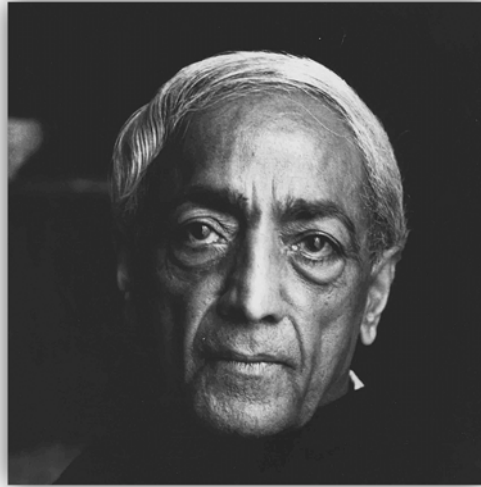


## Krishnamurti and the Desolation of the Pathless Path



*I maintain that Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect.*

— *The Dissolution of the Order of the Star*, 1929

Jiddu Krishnamurti was a wonderful man: mystical, bright, original, passionate, highly critical, and rebellious. Like Buddha, he was constantly on the move, traveling, giving lectures, and meeting people, and he remained active right through to old age. Most people are aware of his fascinating life story and the courage he had to dissolve the Order of the Star in the East, a theosophical organization that had been created for the sole purpose of promoting him as a new messiah. From that critical time onward, he decided to teach on his own and in the name of truth alone.

Krishnamurti was originally discovered in an Indian village when just 14 years old by a man called Charles Webster Leadbeater. At that time, the Theosophical Movement was fascinated by Helena Blavatsky's idea of the imminent coming of a world teacher (Maitreya) who would uplift the consciousness of humanity. Leadbeater, a psychic and occultist, perceived Krishnamurti to be a suitable vessel to fulfill this role. Still very young, extremely sensitive, and fragile, Krishnamurti was to become the main actor in their ludicrous fantasy, which, unsurprisingly, put him under



unbearable pressure and damaged his young soul. And yet even though Krishnamurti eventually repudiated this role, Leadbeater was not entirely wrong – Krishnamurti did become a world teacher, but in his own right and on his own terms.

Many seekers go through a stage in which they draw inspiration from Krishnamurti. He particularly appeals to those who seek independence and who don't want to be constrained either by traditional teachings with complicated practices or by guru dependency. While this is all very positive, the question remains: Did Krishnamurti really offer a constructive alternative to these more traditional paths? Like Rajneesh, Krishnamurti gave endless lectures, but he did not offer seekers any concrete tools through which they could evolve and awaken. Many seekers crave spiritual inspiration, but inspiration alone is not enough to come closer to true peace inside. Inspiration without a clear knowledge of how to walk the inner path is just another illusion – another lie.

Despite his apparent nonconformity, Krishnamurti actually taught a very traditional approach to awakening, drawn from the philosophy of non-duality and jnana yoga (the yoga of knowledge). In that very ancient approach, one applies the power of intelligence to gain insight into the nature of consciousness. This is done through traditional self-inquiry, or a similar kind of contemplation, which aims at penetrating illusion and opening the access to our true self. So, surprisingly, in spite of his rebellion against the past, there was nothing really new in Krishnamurti's teaching.

The incongruity between Krishnamurti's teaching method and his own personal path was that he did not actually reach awakening through the means of understanding. There are many indications that his awakening was caused by kundalini energy, which explains the mysterious and excruciating headaches he was prone to. Much like Ramana Maharshi, whatever inquiry Krishnamurti may have done was not responsible for his realization, but rather enabled him to understand his awakened state after the fact.

Krishnamurti was no stranger to meditation practice. He had been subjected to a severe regime of meditation training, forced on him by his spiritual tutors, when he was being groomed to become a messiah. Even though he did realize his pure subjectivity, his initial awakening was far from being complete. He was evolving toward his true self for his whole life, and one of the deepest spiritual shifts he experienced happened when he was eighty years old. He had a deeply inquiring mind, but lacked some important pieces in his knowledge of the inner realm and of the process of awakening.



