



# THE LINK

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## **The Newsletter**

Dear Friends	3
Krishnamurti: A Dialogue on Death	4
A Tribute to Pupul Jayakar	5
The Right Place of Thought	8
A Reply to David Peat	14

## **Meeting K**

Krishnamurti as I Knew Him	15
Meeting K in Saanen	21

## **The First Step**

Editor's Note	25
The Holistic Approach of Krishnamurti	26
Living with the Teachings	28
Responses to 'Password to the K World'	32

## **On Education**

Introduction	35
Dumbing Us Down – A Book Review	35
The 2nd Summer Conference at Brockwood	38
The Student's Perspective	41
Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools	42
Learning through Direct Observation	44

## **International Network**

A Visit to K-Inspired Projects	48
The Saanen Gathering 1997	53
Can Work Go Together with Inward Flowering?	55
Krishnamurti on Identification	59
Addresses and Announcements	60
Epilogue	63

### **Intention of The Link**

We sense sometimes a little confusion about the intention of The Link. It is not its function to spread the teachings. Krishnamurti said, "You cannot spread the teachings. You must live it, then it will spread." The function of The Link is to keep people informed of what is going on in the Krishnamurti information centres, schools, foundations and related projects; to give individuals the opportunity to report about their investigations, their activities, their relationship to the world and to the teachings. Its main function is to be THE LINK.

*Cover Picture: Palm tree against sunset, spring, eastern end of Ojai Valley, California*

# The Newsletter

## Dear Friends,

IN 1997 I LOST MY OLDEST AND DEAREST FRIEND, whom I had known since childhood, and two old family friends. We also lost three friends from the Krishnamurti Foundations – Pupul Jayakar, G. Narayan and Mahesh Saxena – each of whom had long years of contact with K; and other friends of many years' association, including Elena Greene, Basil Gossage, Lena Frederick and Joe Links, beloved husband of Mary Lutyens, Krishnamurti's biographer. All of them were good people: I wonder if it is goodness which remains after life.

I remember walking in Nepal, alone on a path, when three men came around a corner carrying a dead body. They were carrying it to be burnt at a nearby river. At one point, the man in front couldn't contain his sorrow. He leaned against the earthen bank beside the path, covered his face with his hands and cried bitterly. It was simple and touching. (K also described similar scenes in India.)

Being so concerned with death at this time, I am dedicating the space of this letter to several relevant quotations from K. I know that no set of extracts can give a complete picture of what K said about a subject, but perhaps they will inspire someone to read further.

"Tomorrow we ought to talk about death. It is not a morbid subject. It is not something to be avoided. If you have lived the thing that we have been talking about, you will come to all this delicately, gently, quietly, not out of curiosity. You will come to it hesitantly, with great dignity, with inward respect. Like birth, it is a tremendous thing. Death also implies

creation – not invention. Scientists are inventing; their invention is born from knowledge. Creation is continuous. It has no beginning and no end. It is not born out of knowledge. And death may be the meaning of creation – not a matter of having a next life with better opportunities, a better house, better refrigerator. It may be a sense of tremendous creation, endlessly, without beginning and end."

*Meeting Life, p. 228, Copyright KFT*

K often used to say that to live one must die to oneself.

"To die is to love. The beauty of love is not in past remembrances or in the images of tomorrow. Love has no past and no future; what has, is memory, which is not love. Love with its passion is just beyond the range of society, which is you. Die, and it is there.

Meditation is a movement in and of the unknown. You are not there, only the movement. You are too petty or too great for this movement. It has nothing behind it or in front of it. It is that energy which thought-matter cannot touch. Thought is perversion for it is the product of yesterday; it is caught in the toils of centuries and so it is confused, unclear. Do what you will, the known cannot reach out for the unknown. Meditation is the dying to the known."

*Meeting Life, pp. 5-6, Copyright KFT*

K also used to speak about our life as the stream of selfishness. In Sidney Field's book *The Reluctant Messiah*, the Appendix records a discussion which K had with his old friend Sidney and others about Sidney's brother John,

who had recently died. This is one small part of that discussion.

“K: So, sir, then what happens? If there is no permanent John or K or N or Z, what happens? You remember, sir, I think I read it in the Tibetan tradition or some other tradition, that when a person dies, is dying, the priest or the monk comes in and sends all the family away, locks the door and says

to the dying man, ‘Look you’re dying – let go – let all of your antagonisms, all your worldliness, all your ambition, let go, because you are going to meet a light in which you will be absorbed, if you let go. If not, you’ll come back.’ Which is, come back to the stream. You will be the stream again.”

*Copyright KFT*

## J. Krishnamurti & Pupul Jayakar: A Dialogue on Death

*This is an extract (pp. 95-97) from the book Fire in the Mind, an excellent compilation by Pupul Jayakar of many of the conversations she had with Krishnamurti.*

**Pupul Jayakar:** Is what you say about being a light to yourself connected with the contacting of ‘that’ without the person? When you say that ‘it’ can be contacted without the person ...

**Krishnamurti:** Not ‘contacted’. It can be perceived, lived; it is there for you to reach out to and hold. For you to reach out and receive it, thought or consciousness as we know it has to come to an end, for *thought is really the enemy of that*. Thought is the enemy of compassion, obviously – right? And to have that flame, it requires, it demands, not a great sacrifice of this and that but an awakened intelligence, an intelligence which sees the movement of thought. And the very awareness of the movement of thought ends it. That’s what real meditation is.

**PJ:** What significance then has death?

**K:** None. It has no meaning because you are living with death all the time. It has no significance because you are ending everything all the time. I don’t think we see the importance and beauty of ending. We see the continuity with its waves of beauty and all its superficiality.

**PJ:** I drive away tomorrow. Do I cut myself completely from you?

**K:** No, not from me; you cut yourself from ‘that’. You cut yourself from that eternity with all its compassion, and so on.

It’s simple. I meet the Buddha. I listen to him very carefully. He makes a tremendous impression on me and, then, he goes away. But the truth of what he has said is abiding. He has told me, very carefully, ‘Be a light to yourself so that the truth is in you’. It is that seed that is flowering in me. He goes away, but the seed is flowering. And I might say, ‘I miss him, I’m sorry I’ve lost a friend or somebody whom I really loved’, but what is important is that the seed of truth will flower. That seed which has been planted by my awareness, alertness, and intense listening, that seed will flower. Otherwise what is the point of somebody having it? If X has this extraordinary illumination – I’m using that word as a sense of immense compassion, love, and all that – if only that person has it, and he dies – what then?

**PJ:** May I ask a question, please? What, then, is the reason for his being?

**K:** What is the reason for his being, for his existence? To manifest ‘that’; to be the embodiment of ‘that’. But why should there be any reason? A flower has no reason. Beauty has no reason, it exists. And if I try to find a reason, the

flower is not. I am not trying to mystify all this, or to put it into a fog. As I said, it is there for *anyone* to reach and to hold.

So death, Pupul, like birth, is an extraordinary event. But birth and death are so far apart. The travail of continuity is the misery of man. And if continuity can end each day, you will be living with death. That is total renewal, that is the renewal of something which has no continuity. And that is why it is important to understand the meaning of ending – totally – experience or that which has been experienced and remains in the mind as memory. (Pause)

Could we go, if we have time, into the question of whether a human being can live, apart from physical knowledge, without time and knowledge?

**PJ:** Isn't what we said so far, that is living with ending, the very nature of this question? That is, when the mind is capable of living with

ending, it is capable of living with the ending of time and knowledge.

**K:** Yes. But all this may be just a lot of words.

**PJ:** No, sir. You see, one of the things is that you can do nothing about it, but you *can* listen and observe – nothing else. Sir, I am getting to something which is rather different.

**K:** Please go ahead.

**PJ:** Do you think that there can be a learning in the mind to face the ultimate death?

**K:** What is there to learn, Pupul? There is nothing to learn.

**PJ:** The mind must receive without agitation.

**K:** Yes.

**PJ:** The mind must receive a statement like that without agitation. Then, perhaps, when death ultimately comes there will be no agitation.

**K:** Yes, that is right. And that is why death has an extraordinary beauty, an extraordinary vitality.

*Brockwood Park, 6 June 1981*

*Copyright KFT*

## A Tribute to Pupul Jayakar

*Pupul Jayakar died on 28 March 1997 in a private hospital in Mumbai (Bombay). She was a close associate of Krishnamurti from 1948 and a Trustee of the Krishnamurti Foundation India. She was known world-wide for her achievements in representing Indian culture and reviving Indian village crafts. She wrote the remarkable book Krishnamurti: A Biography, which tells about her own life as well as K's, and compiled the many conversations she had with K in the book Fire in the Mind (see our pp. 4–5). She was also instrumental in getting the Government of India to produce the award-winning documentary film about K called The Seer Who Walks Alone.*

*This article was first published in the Rishi Valley Newsletter. Dr Shailesh Shirali, Rishi Valley School principal, met Pupul in 1983. He begins the article with a passage which Pupul quoted in her biography of Krishnamurti.*

Awake, arise, having approached the great teacher, learn. The road is difficult, the crossing is as the sharp edge of a razor.

– *Katha Upanishad iii*

Pupulji first met Krishnaji in Bombay in January 1948, at a time when the country was in

the euphoria of independence and the trauma of partition. It was a time when her "own entry into politics seemed imminent", for she was already involved at that time in relief work for partition victims as well as social work. She recalls how she felt from the very beginning of her association with K that she was in contact with

something "vast and totally new"; though he seemed at one level harsh and uncompromising, yet there seemed to be a quality of healing which flowed from him. After that first meeting K had said to her, "we shall meet again."

There followed several such meetings, and Pupulji began to find for herself the curiously mirror-like nature of K, the "absence of the personality, of the evaluator". In his presence all masks seemed to be swept away, and she saw reflected the totality of her own life. She was bewildered by his awareness "not only of what was being said – the expressions, gestures, attitudes – but also of what was happening around him – the bird singing in the tree outside his window, a flower falling from a vase." The vastness of his awareness baffled and touched her deeply. (This theme is one that has recurred time and again in Pupulji's dialogues with us, as I shall mention below.)

In the weeks that followed, during which Pupulji and her sister Nandini Mehta slowly got to know K better, she began to sense the mystery that enveloped him, a "mystery that we could neither touch nor fathom." In late March of that year she had a long dialogue with K. He asked her, "Why are you ambitious? What is it you want to become? Why do you want to waste your brain?" She replied, bewildered, "Can I help what I am? I am busy doing, achieving. We cannot be like you." He asked, "Have you ever been alone, without books? For the mind to be creative, there must be stillness ... a deep stillness that can come only when you have faced your loneliness. You are a woman, and yet you have a great deal of the man in you. You have neglected the woman. Look into yourself. ... Why have you no richness? Look, this is what you are. Look at it calmly and simply, with compassion. As you look at the conscious mind, slowly the unconscious will throw up its intimations – in dreams, even in the waking state of thought."

By and by she told him of the changes that were taking place in her social life, how of all things she could "no longer play poker", for bluffing had become impossible. K's response was one of great and uninhibited laughter, and he said, "Watch yourself. You have a drive few women possess. In this country men and women peter out so easily, so early in life. It is the climate, the way of living, the stagnation. See that the drive does not drop away. In freeing yourself from aggression, don't become innocuous and soft. To be free from aggression is not to become weak or humble. Watch your mind, let not a thought escape, however ugly, however brutal; watch relentlessly."

As she rose to leave at the end of the meeting, she asked him, overwhelmed, "Who are you?", and K said, "It does not matter who I am. ... *What you think and do and whether you can transform yourself is alone important.*"

And so began Pupulji's long association with K – the years of dialogue and inquiry, which she so evocatively describes in her biography of K. It is a humbling experience when one senses the intensity and seriousness with which she followed up the words I have quoted above; we in Rishi Valley saw it at first hand. In 1929, K said these famous words:

"I maintain that truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. ... Truth cannot be brought down, rather the individual must make the effort to ascend to it. You cannot bring the mountain-top to the valley. ... As I have said, I have only one purpose: to make man free, to urge him towards freedom; to help him to break away from all limitations, for that alone will give him eternal happiness, will give him the unconditioned realization of the self. ... My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free."



*Morning mist on the Rübli, summer, Rougemont, Switzerland*

These words can be taken as setting the tone and theme of his life's work. So also for Pupulji: I see her life as a long journey in which she worked relentlessly at the challenge which K had set. And in the bargain, she lived a fuller and more active life than practically anyone I have known – filled to the end with vitality, sensitivity, inquiry and humour. We in Rishi Valley have been fortunate to have known her.

Pupulji would often ask, "Can you unplug the senses? Can there be a seeing and listening at the same time? ... Can the brain be completely transparent, retaining no hurts, no images?", and she would reply, "It can – if the senses are operating totally, with no blockages whatever ... " This is a challenge that interests me deeply, for I sense in it the beginnings of a new inquiry and a new metaphor for life.

*Dr Shailesh Shirali, 1997*

## The Conversations of J. Krishnamurti with David Bohm The Right Place of Thought

*This article is a re-print of a presentation given by Colin Foster during the 1996 annual conference at the University of Guadalajara in Mexico organized by the Foundation for New Paradigms in Science. Colin is one of the directors at Brockwood Park School. He did research in physics before joining Brockwood in 1979.*

THE STARTING POINT OF THE CONTACT BETWEEN Professor David Bohm and Jiddu Krishnamurti was the question of the Observer and the Observed. David had come to it through his work on the meaning of quantum theory and relativity. In pursuing this question, he came across a book of Krishnamurti in which he has insights into this whole question of the Observer and the Observed and, in fact, stating that 'the Observer is the Observed in a psychological sense'.

So David came to this through his understanding of the nature of movement and matter while Krishnamurti came to it from observing the nature of the human psyche. I find it fascinating that two men from such different backgrounds were able to come together on a common ground. The basis of this common ground being the "wholeness" or "totality" that both spoke about.

Initially David was concerned in their dialogues with developing his scientific work and ideas but, fairly quickly, they began to extend their conversations to cover the general disorder and confusion that pervades the consciousness of mankind. And it is here, in this area, that David felt that Krishnamurti had made a major discovery, namely that all this disorder and difficulty and crisis that we have in the world, the sorrow and the misery, even the ecological and environmental problems, and including the obvious political problems that we can see in the news today, all these have their root in the fact that we are ignorant of the nature of our own processes of thought, by which we mean the activity of the brain that comes from memory. Let me rephrase

and expand on that because it is one of the key points I would like to make today: David Bohm and Krishnamurti are saying that the state of the world today, both internationally, socially, locally and individually is a result of human behaviour and this behaviour is confused and disordered in a way that is common to all human beings, so the wrong turn in our consciousness, and therefore in our behaviour, is being made by humanity as a whole and this wrong movement in the brain and in thinking (which reveals itself in confused behaviour and in conflict) is itself caused by the fact that we don't see how our own consciousness is operating in our behaviour. We don't see

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how thought is operating in our perception, in our responses, in our reactions, how thought is distorting them so our behaviour is based on distorting illusions rather than on an observation of actuality. And if our behaviour is based on this distorted perception then of course it is bound to create endless conflict and disorder, and confusion and dilemmas. What they are suggesting to clear this up is to pay close attention to this activity of thought. Normally we are not aware of this process of thought, we are aware of its contents obviously, the words and images, but we are not aware of what is going on at the source of

this content. I would like to give my own analogy of the way I see this. I like to compare this with looking at the waves on the sea: we see the waves but we don't see the depth of the water and we don't see what causes the waves. Now, if you have special equipment, you can see below the waves into the depth of the sea, but normally you just see the waves on the surface of the sea. I think in a similar way with thought we see the waves which I would compare with the contents of thought, the words and pictures, but we don't see the depth beneath and behind the thoughts. What Krishnamurti and David were saying is that one can see into the depth of thought and the process that creates thought, one can see that process and that "seeing" they have called 'awareness, attention, insight'. These are various words which try to convey a different quality of the mind other than the usual activity of the brain which is thought, knowledge and memory which by itself is not subtle enough to see the activities of the brain.

