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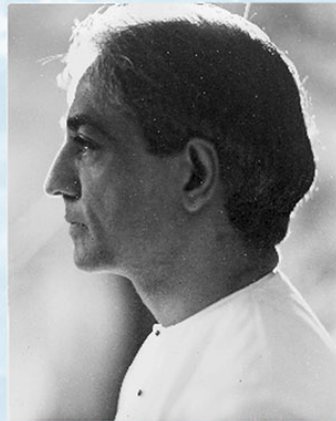
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J. Krishnamurti was born in South India and educated in England. Hailed by many from early youth as a spiritual teacher, he rejected adulation and leadership in order to encourage spiritual freedom and understanding. He devoted his life to speaking and counseling, traveling in the U.S.A., Europe, India and other parts of the world, addressing thou sands of people, always pointing the way to individual discovery of truth.

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Commentaries on Living

FIRST SERIES



From the Notebooks of

J. Krishnamurti

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~ *Three Pious Egoists*

The other day three pious egoists came to see me. The first was a *sannyasi*, a man who had renounced the world; the second was an orientalist and a great believer in brotherhood; and the third was a confirmed worker for a marvelous Utopia. Each of the three was strenuous in his own work and looked down on the others' attitudes and activities, and each was strengthened by his own conviction. Each was ardently attached to his particular form of belief, and all were in a strange way ruthless.

They told me, especially the Utopian, that they were ready to deny or sacrifice themselves and their friends for what they believed. They appeared meek and gentle, particularly the man of brotherhood, but there was a hardness of heart and that peculiar intolerance which is characteristic of the superior. They were the chosen, the interpreters; they knew and were certain.

The *sannyasi* said, in the course of a serious talk, that he was preparing himself for his next life. This life, he declared, had very little to offer him, for he had seen through all the illusions of worldliness and had forsaken worldly ways. He had some personal weaknesses and certain difficulties in concentration, he added, but in his next life he would be the ideal which he had set for himself.

His whole interest and vitality lay in his conviction that he was to be something in his next life. We talked at some length, and his emphasis was always on the tomorrow, on the future. The past existed, he said, but always in relation to the future; the present was merely a passage to the future, and today was interesting only because of

tomorrow. If there were no tomorrow, he asked, then why make an effort? One might just as well vegetate or be like the pacific cow.

The whole of life was one continuous movement from the past through the momentary present to the future. We should use the present, he said, to be something in the future: to be wise, to be strong, to be compassionate. Both the present and the future were transient, but tomorrow ripened the fruit. He insisted that today is but a steppingstone, and that we should not be too anxious or too particular about it; we should keep clear the ideal of tomorrow and make the journey successfully. Altogether, he was impatient of the present.

The man of brotherhood was more learned, and his language more poetic; he was expert in handling words, and was altogether suave and convincing. He too had carved a divine niche for him self in the future. He was to be something. This idea filled his heart, and he had gathered his disciples for that future. Death, he said, was a beautiful thing, for it brought one nearer to that divine niche which was making it possible for him to live in this sorrowful and ugly world.

He was all for changing and beautifying the world, and was working ardently for the brotherhood of man. He considered that ambition, with its attendant cruelties and corruption, was inevitable in a world where you had to get things done; and unfortunately, if you wanted certain organizational activities carried on, you had to be a little bit on the hard side. The work was important because it was helping mankind, and anyone who opposed it had to be put aside gently, of course. The organization for that work was of the utmost value and must not be hindered. "Others have their paths," he said, "but ours is essential, and anyone who interferes is not one of us."

The Utopian was a strange mixture of the idealist and the practical man. His Bible was not the old but the new.

He believed in the new implicitly. He knew the outcome of the future, for the new book foretold what it was to be. His plan was to confuse, organize and carry out. The present, he said, was corrupt, it must be destroyed, and out of this destruction the new would be built. The present was to be sacrificed for the future. The future man was all important, not the present man.

