance of freshness? There must be space so that you will be fresh. No one else can give you this space but yourself."

"I've said this to myself."

"It is better not to say it. To say it, makes another conflict which is another occupation. Just see the importance of freshness."

"The students are so fresh that everything seems new each day."

"There is the illusion of freshness. The busy housewife is occupied with housework and family; if she stopped she would feel lost, frightened. The monk is occupied with Jesus. You are occupied with Happy Valley School work. If an engine runs continuously, it is soon worn out, dead; but, if it rests in between operations, it can go on indefinitely.

“If I may talk about myself,” he continued, “but I am not comparing, I am not superior, I do not prepare my talks. The night before, I am aware that I have to give a talk the next day. Next morning, one idea may come up, that’s enough, or maybe I do not have an idea until I get there. When the talk is over my mind is finished with it; I don’t go over it and say, ‘Well, I might have said this, or I could have put that better’.”

“Yes, though in school teaching, there must be some preparation.”

“Of course.”

“I see that I have attached too much importance in preparation and not enough to freshness.”

Realizing that I had overburdened my life, I started to unwind, but the process was slow—it was years before I was able to lead a more balanced life.

Whatever I did in the school at Ojai was done very conscientiously and with great concern, and there was always something too difficult to handle. Little by little I became less engrossed in my work. I went back to setting aside time for daily meditation alone. I had found out that even though I was unsuccessful most of the time, meditation was worth doing for the sake of a few seconds of stillness.

As long as I lived in Ojai I loved the beauty of the mountains and the peace of the valley. I would go for walks—generally alone, occasionally with someone else, and once in a while with Krishnamurti. Once when we stopped to look at a distant view of the valley we exchanged these thoughts.

He remarked, “By Jove, this valley is beautiful, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it’s more beautiful here than at the other end.” I paused a moment. “There, I’m making a comparison!” We were still looking at the view, “You know that’s a good example. If one compares, it interferes with the enjoyment of the beauty.”

“Yes, it’s a good example. I have often caught myself comparing. Now, look at this view over there.” We watched silently for a minute and then he said, “If you really experience it you do not compare.” He paused for a while. “It reminds me of a valley in India—but I am not comparing!”

Comparison can do more than just interfere, though. For example in education, grading the performance of students gives a feeling of inadequacy to some and superiority to others; it engenders anxiety, and drives the individual to imitate an approved pattern, so that he ceases to be himself. Happy Valley did avoid comparing students, but the school had other vitality-destroying policies.

There were often more new students than returning ones; consequently, those who had developed a sensitivity to the school’s intentions were overwhelmed by too many others who were not yet so sensitive. To maintain the special atmosphere of the place, the enrolment should have grown more slowly and the students should have been more carefully selected.

But most discouraging to me, the educational issues apparent in the teachings of Krishnamurti played only a minor part in the life of the school. Some of us felt that these issues were universal, non-sectarian, and intended to be the heart of the venture. Others, and these were dominant, didn’t see Krishnamurti’s teachings as central because, they said, this would be sectarian. As a result, discussions of Krishnamurti’s teachings were not permitted—in fact, such activity was labelled ‘propaganda’. Krishnamurti’s ideas were tapped along with others, and a few of his books were kept in the library, but a

student's choice of what was read aloud at morning assembly was limited to certain specified books which didn't include any of Krishnamurti's writings.

These differing views led to a crisis among the trustees of the Happy Valley foundation, and after some serious conflict and correspondence with Krishnamurti over a period of several years, the trustees made it clear that Happy Valley was *not* a Krishnamurti school. At the end of 1965 Krishnamurti told me his views: "I am out of Happy Valley. I would not have helped start the school if I didn't think it was intended for these teachings. If one really thinks through things sanely and clearly, one is bound to come to them."

This was a blow to me. I had always felt that behind the scenes Krishnaji did have something to do with the school—now, he would no longer. Meanwhile, the school had grown larger, and though most of the original features were still there, much of the vitality, freshness, and 'otherness' was gone.

I had been involved continuously in Happy Valley from 1947 to 1959, and I needed a year off. Our sons were grown and starting their own careers, so the time seemed right to make a long-desired trip to India. In 1963, at the end of another three years of pain and disappointment over the changes in the school, I took another year's leave of absence to visit India again.

CHAPTER VI

LISTENING

I have always felt that India is my spiritual home: to at last be able to go there made me very happy. Betty and I went straight to Rishi Valley School, where Krishnamurti was staying. I loved India. I particularly loved this school. I loved the people there. I loved the beautiful children. And I loved being there with Krishnamurti. But to be immersed in this ancient culture, so full of religious aspirations and contrast, to be aware of the immensity of India, her depth, beauty and tragedy, was for me overpowering at first.

The Rishi Valley School lies high above the sprawling mountains and mint-green hills of Southern India. Sprinkled with oddly-shaped rocks and rambling shrubbery, the valley cradles some pink-tiled roofs and white-plastered brick buildings which house an isolated community of teachers and pupils whose way of life is guided by the teachings of Krishnamurti. His annual talks with the students and teachers are at the heart of the project.

“The aim of the school”, according to its catalogue, “is to awaken the intelligence of the child; to teach him how to think, rather than what to think; to educate him not only for a career but also for life with all its complex problems and to help him develop into an integrated human being.”

The campus, 165 miles inland from Madras, is lush with green lawns and trees and flowering tropical bushes. On one side spacious fields invite the students to play cricket, soccer, hockey, basketball, volleyball, badminton, and tennis. On the other side 150 acres of cultivated land produce paddy, fodder grass, ground nuts, millets, vegetables, oranges, bananas, mangoes and guavas.

Well-kept paths of red earth, swept by servants with short-handled brooms, take us past tall tamarind trees to the main hall, where innocent voices at morning assembly sing haunting Indian songs and chant ancient, deeply religious Sanskrit verse. Seemingly attracted by the music, twittering birds perch high up inside, adding to the bewitching atmosphere.

Always one must move carefully to avoid the huge, wandering scorpions, numerous colonies of large, black ants, and deadly cobras—occasionally found on a doorstep, in a room, or over a bed. Daylight brings a multitude of noisy, aggressive crows bent on stealing food, even indoors; after swallowing their meal at a safe distance, they express their appreciation with a raucous ‘thank you’.

Upright men in western clothes or white flowing robes and erectly postured women in many coloured saris move about in dimly-lit classrooms clustered around a courtyard blooming with roses. Seated at small brown desks, shy, though friendly, students prepare for stiff examinations. The boys wear grey or tan shorts, white or checked shirts and pullovers and jackets. The girls wear blouses and skirts, dresses or saris and keep their long black hair in pigtailed tied with ribbons and adorned with flowers. Always one is greeted by a polite, “Good morning, sir” or “Good afternoon, sir.”

Near the orchards a huge, many-trunked banyan tree shelters an open-air theatre where Bharathanatyan dance dramas are performed. Young girls who have trained for years in their art, bedecked with flowers and brilliant costumes of gold, emerald, persimmon, and

black silk, dance to the rhythms of South Indian classical music. The strains of veena and tabla, and sweet female voices blend with the jingle of tuned ankle bells as the dancers' bare feet smack the smooth concrete stage. I was mesmerized by the precise, graceful body movements, full of ageless meaning and the form perfected by centuries of artists.

Everyday, as the sun sets, the whole school gathers on a plateau set aside for 'astachal'. All watch in silence the ever-changing colours in the sky and on Rishi Konda mountain. At midday the heat is enervating, in the evening the mosquitoes are a torment, but at this blessed hour there is peace—opportunity for meditation.

The school does have some problems. The entire community seems too dependent upon the poorly paid servants, who aren't particularly interested in the school's fundamental intentions. These shoeless villagers do almost all the physical work—farming, gardening, cooking, laundry, sweeping, maintenance—but, as far as I could see, they constitute an administrative headache. Another problem is the difficulty of finding the right teachers. Some are dedicated to the work, but others are not very interested in the teachings of Krishnamurti.

But the problems seem minor in relation to the school's purpose and intent, which pulsates in the discussions conducted by Krishnamurti there. I attended some of these during both visits to India. Those who took part in the selections which follow were, among others, R. Madhavachari, Krishnamurti's companion throughout India; Dr. Balasundaram, Principal; Vishalakshi, musician, teacher, and wife of Balasundaram; Harry and Hilda Moorhead, administrators; Narayan, mathematics teacher and nephew of Krishnamurti; Shakuntala, teacher and wife of Narayan; Dr. Iyers, estate manager; Venkatachalem, teacher of singing and physics; Meenakshi, dance teacher; Mrs. Cooper, art teacher from England; Alain Naude, visitor from South Africa who later became Krishnamurti's secretary; Donald Ingram Smith of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation; Dr. Vandoran, visiting professor; Frances McCann and a friend from Italy; other members of the staff and maybe another visitor. Nearly everyone, including Krishnamurti—then in his late sixties and greying—would sit cross-legged on the floor of the white-walled guesthouse.