Let's be clear about this by giving a specific example of the political crises that are occurring at present. What they discussed in their dialogues is that these crises cannot be solved by a politician using thought, memory and knowledge with power, ambition, nationalism obviously playing their part. Not only that, but if thought etc. is the only thing the politicians use then they will actually make the crisis worse because these things operating in the politicians and other people are the source of the problem in the first place. So, I hope you are understanding the basic dilemma here, that in our ignorance of the process of thought and how thought is the basic cause of so much suffering in so many ways, in our ignorance of that, we are using thought as an instrument to solve the problems and this can never work. And I think, indeed, we can actually observe that politicians, in attempting to solve a problem, often not only make matters worse but create more problems in the process, and they themselves seem often at a loss and confused as to know how to go forward with some of the

issues they face. My point in giving this example is that in observing the normal world and our lives we can see the tendency of thought to self-contradictory, incoherent action and, in the politicians' case, short-term thinking that leads to limited "fixes" but not solutions to problems.

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So, these subtle processes of thought need insight to see how they operate to cause illusory behaviour. I would like to spend a few minutes on a couple of these processes which they have identified. The two processes I would like to look at are division and psychological time. Let's look at what Krishnamurti and David say about division to begin with. They are saying that thought is essentially divisive. Now, of course, you need to think and you need thought. Thought has its place, knowledge has its place, memory has its place. Nobody is saying that one shouldn't have these activities but what they are saying is that thought is fundamentally divisive. And, of course, we have seen in the material world, through the successes of science and technology, that thought/knowledge works in the material world to some extent and, up to a point, the material world can be dealt with by dividing it into relatively autonomous separate parts. The technological achievement of getting man to the moon was achieved by breaking the operation up into steps and solving each step. In the material world thought and knowledge have clearly had their success. In the psychological world, the psychological realm, however, it is different, and the unavoidably divisive nature of thought is one of the causes of conflict, confusion, illusion and leads to wrong actions. Now this is very different

from what most other people have said or implied about the brain and thought. They have suggested that thought can be non-divisive, that thought can solve problems in a psychological area. Krishnamurti and David emphatically deny this.

Thought deceives itself by presenting its products as if they correspond to reality in an objective way beyond thought, thus having a different meaning than if presented as just ideas.

Thought works by dividing, and the psychological world is full of divisions: we have mentioned one already, the Observer and the Observed. Out of this comes I and not I. There is an endless list of divisions which are the basis of our thinking and therefore the basis of our behaviour; some important divisions are thought and feeling, mind and matter. Krishnamurti and David often used to look at the division between the thinker and the thought, thought and time, thought and God, life and death, man and nature, past and future, me and the world. Now, obviously, each of these divisions requires separate discussion and clarification which, in the videos and dialogues, David and Krishnamurti go into. And what they come to, particularly Krishnamurti with David clarifying and trying to bring out from unconscious to conscious, is that although some of these divisions may have some functional use in a limited domain (and some don't) they are not actualities, and these divisions are created by thought and have no other reality and actuality to them other than that they are ideas, thoughts and images, being created in the brain.

Thought deceives itself by presenting its products as if they correspond to reality in an objective way beyond thought, thus having a different meaning than if presented as just ideas.

This has a profound effect on our behaviour and responses, e.g. the idea of a nation, the idea of time, the idea of god. These divisions may not have caused problems for us earlier on in man's evolution, and may have had a purpose in physical survival, but they now come into our thinking in a conditioned and unconscious way that leads us to perceive these divisions as actualities beyond thought and not produced by thought so that, for example, much of our behaviour is geared to the psychological defence and survival of a self-image as if it were something beyond thought. The very structure of language seems to support the reality of these divisions, for example the division between me as an individual and the rest of humanity. What is being suggested, of course, is that there are superficial differences between human beings, but when we get to see the deep processes of our brain, the deeper functioning and activity of the brain in, for example, seeking security and in the fears that come from that, the confusion, the suffering, the moments of pleasure of course, the loneliness, the tendency to identify and form attachments to people and things, that these common factors of consciousness which David and Krishnamurti bring out in their dialogues are common to all mankind. What is being said is that although, again, these divisions may have their place in everyday functioning, to see them as an actuality is an illusion; an illusion which is the cause of so much difficulty in the world today, an illusion that leads to man fighting man, to so much of the horror we see in the news these days.

But also what is being said is the fact that there is no division separating the individual from the rest of mankind; that is the actuality, that there is no division. And this is not just a nice, comforting idea that we should all be one, that all humanity should believe we are one. It is not some kind of utopian ideal which we aspire to or perhaps will achieve some time in the future. It is a fact to be observed in the moment, to be seen in the 'now' by observation, without the



*Deep winter snow and fog near Haus Sonne, Black Forest, Germany*

division between the Observer and the Observed. So, to sum up for the moment, what we have just been saying is that thought, through its essentially divisive nature, is a source of disorder and conflict and that thought can never be a source of psychological order, because thought and knowledge are always divisive and limited and this order can never come from division or limitation.

I would like to talk briefly about psychological time, because the division between it and thought is a fundamental illusion. It is suggested that psychological time is a product of thought; that it is not divided from thought. Now in science, when time is looked for in a physical process, it can't be found. There is, of course, a sequence of physical events, e.g. the seed grows into a tree and not the other way round, but sequences are not in time, they are not moving in anything, they are their own movement. So time is an idea, a very useful one, but clocks and watches do not measure and display an invisible movement called time but only their own movement, synchronised so that, for example, we can be synchronised to be at a meeting on time and catch the train on time. It's a good idea for functioning in the world but we have forgotten it is just an idea and have transferred it to the psychological world.

Time is a good idea for functioning in the world but we have forgotten it is just an idea and have transferred it to the psychological world.

So psychological time is an illusion upon which is based the idea of the evolution of consciousness. You see the problem here is that the mind is always in the now, you can think of the past but that thinking is being done now and thinking of the future is also always now, so the mind is always working in the now. So any change can only happen now. There is no evolution of consciousness or becoming because these ideas

are based on the illusion of psychological time being something more than a thought.

Upon this illusion, the very notion of a continuous self is based and, therefore, the notion of a continuous self is in question as to its actuality. Psychological time also seems essential to the process of thought that leads to desire and wanting, which must be in psychological time in the sense that wanting and desire must have their fulfilment in the future and, in fulfilment, there is pleasure, but also frustration from nonfulfilment. I was pondering recently how it would be if we wanted nothing, if we didn't want wisdom, enlightenment, a new car, knowledge, if we didn't want to be different from what we are. In other words, if there is no movement from what is, including the wanting to stop wanting. Would this lead to a kind of vegetable-like state where we would have no reason to get out of bed in the morning, or would it be a release from a burden, from an energy drain, that would free the brain to move in a healthier, saner way and bring another energy to its action? For example, in my area, education, would it be that it would lead to the action of learning for its own sake, and joy, rather than acquiring knowledge for some purpose of becoming, which is based on the illusion of psychological time?

So having looked at a couple of the processes that cause disorder, I would like to move on now to briefly say some things about what David and Krishnamurti say is needed to bring about order and sanity, a good mind, for there to be a different movement for mankind that is not the destructive path that we are going down now, so that in a sense it would be the basis of a new culture and a new generation. David and Krishnamurti did think this was possible and that is why the schools were founded, so that we can explore the possibility of educating young people to be "good" human beings.

Now what does this mean? Part of the answer to this is simple, but it is subtle. Because what

Krishnamurti and David say is that if we could see what is the fact, the “what is”, not what we want to be, not what we’d like to be but to see “what is” actually without judging it, without deciding whether it is good or bad, whether it is right or wrong, without like or dislike, without bringing in all these reactions of thought, to see the physical world and (with more difficulty) the psychological world without the burden of judgement of the past, of ideas, of beliefs, of theories, this would be an observation without the observer. And that, in itself, would be a movement in order which would have a right action, an ordered movement which is not the movement of psychological thought, memory and knowledge which, as we have said, is a movement in disorder. This observation, which doesn’t have the division between the observer and the observed, is something which they discussed many times and tried to clarify. They made it clear that this observation, insight, awareness does not come at the end of a process, it does not come in time. This observation is not the end result of gaining knowledge, and then coming to this observation at a certain point in a development of knowledge (time is not a factor in its movement). It is something that occurs in the timeless now and that is why in their dialogues Krishnamurti and David were, I think, at the same time as clarifying the causes of disorder, trying to have order in their own enquiry and dialogue, otherwise it would just be another intellectual discussion of very little value. The observing of disorder is a movement in order. Seeing and understanding “what is” is a movement away from what is, seeing and understanding the depth of the movement of thought is itself a different movement from the

movement of thought. This is what I think has made this part of their dialogues so difficult for many people: it is a nondivisive movement that does not belong to a particular person, including Krishnamurti and David. Insight and observation are not something that an individual does because, as we have said, insight and observation are without the division of you and me. If there is this observation, the division of you and me will not be there and so the idea of your observation, my observation, my insight, your insight no longer has any meaning.

... observation is not the end result  
of gaining knowledge ...

In their dialogues I sense their difficulty in using words to describe this nondivisive movement because our language contains, inherent in it, the subject/object division. In their dialogues one can see them occasionally stumbling with this difficulty and the limitation of words and acknowledging that their description of an undivided movement is not the thing itself. In one dialogue, Krishnamurti asks ‘Have we been observing in this dialogue, have we actually been doing something different from normal conversation and normal intellectual investigation ...?’ Has there been (these are my words now) a movement of a different order than the disorder that is created by thought? The dialogues between David and Krishnamurti often end with Krishnamurti making a statement or observation which thought on its own cannot make sense of, cannot grasp and put into its divisive categories.

*Colin Foster, December 1996*

## ■ Infinite Potential: The Life and Times of David Bohm

### A Reply to David Peat

*In our last issue we published a section on David Bohm which included two reviews of David Peat's book Infinite Potential – The Life and Times of David Bohm. David Moody's critique raised some objections from David Peat and, after personal correspondence between the two, David Moody asked us to print this clarification.*

DAVID PEAT HAS BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION SOME points in my review of his book, *Infinite Potential*, that were either unclear or in error, and I am grateful for this opportunity to set the record straight.

Peat informs me that it is not the case that his book has been "largely ignored" by reviewers and readers. Although my source for this statement is usually reliable, Peat himself is certainly in a position to know better, and I accept his correction.

Peat also took exception to my statement that Krishnamurti is the only individual in his book who is referred to "in terms of his or her nationality." There are in fact many people in his book about whom he gives information regarding nationality, along with other appropriate background material, such as age, marital status, and so on. My point was that only in the case of Krishnamurti is the nationality subsequently employed as a surrogate for referring to the individual by name. Peat feels that even on this interpretation the statement was not entirely accurate; we agree, however, that here the text speaks best for itself.

It may be worthwhile to take this occasion to reflect further on whether Krishnamurti was in fact an "Indian teacher," and on the implications of that phrase. After all, he was obviously Indian by birth, and a kind of teacher by vocation. Probably the central issue was obscured in my review by bringing in a comparison with Peat's treatment of other individuals. The central issue is simply whether it is right or reasonable to refer to Krishnamurti in this manner, irrespective of how we may refer to anyone else.

Let me emphasize that I had no intention of attributing any racist attitudes or sentiments to Peat in connection with this issue. Rather, I object to the irony of highlighting the national origin of a man who rejected all nationality. In addition, there is the matter of the set of implications associated with the phrase "Indian teacher": the two words together mean more than the sum of their parts. In popular parlance, at least in the United States, "Indian teacher" is virtually synonymous with "guru." It refers to a class of individuals with a long tradition, one characterized by occult knowledge, sectarian doctrines, and spiritual authority. Since Krishnamurti devoted his life to the repudiation of these qualities, to associate him with this tradition represents a distortion of his work.

Finally, I would like to thank David Peat for his thoughtful response to my critique of his book. What I appreciate most is his willingness to take our differences as a reason for dialogue, rather than the reverse – very much in the spirit that Bohm himself, I believe, would have greatly admired.

*David Moody, 1997*

## Meeting K

### Krishnamurti as I Knew Him

*The following article was first published in the May 1997 issue of The Theosophist, and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Theosophical Society. Written by Prof P. Krishna, rector of the Rajghat Education Centre in Varanasi, it was based on a talk he gave in November 1996 at Adyar Lodge, Madras, India.*

I REALIZE, I HAVE TAKEN ON A DIFFICULT TASK. Normally we describe a person by lineage, family, accomplishments, education, and so on. But all these are irrelevant in describing Krishnamurti, who was a jivanmukta, a liberated soul.

A dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna in the Gita is apposite. Arjuna asks Krishna about the liberated man. How does such a person live, how does he act, how does he eat and sleep? Krishna's reply in sum is: Outwardly, he is the same as everybody else, he eats and sleeps and lives like them. And yet he is totally different, because he does not do any of these things for the same reason as the ordinary man. There is a dimensional difference in his consciousness. And that is important, not his accomplishments, education, erudition, or all the lectures he may give and so on. Even without those things, his importance would be no less. How does one communicate that? One senses it in his presence, but it is not possible to put it into words. What one can put into words are only the outer actions, the words that one heard, the thoughts that one had, and so on, one cannot convey the state of mind or consciousness from which those words emanated. It is something that one senses between the lines.

In fact, I did not know Krishnamurti well. I never worked closely with him or lived or travelled with him. I was only a rather active, ardent student of his teachings, who took every opportunity to have dialogues with him, to listen to his talks, and put questions as were in my mind.

My first encounter with his teachings was in 1955 when I was seventeen. During a summer vacation, while going through one of my father's cupboards, I came across a small booklet, *Talks to Students*. I had not heard about Krishnamurti nor did I know anything about him. Because it was titled 'Talks to Students' I started reading it. It addressed all those questions which arose in my adolescent mind, and which my teachers never discussed. He was talking with students about whether respect is the same thing as fear: 'Why do you get up from your seat when the teacher enters the class?' He was asking girls, 'Why do you put the *tikā* (red dot) on your forehead?', not in a derogatory sense nor finding fault, but earnestly, 'Do you know why you do all these things? What is the significance? Have you ever questioned yourself? Why are you afraid of examinations?' We do not talk about these things as part of education. So it fascinated me greatly and I read more of his books. Then I went to my father asking about Krishnamurti, and he told me the story of how he grew up in the Theosophical Society, how he was 'discovered', and so on.