In fact, he did not fully understand the path he himself had taken, with all its intricate unfoldments into increasingly higher states of awakening.

Another reason why Krishnamurti did not manage to go beyond traditions was his unconscious aspiration to achieve sainthood. He had a love-hate relationship with past traditions, and he adhered to many of their ideas, such as (unsuccessfully) attempting to follow the model of celibacy. He was constantly examining his mind, relentlessly striving to fulfill the ideal of psychological purity. While this is obviously very noble, excessive self-observation and too much attachment to – and even an obsession with – psychological perfection are in conflict with the principle of surrender and samadhi; one is looking for perfection in the wrong place. After finding inner peace, one naturally becomes much more relaxed in one's relationship with the psychological dimension and stops taking it so seriously. One acts from a place of love and compassion, rather than seeking to be a flawless person, something which simply does not exist.

Krishnamurti's endless discourses were not only designed to help others, but, even more so, to help himself reach clarity about the nature of his own realization. Unfortunately, even if he did manage to clarify his own state, he did not make it accessible for others. Krishnamurti did not seem to understand this, nor did he understand the state of an ordinary seeker's consciousness. In spite of his brilliance, there seems also to have been some fundamental block or insensitivity in his intelligence.

To give an example, there is a film clip showing Krishnamurti in conversation with a scientist. Krishnamurti is passionately explaining how it is possible, in an instant, to be free from the totality of the past and to realize the mind without content. But, sadly, the whole conversation comes across as a big misunderstanding. The scientist keeps nodding, and Krishnamurti seems extremely pleased to be understood so well. But one look into the dead eyes of the scientist makes it obvious that he does not have the slightest idea what Krishnamurti is talking about. Krishnamurti simply could not see this. Why? He was incapable of seeing how other people experience reality because he lived so much in the intellectual dimension.

Krishnamurti's teaching was confined to the realization of awareness alone. He did not understand the difference between awareness and consciousness. There was very little of the element of being, and no real evolution into the heart in the path he created. What was the real meaning of his pathless path then? A true pathless path is based on the principle of sudden awakening. One cannot



walk it unless one has access to one's pure nature. An unconscious individual, stuck in his semi-conscious observer, can imagine that he is on the pathless path. But in truth, he is not on a path at all; he is just becoming more and more miserable.

Through his talks and seminars, Krishnamurti was trying to convince a simple audience that by activating their total awareness, they can go beyond the mind and experience the essence of reality. But no one could. How could they without having the foundation of correct practice and meditation? Only those who already had an actual experience of their pure nature could appreciate the meaning of his talks. Krishnamurti was just clarifying what the minority of his audience already knew intuitively.

## The Pathless Path of Meditation

*Meditation is to be aware of every thought and of every feeling, never to say it is right or wrong but just to watch it and move with it. In that watching you begin to understand the whole movement of thought and feeling. And out of this awareness comes silence. Silence put together by thought is stagnation, is dead, but the silence that comes when thought has understood its own beginning, the nature of itself, understood how all thought is never free but always old – this silence is meditation in which the meditator is entirely absent, for the mind has emptied itself of the past. . . .*

*Meditation is a state of mind which looks at everything with complete attention, totally, not just parts of it. And no one can teach you how to be attentive. If any system teaches you how to be attentive, then you are attentive to the system and that is not attention.*

— *Freedom from the Known*

*Meditation is like the breeze that comes in when you leave the window open; but if you deliberately keep it open, deliberately invite it to come, it will never appear.*

— *The Only Revolution*



Often the best way to understand a teacher is to investigate his knowledge of meditation. Meditation is simply truth experienced in the context of physical non-activity. Later, it also enters activity, but non-activity is where it is forged and tested. The first thing we can note here is the great emphasis upon total attention on everything that occurs in the mind. And, out of that total attention, silence supposedly comes. But is this a true description of meditation? Can one simply transcend the restless and chaotic quality of the mind by being attentive to it? This might work for someone who is already established in consciousness, but for an average seeker, it won't help at all. Krishnamurti also speaks of meditation as a breeze that can enter when we are open to it, but not deliberately expecting it. This is very beautiful, but is it true? Meditation is our nature; why should we wait for it to come? When we have awakened our pure nature, we are the breeze.