"We know how to create that future man," he said, "we can shape his mind and heart; but we must get into power to do any good. We will sacrifice ourselves and others to bring about a new state. Anyone who stands in the way we will kill, for the means is of no consequence; the end justifies any means."

For ultimate peace, any form of violence could be used; for ultimate individual freedom, tyranny in the present was inevitable. "When we have the power in our hands," he declared, "we will use every form of compulsion to bring about a new world with out class distinctions, without priests. From our central thesis we will never move; we are fixed there, but our strategy and tactics will vary depending upon changing circumstances. We plan, organize and act to destroy the present man for the future man."

The *sannyasi*, the man of brotherhood and the Utopian all live for tomorrow, for the future. They are not ambitious in the worldly sense, they do not want high honors, wealth or recognition; but they are ambitious in a much more subtle way. The Utopian has identified himself with a group which he thinks will have the power to reorient the world; the man of brotherhood aspires to be exalted, and the *sannyasi* to attain his goal. All are consumed with their own becoming, with their own achievement and expansion. They do not see that this desire denies peace, brotherhood and supreme happiness.

Ambition in any form for the group, for individual salvation, or for spiritual achievement is action postponed.

Desire is ever of the future; the desire to become is inaction in the present. The now has greater significance than the tomorrow. In the now is all time, and to understand the now is to be free of time. Becoming is the continuation of time, of sorrow. Becoming does not contain being. Being is always in the present, and being is the highest form of transformation. Becoming is merely modified continuity, and there is radical transformation only in the present, in being.

~ *Identification*

Why do you identify yourself with another, with a group, with a country? Why do you call yourself a Christian, a Hindu, a Buddhist, or why do you belong to one of the innumerable sects? Religiously and politically one identifies one self with this or with that group through tradition or habit, through impulse, prejudice, imitation and laziness. This identification puts an end to all creative understanding, and then one becomes a mere tool in the hands of the party boss, the priest or the favored leader.

The other day someone said that he was a "Krishnamurtiite," whereas so-and-so belonged to another group. As he was saying it, he was utterly unconscious of the implications of this identification. He was not by any means a foolish person; he was well read, cultured and all the rest of it. Nor was he sentimental or emotional over the matter; on the contrary, he was clear and definite.

Why had he become a "Krishnamurtiite"? He had followed others, belonged to many wearisome groups and organizations, and at last found himself identified with this particular person. From what he said, it appeared that the journey was over. He had taken a stand and that was the end of the matter; he had chosen, and nothing could shake him. He would now comfortably settle down and follow eagerly all that had been said and was going to be said.

When we identify ourselves with another, is that an indication of love? Does identification imply experimentation? Does not identification put an end to love and to experiment? Identification, surely, is possession, the assertion of ownership; and ownership denies love, does it

not? To own is to be secure; possession is defense, making oneself invulnerable. In identification there is resistance, whether gross or subtle; and is love a form of self-protective resistance? Is there love when there is defense?

Love is vulnerable, pliable, receptive; it is the highest form of sensitivity, and identification makes for insensitivity. Identification and love do not go together, for the one destroys the other. Identification is essentially a thought process by which the mind safe guards and expands itself; and in becoming something it must resist and defend, it must own and discard. In this process of becoming, the mind or the self grows tougher and more capable; but this is not love. Identification destroys freedom, and only in freedom can there be the highest form of sensitivity.

To experiment, need there be identification? Does not the very act of identification put an end to inquiry, to discovery? The happiness that truth brings cannot be if there is no experimentation in self-discovery. Identification puts an end to discovery; it is another form of laziness. Identification is vicarious experience, and hence utterly false.

To experience, all identification must cease. To experiment, there must be no fear. Fear prevents experience. It is fear that makes for identification with another, with a group, with an ideology, and so on. Fear must resist, suppress; and in a state of self-defence, how can there be venturing on the uncharted sea? Truth or happiness cannot come without undertaking the journey into the ways of the self. You cannot travel far if you are anchored. Identification is a refuge. A refuge needs protection, and that which is protected is soon destroyed. Identification brings destruction upon itself, and hence the constant conflict between various identifications.