I was quite taken with *The First and Last Freedom*. It created a certain image or picture in my mind of someone like a Buddhist saint, calm and imperturbable. So when I first met him I was taken aback and a bit shocked, because he was not at all like the image I had in my mind.

In the winter of 1958, he was staying in Delhi with Mr Shiva Rao, a family friend. I was study-

ing for my Master's degree in Physics at Delhi University, and was keenly interested in meeting the author of the books I had read. So Mr Shiva Rao invited me to lunch with him. Before lunch, when I was introduced to Krishnaji, he asked me, 'What are you doing?', and I said, 'I am learning physics at the University'. And he said,

... do anything, but do it with passion, because you like to do it, not because you want to make a living.

'Why are you studying Physics?' I found it a bit odd, because we all study at the university, and I said, 'Well, in order to get a job, make a living, and settle down in life.' And he called to Shiva Rao, 'Look at this young boy, nineteen years of age, and he is already worried about settling down and getting married and making a living!' I felt small, I felt he was finding fault with me. So I said, 'What is wrong with doing that, Sir?', and he said, 'Do anything you like: beg, borrow or steal, but don't worry about the future, about how you are going to make a living.' I was appalled! I asked, 'Steal?', and he answered, 'No, Sir, not steal. I mean do anything, but do it with passion, because you like to do it, not because you want to make a living'. He added, 'This is the trouble with our education. The whole purpose of it is just to make a living and get a job. We have turned education into such a small, horrid affair!' That was like him, not trying to please or impress people. He was spontaneous, with no pretence, and full of passion.

Lunch with him used to go on long with conversation in between. Once I asked him, 'Sir, I have read that when you were in the Theosophical Society, people sat in a closed room and had sessions in order to talk with dead spirits, and there were occult phenomena. Was that all hallucination?' He replied, 'No, those things exist, but

it is another form of power. It has nothing to do with goodness. Therefore, I am not interested in it.' Then he added, 'Of course, the mind has infinite powers of hallucination.' Later on I wondered, what did he mean? And I felt he was trying to convey that occult phenomena, telepathy, ESP, and other powers, do exist, but if one is not interested in power – money, or muscle, or position or status – why want to cultivate occult power?

He said his memories of early childhood were completely wiped out. Whatever experiences he had since 1922 had obliterated those memories from his brain. He said he did not remember Adyar, although he had lived there. He said, 'I cannot recall my brother Nitya's face. I can barely recall Amma's face' (meaning Mrs Besant). Then he added, mysteriously for me, 'Of course, I can recall it, Sir, if I want to.' I am still not able to make head or tail of that.

I used to put many questions to him at the end of his talks. Once after one of those question sessions I went to greet him (and he would hold my hands very affectionately) and he said: 'Too many questions, my boy, too many questions.' The love, the affection which one felt in his presence is difficult to describe.

From 1959 onwards, after doing my Master's degree, I was at Benares Hindu University as a Research Scholar in Physics, and he came to Benares and gave talks in Rajghat. I would go on my bicycle about eight to ten miles from the city to attend his lectures whenever I could. In one of his lectures he said: 'A disciplined mind is a lazy mind.' To me a disciplined person was active, regular, attending to all his work. So when I asked him what he meant, 'If it is not lazy, why does it need to discipline itself? If you have to get up at six o'clock in the morning and if you are not lazy, you get up! Discipline is not required for that. But if you are lazy, you need a lot of discipline. So the man who is trying to discipline himself is lazy.'

In those few words, he explained the duality of the opposites. When a person tries to cultivate courage it means he is afraid. Trying to be non-violent, implies one is violent. Whenever we try to pursue anything, its opposite is present. Instead of pursuing the opposite, one should concern oneself with ending the laziness. Laziness has a cause, maybe the person does not eat or sleep or exercise properly, or his body is aching and he does not have adequate energy. Instead of correcting that, if one seeks to cultivate discipline, it amounts to perpetuating laziness, and a tussle goes on between the two.

When Krishnaji talked to young students, he would talk to them at their simple level. With David Bohm, he would talk at the level of David Bohm. In every case, he was equally full of enthusiasm, irrespective of whom he was talking to. He did not assess people in terms of position or achievements as we do. I always found him alert, sensitive, watchful, aware. There was no trace of laziness in him. There was an overflowing affection for everybody, but that did not mean that he would compromise on truth or avoid it if bitter.

He did not want his lectures to be reduced to a form of knowledge.

In the 1960s, after a talk when I went and stood near him, a gentleman from the audience came, full of praise, saying, 'Lovely talk, Sir, lovely talk; what a marvellous talk!' After he had gone Krishnaji looked at me and said, 'It is an insult.' To me that meant: Here he was at pains to expound the truth about life, and instead of exploring that, this person only says what a beautiful talk. He would take as an insult what we would normally take as a great compliment.

I wanted to photograph him and I carried a camera the whole day, but in those days he

would not allow any photographs to be taken. Nor would he allow anyone to take notes of his lectures. He did not want his lectures to be reduced to a form of knowledge. He wanted them to be an experience of seeing together whatever he was talking about. So he would repeatedly stress that he was not giving a lecture: 'This is not something that I am trying to pass on to you – some information that you don't have. We are looking at life, together like two friends.' Although he was talking to the whole gathering he would emphasize that it was essentially a one-to-one talk between two friends, and that we should use his statements like a mirror held before ourselves, to look at our own lives, and verify if what he was saying was true or not, not blindly accept it.

Naturally, he set no value on agreement or disagreement as such, because that has no meaning. He said, 'I may agree with you or both of us may be agreeing on something or we may disagree, and still not know what is truth. Seeing truth alone has value – not agreeing or disagreeing, or carrying opinions for or against.'

During a dialogue in Brockwood in 1977, with Professor David Bohm, Asit Chandmal, and others, I remember starting it with a question which we had already discussed among ourselves: 'Sir, you say that one is not able to see "what is" clearly, in an undistorted way, because of the conditioning and the colouration of the mind produced by the self. But because we are not able to see the truth, "what is", because of this colouration, this self continues. When will this vicious circle end?' He went into it, and we talked about it. Every time one asked him a question he would look at it afresh, without bringing definitions or conclusions from previous enquiries. There was a quality of inquiry, never holding on to the past, because it is important to see the truth through cognition rather than as memory. So he went into my question and said: 'I am not sure if the self must be completely absent for insight to occur, or if insight can be so great that

it wipes away the self. This is not a process in which you first get rid of the colouration and then you have the insight, or that insight comes first and then the ego is washed away. It is simultaneous.'

What is the quality of a consciousness or mind which goes through experience and instead of collecting a complex, prejudice, or new conditioning, sees the truth and frees itself?

When I asked him, 'Sir, were you once part of the field and did you step out of it or were you always out of the field?', he said: 'I question it, too.' He also questioned why in the case of this little boy Krishnamurti, brought up in the Theosophical Society, who could not pass any examinations being rather dull by normal standards, his mind did not get conditioned like that of everybody else. Why is it that he kept that openness to perceive something new? When you pick up a young boy and bring him up to be the Dalai Lama, he becomes the Dalai Lama. So it would have been normal for him to have become a great Theosophist, the head of the Theosophical Society. How did he come upon something totally new? Why do all the other children get conditioned, and find it difficult to come out of that conditioning, whereas this child learned from every experience?

In 1925, when he was thirty, while on a ship bound for India he heard of his brother's death and was overcome by great sorrow. But when he landed in India he was completely peaceful, and from aboard the ship he wrote to Mrs Besant, 'What I experienced was not sorrow. I am now through with it. I have cheated death.' It seems that he was saying that the death of his brother came in the form of personal sorrow; and that it could have trapped him into a state of self-pity,

and so on, as it would have with most of us; instead he saw through the personal sorrow, understood the significance of death and attachment, and freed himself of it. What is the quality of a consciousness or mind which goes through experience and instead of collecting a complex, prejudice, or new conditioning, sees the truth and frees itself?

A man once told Krishnaji that he was very lucky to have been brought up in the Theosophical Society with teachers like CWL and Mrs Besant, and he said: 'Yes, I was very fortunate to have teachers like them.' Then the man said, 'We are not so lucky, we are going through ordinary institutions. How can we come upon truth?' and he responded: 'Sir, I was lucky because whatever they told me went into one ear and out of the other.' He was not being disparaging. He only meant that they did not condition his mind into what they were teaching. His whole teaching is that one must come upon the truth by oneself, and not accept it from a teacher, because then it becomes just words and is not 'seeing'.

The last time he visited India, in 1985, I was having lunch with him in Rajghat and as often happened he asked questions that nobody ever asked: 'Sir, has the brahmin disappeared from this country?' I said: 'It depends on what you mean by brahmin, Sir. One fourth of the population here think of themselves as brahmins.' And he said, 'No, not by birth – that is so childish. You know what a brahmin is?' I said, 'What do you mean by a brahmin?' He replied with a story.

When Alexander invaded India and fought with Porus, he won. When he entered the state, he saw excellent administration, the whole of the land was tidy, clean and well maintained, people were living happily. So he asked Porus, 'Who was responsible for your administration?' Porus replied: 'There was a brahmin Prime Minister, who was responsible for all this administration.' Alexander said, 'I would like to talk to him'. Porus answered, 'He resigned because we lost the war, and has gone to his village.' Alexander



*The Matterhorn at dawn, spring, Zermatt, Switzerland*

responded, 'Call him, nevertheless.' So they sent a messenger who came back the next day with the response, 'Tell the king I am no longer in his service. A brahmin does not go to anyone, therefore I am sorry that I cannot come.' As this was narrated, Alexander said, 'All right, I will go to his village.'

Alexander was taken to the village, where the brahmin was seated under a tree teaching two children. When Alexander was announced, the man looked up and said, 'Is there something I can do for you?' Alexander asked, 'Are you the man who was Prime Minister?' and the answer came, 'Yes'; Alexander then said, 'You ran an excellent administration,' and the man responded, 'Thank you'. So Alexander asked him 'Will you come with me? I will take you to Greece, give you a palace, make you the head of all our armies. Come with me!' The man considered

this, looked up at Alexander, and replied, 'Sorry, I want to teach these children.' Krishnaji then said, 'That's a brahmin – somebody you can't buy, somebody who doesn't work for a reward. He did what was right for a brahmin to do: he ran as good an administration as he could. When he lost the war he took responsibility for the defeat and resigned, which is the right thing for brahmins to do. When he was in the village, he did what he wanted to do, not in subservience to the king or looking for some more rewarding job to do. That is the quality of the brahmin.' After telling this story, Krishnaji asked me, 'Now tell me, has the brahmin disappeared from this country?' I said, 'I don't know, Sir, there may still be someone in the Himalayas, but I have not come across one.'

On another occasion he asked me, 'Is there anything unique in this country any more?' and I said, 'Maybe the family way of living, the affection with which people regard each other. But I can't

say it is unique, because it exists elsewhere too, although perhaps not in the same measure.' He nodded and kept quiet. He would often leave one with a question like that. Next day when I met him he said, 'Shall I tell you what is unique about this country? I have travelled all over the world, and I have watched. This is the only country left where the poor man still smiles.' That is the kind of thing he noticed – not palaces, achievements, bridges, railway trains. He was watching the people, how they were living, and he saw that the poor man in India still smiles. The poor man in America or Europe feels wretched, deprived, but in India his spirit has not been destroyed in spite of the poverty. Then he added, 'Although we are losing that quality in our country, it is still there.'

These questions and comments become a source of tremendous learning if one dwells on them, takes them to heart. He never wanted us to accept what he said but to reflect on it, ponder for ourselves, and see if it was true or not. One has to do the work for oneself. In all his life he never allowed anybody to use him as a crutch: he wanted no disciples, no help, no sense of renunciation. He gave his talks just out of affection.

In all his life he never allowed anybody to use him as a crutch.

So how does one describe such a consciousness? Whatever one describes is so verbal, so inadequate, compared to what one wants to convey. It is not because he gave wonderful lectures; one can come across better speakers. One can even come across people who can explain his teaching more systematically. The ability to speak or lecture is trivial, although useful. It is what the consciousness is – the freedom, love and compassion in the consciousness that is precious. We are all fortunate to have had such a person amidst us. It does not matter

whether we look upon him as a Theosophist or not, whether he left the Theosophical Society or not. Those are all trivial. A man like that does not belong to anybody, to the Krishnamurti

The ability to speak or lecture is trivial, although useful. It is what the consciousness is – the freedom, love and compassion in the consciousness that is precious.

Foundation or the Theosophical Society. He does not belong to India, but to the world. Of course, he was born in a particular family, brought up and educated in some school. That school could take credit for having produced such a person, but was he this way because of the school or in spite of it?

Achyut Patwardhan told me once that the World Teacher was born in answer to the tears of the world. Therefore he belongs to humanity. Mrs Besant had told Achyutji, 'When you find that you disagree with something that Krishnamurti said, never discard it, or ignore it, keep it in your mind. His is a superior consciousness, and when that says something we must reflect on it, not reject it'. And this is what Achyutji said: 'I never rejected anything that Krishnaji said, however wrong it may have seemed to me. I dwelt on it.'

What a great privilege for the Theosophical Society and for the Krishnamurti Foundation, and for all of us who had the opportunity to interact with Krishnaji, to look after such a person, to publish his books, to make his teachings available to the world, or just to be with him, to know him. In this twentieth century it is very rare to find a man like that. Once when he was asked by someone, 'Where do you come from?' he replied, 'I come from the Valley of the Rishis';

and that is where he belongs, in the Valley of the Rishis.

The following words are from N. Sri Ram:

Man is in his inner being a tiny star which rises and sets many times on earthly life, but eventually, its brightness raised to a superior

power, free from attachment to a restricted personality, it takes its place in the heavens. Such stars constitute the glory of our spiritual sky. The seed of our perfection is the Monad, the parent-principle of our nature, the lone Star whose glimmering ray illumines the otherwise dark chamber of our consciousness.

*P. Krishna, 1997*

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## Meeting K in Saanen

### A Letter from Geta Angheluto to Friedrich Grohe

*Some years ago, there was a request in Friedrich's Newsletter for readers to contribute personal accounts of meeting Krishnamurti. One response received was from Geta Angheluto and we are including extracts from the first part of her letter here. It has been translated from the original French.*

FIRST OF ALL, YOU SHOULD KNOW WHO YOU ARE dealing with: my name is Geta Angheluto, I am 64 years old, retired, and I live in Bucarest, Rumania.

I heartily agree with the idea of gathering together the memoirs of those who knew K, because it is important for people to know that the unique phenomenon that was Krishnamurti was not an isolated phenomenon, someone who tried to patch up here and there the discomfures of humanity, but an incalculable force which worked profoundly on what we call the field of consciousness and put into operation the deepest, most total and most sharp-edged of all revolutions which man has ever undergone ... even if, unfortunately, it has not become a mass phenomenon.