On one occasion in December, 1963, we deliberated the nature of a good mind. After we had been talking for some time Krishnamurti said, "How will you make the children intelligent in the ordinary sense of that word 'intelligent'? You know what I mean: sharp, clear, full of curiosity, alive, questioning, asking, unafraid? Do you follow? He spoke slowly and distinctly in his usual high, melodious voice.

Member of the group: "I think I have to surprise them."

K: "No, no, your bag of tricks will be over in a couple of hours!" Everyone laughed, but Krishnamurti said, "Don't. How will you make those children intelligent? You know: have good manners, pick up the plate instead of waiting for someone else to pick it up, pick up a branch on the road, pick up a piece of paper, watch birds, have fun, laugh?" His facial expressions and hand gestures amplified the meaning of his words, giving a picture of a very alive and vital child.

M: "Most children are imitative."

K: "Yes, sir, they are imitative, but you see we don't want them to become imitative monkeys."

M: "They are naturally imitative at a particular stage of their growth."

K: "I understand. It is necessary for them to imitate a little, but we are trying to avoid making them into machines, imitations. I am just asking how will you make the students, who are by nature imitative and gregarious, so terribly alive they will do things spontaneously, naturally?" His face lit up with enthusiasm. "What will you do?"

M: "Give them lots of attention."

K: "It is your problem, isn't it, as a teacher, as a human being to see that these children become intelligent, not with a narrow, cunning, little intelligence in the business world or in the political world or in some job, but intelligent in the larger sense of the word. It's your work. It's your 'job'. How will you set about it?" He looked around penetratingly at everyone.

Many seemed not to answer because they were too shy. This group was an interesting contrast to those in the West where people speak out to such an extent that opportunities to ask questions are sometimes hard to find. In Rishi Valley, Krishnamurti seemed to have difficulties obtaining replies from the bashful teachers. Consequently, quite often it was a Westerner who spoke.

M: "If I am totally aware..."

K: "Not 'if you'. No, no, please, not 'if', 'when', this conditioned thinking... then we are lost. Don't you want to discuss it? The children come here conditioned. They come here with Indian backgrounds and all that—you know better than I do. So apparently it's not a problem to you. Right?"

Krishnamurti focused his magnetic eyes on some of the teachers who intimated that it most certainly was a problem.

K: "Then what are you going to do about it? If you have a toothache, it is a problem, isn't it? Whatever pain you have, it's a problem; you *do* something about it. It's the same thing here. Tell me, how are you going to meet the problem?" He looked searchingly at the teachers. "If you help the child be intelligent, and I come along and make him dull, your work is finished. Do you follow? So it must be a thing we understand together; therefore it's a problem to all of us. 'I'll do my part; I don't know what the others do'—there is no meaning in that."

M: "I am sure they are all doing the same."

K: "I want to know. As a member of staff I would say, 'For goodness sake, I may be destroying what you are doing. Let's talk it over. Help me.' Krishnamurti waited for him to reply.

M: "That becomes a discussion. We are having those all the time."

K: "Have you found a concerted way, not a stylised programme, to help the child be intelligent?" He gave an inquiring look at him.

M: "It can't be defined in a sentence."

K: "I agree, sir; it can't be defined in a sentence. So if it is a problem to you, then you are maturing with the problem. Right?" His whole being was filled with light and when he spoke everyone listened attentively. "You are growing with it. You are understanding it. You are saying, 'By Jove, I must be very careful how I teach; how the children eat, talk, sleep. Do you follow what I mean? It's a total thing. It isn't an occasional sporadic thing; it's total. Therefore all of us have to do it together. So it's a common problem and in its resolution we must find ways of tackling it which must be modified and changed. Are we doing this?"

M: "If you want me to be honest, I think the feeling is there, but it is very lukewarm. It is not the passionate feeling you are talking about."

K: "Then what will you do? Don't say 'others'. Why haven't *you* got it? It's your problem. If it is lukewarm, whose fault is it? It's yours, not mine. Right? Then why don't we sit down and say, 'Look here, sir, let's find out. It's a grave problem.' You follow what I mean? It isn't a thing of which you say, 'It doesn't matter.' If it is a problem to you as hunger, sex, or a hundred and one things, how will you deal with it?" He waited patiently for a possible comment. There was a long silence during which we sat motionless and distant sounds became very audible, particularly the calls of the valley's crows and the happy voices of children at play.

K: "Sir, isn't it the way you teach? The way you teach mathematics, dancing, or whatever it is? How will you teach through your subject so it doesn't become a mere repetitive, informative answering, but an answering which is the outcome of intelligence? How will you do this? By discussion with them? By asking them to question? Do you do this? So your intention is, your perception is, and in you there is this feeling that they *must* be intelligent, and through discussion, through a look, through certain actions, through living together, that understanding is going to assert itself. Right?" He gave a final discerning look round. "But is that what you want? Is that what we all want?"

Although the question had been dealt with only briefly, it would remain as a constant challenge and would engender further inquiry. We realized that a prescribed method to be memorized and practised or a set of principles to be accumulated as knowledge would hardly beget real intelligence; probably, intelligence is more likely to be found in the free movement of a fresh mind as it investigates and observes.

In the same month we had another very interesting discussion. After some preliminary exchanges Krishnamurti put this question to the teachers: "Looking at the state of the world today, we see nationalism, communism and so-called capitalism, the failure of religions, the immaturity of politicians, widespread brutality, wars, disintegration, deterioration, and so on. What is the central issue?"

The group gave a variety of answers, all of which were exposed as inadequate, as Krishnamurti asked the question a little more poignantly, "What cry do you hear? Exercise your brain, your whole being. Do not offer just words. To a man who is hungry, you do not give him words!"

After a considerable pause, a teacher said, "I hear despair."

K: "To respond to that, you must find, not a fragmentary reaction, but a total action which won't breed further despair, further misery. Don't agree; we are thinking aloud.

"If you see and hear that, what do you do? How do you respond to it? Or, do you say, 'Sorry! I too am in despair. I can't do anything about it. I'm married. I've got children. I've no job. I'm not being treated nicely. My wife is this, or my husband is that.'"

Krishnamurti waited a few moments before continuing in order to watch the effect of his words on his audience. "Is your despair so limited that you cannot hear the cry, and when you do hear the cry, do you translate it into your own limited terminology and experience? Do you follow what I mean? What do you say? You've got to answer; you've got to find out. You cannot just sit there, let the world spin, and somebody will tell you what to do. You've *got* to find out."

He waited again for a response which he didn't get, so he started anew. "You hear the cry. How do you respond to it? As an existentialist? As a Hindu? As a Muslim? As an

M.A. who has passed exams, a tremendous lot of stupid words, words? How do you respond?”

There was still no response from the group. “You hear the cry; perhaps I don’t hear it. What do you do? Do you say, ‘I’m in despair, therefore I can’t answer, full stop!’? What do you do?”

He frequently questioned us as to whether we were following—more often than reported here—and whether we actually saw what he meant, so as to keep us alert and active, rather than passively absorbing his words. He patiently continued. “First be very simple and clear. At what depth do you hear the cry? Do you follow? If your baby is crying in the middle of the night, you get up and do something. You don’t have a theory about it. Right? At what depth do you hear it; whether you respond to it fragmentarily or totally. These two are the factors. You have to think this out.”

The group by now was deeply moved and everyone was doing his best to think clearly, but no one had anything very definite to contribute, except, of course, Krishnamurti himself. “If you hear the cry very far away, over the hills, it means nothing. But, if you are *intimately* connected with this cry—it is next door; it is your child, your son, your husband, whatever the cry is—you *do* something. So, before you do something, you not only have to hear it, you have to find out whether you hear it casually, superficially, fragmentarily, or totally; which means a total answer, a total response. Do you follow?”

“When I want something totally, you give me a little piece of bread. I say, what are you talking about! I don’t want your bread; I don’t want your books, your knowledge. It’s a cry. So, you have to find out whether you hear it totally or fragmentarily, whether you respond to it fragmentarily or totally. Which is it? Don’t answer me; this is meditation. You understand, it isn’t just sitting and discussing opinions, dialectically enjoying ourselves. This demands tremendous inquiry into yourself. If you can’t hear it, you are just a dead human being; you are caught up in your own little family affairs—who cares!