The more we struggle for or against identification, the greater is the resistance to understanding. If one is aware of the whole process of identification, outward as well as

inner, if one sees that its outward expression projected by the inner demand, then there is a possibility of discovery and happiness. He who has identified him self can never know freedom, in which alone all truth comes into being.

~ *Gossip and Worry*

How oddly similar are gossip and worry. They are both the out come of a restless mind. A restless mind must have a changing variety of expressions and actions, it must be occupied; it must have ever increasing sensations, passing interests, and gossip contains the elements of all these.

Gossip is the very antithesis of intensity and earnestness. To talk about another, pleasantly or viciously, is an escape from oneself, and escape is the cause of restlessness. Escape in its very nature is restless. Concern over the affairs of others seems to occupy most people, and this concern shows itself in the reading of innumerable magazines and newspapers with their gossip columns, their accounts of murders, divorces and so on.

As we are concerned with what others think of us, so we are anxious to know all about them; and from this arise the crude and subtle forms of snobbishness and the worship of authority. Thus we become more and more externalized and inwardly empty. The more externalized we are, the more sensations and distractions there must be, and this gives rise to a mind that is never quiet, that is not capable of deep search and discovery.

Gossip is an expression of a restless mind; but merely to be silent does not indicate a tranquil mind. Tranquility does not come into being with abstinence or denial; it comes with the understanding of *what is*. To understand *what is* needs swift awareness, for *what is* is not static.

If we did not worry, most of us would feel that we were not alive; to be struggling with a problem is for the majority of us an indication of existence. We cannot imagine life with

out a problem; and the more we are occupied with a problem, the more alert we think we are. The constant tension over a problem which thought itself has created only dulls the mind, making it insensitive and weary.

Why is there this ceaseless preoccupation with a problem? Will worry resolve the problem? Or does the answer to the problem come when the mind is quiet? But for most people, a quiet mind is a rather fearsome thing; they are afraid to be quiet, for heaven knows what they may discover in them selves, and worry is a preventive. A mind that is afraid to discover must ever be on the defensive, and restlessness is its defense.

Through constant strain, through habit and the influence of circumstances, the conscious layers of the mind have become agitated and restless. Modern existence encourages this superficial activity and distraction, which is another form of self-defence. Defense is resistance, which prevents understanding.

Worry, like gossip, has the semblance of intensity and seriousness; but if one observes more closely one will see that it arises from attraction and not earnestness. Attraction is ever changing, and that is why the objects of worry and gossip change. Change is merely modified continuity. Gossip and worry can come to an end only when the restlessness of the mind is understood. Mere abstinence, control or discipline will not bring about tranquility, but only dull the mind, making it insensitive and confined.

Curiosity is not the way of understanding. Understanding comes with self-knowledge. He who suffers is not curious; and mere curiosity, with its speculative overtones, is a hindrance to self knowledge. Speculation, like curiosity, is an indication of restlessness; and a restless mind, however gifted, destroys understanding and happiness.

~ *Thought and Love*

Thought with its emotional and sensational content, is not love. Thought invariably denies love. Thought is founded on memory, and love is not memory. When you think about someone you love, that thought is not love. You may recall a friend's habits, manners, idiosyncrasies, and think of pleasant or unpleasant incidents in your relationship with that person, but the pictures which thought evokes are not love. By its very nature, thought is separative. The sense of time and space, of separation and sorrow, is born of the process of thought, and it is only when the thought process ceases that there can be love.

Thought inevitably breeds the feeling of ownership, that possessiveness which consciously or unconsciously cultivates jealousy. Where jealousy is, obviously love is not; and yet with most people, jealousy is taken as an indication of love. Jealousy is the result of thought; it is a response of the emotional content of thought. When the feeling of possessing or being possessed is blocked, there is such emptiness that envy takes the place of love. It is because thought plays the role of love that all the complications and sorrows arise.