I told myself that I must make a small contribution, in order to make a clean breast of things with Life and with myself; I am writing in French because, after Rumanian, that is the

language I know best. In Rumanian I would have had more freedom of expression, but I hope I shall get by.

My childhood and youth were immersed in and 'haunted' (in the poetic sense of the term) by the presence of K. I grew up surrounded by the books my father read, amid the stormy discussions he set up with friends about philosophical problems (my father arguing for K's teachings) and among photos of K, which could be seen on book covers ... I mean that I was accustomed to his image, visual as well as intellectual, for at that time, I am quite sure, my father was struggling with himself at the intellectual level. Later, towards the second half of his life, things changed.

As I grew up, a markedly passionate nature distanced me from K. I felt an irresistible urge to join the display, to throw myself into the turbulent waters of life, common life; I went into the theatre (still prompted by passion) thinking

perhaps that by living a number of stage lives I would be appeased. I engaged in action blindly, driven by a restless instinct that was seeking some kind of satisfaction. A crazy youth from every point of view ... Married (at 19) and remarried, again divorced, thinking wildly every time that the man I had met 'this time' was my companion for life ... or even (perhaps?) for eternity(?). I got it wrong, obviously, every time.

One day around the age of 35, when I was emotionally afflicted (I was being deceived), I felt the impulse to rediscover K as a crutch. I had never lost sight of him, but now I felt the need to be free, madly free! My parents understood and left me full rein, watching from afar to make sure that I did not lose myself for good. My mother was German and came from a very old family, the 'von Moriensees', whose lineage is lost at the start of the second crusade, and in consequence my education was entirely 'teutonic'. You will understand the grief of a mother at the antics of a child who had been educated so well and with such difficulty ...

I was still little when my parents, who were very poor (my father a painter and art teacher at a Bucarest high school and my mother jobless, though a sculptress, having both completed studies at the Fine Arts College of Bucarest; it was around 1935-36) had the opportunity, following an exhibition which brought them in the kind of money they were not at all used to, to travel to Ommen ... It was my father's dearest dream. My mother, who was an ardent Catholic, did not engage in K's teachings, but she did not prevent her husband in any way from following the promptings of his heart. After the first talk my father asked her what she thought of K. Looking about her, she replied: 'He's the only human being around.'

In 1973, after receiving an invitation to go to Italy from some friends in Turin, I applied for a tourist visa for Switzerland; it was exactly the

time of the Saanen gathering. Fortunately, my parents had a friend, a Swiss lady, who went to Saanen every year to listen to Krishnamurti, and she offered to put me up for the five days my visa allowed me to be in Switzerland. It is to her that I owe my first meeting with K, because otherwise, due to lack of funds, I could not have met the cost of board and lodging. In Saanen there was also another friend of my parents and K, a Rumanian lady, Sorona Topa, who became in a way my spiritual mother after the death of my mother. It is to her and to K that I owe the normality I live in today – otherwise, I would have become an actress made ill by her own persona. My real mother died when I was nineteen years old, a critical moment for the wild thing that yours truly then was. Yes, a wild thing, sick with fear. I was afraid of the people in the street, of my teachers, my parents, who were perfect (I never heard them argue with one another, nor even get into heated discussions), I was afraid of my playmates and my classmates. Fear was the god of my life, a continual terror which I attempted to hide, while trying on the other hand to satisfy my desire to 'live dangerously' with the help of the theatre.

And there I was at Saanen!, but not before having received in Bucarest, before my departure, the visit of two Security officers, who invited me very prettily to report back to them the discussions my friends abroad would have in my presence ... (mainly Rumanians, of course); when these two State Security 'workers' came into my small flat, there was suddenly scarcely any room to fit a pin ... Here was an opportunity to be afraid ... well, let me assure you, I didn't miss it! I don't know where I found the courage to refuse and to let them know in a 'harsh tongue' (I think that's what you say) that I was too incautious and undiplomatic to undertake such a task. I wonder by what miracle of chance they let me go and did not take my passport away.

It seems that for the 'wild thing' it was the right moment to meet Krishnamurti. I have no

other explanation ... For, perhaps you will have heard, the Communist regime had the amiable habit of persecuting and pursuing people who studied philosophy (except materialist philosophy) and spirituality, just as much in Rumania as in Russia ... and in the other Communist countries – in fact, all of us who lived in the countries taken over by Communism were drugged with fear. In previous years my parents and Sorona had been subjected to terrible pressures. In order not to go to prison and to save K's living teaching, they had had to burn and destroy a good number of the books which they had acquired with tremendous difficulty. I was little then and didn't know anything about it.

He had the profile and distinction of a young man and, with it, the power of a mighty storm.

Here in Saanen, then, I was completely unaware of what awaited me! It was my first trip abroad, and I was alone, pervaded by an intense fear, which went to the very roots of my hair. There was one thing on my side: I knew French and I had a working knowledge of English ... but I have to confess that this did not decrease my fear.

The day after my arrival was the first talk of Krishnaji's that I attended ... he spoke about ... fear! I was devoured by curiosity – I wanted to see from as close up as possible the man who had haunted my whole life until then and whose teaching my father had followed step by step, at Ommen and at Saanen. I would have liked to have sat right next to the stage, two feet from him, among the people pushing and shoving to get two square inches at his feet, feel him breathing and see how a sage sweats; I would have liked to have penetrated his skin, to see and feel what life is like inside the body of a God ... but, instead of that, I had to sit down like a good girl

next to Sorona on the first row of seats and await K's arrival. I was all eyes and ears. I focused my gaze uninterruptedly on the back entrance to the tent, the one behind the stage ... that was all I saw – I didn't want to miss a split second of the 'show'. A few minutes before 10.30 a total silence fell upon the tent. The people had stopped chattering and we were waiting. Then, a few seconds before 10.30, through the opening in the curtain which concealed the entrance, I caught sight of a portion of K's forehead and one arm; he was looking at his watch ... and, at 10.30 precisely, he entered; small, slim, brown, and silent as a cat. He could have been a plant, rather than a man of flesh and blood. He sat down, put his sweater over the back of the only chair that was there, took off his watch and placed it on the floor a little in front of him and to the left, rested his hands on the seat of the chair, his head inclined slightly over one shoulder, and kept silent for a long time, looking all around him at the crowd. I had the feeling that he saw us all at once and each one of us separately ... At the moment when he looked directly at the audience, I felt a pressure pushing me towards the back of the tent, as if it were a great cushion filled with air ... I was almost incapable of breathing ... He spoke about fear, beginning with a 'So' ... It was more than I could ever have imagined. He had the profile and distinction of a young man and, with it, the power of a mighty storm. He was quick and full of humour and, when he laughed, he laughed like a child, with his whole being. He was not a 'sage' ... The image that I had of him had almost nothing in common with the living being I found in front of me. Everything evaporated in a second. I did not feel the time going by. At a certain moment there occurred in his discourse (it isn't the right word, but I can't find another for now) a difficult step, over which he paused, closing his eyes in total peace. Someone from the audience wanted to help him, but Krishnaji signalled him swiftly not to do so and to let him find it for himself. A few seconds later he carried on, giving the answer to his own question and laughing heartily: 'You see, I've got it!' He

leapt up like a boy, picked up his watch and his sweater in one go, and exited nimbly, as if his feet never touched the floor.

... on that day, a part of my life had ended and, at the same moment, another had begun.

Suddenly, as if the great cushion which had been pressing in on me for an hour and a half had been removed, I felt the breath go out of me, this time for good, and I began to sob, with floods of tears, letting rip from my throat, lungs and from my whole being a kind of howling, which I couldn't keep back. I was ashamed of making such an unseemly spectacle of myself, so to speak, but it was stronger than I was. I had the sensation that my body and soul were being cleaned out, in pieces that flew off into the air, leaving me there completely nude, with this howling that went on and on. The civilised people who were leaving the tent asked Sorona what was happening to me, if by chance I wasn't ill, or if some sudden misfortune had not descended on me. She gave some answer which I've forgotten, an indescribable expression on her face ... no, she was not afraid (fear was my province); she was smiling enigmatically; she did not speak to me and did not touch me, she was not sorry for me (as one can be sorry in such circumstances), it was as if she were witnessing a surgical operation which had to be carried out without delay. Little by little I calmed down. At last my breath came back to me, the tent was empty, it was very hot ... Sorona continued to keep silent beside me ...

I spent the days which followed as if nothing had happened. In fact, on that day, a part of my life had ended and, at the same moment, another had begun. I would realise this some

weeks later, when I came back to Switzerland. In Italy – my Swiss visa had expired – all the splendours of Florence, Verona, Padua and 'flaming Venice' seemed vain and superficial, although I was seeing them for the first time ... I was wearied by so much external beauty. All I wanted to do was get back to Krishnaji, change myself into a little carpet at his feet, and never leave him for the rest of my life, not asking him questions, not bothering him with my presence – just be there, always, where he was ... But the Mother of us all, Life, great Life, did not allow it, for She knew very well that I was lazy and that I needed to learn and work, in order to implement the gift of the great privilege that had been offered me. I was not at that time aware of all the things I am telling you now ... I carried on with my life, with all its vicissitudes, my acting career, my marriage (which wasn't working) and the great, hard lesson of 'socialism'. But, day by day, I was cutting free of all that, until the day when I felt that success had no value at all, that it was the deadliest way of strengthening the ego, and that marriage was the shabbiest and surest way of putting oneself to sleep. I felt all that falling from my skin like dead scales, and I left the theatre with joy in my heart. I felt that I could help young people by getting involved in their education. So I got a job as a teacher at the Thieche Institute in Bucarest, where I began to teach drama (the art of acting) in a somewhat strange manner; I used the job as a pretext for getting the students interested in knowing themselves ... I taught them what I had learned from K and Sorona Topa, who had been one of the greatest actresses in our country and who had quit the theatre when she met K (but that's another story). She had taught me the art of drama in the same way. Since the death of Sorona and my father I have been alone with K's teachings, which, without my knowing it, have their own operation; from time to time I discover all kinds of new things inside me, but this 'me' is less and less important ...

*Geta Angheluto*

# The First Step

*Contributions and editing of 'The First Step' have been kept anonymous to encourage free written dialogue. This may be seen by some as a license to provoke by way of extreme or exaggerated opinion. That is never the intention, but it needs repeating that the views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of The Link's editors and publisher.*

## Editor's Note

Our feature article in this issue raises for questioning the possibility of a kind of subtle but non-deliberate corruption of the heuristic philosophy of Krishnamurti by those of us who have the responsibility for making it available to the public. Many of us are, unfortunately, all too familiar with the more recognizable and annoying corruptions of "interpretation" and "discipleship" by those who seek to "carry on" the role of "world teacher". Throughout his life, Krishnamurti, uncompromisingly, warned against this.

But "The Holistic Approach of Krishnamurti's Teaching and Its Corruption" points to a much less obvious corruption – that of using the teachings as a means to reach some desired end, in this case the publishing of the Krishnamurti material in a form (theme books) that supposedly makes it more current, more accessible to an ever-changing public (the publishers' dilemma).

But what about the responsibility of those who read these books as part of their study of the teachings of Krishnamurti? Not being personally involved in publication of the Krishnamurti material, the significance of this article, for me, is that it indirectly illuminates the need to study the teachings as a whole, to search out, in a kind of negative approach, that which remains not understood rather than take the positive approach of feeling reinforced about that which I have previously understood.

By studying the large body of a teaching which has spanned almost a century, one can see the changing means of expression that Krishnamurti evolved in his undaunted attempt to communicate what he was directly perceiving. Through my ongoing study of these changing expressions, I have found value in these teachings only when intended meaning transcends the words used rather than becoming entangled with them. One begins to see the need for inner pliability in order to receive the meaning as a whole rather than getting attached to any particular topic. While I see that different personalities are attracted to different parts of the teachings, I would suggest that, for all of us, regardless of our individual preferences, patiently taking the time to understand the whole is more important than identifying with the parts which suit us. When we choose to study only a limited part of the teachings, at best we can come only to a happy misunderstanding of them.

So, the question is raised: Is dividing the teachings into separate topics a continuation of the process of breaking things up in order to please traditional minds that insist on understanding by fragmentation?

## The Holistic Approach of Krishnamurti's Teaching, and Its Corruption: A Personal Point of View

KRISHNAMURTI'S TALKS HAVE CERTAIN UNIQUE features. They are never single lectures, but always a series of talks. Each talk has several interrelated subjects and each talk in a series is also linked to each other by Krishnamurti when he gives resumés of earlier talks for those who were not present. His talks were not based on a study of philosophies or religious scriptures and were not prepared but emerged extempore. The movement of a talk depended upon his relationship of communion with the audience. He reminded the audience throughout his talks to participate in the journey and not listen to him as a lecturer or a priest. He asked them to make him into a mirror in which they could see themselves, thereby starting the process of self-awareness.

"Why are you listening? If you are listening to get some new ideas or a new way of looking at life, then you will be disappointed, because I am not going to give you new ideas. ... All I can do is to point out your own difficulty and we can then talk it over with each other, but it is for you yourself to see. If you have one purpose, one intention, and I another, we shall never meet. Then there is no relationship between you and me. ... I have something to say – you can take it or leave it. And if you take it, it is not that you are taking it from me. I merely act as a mirror in which you see yourself. ... You don't have to accept what you see, but if you look at the mirror dispassionately, then that very awareness of 'what is' does a most extraordinary thing if there is no resistance."

*Ojai, 23 July 1949*

To Krishnamurti, this relationship was extremely important, because through that he created a kind of meditative awareness in every

listener. What he said was not something to be accumulated as knowledge to be acted upon later in life, but was to be lived there and then. So a talk and the series as a whole were to him an act of meditation.

His audiences were unfamiliar with his approach and he, knowing that many were at a talk for the first time, would lay the foundation in the first talk by pointing to the facts of life – the state of complete chaos and disorder in the outer world – and then showing that this state of affairs has been created by man and not by some outside agency, and that the outer is only the expression of man's inner disorder, of the crisis in his own consciousness. "And that man is you, each one of us. You are not outside this world, you are a part of it", he said. Then he moved on to show that if there has to be a change in the world, every person has to look within for the cause of the outer disorder. Having brought the audience to realize the importance of self-awareness, he then, step by step, showed the subtlety of every movement of thought which is the self – till in his last talk he brought the audience to a state of passive, choiceless awareness, in which time ends, which is freedom. This is what I mean by his holistic approach: begin in the outer, move to the inner and show how they are interrelated; begin from the particular and move to the general and show their interrelationship; begin from the conscious mind and then move to the unconscious and show their oneness.

"What I want to do is to make that fleeting vision of eternal life permanent. But to make it permanent, you must have the right foundation, and it is my purpose during these talks to help you to lay that foundation for yourself, to make that vision permanent, not a fleeting thing. ... I am only concerned

with that foundation ... You come here for this only ... and if you are interested in this, then we can talk together. But if you think that I am only presenting one aspect of truth, let me say that truth cannot be realized by dividing it into aspects and by presenting it according to the needs of the moment."