“You see, we haven’t put this question to ourselves. Right? Have you put this question to yourself before? First, if you haven’t, why haven’t you put it? Do you follow? Second, if you have put it, what is it that you hear? How do you respond? *You can’t sit still*. You haven’t time. You can’t say, ‘I will think about it. I will look up all the books, all the magazines, read and come to a conclusion.’ This is what you have done—books, books, books—and when a real question is put, you don’t know what to do. Right?”

I felt that someone should speak up, so I pulled myself together and said, “I have put this question to myself before. I feel that I *have* to do something about it—I just can’t help it—but my efforts always seem so futile.”

K: “So, you don’t hear it properly.”

D.Y.: “I’m afraid so.”

K: “That’s it. You are again responding fragmentarily to something which says, ‘Look. You can’t answer that way.’ You keep repeating fragmentarily—you follow?” The difficulty is to live fully, to flow totally. When we listen with a prejudice, a condemnation, or whatever the distortion is, then we are not responding fully to the question.

We could all hear a crow calling, calling.

K: “Do you know what it is to listen? Do you hear that crow? How did you listen to it? Listen to it. First, hear it intelligently. That crow is calling. Do you hear it out of emptiness? That’s the only way to hear it, isn’t it? Or, do you hear it amongst other noises? Be careful. Don’t answer quickly, because this is very important for each one to

find out.” How do we listen to the song of a bird which we have never heard before? Aren’t we open, empty and hence free to receive?

M: “If...” and Krishnamurti interrupted to say, “No! Not ‘If’, ‘when’, should’. I said listen to it. Do you hear it out of emptiness or amongst other noises? What is the fact for you, not for me?”

M: “Out of emptiness.”

K: “Now, if you hear it out of emptiness, the crow, do you hear out of emptiness this phenomenon?” He was referring to the original question about world conditions. “You said emptiness. What do you mean by that word? A cup is empty; it has nothing in it, completely empty. Wait. Go slowly. Is the cup completely empty? Don’t answer; you can’t answer this question. Do you hear the cry of despair, not in Rishi Valley, of man, not a particular man, in emptiness? Therefore, that sound has an *extraordinary* potentiality—do you understand?—as every sound heard out of emptiness becomes an extraordinary sound.”

The questions were for meditation and therefore couldn’t be answered by the intellect. The atmosphere was filled with silence and stillness.

K: “So, can you listen? Therefore, can you see out of emptiness? See this phenomenon out of emptiness? And therefore see it as you see that flower over there, that colour, out of emptiness? Look at it. If you look at it out of emptiness, it has quite a different quality than if you look at it amongst other clashing colours and noises. Do you follow? Do you listen to this cry out of emptiness? Therefore, that cry has an astonishing quality.

“Last night, I heard an owl. Everything was quiet. It was there, sitting on that tree. It was almost in my room. There was complete silence, within and without, and the hoot of that owl was the most extraordinary sound. Now, you find out.”

Slowly and silently we arose and went back to our duties. We felt a great peace within.

Out of all the advice that Krishnamurti has given me, the suggestion which has proved to be the most helpful has been to listen to whatever sound happens to be at the moment—an airplane, the wind, the rain, the call of a crow—and then in this state of openness turn inwards and ‘listen’ to and ‘look’ at whatever is actually there. And this inward ‘listening’ and ‘looking’ is meditation—in such a state the mind does not chatter.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNKNOWN

Other questions—can the mind be free of the known so as to discover the unknown, what is truly new?—were tackled by the same group. One day we began with the inquiry: “How can a shallow mind go beyond itself? Does the shallow mind know that it is shallow and, if it does, how is it to be deep?” After some exchange on this subject Krishnamurti asked, “What makes for a shallow mind?”

As no one answered he continued, “What is the function of knowledge? And does not mere knowledge, that is, book learning and the capacity to retain all that, whether it’s the Upanishads or the latest Marxian philosophy or the latest fad and so on, mere retention, and springing off from there into action, wouldn’t that make a mind shallow? And isn’t that taking place throughout the world? As we were discussing last night, the so-called philosophers of India start off by quoting and repeating what they have read indefinitely, without one breath of an original thought, without something of their own experience, of their own intrinsic worth—irrespective of what society, what the books, and what the teachers have said. Is that what is happening to most of us, too? Where information of what Shankara or Einstein or the guru around the corner has said is repeated, not only in the field where you have to experience things yourself, but also technologically, this mechanical repetition is making the mind shallow. Would you consider that?”

We have to live with some mechanical repetition so I asked, “Is it possible and isn’t it possible to go through a certain amount of mechanical repetition and still...”

K: “Wait, wait, wait. We’ll come to that later, David. First, let us see what makes for shallowness. The fact, not an imaginative or theoretical supposition, but the fact that, as the world is going on now, education and all the rest of it, where there’s such tremendous importance given to technical knowledge, isn’t there the danger and the tendency and the fact, the actual fact, that it makes for a very superficial conduct, behaviour and thought and action? Knowledge has taken away the quality of depth.”

M: “Is it, perhaps, because the importance given to knowledge is out of proportion?”

K: “First, let us see why the mind, not only in Europe, in America, but also in this country, has become so extraordinarily shallow. Or would you say it is not shallow? Would you say a man who quotes endlessly, though he may be very learned, would you consider him a very deep-minded person? Obviously not. Yet, that is what is taking place, actually, isn’t it? All of us do it.” Krishnamurti looked at everyone in a very knowing manner. “Now, if that is so, if you admit or see the fact that a mind limited to knowledge in the sense we are using it, is a shallow mind—and society demands more and more a shallow mind that functions mechanically in technological fields—if you see that, what will you do? How will you go beyond it? How will you set about it? What will you do to break through the tremendous barrier? Come on, the Ph. D.’s, the M.A.’s, and the rest!”

M: “We could begin to think for ourselves.”

K: “Think for yourself. What does that mean? All your thinking is superficial.”

M: “All activity of the mind is superficial.”

K: “That’s it. Can you think for yourself? What does that mean, ‘think for yourself’, when all your mechanism of thinking is in the field of the known? I am not saying it is right or wrong. But all thinking is in that field, whether you call it thinking for yourself or thinking according to some other pattern, isn’t it?”

“My problem, my question then would be, how can a mind that has been trained, almost destroyed, by this rotten education, by society with its demands, how can that mind delve into something that is not mere knowledge, mere information, mere conclusion or concept? How? By what process, by what catalyst, whatever it is, how will you set about it? Come on sirs. What will you do?” Krishnamurti waited, but not for long.

“Wait a minute. There you are. You are all very well educated. You have a degree. You all have the capacity to remember, recollect, quote, and so on, and I am asking you a question—out of the ordinary—and you are stumped, aren’t you? You can’t proceed further. Right? How will you proceed further? You can’t go back to books, Shankara and so on; they can’t reply. Now, what will you do? Here is a fact, being shallow—I am not being insulting—what will you do to break through this shallowness?”

M: “I could wipe out my education.”

K: “How will you wipe it out? Don’t say things that have no meaning. Do you follow? Don’t say things that you cannot put into action. Otherwise you’ll be impractical, contradictory. What will you do?”

“Here is a problem. Right? How do you respond to it? A challenge is given to you, what is your reaction, how do you answer it? If you are really aware, honest, clear, you would answer it from the field of the known, wouldn’t you? Stick to that. I wish you would go slowly, logically. You will see in a minute. The question is new to you. Right? And you respond from the old, obviously. And when you respond from the old and that isn’t satisfactory, you try to find other answers, still within that field. Right? Look, this question is put to me and I haven’t an immediate answer. If it were a familiar question, my answer would be immediate. But I don’t know the answer. I don’t know what to do.” Krishnamurti really meant this—he was watching his mind and reporting his observation. “So, what is my mind doing? What’s your mind doing?”

M: “Trying to find an answer.”

K: “Still working in the field of memory, still within the field of the known. Right? I wish you would push it. Don’t wait for me to tell you.” The repetitions seemed needed to help us concentrate on asking ourselves his question, which gradually became clearer as our awareness deepened. “Push it. You are still within the field of your memories, of what you have read. Do you follow? You mind is still looking, looking, looking, searching, to find out the answer. Right? You have an examination paper—all your memories are in operation to answer it. You are doing the same thing here, aren’t you? *How* you are responding is important, not the answer. Right? Here is a question put to you. How do you respond?”