Because Krishnamurti did not fully understand the process of awakening, he often resorted to poetry when speaking about meditation. This is very common. Beautiful words can fill our gaps in understanding. In most cases, those who merely speak of silence, bliss, or emptiness have not even a basic grasp of the nature of meditation. The term silence means nothing, because it can be understood in thousands of ways. There is no precision in Krishnamurti's descriptions, and there is no understanding of being, of absorption in reality. While his is a path of awareness, it has no understanding of either the horizontal or vertical depths of consciousness. Constant attentiveness and self-observation will keep one hopelessly stuck on the surface of meditation.

### Reinterpretation of 'Observer is the Observed'

*The division in our lives is the structure of thought, which is the action of the observer who thinks himself separate. He further thinks of himself as the thinker, as something different from his thought. But there can be no thought without the thinker and no thinker without the thought. So the two are really one. He is also the experiencer and, again, he separates himself from the thing he experiences. The observer, the thinker, the experiencer are not different from the observed, the thought, the experienced. This is not a verbal conclusion. If it is a conclusion then it is another thought which again makes the division between the conclusion and the action which is supposed to follow that conclusion. When the mind sees the reality of this, the division can no longer exist. This is the whole point of what we are saying. All conflict is this battle between the observer and the observed. This is the greatest thing to understand.*



— *Freedom, Love, and Action*

This quote is pivotal to our understanding of Krishnamurti's approach to awareness. Osho commended him for this passage, and saw the stage of the observer becoming the observed as enlightenment or samadhi. This is a great exaggeration, for it is neither. He also said that in the realms of the known, unknown, and unknowable, Krishnamurti refers to the third, which is the highest. This does not make much sense either. There is nothing unknowable about the observer becoming the observed – it is quite basic really. And, in fact, this description of the whole process is simply incorrect, as we will see. How can the observer transcend himself?

According to Osho, when the observer becomes the observed, only the 'seer' remains, which is our pure subjectivity. But was Krishnamurti speaking about reaching unity with our pure subjectivity, or rather a condition of non-separation from the flow of experiencing? It is actually more the latter. In his view of total observation, the faculty of attention expands and stretches itself into the field of perception. In such a comprehensive act of attention, the observer forgets himself as the subject to the perceived and a kind of unity is experienced. But is such a process really feasible?

The first thing we need to understand is that the sense of separation based on the observer is a positive step in evolution. It is a stage that allows us to go beyond the subconscious. In the subconscious state there is no observer, but even though one does not experience separation, one is completely ignorant; the absence of the observer in subconsciousness does not make one free. To have a sense of me as the subject to thoughts is the very prerequisite for our evolution toward consciousness. Krishnamurti had everything back to front. There is no way that, even through supernatural exertion, the observer can reach unity with the object. The problem is not the division between subject and object, but that the observer is not conscious of himself. Krishnamurti leads us to believe that it is terribly wrong for the observer to be separated from the object. But, without that separation, one would simply be insane.

The model Krishnamurti proposed needs to be reversed: the observer has to turn his attention back *on himself*. This is the proper understanding of the phrase 'observer becomes the observed'. There are several stages to this process. The first stage is self-reference, in which the observer can sense himself as the subject in relationship to the object. Then there is self-attention, in which the observer becomes directly conscious of his me, but with the inclusion of subtle duality. Finally,



there is the realization of the subjectivity of the observer as me without object – bare attention. Bare attention, when realized in the context of the self-conscious observer, is a stage in-between the observer and conscious me in which the observer experiences himself in his plain subjectivity, in separation from objects and thoughts. This is the main thing Krishnamurti missed in his vision: the understanding that before we can reach unity with the object, the subject itself needs to be fully isolated and established. The observer has to become one with himself, which is the awakening of conscious me, and then, through vertical surrender into abidance and restfulness, give birth to his deeper subjectivity, which we call ‘fundamental me’. Additionally, to reach a higher condition of unity with perception, the ground of pure consciousness has to be established – a concept entirely foreign to Krishnamurti.