*Star Bulletin, August 1931*

Thus, during a series of talks, though he dealt with every possible problem of life, which he called fragments, he emphasized that no problem can be solved in isolation, as all problems are interrelated and have a common root, the self, the 'I'. Anyone who has attended any one series, could see whether this was true. Those who did not attend can see the same in verbatim reports of his talks, now in the Collected Works:

"... this whole problem must be approached as a movement of life, and in understanding the total problem, we shall then be able to resolve our own particular problems. ... it is not possible ever to understand the totality of living, which includes all the fragments, from a fragmentary or peripheral outlook. You have to see the whole picture, ... and in seeing the whole picture, you will then be able to answer the particular, the personal issues, problems, and so on."

*Saanen, 11 July 1965*

Now you will certainly ask, why has the need to say all this arisen? It is because, as days are passing, the publications policy of producers of K's books and audio and video tapes is rapidly changing. In the last four years, rarely has any book been published which reveals K's unique relationship with his audience and his holistic approach. Either the talks are heavily edited (for example, reducing a 15-page transcript to 2 or 3 printed pages), or they are re-published again and again under different titles, or they are

excerpted and compiled to produce a theme book. Lately this approach is also adopted for some video tapes, and a multimedia disc made in a similar way will soon appear.

Any presentation which fragments, picks up bits and pieces from the beautifully created flow of meditative awareness of a total series, is a corruption of K's holistic approach. And when the very custodians to whom K entrusted the responsibility of preserving the integrity and pristine quality of the teachings do this fragmentation, one is reminded of a fable which runs:

"Once upon a time – which is the way all true stories begin – there was a world in which all the people were sick and sad and yet all of them were seeking to be released from their suffering and to find happiness. Then one day in the midst of this suffering world, there arose a whisper – which grew into a shout – that a Great Teacher was coming, who because of his love for the world and because of his wisdom would bring to those who were suffering, comfort in their sorrow, and would show all the people in the world how they might find lasting happiness. Then one day he came. He asked them to set aside their gods, their religions, their books, their knowledge, their families and friends. And if they would do that, he said, he would provide them with food for the journey, he would satisfy their burning thirst with the living water which he possessed, and would bring them into the kingdom of happiness. Then those people, who for so many years had been preparing for the teacher, began to feel uncomfortable and troubled. They said: the world does not need the bread of the Teacher, but the particular kind of pastry for which we hold the recipe. It does not need the water to quench the thirst, but the wine contained in our chalices. The words of the Teacher will not help the world because they are too simple and the world cannot under-

stand what they mean. We have complicated theories to solve the complicated problems of the world and the world can understand them. So, in a few years, he went away, and then the same people hailed him as divinely inspired ... and built a new religion upon the Teaching he had not given. And the world continued to suffer and cry for help."

*International Star Bulletin, November 1929*

If someone ever dared to ask the authorities concerned the reasons for their publications policy, the stock answers would be: the publishers won't accept the verbatim talks, they want this, they want that; it is the publisher who more or less decides how the truth should be presented. Another excuse would be: the reader prefers to have these catch-phrases and excerpted versions on topics of their immediate concerns rather than spend time on the whole series of talks. And yet another reason would be: if the books, audio and videos don't get sold, how will the teachings spread and how will the Foundations survive? True.

"You know, this idea that as people do not understand, therefore you must give them something they understand, is really a clever way of exploitation. ... It is the attitude of the man who has many possessions. That is, he wants to feed the world, he wants to guide the other man, whereas I desire to awaken the other man so that he will act for himself."

*Auckland, 10 March 1934*

It is also sometimes said that the theme approach is to present the teachings in an attractive way and it is the responsibility of the reader to go to the source book or tape. But where are the sources available? In the Archives of the Foundations? How many readers in the past 15 years have ever wanted to find out? Who wants to cook when pre-cooked and pre-digested food is provided? So the tragedy continues. During Buddha's time, there were no means to record what he spoke, but in Krishnamurti's time everything was available and done, yet the teachings reach humanity in a corrupted form.

Oh, Krishnamurti! didn't you say "the future is now"? It is here.

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## Living with the Teachings – A Personal Story

I ATTENDED KRISHNAJI'S TALKS MORE THAN 30 YEARS ago when I was still a student. I did not make much out of what he was saying but his very 'presence' made me feel that he was saying something very profound and of enormous significance. I was brought up in a traditional way and I had had this sort of a pull for something non-worldly ever since my childhood. So listening to Krishnaji must have triggered my interest and I started reading his books. It was only after a time I started making some headway into the meaning of what he was saying. Some of his

phrases like 'holy indifference', 'alert passivity' and 'sensitivity with detachment' made a deep impact on me. I used to brood over them. The nature of my profession involved extensive travelling in the countryside and during such times I found more time to read and reflect on his teachings.

Krishnaji used an idiom which had nothing to do with any known religious tradition. I had not followed any particular tradition nor had I read or studied any scriptures nor was I practising any

rituals. So in a way this was an advantage, that consciously I had apparently nothing to give up. Yet at a deeper level there was this vast storage of images, ideals, expectations about God-realisation and about leading a religious life. These obviously had come out of a strong cultural background. Krishnaji's teachings started operating at quite another level, that is, by circumventing all my notions about religious life; he did not make me feel confronted with my ideas and conditioning at a deeper level. His teachings were now making me set aside all that and pay attention to happenings in my daily life. The teachings made me conscious about my motives in day-to-day living, my fears and insecurities and my pursuit of pleasure. The place and role of comparison which was the root cause of most of my unhappiness stood exposed. I was slowly understanding the significance of what he was saying, in an 'intellectual manner', seeing its logic; the connection between thought and action and so on. It was so intense, powerful, irrefutable that I could not have argued against it in any way. It (the teachings) gave absolutely no chance for any escape in an intellectual sense.

I used to think in terms of right or wrong in an absolute sense till I discovered this assessment was actually always in a relative sense.

Krishnaji talked of 'conditioning'. The truth of it, in whatever small measure it appeared in day-to-day life, was a revelation. I used to think in terms of right or wrong in an absolute sense till I discovered this assessment was actually always in a relative sense, that right or wrong was in a certain context and varied from person to person, depending upon the angle through which it was observed. That which was right or wrong for me was not necessarily so for another, as this could be argued equally forcefully through his

way of looking. This right or wrong view through sometimes very painful interactions, in day-to-day living, brought me to think more in terms of an 'appropriate' response to a situation. I hesitate to call anything Right or Wrong in an absolute sense now and realise that it has to be 'qualified' in a certain framework of suppositions. This slowed down the tendency to argue with others and I learnt to accept varying points of view, or perceptions, by 'agreeing to disagree'. The compulsion to justify, to defend myself slowed down and it did not matter so much what people thought of or about me.

Krishnaji discusses the role of thought and its limitations. The very idea of self-realisation seemed absurd and contradictory since the idea of an individual itself, when put to close scrutiny and questioning, led of course intellectually, logically to an understanding that there is no entity as an individual. What we call individual consciousness is part of the totality of consciousness which is common and shared by humanity. In the early years I used to be hoping, wanting to have visions, trances, was interested in ESP, predictions, psychic phenomena and had a compelling desire to 'know' everything. All this wore itself out quite unexpectedly. I used to think of spiritual progress in terms of acquiring or experiencing special powers. Fortunately or unfortunately I did not have any such spiritual experiences. I am not psychic nor do I possess any special sensitivity for such matters. I question the issue of 'progress' on the so-called spiritual path. I thought my energy had been saved from working, thinking on those lines.

A great deal of time was spent in getting to know the words and their meaning. But I found out that this would not necessarily lead to understanding. Many times the reasoning and words would create an illusion of having grasped the root of the problem and give false signals of having resolved the problem. To my dismay it was found that logic, however powerful and rational it may appear to be, was incapable of

solving problems. At most it silenced the mind temporarily. But the feeling of restlessness, sorrow, despair was not something which could be ended just by logical thinking. It would go on to no end. It was the same when it came to

Many times the reasoning and words would create an illusion of having grasped the root of the problem and give false signals of having resolved the problem.

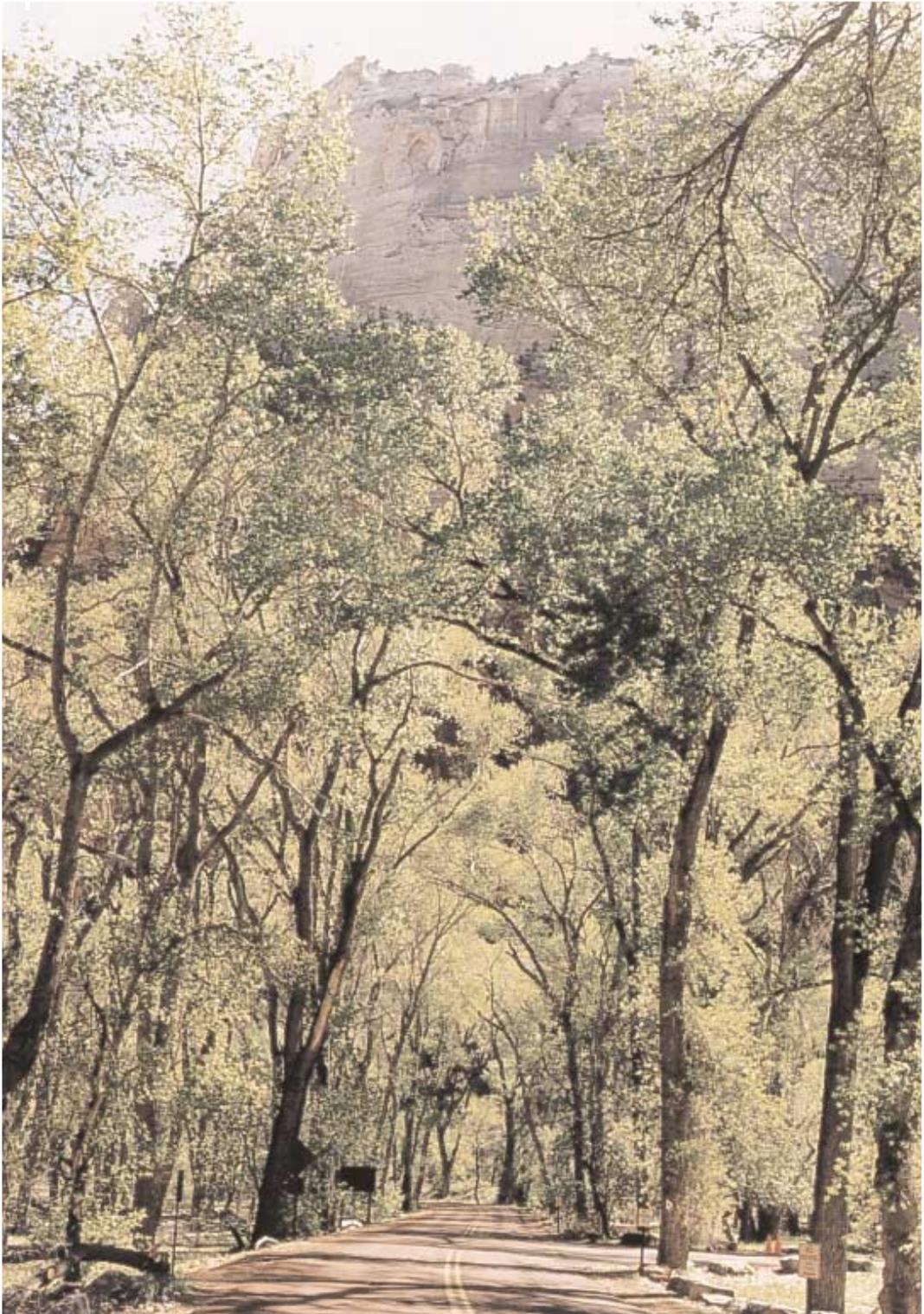
problems posed by others for themselves. It appeared to be resolvable by a process of analysis but in the end the restlessness would still persist with the one who posed the problem. Obviously, just by acquiring or learning the skill of logical questioning one did not much help oneself or the other.

That was the time when I came into direct contact with my feelings. I found that my thinking out of habitual patterns, that is conditioning, was dictating the kind of feeling it should evoke – there was this very strong one-way traffic – thought directing the feelings or ‘creating’ feelings – it was never the other way. There was also this conviction that all problems are solvable instead. I found that thinking, logically or otherwise, was incapable of solving my psychological problems. So after repeatedly trying very hard to progress through thinking, I found that I had no option but to be with that restlessness and just keep quiet. I found that staying with such situations, without making an effort to escape, meant ‘accepting’ situations as they are and not trying to mould them into situations I wished they could be. That brought a certain amount of quietness and gave a feeling of having come out of the situation clean and without scars. It also meant accepting the world and the people around as they are and not being critical of them. That slowed down the impulse ‘to do’ something about

anything and everything all the time. I discovered that I could really ‘do’ very few things affecting my life or that of others and my struggles reduced over a period of time. In other words I started accepting life, of course making efforts and attending to things when necessity arose, but my inner urge about certain expectations or results out of these actions became weak, diluted and I found that I had no strong will for anything in particular. Whereas on the level of conscious action there was no sparing of effort, the mental hold on results weakened. Life became simple and quiet. The other fall out of this aspect was that I started to rely more on my feelings rather than thinking things out. I was quite insensitive in so many ways, blind to all living contacts, but this sort of disinterestedness and not being preoccupied with oneself helped me to be spontaneous, gave space within to watch, observe and be ‘available’. Relationships became more meaningful. I found living and acting through ‘feeling’ quite another thing. If I felt not to act upon something I refrained from acting. And if I did act, I acted out of knowing my feelings and understanding why I was acting against my feelings and that sort of ‘open book’ gave me few chances to feel regretful no matter what the result or outcome of such actions were.

So after repeatedly trying very hard through thinking, I found that I had no option or chance but to be with that restlessness and just keep quiet.

I stopped expecting much from the world; the urge to fight it went out, I could see in myself and others the motives for doing something or acting in certain ways, more than I could before. I found no shame in admitting my mistakes and misjudgements about situations, and accepted and owned up to failures. I stopped interfering with others’ lives. I used to be highly critical of



*Zion Canyon, springtime, Utah*

people, their motives and actions. I was trying to fit these people into a world made out of my own ideas of right and wrong. I gave that up, as a fruitless occupation.

What I had felt strongly to be 'me' looks now rather irrelevant in many ways. With that, day-to-day-living became less complicated.

I came to see myself more factually, that is that I am an ordinary person with no special ability or talent, skills or special qualifications. Whatever little I acquired in the process of training myself to earn my livelihood, much of it may have already been lost as I had stopped using that knowledge for many reasons. I have no regrets for it. When necessary it had served its purpose. What I had felt strongly to be 'me' looks now rather irrelevant in many ways. With that, day-to-day living became less complicated. The habitual response of making everything into a problem weakened. I also see now that I know very little; just enough for survival. I seem to desire less and less and I am content with my lot and accept things without squirming too much.