“May I go into it? You are all so lazy. Not being familiar with the question, your mind is looking for the answer in all the books you have read, in all the memories you have gathered. No? It is looking and you don’t stop looking. You have said, now what did Shankara say? What did this person say? What did that person say? What is my own memory? Do you follow? You are looking. You are asking. You are demanding. You are searching. And your search is within what you know. Have you found the answer? You haven’t, have you? No? Right? Then, why don’t you stop? I say, I don’t know. You don’t

know. So, why don't you stop? Instead of looking, looking, looking, asking... say, I really don't know. Can you honestly say you don't know? Now go the next step further. Come on. When you say you don't know, what do you mean by that? What is the state of mind that says, 'I don't know'? What is your state?"

M: "My mind is blank."

K: "No, it's not blank."

M: "My mind is empty."

K: "It is not empty. It is still waiting. It is waiting to find the answer."

M: "Yes, but I've found it."

K: "But, it is waiting. It has sought here, there, there, there, there, and hasn't found an answer and says, 'I don't know', but I am still in a state of expectation. Obviously, right? What are you expecting?"

I felt that most of us were expecting that sooner or later Krishnamurti would give an answer and that, before the end of the discussion, he would completely think through the problem. We were just leaving it to him and, of course, we knew he could do it better than any of us could, so I said, "We are thinking you'll give the answer, aren't we?"

K: "That is, you are waiting for an answer from me?"

D.Y.: "It may sound foolish but..."

K: "Wait. No. I am saying to you, what is the state of the mind? You have to find it out, not I tell you about it."

D.Y.: "Yes."

K: "If I tell you what it is, then you repeat it and you are back again where you started. Right? Now, go step by step. You will see it for yourself—shallow mind, how it has been made shallow and when a question is put to it, a challenge—then you respond according to your conditioning, according to everything you know.

"But, the challenge is a new thing, and you respond according to your memories; so you are not answering or responding totally to the challenge; you are still searching—Eh?—and you don't say, 'Now wait a minute, I really don't know what to do.' And when I ask you what is the state of the mind that says, 'I don't know' you don't answer me. You are still waiting for somebody to tell you, which means you, yourself, haven't found out what it means when you say, 'I don't know'. Right?"

"Now, go into it. What do you mean, 'I don't know'? What is the state of your mind when you say, 'I don't know'? You understand what I mean by 'state'? What is taking place in the mind?"

We all remained silent. Either we didn't know what to say or we didn't want to say what we saw or felt, so Krishnamurti continued, "Do you want me to explain it to you? Eh? And then you'll agree; or will my explanation be the exact description of what your mind is, and therefore non acceptance, though you can't put it into words. Which is it?"

"When you have stopped searching and researching and trying to answer from the field of the known, and you face the fact—please follow this—you face the fact that you really don't know, what is the state of the mind which says, 'I don't know'? You are still expecting, right? You are still expecting an answer, no?"

"Let's proceed. You see, I am watching the mind. I see what happens. I've searched in the known and I can't find an answer and I say, like a school boy, 'I don't know, Sir!' Now, if I wait for an answer from you, my mind will accept the answer according to my judgment, evaluation, and that becomes another memory to be added. Do you follow?"

And again I move from that which I have known. So I say to myself, “What is the state of my mind when it says, ‘I don’t know’? It’s very important for me to find out. What *is* the state of my mind? Am I waiting, expecting an answer, or do I say, ‘I really don’t know’? Do you see the difference, not because I point it out, but do you *actually* see the difference?”

“Now look what you have done—started with a superficial mind and now you have come to a state when you actually say, ‘I don’t know’, which means you are not expecting. Right? Now, next thing, what is the state of the mind that says, ‘I really don’t know’, not expecting, not seeking, not wanting, not hoping somebody will tell you? Do you follow? *You don’t know.*”

I had gone through all the inquiry, the thinking, and the meditation. I had seen it all intellectually, felt it all consciously, but now something in my unconscious was appearing and moving inside of me. I didn’t know what it was, but it seemed to speak to me, still, wanting, hoping. I was eager to complete the experience so I said, “May I slow you down a little bit?”

K: “Go ahead.”

D.Y.: I find that there is still hope of some kind. I’m not quite sure. I’m trying to find out what it is. I mean, I’m not especially hoping for you to answer, but I know I...”

K: “I can’t answer because I’ve come to that point. If you haven’t really experienced all the things that you have said just now, you can’t proceed further. You are stuck. It’s like—you know?”

D.Y.: “But you see the difference.”

K: “No. Either you see the description through my description or you *actually* see it.”

M: “But the mind is still concerned about its shallowness, isn’t it?”

K: “Ah! It has moved far away. It has moved away because now it’s concerned. It has seen that every response it has had so far has been from the shallow, from the little, from the known, from the experienced. If you haven’t seen that, you can’t go to the next. Right? You are following?”

“So, either you say, ‘I don’t know’ and are waiting for an answer, or you actually don’t know. Now, if you actually don’t know, then what is the state of the mind?”

M: “It is still.”

K: “What do you mean by being still?”

M: “It’s not trying to find an answer.”

K: “There is no frantic search. Now be careful. Because you have stopped seeking, is it still? If you find the answer, it will become active again, so it is not still. Do you follow? Do you see this?”

“I’ll put it differently. If the mind is made still, then it is not still. If I force you to do something, it’s not your action. It’s your mother’s action or your father’s. If the mind is forced to be still because it cannot find an answer, then it’s made to be still. You understand? So you are still in the field of waiting for an answer.

“So when you say, ‘I don’t know’ and you really mean ‘I don’t know’, what is the state of that mind?”

M: “I know that I don’t know.”

K: “And yet you want to know.”

M: “Yes.”

K: “And therefore you have already moved away from the fact that you don’t know and remained there.”

M: “I know. It is a knowledge—”

K: “Therefore, you drop it. Cut it completely. Say, ‘I don’t know’ and then find out.”

M: “I know that I do not know.”

K: “All right, sir. But it’s still not a mind that says, ‘I really don’t know’.”

M: “It is a knowledge.”

K: “Yes, that’s all. So I am asking, what if you go a bit further away from the knowledge that I know that I don’t know? Then you must inevitably come, if you pursue seriously and persistently, you must come to a point ‘I don’t know’, not as knowledge, but actually ‘I don’t know’. I say, I’m asking, when you say, ‘I really don’t know’, then what is the state of that mind?”

M: “It’s an empty mind.”

K: “Wait. What do you mean by empty? Empty of what?”

M: “Empty of thought and of expectation.”

K: “Therefore you are still waiting for an answer.”

M: “No, it’s empty of expectation.”

K: “Empty of expectation. Now wait. Please go slowly, because I can’t think fast. I want to see everything step by step—you understand?—logically, sanely. Otherwise we’ll go off the deep end and get stupid.

“Empty. When you say empty, what do you mean by empty? Still a result?”

M: “No.”

K: “You are sure it is not a result?”

M: “Yes.”

K: “Ah. Go slowly. It is not a result, which means what?”

M: “Sir, when I say I know that I don’t know, this knowledge is not from my memory. It is now.”

K: “Which means you actually experience a state when you say, ‘I really don’t know.’”

M: “I know that I do not know.”

K: “That’s it. You are aware. You are choicelessly, negatively, aware that you really don’t know.”

M: “Yes. A new thing comes.”

K: “Right. Do you follow? I want to touch that. For the first time you have touched something original.”

M: “Yes.”

K: “Do you follow? For the first time, when you say, ‘I don’t know’, you have touched something original. From there proceed. Before, everything you have said has been second hand.

“See what has happened to your mind. You have completely put aside the known. It will be used. You have to know how to teach, but it has no longer importance. It becomes secondary. Right? So, from the moment you said, ‘I don’t know’, you have begun something entirely new, not second-hand. Now, from there proceed.

“When you put away the second-hand, it means putting away Jesus, Buddhas, Shankaras, Einstein, do you follow? Put them under the carpet as you put dirt, you know;

leave it there. You can remove it later or use it for whatever purpose, put it in a compost. Do you follow? Leave it there.

“Now, can you proceed from there, which means you are really learning. The moment you accumulate and reply from what you have accumulated, you are back into the old field. Do you understand what I am talking about?”

“So we see a mind becomes shallow when it is caught within the fence of the known. And the moment the mind is free from the known it has touched something which—I won’t use too many philosophical terms—is out into a different dimension. From there can you function?”