If you did not think of another, you would say that you did not love that person. But is it love when you *do* think of the person? If you did not think of a friend whom you think you love, you would be rather horrified, would you not? If you did not think of a friend who is dead, you would consider yourself disloyal, without love, and so on. You would regard such a state as callous, indifferent, and so you would begin to think of that person, you would have

photographs, images made by the hand or by the mind; but thus to fill your heart with the things of the mind is to leave no room for love. When you are with a friend, you do not think about him; it is only in his absence that thought begins to recreate scenes and experiences that are dead. This revival of the past is called love. So, for most of us, love is death, a denial of life; we live with the past, with the dead, therefore we ourselves are dead, though we call it love.

The process of thought ever denies love. It is thought that has emotional complications, not love. Thought is the greatest hindrance to love. Thought creates a division between *what is* and *what should be*, and on this division morality is based; but neither the moral nor the immoral know love. This moral structure, created by the mind to hold social relations together, is not love, but a hardening process like that of cement. Thought does not lead to love, thought does not cultivate love; for love cannot be cultivated as a plant in the garden. The very desire to cultivate love is the action of thought.

If you are at all aware you will see what an important part thought plays in your life. Thought obviously has its place, but it is in no way related to love. What is related to thought can be understood by thought, but that which is not related to thought cannot be caught by the mind. You will ask, then what is love? Love is a state of being in which thought is not; but the very definition of love is a process of thought, and so it is not love.

We have to understand thought itself, and not try to capture love by thought. The denial of thought does not bring about love. There is freedom from thought only when its deep significance is fully understood; and for this, profound self-knowledge is essential, not vain and superficial assertions. Meditation and not repetition, awareness and not definition, reveal the ways of thought.

With out being aware and experiencing the ways of thought, love can not be.

~ *Aloneness and Isolation*

The sun had gone down and the trees were dark and shapely against the darkening sky. The wide, strong river was peaceful and still. The moon was just visible on the horizon: she was coming up between two great trees, but she was not yet casting shadows.

We walked up the steep bank of the river and took a path that skirted the green wheat fields. This path was a very ancient way; many thousands had trodden it, and it was rich in tradition and silence. It wandered among fields and mangoes, tamarinds and deserted shrines. There were large patches of garden, sweet peas deliciously scenting the air. The birds were settling down for the night, and a large pond was beginning to reflect the stars. Nature was not communicative that evening. The trees were aloof; they had withdrawn into their silence and darkness. A few chattering villagers passed by on their bicycles, and once again there was deep silence and that peace which comes when all things are alone.

This aloneness is not aching, fearsome loneliness. It is the aloneness of being; it is uncorrupted, rich, complete. That tamarind tree has no existence other than being itself. So is this aloneness. One is alone, like the fire, like the flower, but one is not aware of its purity and of its immensity. One can truly communicate only when there is aloneness. Being alone is not the outcome of denial, of self enclosure. Aloneness is the purgation of all motives, of all pursuits of desire, of all ends. Aloneness is not an end product of the mind. You cannot wish to be alone. Such a

wish is merely an escape from the pain of not being able to commune.

Loneliness, with its fear and ache, is isolation, the inevitable action of the self. This process of isolation, whether expansive or narrow, is productive of confusion, conflict and sorrow. Isolation can never give birth to aloneness; the one has to cease for the other to be. Aloneness is indivisible and loneliness is separation. That which is alone is pliable and so enduring. Only the alone can commune with that which is causeless, the immeasurable. To the alone, life is eternal; to the alone there is no death. The alone can never cease to be.

The moon was just coming over the tree tops, and the shadows were thick and dark. A dog began to bark as we passed the little village and walked back along the river. The river was so still that it caught the stars and the lights of the long bridge among its waters. High up on the bank children were standing and laughing, and a baby was crying. The fishermen were cleaning and coiling their nets. A night bird flew silently by. Someone began to sing on the other bank of the wide river, and his words were clear and penetrating. Again the all-pervading aloneness of life.