Krishnamurti was not aware of the intricate process of our evolution into pure subjectivity. He was, to a great extent, conditioned by Buddhist preconceptions of non-self, and sought to realize emptiness rather than to meet his essential self. Because he was not fully merged with his pure subjectivity, and therefore not completely absorbed, Krishnamurti was stuck in the constant need to watch, observe, or cultivate total attention. He could not just drop all of that, rest within, and simply be free.

### *The Basic Confusion of the Pathless Path*

In the name of the pathless path, Krishnamurti was caught in the same quicksand as other non-dual teachers who became stuck in an overly intellectual vision of awakening. Like them, he confused the original and acquired dimensions of enlightenment. He lived in a theoretical reality, lecturing and communicating to an abstract audience. Not only did his knowledge of consciousness lack the requisite depth, but he also failed to grasp the nature of ignorance. For a spiritual teacher, it is as important to understand ignorance as it is to understand awakening, for the two are fully interconnected. If Krishnamurti had actually been working with people directly, he would have realized that all his talks about total attention and complete awareness were no more than mind talking to mind. They do not work as a means of awakening because the mind cannot transcend itself through the sheer power of its own self-understanding.

In Krishnamurti’s quasi-pathless path, a number of shortcomings are evident:



- A simplified vision of consciousness as a single dimension, rather than one which is multidimensional by nature
- The absence of the distinction between awareness and consciousness
- A lack of understanding of the nature of me, other than his observations confined to the level of the observer and attention
- The absence of the pivotal concept of stabilization
- The complete absence of the vertical dimension of evolution
- A limited understanding of the practice of meditation
- The absence of the soul

Krishnamurti did not teach a pathless path. He taught non-duality for Western people, enriching it with psychological language and the concepts of rebellion and independence. In that sense, his teaching was a combination of Advaita and Buddhism in disguise. He was a source of inspiration for many, but he did not create a distinct path of awakening based on tangible experience.

On a personal level, Krishnamurti was evolving throughout his whole life, and, as has been noted, he reached a deeper enlightenment at the very end of it. However, his personal teaching did not seem to change substantially from the time he first formed it right up until the end. His particular style of teaching became such a habit for him that he stopped really questioning its basic assumptions. Krishnamurti was naturally connected to his individuality, but the non-dual conditioning in him was just too deep. It is interesting to see how a man as intelligent as he was still could not recognize how much he continued to be conditioned by the very traditions he rebelled against. His rebellion against the past traditions did not go very far because, in the end, his conclusions were no different than the ones of Buddha, jnana yoga, or Advaita. It is a pity, because if he had been able to go beyond his personal rebellion and examine more deeply the root of his spiritual preconceptions, he could have opened a new way for seekers of truth. Instead, he left them completely lost somewhere in-between realms, in the barren landscape of the pathless path to nowhere.

Krishnamurti was a teacher who refused to be seen as one. This paradox created an interesting situation for those who follow him, as they try to reconcile their urge to trust his words while simultaneously seeking their own independence. Krishnamurti challenged the very institution of the spiritual guru or master, and yet he became the guru for many. He was a beautiful human being with a deeply contemplative nature who, through his passion for truth, profoundly stimulated the





minds and hearts of countless seekers. And yet, he did not seem to reconcile many of the painful inner contradictions he himself had – one of the biggest of which was the mix of love and bitterness he had toward past traditions. And it is for this reason he did not transcend them.

Blessings,

Anadi

*For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website [www.anaditeaching.com/glossary](http://www.anaditeaching.com/glossary)*