We discussed this, and other questions too: How can one be constantly in a state of non-accumulation?—for otherwise one can’t learn. Do you teach because you’re learning, or do you teach merely to impart information? Do you cooperate out of necessity, or are you going to learn what it means to cooperate? It was a very long discussion.

Of all my experiences in India, these meetings with Krishnamurti touched me most. The Himalayas at sunrise, the city of Jaipur at midday, the golden light on the moving waters of the Ganges at sunset, the Taj Mahal by moonlight, the rock-cut temples of Ajanta, Mahabalipuram’s amazing sculpture, the World Conference of the New Education Fellowship in Delhi, all deeply impressed me, but they didn’t open for me the doors of perception as did these Rishi Valley dialogues.

CHAPTER VIII

INITIATIVE

When I came back from India in 1964, I found myself deeply affected by my stay there; if only there were stronger centres of light in the West! I was still at Happy Valley, but I had little hope of doing anything worthwhile there except to teach dancing.

Could there be a spiritually-orientated community-cum-school, a Western parallel to Rishi Valley school, seriously concerned with the fundamental truths indicated by Krishnamurti? Would Krishnamurti himself love a centre where his teachings were at the heart of the venture and where he could talk freely? The task appeared to be monumental, but perhaps a beginning could be made, however tiny, however apparently insignificant. At least some of us could meet and share our understandings and concerns.

Several groups were formed of people very interested in Krishnamurti's teachings and after a year, one group of parents and teachers asked, couldn't we actually start a school in September? I felt that we weren't in a strong enough position to do so, but the parents pointed out that if we waited it would be too late for their children, then 14 or 15 years old. So we decided to try.

We made plans. I was elected Director, and we published this leaflet. It contains many questions—this was our approach at that time:

A New School

An objective look at the state of the world today and at the many influences old and new which surround youth, accentuates the need for a true education. In order that a boy or girl can develop fully, and be able to find freedom from the innumerable social and economic pressures, there must be space and encouragement for inquiry into what is intelligent living.

A group of us, seriously interested in the educational issues raised by J. Krishnamurti, would like to create a school in which fundamental inquiry is encouraged. Is it possible to provide an environment in which the question of perceptive living is the heart of the whole educational endeavour? Can discovery take place without sensitivity at all levels, such as intellectual, social, psychological, and spiritual? Man has been accumulating knowledge at an ever-increasing rate, but widespread conflict, violence, exploitation, and brutality make it clear that technological progress alone is not enough to solve our problems. Clearly some aspects of education have been badly neglected. Can we create an atmosphere and a program that will foster well-balanced human growth and engender awareness that has been crowded out of our lives by ambition, greed, and anxiety for success?

What is the right relationship among students, teachers, parents, and administrators? Can we discuss together the way we lead our lives, the state of society today, the running of the community, and the everyday problems which will inevitably arise? Isn't it possible to find out what makes possible honest, friendly cooperation?

Since comparison, competition, and awards cause frustration, envy, and distorted growth, isn't it more important to stress interest in the work itself? Is it possible for the students to do things because they love to do them, rather than out of a sense of achievement? Is it possible for a student to do necessary college preparatory work

without anxiety over grades or other types of rating? Can classes and activities, whether academic, artistic, or otherwise, take place out of interest rather than by motives of any other kind?

What is freedom? Is it being free to do whatever one likes, or will the uncovering of self-interest and the awareness of motives lead to the discovery of true freedom? Will coercion, condemnation, and suppression bring this about, or can we find it through openness, affection, and understanding? Is it possible to find freedom from fear?

These are the issues which we feel are basic to the educational problem. We shall try our utmost to do something about them.

The group decided that I should go to Switzerland and talk over our plans with Krishnamurti there, for he wasn't expected to come to America that year. We thought he should hear first-hand what we wanted to do, and find out what he had to say about the project. I began by explaining how we had come to our decision.

"When I came back from India, I started a series of discussion groups on fundamental issues. I saw the importance of your work and thought that if we cannot have a school in Ojai with the teachings at the heart of the endeavour, then at least teachers and parents who are seriously interested can meet together. Sometimes there were two groups at once; sometimes there were rest periods. Some people dropped out, but the interest continued. After a year, some spontaneously asked, 'Why can't we actually try to start a school?'"

"What does Happy Valley School think of all this?"

This question hit upon our greatest difficulty. Krishnamurti has had a lot to do with Happy Valley. While his teachings were not at the centre of the school and while Rosalind Rajagopal, then President of Happy Valley Foundation, had often said, "This is not a Krishnamurti school", nevertheless she wanted him to talk there and be associated with the place. Another school in Ojai connected with him would be a serious embarrassment.

"I have talked with the Director of the school, but I couldn't detect any reaction. I told him I wished to be out of Happy Valley now, whether or not we succeeded in starting a new school, although I would help out with the dancing for another year. I tried to talk to Rosalind, but she was away. I wrote to her a month ago and told her what we are trying to do, but I've had no reply."

"What does Rajagopal think of it?"

"He has taken part in some of the discussions, encouraged us and talked things over, but he hasn't undertaken any responsibility."

"What does he think of the pamphlet?"

"He thinks it is excellent. What about the use of your name?"

"You have done it."

"Yes, but we may want to use it in the same way when we publish a catalogue. We have used it in a way that is factual. That is how we got together."

"Yes, it is factual, but there is no authority or responsibility on my part. Every year I visit the two schools in India and talk there, but I undertake no responsibility. I leave it up to them." Yes, though when I was there my observation was that he was very much involved with those schools.

“There is no responsibility on your part except that you are the author of the books mentioned.”

I learned later from friends close to Krishnamurti that he was very interested in our efforts. It was clear, however, that he felt he had to be very careful about the use of his name, particularly because of complications with Happy Valley. He continued, “Will using my name be a disadvantage?”

“Not amongst the people who matter. In the early days, Happy Valley was known as a ‘Krishnamurti’ school, but this didn’t seem to hurt the school.”

“No one says this of Happy Valley now.”

“No. What is your degree of interest in our attempt to start a new school? People will ask, what have you said. What am I to say?”

“That I neither encourage nor discourage it. Don’t have people help you because they love me. It would be the death of your school. Have people who help because they love the teachings.” This is an important distinction. To find Truth one must be free of all individuals, including Krishnamurti.

“If and when you come to Ojai, will you talk to the teachers and students?”

“I don’t know when I shall come to Ojai, maybe in five years, maybe next year. I don’t know. If I do come, then we’ll get together; but you cannot start a school on that basis. I may die in an airplane crash.” He did seem willing to talk in our school, but, when he did come to Ojai a year later, circumstances prevented him after all.

I went on, “May I say I feel it’s very tragic your continually not coming to Ojai. All the young people there...”

“Yes, I know.”

“You don’t give the reason why you won’t come, so everyone speculates on all kinds of reasons.”

“I cannot help that.”

“I hear that you are coming to New York next year.”

“I have not even thought about it. I said that I may come to America, but not Ojai. That is all.”

I asked: “What is the state of mind with which one approaches the creation of a school.”

“You find teachers, parents, buildings, money, land, etc., and go ahead.”

“We have enough pupils for a beginning and almost enough teachers who are willing to work for nothing or else for whatever is available. However, we don’t have enough money to buy a building. I have talked to many people in order to correctly inform them of what we are trying to do. We have received a great deal of encouragement, moral support, and offers of free labour, but, as yet, not sufficient financial assistance. We would like to buy the Logan house which is for sale.”

“This is the first time I have heard that the Logan house is for sale.” Krishnamurti’s brother, Nityananda, had died there.

“It would be very suitable if we could manage it.”

“How much is being asked for it?”

“Sixty thousand dollars, and ten thousand will have to be spent on it.”

“Could you rent a building?”

“To satisfy the County Health Department, the Fire Department, and the Education Department, we would have to spend a lot of money on someone else’s property. Also, the owner might object to something.”

“I see.”

“Some of the group happen to be here in Gstaad. Could you have a discussion with us? Unfortunately, half the group couldn’t come, but at least you could talk with those actually here.”

“Where do I come in? I cannot find you teachers, pupils, or money. There are a lot of people here from all over the world. I have to see that the time and energy spent is worthwhile.”

“You mean worthwhile from your point of view?”

“No, I mean worthwhile, not from my point of view or your point of view, but worthwhile impersonally.”

“There’s no point in starting a school if we get lost in mundane things so there is no flame of awareness in our daily lives. We must be able to commune with each other on deeper levels. We have been trying to do this for over a year, and we shall continue to do so whether or not we have a school. A discussion with you would help us in our attempts.”