~ *Pupil and Master*

"You know, I have been told that I am a pupil of a certain Master," he began. "Do you think I am? I really want to know what you think of this. I belong to a society of which you know, and the outer heads who represent the inner leaders or Masters have told me that because of my work for the society I have been made a pupil. I have been told that I have an opportunity to become a first-degree initiate in this life." He took all this very seriously, and we talked at some length.

Reward in any form is extremely gratifying, especially a so-called spiritual reward when one is somewhat indifferent to the honors of the world. Or when one is not very successful in this world, it is very gratifying to belong to a group especially chosen by someone who is supposed to be a highly advanced spiritual being, for then one is part of a team working for a great idea, and naturally one must be rewarded for one's obedience and for the sacrifices one has made for the cause. If it is not a reward in that sense, it is a recognition of one's spiritual advancement; or, as in a well run organization, one's efficiency is acknowledged in order to stimulate one to do better.

In a world where success is worshipped, this kind of self advancement is understood and encouraged. But to be told by another that you are a pupil of a Master, or to think that you are, obviously leads to many ugly forms of exploitation. Unfortunately, both the exploiter and the exploited feel elated in their mutual relationship. This expanding self-gratification is considered spiritual advancement, and it becomes especially ugly and brutal

when you have intermediaries between the pupil and the Master, when the Master is in a different country or is otherwise inaccessible and you are not in direct physical contact with him. This inaccessibility and the lack of direct contact opens the door to self deception and to grand but childish illusions; and these illusions are exploited by the cunning, by those who are after glory and power.

Reward and punishment exist only when there is no humility. Humility is not an end result of spiritual practices and denials. Humility is not an achievement, it is not a virtue to be cultivated. A virtue that is cultivated ceases to be a virtue, for then it is merely another form of achievement, a record to be made. A cultivated virtue is not the abnegation of the self, but a negative assertion of the self.

Humility is unaware of the division of the superior and the inferior, of the Master and the pupil. As long as there is a division between the Master and the pupil, between reality and yourself, understanding is not possible. In the understanding of truth, there is no Master or pupil, neither the advanced nor the lowly. Truth is the understanding of *what is* from moment to moment without the burden or the residue of the past moment.

Reward and punishment only strengthen the self, which denies humility. Humility is in the present, not in the future. You can not *become* humble. The very becoming is the continuation of self importance, which conceals itself in the practice of a virtue. How strong is our will to succeed, to become! How can success and humility go together? Yet that is what the "spiritual" exploiter and exploited pursue, and therein lie conflict and misery.

"Do you mean to say that the Master does not exist, and that my being a pupil is an illusion, a make-believe?" he asked.

Whether the Master exists or not is so trivial. It is important to the exploiter, to the secret schools and

societies; but to the man who is seeking truth, which brings supreme happiness, surely this question is utterly irrelevant. The rich man and the coolie are as important as the Master and the pupil. Whether the Masters exist or do not exist, whether there are the distinctions of Initiates, pupils and so on, is not important, but what is important is to understand yourself. Without self-knowledge, your thought, that which you reason out, has no basis. Without first knowing yourself, how can you know what is true? Illusion is inevitable without self knowledge. It is childish to be told and to accept that you are this or that. Beware of the man who offers you a reward in this world or in the next.

~ *The Rich and the Poor*

It was hot and humid and the noise of the very large town filled the air. The breeze from the sea was warm, and there was the smell of tar and petrol. With the setting of the sun, red in the distant waters, it was still unyieldingly hot. The large group that filled the room presently left, and we went out into the street.

The parrots, like bright green flashes of light, were coming home to roost. Early in the morning they flew to the north, where there were orchards, green fields and open country, and in the evening they came back to pass the night in the trees of the city. Their flight was never smooth but always reckless, noisy and brilliant. They never flew straight like other birds, but were forever veering off to the left or the right, or suddenly dropping into a tree. They were the most restless birds in flight, but how beautiful they were with their red beaks and a golden green that was the very glory of light. The vultures, heavy and ugly, circled and settled down for the night on the palm trees.