All these years have been a learning experience, much of it, though, through very painful

situations in daily living. This might appear as a very simplistic record. It is not actually so – all things were happening at different times and in different sequences. Whenever changes came about at any point of time in my attitude or thinking I could not even pinpoint them chronologically as I was not conscious of them. Occasionally when I see in retrospect, in some context or the other, these things reveal themselves. Many things used to mean a lot to me in the past and they had a strong hold over me. I see the foundation of all that withering away, without my consciously knowing about it. I could not ascribe or pinpoint any reasons to any of these changes; much less claiming any credit for it. I have a hearty laugh at my stupidities and no claims to make for anything. In some ways I feel I can get the sense of the place of effort where it is relevant and where it is not. Also, I now understand that there are no certainties about anything, and that for anything or everything one does not need always to look for a 'purpose'.

One cannot read too much into this narration. I have no goals now or ideals and I live without undue concern for the morrow. There is no longer an idea of perfection – rather, only through my interactions and relationships do I continue to reveal myself, learn of my limitations. I have no idea of clarity. I also see that there is nothing by way of finality, no full stops.

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## Password to the K World – Responses since our last Issue

*It is always interesting to receive responses to our articles and, in fact, we urge you to respond. This will give us all the opportunity to open up this forum of anonymous communication. As we are unable to print every response, we will be happy to send on*

*responses to those who originated the topic. There were many more responses to 'Password to the K World' (published in our last issue) than we expected, most written anonymously, some verbal. Here are excerpts from three letters, and a fourth printed in full.*

1. The 'Password' doesn't quite describe any particular person – that's my impression, of course – but reflects attitudes that we as human beings can be trapped into: the attitude of private benefit from any form of life, from any movement, the attitude to deceive oneself and just play with words, the attitude of calling oneself something, the feeling of belonging to a group and feeling secure there, separated from the others one considers as outsiders. But the article also implies another trap: the assumption that there is a "real K world" to which I can belong or not. But this (also) is a mere image, a concept.

2. I eagerly read 'Password to the K World' ... The expression 'K world' shocks me a little, but I admit, with humility, that I don't know what other expression would be more adequate.

3. Such refreshing honesty really makes one wake up to one's own mind.

4. I read with interest the article 'Password to the K World' ... The article reveals a need for deep reflection and I am glad that it has appeared in the right place, namely The Link. This article raised a few thoughts in my mind which I would like to share.

It was rather naïve on my part to think or believe that there was a separate K world apart from the world we live in.

I, at one time, had feelings similar to that of the writer's about the K world. I used to react strongly to apparent contradictions seen in the K institutions during the early period of my association. I discovered soon that my righteous indignation was the result of my expectations and ideas about how people in the K world should behave and live in the day-to-day world. It was rather naïve on my part to think or believe

that there was a separate K world apart from the world we live in. The idea of a perfect environment or a perfect community is a myth after all, and Utopias exist but in imagination. Nevertheless, looking back I realise there is much to learn from such an exposure.

Unless we are able to see that essentially it is the same mind that operates irrespective of the type of organisation, we are likely to become disillusioned and bitter.

In the professional or business world the aims and objectives are fairly clear and everyone knows that these organisations exist solely for accumulating power and profit. Therefore, the means are, by and large, seldom questioned. In educational or spiritual organisations the material objectives are never high on the agenda (if they are, they are for providing a better environment or for facilitating the non-material goals) but that does not necessarily mean that the minds working in such organisations are very different. Unless we are able to see that essentially it is the same mind that operates irrespective of the type of organisation, we are likely to become disillusioned and bitter. After all, the inner motivation and urges ultimately control and dominate the outer. Sometimes the usage of a certain idiom can lull us into complacency or give us very illusory signals that we are 'different'. Only an honest probing within ourselves could question our at times 'holier than thou' attitude. The issues of power and hierarchy are extremely complex, and history has shown that these have not spared any organisation – commercial, educational, or so-called religious. It is important for us to know that understanding all this needs a 'learning' mind which is not necessarily a product of any special environment or organisation. There appears to be a belief that institutions are very special and

people seem to carry many ideas about these being 'ideal'. With increasing awareness of the need for developing improved teaching technology and a greater number of tools, not only are issues of learning being addressed by some alternative schools but also the deeper aspects of holistic education are also being probed and examined. In this context, the value of K's perspective on education is increasingly being recognised. In the light of this, what is different in K schools remains or serves as an important pointer.

... all meetings about the teachings serve the purpose of true enquiry only if such meetings and discussions are based on living the teachings in one's own life in whatever small measure.

I could share the feelings of the writer when he mentions about certain benefits accruing from mastering a certain idiom. It once again brought home to me the point that all meetings

about the teachings serve the purpose of true enquiry only if such meetings and discussions are based on living the teachings in one's own life in whatever small measure. Any other purpose such as academic, pedagogic or any form of self-fulfilling objective does not have much significance. There is an obvious danger in using K's idiom or quoting him as it creates an illusion about having gained clarity. The teachings lived are bound to find their own expression. Such an expression may or may not be elegant but it surely will have the capacity to touch our hearts. In such a sharing, probably, there is a chance to be in living contact with the teachings. This could happen only when there is humility. The observations of the writer in the last few lines of his article pertaining to self enquiry deserve to be looked at seriously. Criticism of the world without doubting one's own ways of thinking and acting has very little value. The forum of The Link will truly serve its purpose when we simultaneously see our own and others' blind spots and talk candidly about it so that we help each other. In that there will also be the acknowledgement of the fact that we are, after all, in many ways, ordinary human beings, no matter what capacities we have or where we are placed. I suppose that is the true starting point.

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## On Education

One of the most significant aspects of the teachings in the educational context is the emphasis on learning through direct observation, rather than through 'received wisdoms'. This is sometimes easier to imagine in the more general context of life itself than in the classroom. We were fascinated, therefore, when our friends in South India – at the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary in Kerala and at Centre for Learning, a small school in Bangalore – decided to jointly conduct a project which would not only introduce CFL's students to the wilderness around the Sanctuary in the Nilgiri Mountains, but also would give scope to such direct observation as part of the learning process. The project seems to have been most successful, and therefore their final report is being included as the main item. To maintain our international bias, we have also included a report on the most recent Educational Conference at Brockwood Park, together with the dialogue entitled 'The Student's Perspective', which occurred there. There are also book reviews covering topics as wide as mass-schooling in the USA, a Krishnamurti Educational Journal published in India, and a travelogue described as 'a journey to the frontiers of anarchy' which covers regions as diverse as Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and Cambodia.

### Dumbing Us Down – A Book Review

JOHN TAYLOR GATTO IS A TEACHER FROM NEW YORK with 26 years of experience in the class-room. He has won a number of awards for his teaching including New York City Teacher of the Year (1990) and New York State Teacher of the Year (1991) and has used this platform to write and lecture on what he sees as the crisis in education in America. *Dumbing Us Down* is a small (104 pages) collection of talks and articles synthesising his views.

What makes this booklet interesting, apart from the revolutionary nature of his comments on conventional schooling, are the contradictions which he perceives at the heart of a centralised system of mass education. While I have grave doubts about his proposed remedies, the fault lines he perceives seem to mesh in significant ways with those concerns which motivate people to bring K's views on education into practical effect. Gatto conceives "compulsory, Government-monopoly, mass-schooling" as a disaster. He juxtaposes the attributes of

this system with their apparent opposites: for example, 'central control' with 'self-knowledge', 'networks' with 'communities', and the most significant, 'schooling' with 'education'. This leads him to assert that what is needed is 'less school, not more'. He places the argument in both socioeconomic and historical contexts, pointing out that as a teacher he is primarily involved in a 'jobs project' whose main function is to train young people to fit uncomplainingly into the pyramid structure of modern western society.

... as a teacher he is primarily involved in a 'jobs project' ...

To a large extent the message of the work is contained within the first chapter where he lays out the hidden curriculum of schooling, the seven lessons which are, he says, what he *really*

teaches. It is worth setting these out, as the flavour of the book is contained in them:

1. 'confusion' (by cramming an endless series of unrelated, arbitrary, disconnected subjects together);
2. 'class position' (through enforcing a rigid age and ability hierarchy within the school);
3. 'indifference' (by demanding attention and enthusiasm only until the bell rings);
4. 'emotional dependency' (by making students hostages to 'good' behaviour);
5. 'intellectual dependency' (through having other people – 'experts' – know better than them what should be the meaning of their lives);
6. 'provisional self-esteem' (through constant evaluation and judgement by others);
7. 'one can't hide' (because of constant surveillance and lack of privacy).

The author comments that 'two institutions at present control our children's lives: television and schooling' – he might have added computer games, if only for the middle classes. He proceeds to make one of those somewhat simplistic analyses which end up demonstrating that the average child has only 9 hours of private time a week to learn for him/herself what life is really all about. He compares this situation unfavourably with his own youth of relative freedom and wide-ranging instruction from a variety of sources, either sought or serendipitously stumbled upon. And it is from the historical context that the author draws his solutions.

Krishnamurti Schools will have to demonstrate the humanism of the teachings ...

He points out that compulsory state schooling was invented, in America at least, in Massachusetts in 1850 and took thirty years to impose,

often at the point of a gun. Prior to that date, state literacy was at 98%, a level which it has never subsequently attained (91% in 1990). In brief, he believes that the remedy lies in reverting to the philosophies and attitudes of the past, and by having complete faith in a 'free market' of schooling such as existed in New England before that time. Readers can draw their own conclusions about the likely efficacy of such an approach; suffice it to say that I am aware of no circumstances where a wholesale reversion to the past has ever succeeded in curing the ills of today. Furthermore, the benefits of 'free markets', at least in the economic sphere, have always fallen disproportionately in favour of the already advantaged and more affluent sections of society.

One can also feel some resistance to the methodology employed. As with K himself, one is faced with a kind of argument by assertion. However, whereas K constantly invited you to check him out, in this case you have to do that uninvited. And I suspect that someone skilled in the fine arts of rhetoric would point out that a conclusion is not justified solely by the clarity with which the premises are expressed, or even the quality of the preceding analysis. But the booklet is devoted very largely to an analysis of current schooling in America and much less to the supposed solutions to the crisis thus disclosed, and in that respect it is very effective. Gatto writes with passion and intelligence in this arena, and if we have doubts about his solutions that does not destroy the validity of his observations. It is a good and thought-provoking read on a subject that should concern us all, and particularly those with an interest in so-called 'Krishnamurti education'. K schools, particularly Brockwood Park and Oak Grove, will increasingly have to draw their students from educational environments like that described by Gatto, to 'compete' within it for patronage, and to demonstrate to it the humanism that lies at the heart of the teachings. We ignore that environment or gloat over it at our peril.

*Children watching a solar TV, Tahoua Village, Niger.  
Photo: Mark Edwards*



This would be an opportune point to finish this review. However, the consequences of this type of ‘schooling’ – Gatto’s distinction between that and ‘education’ seems increasingly crucial within the current debate about standards of education, and this needs to be recognised before progress can be made – young people who are ‘cruel, materialistic, dependent, passive, violent, timid in the face of the unexpected, and addicted to distraction’, puts me in mind of another book that passed through my hands and mind recently.

*The Ends of the Earth* is a travel book with a difference. The author, Robert D. Kaplan, took a

journey to what he describes as ‘the frontiers of anarchy’, those parts of the planet where humanity is under the greatest pressure from itself. This includes sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, the former Soviet states of Central Asia, and Pakistan, India and Cambodia. It is a harrowing tale of human bigotry, greed, and insensitivity, relieved only in significant measure by the author’s visit to Rishi Valley, which constitutes pretty much a whole chapter. The teachings themselves receive only passing mention, the real focus being the reforestation work and the rural education extension program known as ‘school in a box’ being developed there.

If we are to understand the nature of the world around us, and surely we must do that if our understanding of ourselves is to have any context at all, then books like this are valuable. Some may find it something of a dry read, but that is, at least in part, because the author is trying, commendably, to present the evidence rather than to convince the reader of any particular theory. Theories do exist, alongside quite a lot of statistical information, but it is the overall weight of the content that leaves the greatest impression. To give but two examples:

a) SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA has a population growth of over 3% per year and an urban growth rate of 5.8% a year, both the highest in the world; at the same time it has declining GDP still largely sustained by slash and burn agriculture. The exponential growth of shanty towns breeds increasing human degradation and sadistic violence. In the 1994 United Nations Human Development Report, of 173 countries rated for literacy, schooling (that word again), population growth, per capita GDP, and life expectancy, 22 of the bottom 24 countries were in sub-Saharan Africa.

b) THE ARAL SEA, described as 'probably the world's greatest single environmental disaster', was once the fourth largest inland lake on the planet. In the last 30 years it has shrunk to half its former size and a third of its former volume, due to unrestricted use by the Soviet Union's cotton monoculture. In 1989 the sea was three

times more saline than just 28 years before, and virtually devoid of fish. The regional effects on living quality, including health, have been huge.

The book examines these regions from most if not all relevant angles to try to find common threads. This involves environmental, religious, political, social, and economic factors, as well as the idiosyncratic nature of the cultures themselves and their ancient enmities. The problems inherent in a dehumanising system of education as described by Gatto in America may seem of very little account in the face of statistics like those above, and the desperate conditions of life which they represent. Nonetheless, they are all cut from the same cloth, and the manner in which we deal with educational issues in the more affluent western nations will impact, directly or indirectly, on local problems in other parts of the globe as well as our own. We must understand this link if we are to survive and flourish. As Kaplan says in the final sentence of the penultimate paragraph of his book: 'we are the world and the world is us'. Now where have I heard that before?

*Dumbing us Down* by John Taylor Gatto,  
published by New Society Publishers,  
Philadelphia, 1992, ISBN 0 86571 231 X

*The Ends of the Earth* by Robert D. Kaplan,  
published by Vintage Books, Random House, New  
York, 1997, ISBN 0 679 75123 8

*Nick Short, October 1997*

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## **The Second Summer Conference at Brockwood Park (August 1997): "The Aims of Education"**

ONE ONLY HAS TO OPEN KRISHNAMURTI'S *Letters to the Schools* to get a sense of his educational proposals. In the very first letter, dated 1-9-78, he outlines what his schools should be. Their main purpose is to bring about what he calls 'the flowering' or cultivation of the whole human being, not the passing of examinations and

getting good degrees. Their principal aim is to reverse the process that puts career and money first and everything else second. While recognizing the importance of academic excellence, he observes that an education that limits itself to the acquisition of knowledge, to what to think instead of how to think clearly, narrows the mind

and subjects us to the dictates of the State, thus becoming a danger to freedom. But freedom is the only ground in which this flowering can take place. The flowering means complete harmony between body, heart and mind. This implies that the mind is capable of clear, objective and impersonal perception and thinking; that the heart is not sentimental, romantic or imaginary but suffused with the goodness of affection and love; that the body is properly nourished, exercised and looked after so that it develops deep sensitivity. He ends by saying: "This is our job as educators, our responsibility, and teaching is the greatest profession in life."