“Then you are requesting a group interview for a group of people who have been discussing together and who will continue to discuss together, not for a group trying to start a school. I will arrange it.”

And he added, “May I have a couple of your pamphlets? I’m afraid the one you sent me got torn accidentally.”

A few days later, on July, 23, 1965, seven of us, Helen Hooker, Verna Kreuger, Benny Noyes, Frank Noyes, Dorothea Reed, and Charles Reed, all teachers or parents, went to Chalet Tannegg for the group interview. We were ushered into the living room, and Krishnamurti came in and sat down. After sitting silently for a moment, he asked if he could have Alain Naude join the group. “He travels with me everywhere. I want him to be *au courant* with things.” The group agreed, and Krishnamurti brought him in, though he didn’t take part in the discussion. Krishnamurti began, “Will you start the ball rolling, David?”

I started with what very much interested me, “At the end of your lecture yesterday you talked about gathering all of our energy on all levels and being in a state without dissipating any energy, without any psychological movement. Can we try to do this now?”

K: “Do you want to talk about *that*?”

D.Y.: “We wanted to have a discussion on a fundamental subject and go into it as deeply as possible.”

K: “Will you all be here for the large group discussion in the tent?”

D.Y.: “Yes.”

K: “Then shall we take it up at that time? Perhaps we could discuss something more specific now.”

D.Y.: “Do you have something in mind?”

He didn’t answer, so it was up to me to think of something else, “In our daily lives in school, at home and so on, we see the need for some flame of fundamental perception. How do we engender this, both individually and as a group, without getting lost in

things? How can we find freedom from influence both for us and for the students? How can we live without effort?"

K: "How to find action free of ideation, concepts? Is that the question? There is action according to an idea, then there may be momentary action without idea. There is always action. If I act according to an idea or formula, which is important, the idea or the action? The idea becomes more important, and since this never approximates the action completely, there is always conflict."

D.Y.: "You are including all pleasure-seeking neurotic movements?"

K: "Yes, all that. Don't complicate it. Concepts, knowledge, experience, verbalization, all that is included under ideation. What's wrong with acting according to a pattern?"

Member of the Group: "I have heard that there is another way of acting, so this increases conflict."

K: "No, not 'I have heard' or 'someone tells me', what do I find directly? Have you not looked at yourself acting according to an idea?"

M: "This kind of action results in perpetual frustration." Undulating her hands to show what she meant, she continued, "We see that action according to a formula makes us go up and down."

K: "What do you mean, up and down?"

M: "Continuous highs and lows."

K: "It's repetitive. A formula for anything demands conformity, whether it's a formula for feeding a baby or a formula for starting a school. Let's suppose I am feeding an infant according to a formula...I will say, 'My God, am I following the formula correctly?'"

I added, "You are afraid of making a mistake."

K: "There is effort and conflict. Having a formula is no way to live. It leads to boredom and frustration. There is a child in front of you. You have a formula for educating him. Then the idea is more important than the child. And the idea of not conditioning him is also a formula.

"It is so simple. Can't you see it? I look at this rug and see that one of the patterns is red. That is a fact. No amount of telling me that it is blue will convince me otherwise, unless I put on coloured glasses or take a drug or something. In the same way, can you see as a fact that action tied to a formula will inevitably produce effort and conflict? When you really see it as a fact, non-verbally, you don't touch it. You avoid it as you would a poisonous snake."

As usual I wanted complete realization. "I see it now, but later conflict takes place."

K: "Then you don't see it. You see it only verbally. You are floating along on words. If I know there is poison in a cupboard and I need something out of that cupboard, then I will be very careful to avoid the poison. I won't drink it. If it is dark, I will turn on the light."

M: "I know only action according to idea so I keep on with it, although I think I understand what you are saying."

K: "Why? If you met a rattlesnake in Ojai, you would let it alone or you might kill it; but if you thought it was a king snake, then you might play with it. Why don't you go into it, investigate it, see it all the way? If I wanted to understand the pattern of this rug—it has a very complex pattern—I would need to give it my complete attention."

M: "We try to change the action to fit the formula."

K: “That is part of the pattern. I had a tremendous Hindu conditioning, 5,000 years old or more. I was a Brahmin, World Teacher, Theosophist, vegetarian—I meet another vegetarian, two silly vegetarians!—I must not touch this or that.”

M: “The Christian is the same.”

K: “No, that’s only 2,000 years old. The Hindu conditioning is much older and deeper, and the Catholic is stronger than the Protestant. But we needn’t argue which is more, it’s the same issue.”

I joined in again, “We all have two million years of conditioning.”

K: “A Roman Catholic must go to mass, go to confession, no contraceptives, afraid of Hell, must obey the priest. All this breed tremendous fear.”

D.Y.: “It’s fairly easy to see this for the Roman Catholic. We are not Roman Catholic. But, do I see that I live by a formula, that I *am* a formula?”

K: “Yes, you have a ‘Youngian’ formula—not a Jungian formula, but a ‘Youngian’ formula. What would happen if you didn’t have a formula? We are afraid that without a formula we would go wrong and be failures.”

M: “When one of these formulas breaks up and drops away, there’s intense suffering.”

K: “No! Not when it breaks away, but before then.”

M: “Are all the formulas included in the image?”

K: “What image?”

M: “The image of myself.”

K: “Yes, the formulas, ideas, all together make up the image. These ideas and formulas are also in the deep subconscious which becomes almost instinctual, animalistic action, though some animals, like the bee, can think—but we won’t go into that now.”

M: “There is energy in action, not ideas.”

K: “An unbalanced person may have a great deal of energy coming from ideas.”

M: “There are so many thousands of decisions to make.”

K: “When you do something, start a school, etc., do it easily. I have things to do this afternoon. I need not get agitated about it—I flow along with it. When I go to my office or school when I am teaching, I go into an environment where everything is formula. I must find a way of working that is fresh, without formulas, even though I use knowledge, as in teaching factual knowledge. A new approach must be found.

“Is this enough?”

Krishnamurti noticed that I looked at my watch and said, “Not by time, but otherwise?”

We all thanked him very much for his time and energy and left quietly.

Soon after I returned to Ojai, there was a furore over our attempt to start a ‘Krishnamurti’ school: we were caught in the middle of the controversy over Krishnamurti and the Happy Valley School. The atmosphere was too tense for the starting of our venture, and besides, we didn’t have a suitable building. So we waited another year.

But we kept working at it, and by September, 1966, we actually opened. There were five pupils of intermediate age and a fine group of teachers, each of whom taught part-time because they all had other responsibilities. Paula Hughes, one of the trustees, had supplied the building.

A group of thirty friends, parents, and teachers attended the opening assembly. There was something new in the air. Those of us who had been making preparations felt like

gardeners. For months, we had been preparing the soil, planting the seed and watering the ground hopefully. Now, the seedling had pushed its little head through the earth and was receiving the warm light of the sun. Now it was for us, the teachers, the pupils, the parents, and our friends to care for the tender young plant.

We were conscious of our weaknesses and limited awareness, and that we had to live with the ideologies and faults of others, just as they had to live with ours. Yet, with affection for our students, if we really cared for them, surely we could do something worthwhile.

We were truly an experimental school. Would we really be able to approach each student as a complete human being? Of course knowledge is needed, but that's only one aspect of life. Could the rest of life also be felt, seen, and heard, both by the teachers and by the students? Such an approach is almost impossible in a large school, where relationships with so many are necessarily superficial and confusing, but we had the advantage of being a very small school, with plenty of space for initiative and spontaneity. If we were willing to learn, life would teach us.

So we began. And it really was a good school, for a while. Something was happening spiritually and in other ways. People felt it. Then one of the families had to move away from Ojai, because the father couldn't find suitable work there anymore. So we lost one of our two boys, and we weren't going to keep the school going at the price of enrolling unsuitable pupils. Our one boarder wanted to go back to her mother. We suspended classes.

During the school's life of some three months, we had created four valuable assets: a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation; a good bank balance, thanks to some donations; a carefully-worded Statement of Intentions, later modified for the Oregon project; and, after much exchange of ideas among parents, teachers, pupils, and friends, a name, 'Mountain Grove'. All of this was to prove valuable when we started the centre here in Oregon.

For 40 years I had looked to Krishnamurti for the light, needing to see him from time to time. I had tried to be a light unto myself, but with his aid. The time had come to break my own trail without any help or even encouragement from him, and to rely on my own light, however dim it may be. I wondered what I could do that was worthwhile.