A man came along playing the flute; he was a servant of some kind. He walked up the hill, still playing, and we followed him; he turned into one of the side streets, never ceasing to play. It was strange to hear the song of the flute in a noisy city, and its sound penetrated deep into the heart. It was very beautiful, and we followed the flute player for some distance. We crossed several streets and came to a wider one, better lighted. Farther on, a group of people were sitting cross-legged at the side of the road, and the flute player joined them. So did we; and we all sat around while he played. They were mostly chauffeurs,

servants, night watchmen, with several children and a dog or two. Cars passed by, one driven by a chauffeur; a lady was inside, beautifully dressed and alone, with the inside light on. Another car drew up; the chauffeur got out and sat down with us. They were all talking and enjoying themselves, laughing and gesticulating, but the song of the flute never wavered, and there was delight.

Presently we left and took a road that led to the sea past the well lit houses of the rich. The rich have a peculiar atmosphere of their own. However cultured, unobtrusive, ancient and polished, the rich have an impenetrable and assured aloofness, that inviolable certainty and hardness that is difficult to break down. They are not the possessors of wealth, but are possessed by wealth, which is worse than death. Their conceit is philanthropy; they think they are trustees of their wealth; they have charities, create endowments; they are the makers, the builders, the givers. They build churches, temples, but their god is the god of their gold. With so much poverty and degradation, one must have a very thick skin to be rich. Some of them come to question, to argue, to find reality. For the rich as for the poor, it is extremely difficult to find reality. The poor crave to be rich and powerful, and the rich are already caught in the net of their own action; and yet they believe and venture near. They speculate, not only upon the market, but upon the ultimate. They play with both, but are successful only with what is in their hearts. Their beliefs and ceremonies, their hopes and fears have nothing to do with reality, for their hearts are empty. The greater the outward show, the greater the inward poverty.

To renounce the world of wealth, comfort and position is a comparatively simple matter; but to put aside the craving to be, to become, demands great intelligence and understanding. The power that wealth gives is a hindrance to the understanding of reality, as is also the power of gift and capacity. This particular form of confidence is obviously

an activity of the self; and though it is difficult to do so, this kind of assurance and power can be put aside. But what is much more subtle and more hidden is the power and the drive that lie in the craving to become. Self expansion in any form, whether through wealth or through virtue, is a process of conflict, causing antagonism and confusion. A mind burdened with becoming can never be tranquil, for tranquility is not a result either of practice or of time. Tranquility is a state of understanding, and becoming denies this understanding. Becoming creates the sense of time, which is really the postponement of understanding. The "I shall be" is an illusion born of self-importance.

The sea was as restless as the town, but its restlessness had depth and substance. The evening star was on the horizon. We walked back through a street crowded with buses, cars and people. A man lay naked and asleep on the sidewalk; he was a beggar, exhausted, fatally undernourished, and it was difficult to awaken him. Beyond lay the green lawns and bright flowers of a public garden.

~ *Ceremonies and Conversion*

In a large enclosure, among many trees, was a church. People, brown and white, were going in. Inside there was more light than in the European churches, but the arrangements were the same. The ceremony was in progress and there was beauty. When it was over, very few of the brown talked to the white, or the white to the brown, and we all went our different ways.

On another continent there was a temple, and they were singing a Sanskrit chant; the puja, a Hindu ceremony, was being performed. The congregation was of another cultural pattern. The tonality of Sanskrit words is very penetrating and powerful; it has a strange weight and depth.

You can be converted from one belief to another, from one dogma to another, but you cannot be converted to the understanding of reality. Belief is not reality. You can change your mind, your opinion, but truth or God is not a conviction: it is an experience not based on any belief or dogma, or on any previous experience. If you have an experience born of belief, your experience is the conditioned response of that belief. If you have an experience unexpectedly, spontaneously, and build further experience upon the first, then experience is merely a continuation of memory which responds to contact with the present. Memory is always dead, coming to life only in contact with the living present.