This year's Summer Conference at Brockwood Park, organized under the title The Aims of Education, was basically an exploration of these general proposals, which were distributed among eight workshops: Knowledge & Skills; Looking, Listening & Observation; Human Development; Spiritual Development; Morality & Ethics; Understanding Consciousness; Awakening Intelligence; and Setting Children Free.

These presentations and discussions could be seen as a fairly cogent and complete mapping of a holistic education. In every such institution there invariably arises the question as to the place and relative value of knowledge and skills, the importance of observation and intelligence, the understanding of developmental stages and their implications in relationship, the primacy of behaviour and right conduct, the understanding of consciousness, and the meaning and practice of freedom. Concern with the body was perhaps the one thing left out.

A place like Brockwood exists in response to the pervasive crisis in the world and centres its work on the cultivation of wholeness. As a school, too, it undertakes to teach the students the necessary knowledge and skills required to function in society. This is its responsibility by virtue of being a school within a given educational system. However, K clearly indicates that learning is not just a

matter of accumulating knowledge. Learning is primarily observation without the interference of the known. He finds that knowledge, as the blind and mechanical operation of the past, is intrinsically divisive, and the source of all our problems. So on the one hand knowledge is needed to function and on the other it is at the root of the current ethical crisis. Operating from knowledge is necessary in practical matters but

Operating from knowledge is necessary in practical matters but in relationship it is the same as responding from prejudice, which is the denial both of love and intelligence.

in relationship it is the same as responding from prejudice, which is the denial both of love and intelligence. K sees the ending of this destructive conditioning as the very ground of freedom and integrity and places the key qualities of sensitivity, understanding and affection beyond the operation of the known. This is not to deny the need for accurate information and critical thinking at all levels, but it does point out in rather a forceful manner their intrinsic limitations. The basic message, therefore, seems to be that knowledge, however useful otherwise, is perfectly irrelevant when it comes to meeting the whole of life. And, from this point of view, it is evident that one is not truly educated or civilized unless this wholeness becomes a reality.

Implied in this is a chain of meaning in which practical knowledge is secondary to self-knowledge and the latter is only a stepping stone to another dimension. The issue is further complicated by the fact that each of these three spheres is at once complementary and distinct. In the area of knowledge the object can be clearly distinguished from the observer. In self-knowledge the two are indistinguishable and in the other there is no sense of psychological move-

ment at all. K asserted that this inward emptiness of self is the fundamental source of meaning and human regeneration. If this is so, it would be a very important contribution to the whole pedagogical field as well as to the transformation of society. Education thus becomes not a mere public service but a sacred responsibility.

But what actually happens in a school like Brockwood? How are these things manifest in the daily life of the community? How does such an education prepare people to meet life? These kinds of questions were addressed in the question and answer meetings with Brockwood students, staff and alumni. When one describes Brockwood's intentions in such exalted terms, one tends to lose sight of it as an international boarding school and rather imagines a kind of secular monastery where people spend their days in work, study and meditation. And, in a way, the challenge is just that: the combination of these

But what actually happens in a school like Brockwood? How are these things manifest in the daily life of the community? How does such an education prepare people to meet life?

two. The students receive instruction in the regular academic subjects and sit for examinations in order to go on to further education and all that. They are not only taught mathematics and art, but an attempt is made to expose them to the whole spectrum of relationship with people, things and ideas. Special attention needs to be given to formative issues of adolescence such as sex and self-image. The movement of thought and consciousness is not only approached academically through the unfolding of its logical and metaphorical orders, or the exploration of successive historical world views, but also in the ways of our daily life. And direct observation and questioning

are encouraged as the key to learning and behaviour, all of this taking place in an overall atmosphere of freedom and care. This is yet another general way of saying what is fostered and done at Brockwood.

The students who participated in these meetings painted a very interesting picture (see p. 41 for 'The Student's Perspective'). They valued their stay and education at Brockwood because of the beautiful surroundings and the common interest of the people and felt that there should be other schools like it. They viewed the relationship between staff and students as a varied mixture, with the staff either being open or resorting to authority. They recognized, however, that such issues are always open to discussion. The school rules are invariably a source of much debate. They invite rebelliousness and much energy is spent talking when doing them would make more sense, and students get somewhat spoilt by the relaxation of discipline. When asked about academics, they acknowledged that it is not brilliant. The talk of excellence does not show in the results. The international make-up of the students and teaching staff is one factor. It takes some time for them to master the new language and adapt to the British system. Further, they find that exams are not valued and that the staff go to Brockwood first for K's teachings rather than to teach. This contributes to lowering academic standards. Students are expected to be independently responsible for their studies but they find it hard to combine studying and living.

In a series of taped interviews, several of the older students indicated that Brockwood provides a healthy environment. Even though they rebelled against school restrictions, they felt these prevented them from developing destructive habits and thus contributed to their freedom. One of the most critical of them told me that Brockwood had saved his life for just such reasons: if he had not gone there most likely he would have become a drug addict. Others added that it helped them re-examine their views and develop an unprejudiced

and respectful approach to others. Some spoke sensitively about the dynamics of the inner and expressed the need for a more creative and imaginative approach to life and the unfolding of the personality. This is the area where they saw their fundamental limitations situated. It would seem that this area, so central to the purpose of the school, needs greater attention.

In conversation with other students, staff and alumni, I was able to verify that the inquiry into all these issues is very much alive. Though at times tinged with a nostalgic air of idealism, there is a general consensus among them that Brockwood is one of the turning points in their lives. No matter what the difficulties and limitations of the place may be at any one time, returning there one recovers a strange ease in communicating with others about the nature and meaning of human existence. This shared humanity is perhaps the most precious and abiding quality of the community and its network of relationships. I was very touched by a couple of such encounters in which friendship became a joyful movement of self-discovery.

The Second Summer Conference was made longer than the first to give people greater leisure to digest the heavy menu and allow time for personal reflection and contacts – which may be, ironically, one of the reasons why it felt less intense. Otherwise the structure was very much the same as last year's. There was a final review session and the coordinators were asked to keep notes of their respective workshops with views to

producing a booklet that later would be sent to the participants. Apparently there had been a demand for such a publication. This might be useful to get a proper overview of the whole, since one could attend only three out of eight

This shared humanity is perhaps the most precious and abiding quality of the community (Brockwood) and its network of relationships.

workshops. Perhaps ways should be found for everyone to attend every major event, as otherwise it could result in fragmentation.

Once more the earth was generous in its beauty. The Conference coincided with the corn harvest and the full moon. Going for a walk at sundown was sheer bliss. The light of the sun low over the horizon bathed the land in warm colours and lent it an air of profound quietude. Swarms of insects danced at the crossroads and every leaf was touched by the fugitive magic. The sunset's roseate afterglow was all over the gathering woods and the moon rose above their deepening shades to imbue the stillness with its golden somnolence. It was good to breathe such powerful gentleness. It was good to be alone with oneself and share all these things with others, to think and to be silent.

*Javier Gómez Rodríguez  
September 1997*

## ■ The Student's Perspective

THIS SEMINAR WAS PRESENTED DURING THE SECOND Brockwood Summer Conference by the Brockwood students Firas Zenie, Nora Wiechert, Sadia Abdullah, Elisabeth Marcot and Valentin Gerlier, and 25 visiting participants. Visitors were invited to ask questions.

*Do you feel everything is available to you here? Are you happy? When you leave and go out into society, how do you find you relate? Do you have to compromise what you have learned here, or abandon it? Have you learned here how to survive in the world?*

**Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools**  
No. 1, March 1997

THE VERY FIRST ISSUE OF A NEW EDUCATIONAL journal began circulation in July 1997, and a very welcome addition it is to the usual rather stuffy and abstract periodicals which seem to abound in the world of education. This publication is like a breath of fresh air for the mind, a spring shower for the eye and brain, with its two-toned leaf green cover, delicate and unusual little inter-text drawings, clear and well-formatted type.

The sense of freshness comes through as well in the articles, mostly written by teachers, directors and administrators of the Krishnamurti schools in India, England and the USA, but including an overview of the Development of Ecological Perception by Stephan Harding of Schumacher College. In addition to pieces offering insights into the teaching of language, social studies, mathematics, biology and environmental issues, there are selections on the beginning of the new school in Pune, houseparenting, the place of leisure, and the shortcomings in traditional approaches to education. In 78 pages, there are 20 essays, an editorial and 6 pages of book reviews.

Although it is at present 'An In-house Journal for Private Circulation' in the Krishnamurti Schools, it deserves a place in public educational publishing. We hope it will soon be in demand there. It is no small feat to have been able to motivate many people on three continents to produce and submit their thoughts and works and to present them in such a striking package. Many thanks to Editor Ahalya Chari and the Krishnamurti Foundation India for this gift to education.

*Ray McCoy*

I have learned I must compromise to some extent with people who know me, but I also stand back and look at things and what I am doing.

*Should there be other schools like this?*

It depends on who the teachers will be. It would be good to give the opportunity to other students by having other schools with the same intentions as Brockwood. It doesn't mean

they have to present Krishnamurti, but must have a clear interest in good education. It is a great gift for us, and others should have it, too.

*What is the particular privilege in being here?*

The beauty of the surroundings, and the fact that everyone here is moving in the same direction, has the same underlying interest.

*Is it good to be away from your families?*

Definitely.

*Are you as influenced here as you are at home?*

Yes, you are always influenced to some extent by those around you, friends, staff members, other students.

*What are relationships like between staff members and students?*

Sometimes they are all right, sometimes there is separation. There are status things lurking behind sometimes, authority, supervision, "I know better".

*How do you deal with it?*

It's discussed. Authority is there and it is created as much by us as by the staff. To be free is not just to rebel, but to be free within yourself. Here you can talk with the staff about things, and they will engage with you as much as each one can. Students here learn to talk very well, to argue cleverly, which often is just a waste of energy. There is lots of good energy, but often energy is wasted talking about trivial "rules" when just doing what is said would make more sense. Perhaps there should be more so-called discipline; the students have too much opportunity to rebel so they are spoiled to some extent. You have to learn to rebel intelligently not just say no, no, no.

*Have you learnt more this way?*

Oh, yes, we learn to be flexible.

*How often is negotiation really open?*

There is no simple answer to that. It depends on each situation. I have been to some work-

shops where I thought the teachers were too democratic.

*How do you feel going out after being so sheltered?*

It is a myth that we are sheltered. We are not cut off. We go out to concerts, watch television, go to films.

*But what about the practical economics of working for a living?*

We do work during holidays, but ask us in 5 years.

*Did you know about Krishnamurti before you came here?*

Yes, a little bit, books and so on. But you have to do something, not just read and talk. You're missing something if you only read and use words. The truth behind what he says is so overwhelming.

*Mary Zimbalist asked if there was still a feeling of Krishnamurti being in the School as there had been when he was alive.*

There is a difference between then and now. We have only heard of the teacher and the philosopher, but we don't know the person. We have heard that he was a joyful person, but you can't tell that from the videos. We do feel his "presence" a lot because he started the place and some of us can imagine him when people talk about it. I don't want to be sentimental about it and not think for myself, which is what he said all his life.

*What did you feel when you first came here?*

"A" hated school before, but as soon as she came here felt she was home. "B" first came at the age of 7 and it was raining and she didn't like it. Later she came in the summer but only spoke French so felt lost. But when she finally came as a student everything was all right because she felt taken care of and wanted to take care of the place. For "C", people were open and friendly, completely different from in her former schools.

*What techniques have you learned here that help your understanding?*

There are no techniques to learn. Maybe Morning Meeting or Discussion could be seen that way, but we don't. You learn to listen and to see how you react and how you relate to others. Sometimes you learn from fighting, and sometimes you learn from not fighting. "Discussion" sometimes becomes a dirty word.

*How about academics? (Laughter)*

*Do you need more pushing?*

You need to learn to move yourself. It's hard at first but it's good to learn

*Why did you all laugh?*

There is some sense that the academic side of things is not brilliant. We talk about excellence, but don't value exams, so there's some conflict. That's why we laugh. We want an academic balance, but we value freedom too. You have to take responsibility for yourself. Not all the teachers know academic subjects well; we should have teachers who know their subjects, know about the exams, and so on. There is conflict created by not having a clear approach to this. It is difficult also for teachers to have to follow a syllabus which they don't necessarily approve of, or not to be able to digress from it to discuss aspects they consider more important. The staff members come first for Krishnamurti, not to teach; but as educators they must look after the students. And quality is important.

*Are you saying the teaching of academics needs to improve?*

Part of the approach to academics arises from the fact that students come from so many backgrounds. This creates tolerance in us, too. There are so many things to do in a day. It's hard to combine studying and living. We are busy all day. New students seem to have spare time, but the days are crammed full. Students should re-assess their loads during the year, and we do get help with that. It is very important to learn to self-organize.

*Is it a matter of priorities?*

It requires organization, clarity, and honesty – not making excuses for yourself. The number of hours of classes each student has is set at the beginning of the year after discussion and making sure our timetable has a good balance

between academics, physical activities, art, and so on.

*What if a student or staff member doesn't fit here?*

We talk with them. We talk with each other and talk among friends.

## Learning through Direct Observation

### A Joint Project on Nature and Education in India

*Centre for Learning (CFL) is an innovative school with sixty students in Bangalore, South India, founded by educators with a long-standing interest in the educational philosophy of Krishnamurti. A day journey by bus takes one to the wilderness of the Nilgiri Mountains in Kerala, where a small and dedicated team of people runs the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary. This is their report of a joint educational project.*

CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND GURUKULA BOTANICAL Sanctuary have been conducting a joint nature education program, from July 1996 to February 1997. This article is an abstract from our report about that project. (A copy of the full report, which includes a detailed description of our activities and many excerpts from CFL teachers' and students' feed-back, can be obtained by writing to this publication or CFL at 462, 9th Cross Rd., Jayanagar 1st Block, Bangalore 560 011, India, or GBS at Allattil P.O., North Wynad 670 644, Kerala, India.)

Centre for Learning and Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary have known each other well since 1992. The relationship between the two places has grown out of a shared concern for the place of nature in education. The mutual support, affection and respect for each other have nurtured many different areas of co-operation and interaction between the two communities in the last few years.

When in 1993 CFL teachers felt that a yearly exposure to life in the forest would be very valuable for their middle group of students, the Parijatas (students aged 13-15) came every year for three weeks at a time. Essentially, teachers and students engaged in their own study

program. The Sanctuary provided a beautiful natural environment to learn in, with opportunities to go on long forest walks, swim in the river, do some practical work in the garden and live a simple, non-technological life.

In February 1996 the Parijatas (by then 15 years old) were due for what we assumed was their last visit as a group. We became interested in doing something more intense and directed with them, to enhance their capacities for understanding and appreciating the natural world. We wondered what features of life at the Sanctuary could be shared with them and in what way. Two stood out:

- The Sanctuary is a place where it is possible to experience a way of life closely connected to a much larger community of interdependent living beings – wild and domestic, resident and visitor, plant, animal and human. Living with a direct awareness of other life forms, the forest, weather, natural resources and one's own waste, evokes quite a different response within an individual than does the city environment.
- The Sanctuary's work with conserving native plant species has involved years of patient

observation of plants in the wild and in the garden. There is very little technical information available on the cultivation of wild species. The particular feature of the daily work at the Sanctuary is a detailed and careful observation of individual plants, the forest, related insects, birds and animals. This daily "looking" is the source of all the various activities that follow in the garden.