CHAPTER IX

INDEPENDENCE

I thought things over, meditated, and talked to various people. I asked, how about a spiritual and educational centre with a community, a farm, a school, all as an integrated whole? This vision seemed to strike an alive stream of energy, but the initiative seemed to be up to me.

I was still inspired by Krishnamurti's teachings. Could the project be originated with these teachings as the approach? The critical article of incorporation of the New Education Foundation, the tax-exempt, non-profit corporation which we could use to sponsor the venture, read as follows, "The basic policy of this corporation is to attract individuals who are deeply interested in the educational issues indicated in the teachings of J. Krishnamurti..."

This is a good legal basis for defining the corporation, because it refers to the content of books already published, and so is specific without using a mass of words, but it means little to anyone who hasn't studied Krishnamurti. And we wanted to be open to others, who, while knowing little or nothing about him, nevertheless were genuinely interested in the same fundamental issues. We must welcome other points of view with which we would be able to work in harmony.

Twenty-one years before, I had had an interview with Krishnamurti which seemed pertinent now. At the time of the interview he was about to start on his travels again, and I wondered what we at Ojai could do on our own, and whether our efforts could be worthwhile. What came out of our conversation about discussion groups applies equally well to starting a spiritual centre. I began:

"I am interested in continuing the discussion groups on our own while you are away, and I know others are too."

"Yes. May I suggest that you make the whole thing very serious. Meet three times a week, and choose people who will come regularly and be serious all the time. Don't make it narrow or bigoted; bring in other things."

"You mean other things besides you?"

"Yes. Discuss other points of view. For example, suppose you are discussing meditation for a month—perhaps you are doing the wrong thing. In one group, other views and methods of meditation were all brushed aside; only my way was considered. The group wasn't even ready to see what was in the other kinds of meditation. I had to try out different methods and find out by experiment for myself before I knew."

"Imagine that I was killed in an accident, or that I didn't live according to my teachings, or that I denied it all. Work at the thing because in itself it is important. The whole group effort could be a very alive and vital thing."

"We have found it best to say what we feel and think at the time."

"Have only people who are serious enough to work all the time. If they are jealous, for example, then they will work at it so as not to be jealous. In the old days people had to do something definite, such as putting on a yellow robe and renouncing the worldly life. Attending a discussion for a few hours a week is not enough."

“Of course, it will be your group and not mine. You could have it in your house. Those who wanted to meet only once a week could meet elsewhere on Sundays.”

Soon after this interview some of us did try meeting three times a week and it was worthwhile, but it didn't last very long.

Whenever I went to see Krishnamurti, I had the feeling that enlightenment and liberation were within reach, and that all one had to do was press the right button. There was a hope that really listening to and understanding one of his talks would do the trick. This feeling led to a state of mind where I was always attending 'just one more talk'.

By 1967 I was through with this illusory kind of thinking: I realized that Krishnamurti could only point the way, and that the rest was up to me. I was becoming more aware of a source of inspiration within, completely independent of him. His teachings were still available and vital, but I didn't depend on them anymore. I was now able to tap the same high vibrations felt with Krishnamurti without any aid from him.

The next year I began feeling out what seemed to be needed, and acting more positively. As I worked on the project, I meditated and kept in tune with and followed that particular energy which has so often led me. As I took each step I felt I was being carried on a wave of inner support which somehow overcame all difficulties.

Right away it became clear that Ojai was *not* the best place to start something very new, because so much was already going on there and people were so involved with other well-established activities. The venture needed a group of workers dedicated to its development.

The trustees agreed to purchase suitable land for the creation of a 'spiritual and cultural centre'. The community would include families, and out of the needs of their children, a school would develop naturally along with other activities, making possible integration of community with farming, education, and a self-knowing, meditative life. We would be as self-sufficient as possible.

Three people wanted to begin and we felt sure others would join us sooner or later. First, we had to find the right place, which I vaguely sensed would be in Northern California or Southern Oregon. We were looking for property which felt right spiritually, with real beauty and freshness, and at the same time with land suitable for a community. We needed a not-too-short growing season, a live stream, a forest which could be kept wild, no public road going through or over-looking or bordering, an airport not too far away, and a moderate price tag. As a result of our first journey we were able to narrow down the possibilities to a more specific area.

On the second trip, after walking many miles over many ranches, we found our little valley off Barton Road, near Glendale, Oregon, 25 miles north of Grants Pass. We knew at once that this was it. There was no choice, just awareness.

The acreage and the cost were more than I had planned, but, as soon as I saw our find, I knew that the larger size was right. Six others came and unanimously confirmed our discovery of a beautiful valley with 360 acres of forest, 60 acres of tillable land, a live creek running from one end of the property to the other, and a growing season which permits the farming of an abundance of vegetables and fruits, together with some cash crops. The noise from a nearby freeway is a disadvantage, but access is very convenient and the traffic noises do act as a reminder of the busy world outside.

'Mountain Grove' was clearly an apt name for the centre. There is strength in the word 'mountain' and a kind of affection in the word 'grove'. The combination of these two

words now mean a great deal. It represents not only the valley and its atmosphere, but also the meditation centre, the school, the farm, our life together as a community, our home, and above all an Intention which feels very real and vital to us.

The deep underlying purpose here cannot really be expressed in words. One can only hint at it, and even then perhaps be misunderstood. Yet there is a need to communicate verbally, and at the beginning of life at the new community our original statement of intentions was amended and printed and sent to all who made inquiries. In the first newsletter, published in May, 1969, this was referred to as “the necessary basis of our lives if the project is to be worthwhile.”

Statement of Intentions

We see it is vital for each person to live as a complete human being.

Our basic approach to life is inquiry into fundamental questions such as:

Can each individual discover what he really loves to do with his whole being, without striving after a reward or being distracted by an ideal?

Is it possible to be aware of an unmotivated action of love that doesn't compare, dominate, or possess?

We are deeply concerned with finding what is relationship to people, to nature, to ideas, and to the whole of life.

Rather than setting up principles and prescriptions for living, we feel it is important to raise questions, point out issues, and encourage independent thinking which starts from facts and not from beliefs and ideas.

We think that learning isn't the mere cultivation of memory and the accumulation of knowledge, but a free movement of a fresh mind as it inquires and observes.

We look upon freedom, not as a matter of doing whatever one likes, of being merely in opposition, or of following some other authority or influence, but of being inwardly free to be aware of one's own urges and motives which reveal themselves through daily thoughts and actions.

We see meditation as a listening process of self-knowing in which there is no outer or inner compulsion, no fear, no judgment, no conflict, and as an awareness in the movement of action of everything we do, so that each may be a light unto himself.

Those familiar with Krishnamurti's teachings will recognize his ideas. The last phrase came from the Buddha.

Clearly we couldn't make the statement into a dogma to be adopted and believed. Nor could we ask for Krishnamurti to be accepted as an authority. And we didn't want to confine members to those 'infected' with Krishnamurti and his teachings. How could we draw a line? Were we concerned with Krishnamurti as a person or with Truth?

We had to be open, even though it would have been much easier to begin with a group who all agreed upon a definite formula for living. Instead, those who stayed, stayed because they were sensitive to an atmosphere or intangible purpose with which they felt in harmony and to which they felt drawn. Nevertheless, the basic intent has remained unbroken even with exposure to many groups—Quakers, Theosophists, Applied Ontology, the Inner Peace Movement, to mention but a few—and to individuals who have tried to introduce a different set of agreements or understandings. These experiences have contributed to our development, tested our strength, and helped us realize that we want to

find our own relationship to Truth. Something new is coming into being, something which I feel is needed, however small and insignificant it may be.

This breaking of new ground has entailed many birth pangs. We have quarrelled, we have 'encountered' each other, we have had illusory 'highs' followed by sorrowful 'lows', but we have kept going because we feel the project is worthwhile. The three who started the venture with me soon left, and many others have come and gone, but I have learned to accept these changes.

As Founder I feel responsible for the basic direction of Mountain Grove. This role has been unsuccessfully challenged by several individuals who have sought a somewhat different purpose for the centre. Our valley could, of course, be used for many different projects, but I feel a very strong inner support for being the guardian and focus of the fundamental intention.

Instead of following a guru, a book, or an organized religion, we have looked within, and so been our own challenge, both as a group and as individuals. We have found that our life with each other and with the valley provides much encounter and support, so that many of our psychological needs are met right here at Mountain Grove.

Self-knowing and sensitivity-awareness play an important part in our daily lives. The meditation process brings light to our inner being; we watch our thoughts and feelings and find out what we actually are. Each does this in his or her own way. And we are aware of a 'presence' here which we can't explain, but which we continue to experience as something very real and vital. In the forest, we have discovered several groves and other special places which we feel are sacred and particularly suited for meditation. Generally, we are silent together just before our evening meal and before meetings. Some of us sit alone, completely still, in silence regularly, and some of us do this together.

Although each individual is free to grow spiritually in his or her own way, physically, as a community, there is a need for certain restrictions. If all who entered the gate were allowed to do whatever they liked, there would be anarchy and no real community; action on the part of some would interfere with the flowering of our fundamental purpose.

Those joining us are faced with the fact that certain decisions have already been made. Either they agree with them and feel able to live harmoniously with them or else they don't join. From the very beginning I felt that the use of drugs would be a serious distraction. This was one of the points discussed and agreed upon by those who started here. We offered participation in the project to those who were looking for a way of life other than the drug approach. We have been very firm about this and those who wanted drugs either didn't come in the first place or else came, tested out whether we really meant it, and found out we did. Visitors are expected to honour this agreement.

I am a strict vegetarian, in fact I don't even eat dairy produce, but I didn't wish to impose a rule concerning a basically personal matter. For the first two years, some individuals purchased meat or fish to supplement the vegetarian diet provided here. Now this is not done, and no more turkeys seem to be bought for Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Again from the start an agreement to forbid slaughtering, hunting, and fishing on the property was sought from perspective members, as this would greatly affect the atmosphere of the valley and would prevent the development of the centre as a sanctuary. More recently, out of our growth in sensitivity to nature, we have agreed not to cut down live trees in the valley without group assent. And now we have agreed upon no alcohol, no tobacco, and no fire-arms on the property.

How do we arrive at decisions? We are in the midst of finding out what is real, intelligent cooperation. The necessary exploration has so far often been very difficult, even painful. We have experimented with consensus as a means of government, but this process has many weaknesses. It can be misused, and it's frequently impractical and too energy-consuming. I think we can find a better way of making decisions or a better procedure for finding consensus. Now we are into consensus through a focus—the Director. When Mountain Grove was started, I was named Director; later, with a growing community and community consciousness, I resigned. Now, I have again been appointed Director. We will continue to work for agreement, but when disagreement brings paralysis, action can be taken.

We share the land, the buildings, the farm, our food, tools, books, and our labour. We do have some private space and personal belongings, giving necessary individual freedom. Sometimes we have fallen down and bumped into and hurt each other. Sometimes we have found communication very difficult, but each of us knows and feels that everyone else is searching, too.

Our lifestyle, though simple, is comfortable enough so that there's energy and space for creative activities such as dancing, drama, photography, writing, composing, painting, sculpture, sketching, weaving, and wood-carving.

Each person takes part in work projects, and when people want to help each other, work goes forward. Through cooperation we have constructed most of our eleven buildings and maintained a sixty-acre farm.

How has the project been financed so far? At first Betty and I had to sell our Ojai real estate—fortunately in the nick of time. Since then resident members have made regular contributions, mostly from jobs outside, but these haven't been quite enough. Each year we have had a deficit of over \$2000, and this has been made up by generous, and sometimes miraculous, donations from friends outside and from the meagre savings of individual members of the community.

Mountain Grove's strength in overcoming financial and other difficulties has helped maintain our confidence in the centre's abilities to serve others. We are organizing our school to include young people who need a year on a ranch with a minimum of academic work. And we are planning seminars on spiritual and metaphysical subjects, for residents and non-residents. We expect to have conferences here too.

Mountain Grove is an immense challenge. Personally, it inspires me to find out my own fundamental intention, and the life here provides me with a very realistic opportunity of testing out the truth of Krishnamurti's teachings—the truth that I find in my everyday existence. Each day calls for fresh endeavour. I know that I must venture alone into the unknown, the new.

CHAPTER X

INSPIRATION

True newness is really a growth in seeing. Seeing grows on its own initiative and we can't force it by following a formula or pattern, however novel it seems. It is not a creation of the brain. Thought must be quiet for the new to enter. And when it comes our hearts and minds will find a way of expressing it.

Some will paint or dance or care for growing things. Others will sing or draw or write or create in whatever they feel moved. I offer six compositions which came to me uninvited in my cabin and in the forest of Mountain Grove; I offer them as flowers, delicate and easily destroyed by reason, yet very real to me and perhaps also to others. The words are merely clues in a metaphysical treasure hunt and not the non-verbal, intangible, treasure itself.

1.

I am alone. I sit completely still. I am quiet. I watch my thoughts and all the feelings that go with them. As I watch, my mind slows down. I find serenity. I search for what is behind my thoughts and feelings, and what is behind that, and even behind that. There is peace.

I listen. I hear music. The notes are of a high pitch. Listening to this music gives me the feeling of watching the stars on a clear night. I call it 'universal music'. There is a flow of energy. I relax into it.

My mind calls me and I go back into thought. I get lost in thought. I wake up to this and ask myself, "Is this what I want to do now?"

Again I watch my mind and its wanderings, and the whole process of awareness and listening is repeated. I see light. Some of this light is daylight coming through my eyelids, but I know from experience that some of it is there in total darkness. I call it 'universal light'.

Again there is thought. I visualise the sun radiating golden and white light. I am bathed in this light. I visualise the valley and each member of the community in this light. There is thought again as I think of the problems we have together.

Insight into some of our difficulties comes to me. I start being creative, but the cultivation of my creativity must wait. It is difficult to wait, as I have to wait until others are ready. I wait.

I look and see beauty, two beautiful, transcendent eyes. I look into those eyes. The flow of energy increases. I am lost in adoration. I sense a presence. It is very real. It is alive and close to me, very close. We are one.

I am back again in thought, but the feeling of love remains. I am glowing with good vibrations. Creativity calls. I must return to the world of activity. May the blessing I feel stay with me, and may I be able to share it with others.

2.

Softly I tread in your graceful blue and silver fairy land.

Your gentle warmth welcomes me and I am enraptured by the heavenly music of your kingdom.

It is the whispering of a world beyond thought and beyond time, of wonders as yet unseen, unheard, and unfelt.

3.

The stillness of your beauty surrounds me. I am touched by your innocence and by the snow-white blossom of your purity.

I see your delicate hands, and on your finger the gold ring of true love.

You give and give and give and ask nothing in return.

I am indeed fortunate to have you as a companion.

We are not bound. We are free and yet you are embedded in my soul.

Now, I realize that when I have been in pain, you have brushed away my tears and given me strength, and that when I have needed soothing ointment, you have caressed me with your tenderness.

I have looked for you in a thousand faces, but now I see you crystal-clear, and I know that you are with me always.

I am bathed in the ecstasy of love—your love for me and my love for you, there is no difference. It is one love. I am part of you and you are part of me.

Have I ever felt such happiness? Have I ever known such joy?

My cup is full, and yet it is empty, ready to receive and to give.

4.

You greet me with a smile as I approach in wonder.

I breathe deeply the fragrance of your magnificent colouring.

I look into the clear mirror of your wisdom and see that you are my inner voice and that we have known each other since the beginning of time.

I share my problems with you. Together we understand them and walk through them as if they weren't there.

Quietly and confidently we pass through the forest of everyday existence.

Together we remove the cobwebs of despair. Together we offer joy to all we meet.

5.

I find myself in the middle of your dancing, ever-flowing waters. I am washed clean as you pass around me and over me and through me.

You support me as I float.

I hear your laughter as you encounter and smooth each jagged rock of the past. I too welcome the encounter and flow with you.

I join in your joyful cries as we wind our way through the valley of life.

I am with you and we are together as we cascade over the waterfall of sorrow, scream in pain with the impact, and eagerly flow into the sunshine with its gift of diamonds.

We flow on and on and on, on into the unknown.

6.

I ascend in meditation.

As I drop my burdens, my own world comes to a standstill.

I stretch out my arms in welcome of your benediction, and I look to see descending from the heavens shafts of radiant, transcendent light.

I stand erect as your shining energy pours through me.

I am enveloped by your glory.

I'm on an adventure, growing alone and yet not alone, with a source of inspiration and energy within. I meditate, search, think, and inquire; and I'm still interested in occasionally listening to a very old friend of mine, a now white-haired, but extremely healthy, Krishnamurti.

He has given to the world a clear, simple, expression of the truth. As far as my own life is concerned, his teachings have stood the test of time. I have found them to be universal and timeless.