Working and functioning in nature demands an alertness of the senses and the ability to look consistently and afresh at what is going on around one. Nature moves in unpredictable ways, never static, always new, presenting infinite variety in form and function, revealing deeper patterns and principles. To engage fully with this invites looking and listening, an agile body and a quiet, alert and non-judgmental mind. Would it be possible to draw out young people's inherent sensitivity and readiness to look and learn through interaction with nature?

Awakening the most primary mode of learning through direct observation is too often ignored in education, especially as the child grows older. Contact with the primary gets progressively phased out with the emphasis moving to abstract knowledge. To discover something new and afresh, to live close to the unexpected as indeed is true of a life in nature, could generate a different approach to human life too.

Communication, making sense of the processes observed, connecting and seeing patterns, require another function of the brain. Could we begin to look at the two aspects of learning, i.e. the primary (direct observation) and the abstract (right thinking), using nature as the medium?

With all this in mind, the third visit of the Parijatas took shape in the form of various nature projects over the two weeks that they were to be at the Sanctuary, in February '96. The entire experience during these weeks was an eye-opener for all of us. The unexpected detail and originality of the studies, the interaction between

the individuals, the time spent alone and together exploring processes in nature, were of great enjoyment and challenge to everyone.

Could we begin to look at the two aspects of learning, the primary (direct observation) and the abstract (right thinking), using nature as the medium?

The experiment was so encouraging that a proposal was made to the teachers at CFL that we engage in a joint program involving all the students and teachers as well as the Sanctuary folk, to explore further the nature of learning while learning in nature. CFL staff were instantaneously supportive and enthusiastic, questions on direct perception and learning having always been an intrinsic part of the school's educational philosophy and curriculum, particularly in the senior science program and the activities with younger children.

One of the basic impulses behind our venture has come from a sense of the necessity to awaken in people the awareness that we are a part of the biosphere. Understanding nature allows us to see the role we play within it; the notion of ourselves then changes and we become more critical of our actions and ready to correct them.

Such understanding cannot be transmitted abstractly and needs some direct involvement with things. Contact and observation are seen as a way of getting close to and establishing a sympathetic relationship with nature. We wanted therefore to create opportunities for people to participate in it.

Of particular interest to us has been the process of observation. What is observation? What is happening to a mind that is observing the minute details as well as the vastness of creation? As we start watching nature, we may begin to perceive some inherent beauty. With it comes a sense of respect, of being a part of what is there

and of its vital importance to us. The act of looking, in a very physical and immediate sense, seems to spontaneously open the door to a vaster, more meaningful world. The beauty of nature invites this looking; indeed invites an intense engagement with all of one's senses. Coming alive in this way, with all of one's body and awareness, is surely part of an intelligent existence.

However, does observing necessarily bring about learning? Can this quality be drawn out, nurtured? Furthermore, can the mind be awakened to the muse of the forest, the incredible complexity of tropical life, the fragility of this ancient ecosystem, and to the fact that there is no separation between humans and nature?

Wilderness is free of the thought-bound mode that is at the base of the man-made world. How does it challenge us? Do abstraction – the capacity to see patterns and connections – and communication have a role to play in becoming intimate with creation, or do they rather inhibit that process? What is the place of thinking and knowledge in all this? These were the questions that we intended to address with our program.

Do abstraction – the capacity to see patterns and connections – and communication have a role to play in becoming intimate with creation, or do they rather inhibit that process?

The Sanctuary is immersed in nature. Here you breathe air scented by the plants, drink the water of the stream, see, hear and meet the countless forest creatures as a daily matter of course, get drenched in the monsoon. In this environment, residents and visitors live, work, play, quarrel, and study together. We wanted CFL's students and teachers to share a different style of life, where the awareness of a much

vaster community pervades one's actions and concerns. Living with young students is a rich exposure to human relationship and this has been, in turn, of great joy to Sanctuary residents. It provides an opening into a different involvement with important issues and adds a new dimension to the work. While they learn about plant and animal nature, so we learn about people nature. Bringing together those different aspects of life has been another of our central intentions. As we have been discovering together, it is all the same.

The program itself involved most of CFL's teachers and students. They came in small groups, between July '96 and February '97, for one to three weeks each. Looking back at this one year experience, can we say that any of our intentions have been met at least to some extent? Our immediate feeling says 'yes'. Our minds leap back to a joyful, affectionate time and the many friends who discovered something new, who took an unfamiliar step, got absorbed in their activities, shared their learning and feelings.

The following factors show some positive movement toward our aims:

Studying nature, working and living with others, sharing observations and ideas, all called for some degree of openness. In the course of their stay, we could see people become more relaxed, soften some of their attitudes and drop some artificiality of behaviour.

The nature study activities brought about a greater alertness and awareness of the environment in many of our friends. Their attention would be more readily drawn by the flight of a bird in the canopy or a cicada's call emerging from the woods, and they would spontaneously try to find out more about it. Their observations and descriptions grew more diligent, relevant, diverse and detailed.

Several youngsters developed some new interests, if maybe only temporarily: the world of mushrooms, bird-watching, growing orchids, gardening.

Something more important, to our eyes, is that many of our young friends learnt that nothing is insignificant in nature; they learnt how to look with more interest and attention and to learn through their own observations. They developed a keener disposition to engage in this process and the capacity to enjoy doing so. The constant acquaintance with nature brought about a certain familiarity with the wilderness. On their arrival at the Sanctuary, many visitors harboured some anxiety about snakes, spiders, scorpions and elephants. In general these dissipated after a few days involving some outdoor activities.

The overall response to nature was positive, though with some exceptional cases of stated dislike. A few individuals seemed to have been touched more significantly and to have found moments of a deeper intimacy with nature, an appreciation of its beauty and the urge to care for it. It was rewarding for us to see how they could forget their city mode and be fulfilled with this outdoor and community life. We can't think of any significant negative result from this venture, but we are aware of numerous ways in which it might be improved. One point of appreciation seemed to be the lack of an ideology of nature, despite the intense involvement with it. Individuals were free to find their own relationship, and we made no objections to any, even in cases of lack of interest or resistance. We felt we had to take into account people's spontaneous energy and learn to work with it.

It has been quite a feat for CFL to send 70 individuals to the Sanctuary, rearrange classes back at school, raise funds, and cancel other trips. For the Sanctuary, too, it has meant a big commitment and responsibility – deferring other work in the garden, cooking and caring for hungry kids – and a lot of time and energy spent in preparing and running the program.

We spent a year looking at nature – from the iridescent shimmer of a damselfly's wings to the awesome beauty of the rain forest in the monsoon.

We climbed the tangled trellis of a fig tree, swam in a swift swollen river, watched the busy life of ants, and shared all this with each other. We learnt a

... wild nature is, after all, the one space we have in which to encounter the immensity of life, indeed it is the ultimate context in which we live; a space beyond our own structures and thinking.

little about ourselves, too – about fear and likes and dislikes – and to live for a short time without our usual comforts. We began to see that it is possible to work with nature, and that beauty is not separate from one's daily life and actions.

Yet it was only a beginning. The time with each group was short. No sooner was there an opening in all of us to relate, look and learn together, than it was time to end. The exposure to nature was intense but brief. Whether at the Sanctuary or elsewhere, we see some purpose to a longer, deeper and more sustained contact with wild nature. It is, after all, the one space we have in which to encounter the immensity of life, indeed the ultimate context in which we live; a space beyond our own structures and thinking. It is vital to be intimate with this space, the awareness of which would add immeasurably to their lives wherever they go.

Hopefully there will be many more such interactions in the coming years, though it remains to be seen in what manner. One thing we know for sure – it has been a marvellous thing to do so far, nurturing the relationship between a school and a forest garden and learning together.

Thanks to the children, teachers and parents of CFL and the native and exotic creatures at the Sanctuary.

*Suprabha Seshan & Lorenzo Castellari,  
March 1997*

# International Network

## A Visit to K-Inspired Projects

AS SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW, FOR TWO EXPLORATIVE years, Raman Patel and the writer, Rabindra Singh, have navigated the so-called K world, visiting different parts of South America, Mexico, the Caribbean, Australasia, India, Indonesia, and other parts of Asia. Friedrich Grohe supports this and sometimes he and others travel with us, and sometimes we are on our own. On occasion, Raman and I have been accommodated in mansions and sometimes we have slept on mud floors. Paradoxically, these trips can be both exhausting and energizing.

We have seen diverse approaches to creating a place to facilitate the study of the teachings, such as:

- schools
- study, retreat or information centers; libraries
- dialogue or discussion groups
- private homes in tropical jungles or modern cities
- organic farms and botanical sanctuaries
- gatherings and conferences
- bed-and-breakfast inns
- ashrams and monasteries.

Such diversity is a good thing, as different forms are used to facilitate a common intention which can expose fresh perspectives, although it can be a bad thing if factions begin to occur. However, we rarely came across the latter.

As Raman puts it: “In our travels, we came across many people, some of whom fell outside the umbrella of the existing official Foundations. Despite this factor, it was admirable and heartening to see, against all odds and difficulties, the amount of work that they were doing regarding ‘K’ related activities, whether it was running a school, a study center, showing video tapes,

holding gatherings, translating books or dubbing/subtitling video tapes in their own languages.”

With a few exceptions, wherever we go people say they need money to carry out the work. In some cases the need seems genuine, in other cases extravagant or not well thought out. We spent much time in brainstorming discussions trying to help our ‘K-informed’ visionaries to clarify their ideas and in all cases, if they had not already done it, attempt to create a comprehensive written statement of intention – if for nothing else than to increase their own insights into their projects and to develop strategies or approaches.

We spent much time in brainstorming discussions trying to help our ‘K-informed’ visionaries to clarify their ideas ... and to develop strategies or approaches.

While many of these K concerns are very deserving of financial support, donations are rare and the ongoing question of right livelihood continues to stimulate lively discussion. How can right livelihood be combined with the work of dissemination in one of its many forms, and yet not compromise the time and energy required for attention to oneself in relationship?

Realising the limited monies available from donors, we encourage our visionaries to see the importance of self-sufficiency, of not repeating

## Colombia, November '96

MOST OF OUR TIME WE SPENT IN SMALLER CITIES like Medellín, with Carlos Calle, the official representative of the Fundación Hispano-Americana. Semi-retired, he devotes most of his free time to making the teachings available to the public.

Before going to Colombia, we had apprehensions about visiting and had been warned by several people not to go, as Colombia is known worldwide for its out-of-control culture of violence and fear. I found most people there have become hardened to fear, surviving psychologically through desensitising themselves to the daily news of violence and death.

Interestingly enough, Colombia is the place where we found by far the greatest growth of public interest in Krishnamurti's teachings. Hundreds of people came to a public showing of a Krishnamurti videotape in Medellín that had been advertised only by word of mouth. At the university, another video showing was attended by several hundred students, and a very popular course in Comparative Religion, focusing on K's teachings, was being offered there. Carlos Calle has donated some property in a lovely valley near Medellín to create a small study centre, but the funds for the infrastructure still remain to be found.

In this country, people are desperate for answers and K might seem like the last hope. The dark side of humanity is very much exposed here and yet most of the Colombians we met were extraordinarily gentle and polite. Perhaps this gentleness was also a simple kind of defence, a way of preventing the sudden awakening of violence in others. People are usually dressed in dark grey and black – inconspicuousness must mean safety.

In other parts of the world, I have often seen intellectual, sometimes even argumentative, discussions about K's statement that "you are the world", that the crisis in consciousness is the same crisis in each one of us. In Colombia, the truth of this statement is immediately obvious – no discussion is required.

the model of donation-dependent situations. We urge them instead:

- to keep things small
- to lower expenses
- to share resources
- to invest any initial donations in creating self-supporting income.

In the K world this last is not easy, as many people are disposed to avoid life in the real world, preferring to escape from it. The right livelihood question is really proving to be a tough one. How to be 'in the world but not of it' can be rather challenging for people and groups not sheltered by a Foundation (see article on pp. 55–58).

Groups we have visited may have land, property, human and other resources, but often don't know how to use these to generate income without getting caught in the travails of business life. This question of whether a non-isolating self-sufficiency is really possible in the Krishnamurti work needs to be deeply considered, especially as it gnaws at the core of physical and psychological security and our sometimes too-personal motives for being involved in making the teachings available. In our travels, this question has been the starting point for many conversations.

While I have two time-demanding projects of my own, I continue to travel, not just for my own learning, but because I feel that the concept of many diverse, self-sufficient, small-scale places all over the world, connected by a representative, non-authoritarian association that facilitates communication between them, can go far in maintaining the presence of K's teachings in the world. Working with Friedrich Grohe and the AG Educational Trust, this is part of what we have been trying to do.

In fact, I wonder whether the very survival of the teachings depends on this international reach. While in one country the sales of books decrease, in other places the demand exceeds the supply, as we saw in Colombia and Thailand.

## Mexico, December '96

ORGANIZED BY RAMON GALLEGOS, THE ANNUAL conference in Guadalajara sponsored by Foundation for New Paradigms in Science is proving to be a good opportunity for introducing people to Krishnamurti's teachings (see article on pg. 8). The conference is a series of seminars, lectures and workshops on current issues in physics, philosophy, science, religion, psychology and spirituality unofficially held together by the fact that many (though not all) of the speakers have an interest in Krishnamurti's work, especially as it applies to their own field. Consequently, an introduction to the teachings occurs to the several hundred participants who might not otherwise have come into contact with them. It is also gaining recognition in the academic world as a forum for scientists interested in K and could have a pronounced impact on the move to introduce K into university curriculums. In his eloquent introductory speech this year, Ramon took the opportunity

to outline to the many scientists present his view that K's approach to investigative inquiry can significantly affect the so-called traditional model of the 'scientific method'.

Comparing the conference to the annual summer gathering at Saanen in Switzerland, it becomes clear that in Guadalajara the audience is being newly introduced to K, that this conference reaches outside the "K world". At Saanen, most of the participants are already familiar with the teachings and have come primarily to relate to others inside the "K world" who share an interest in the teachings in order to deepen their understanding of them.

To someone who shares K's passion for what the teachings suggest as possible for humanity, neither of these two aspects needs justification. Instead, the energy to either spread awareness of the teachings or share insight is simply there.

With many small places scattered throughout the world, the failure of one or two won't matter if the central issue is to maintain the presence of the teachings in the world. To me, Nature is diversity and it makes sense to follow its example.

Also, I think that the teachings, being timeless, are unbounded by culture or circumstances for anyone willing to take the time to study them and, therefore, have the potential to remain meaningful for generations to come. Of course, anyone can misquote or 'interpret' the teachings for the purpose of germinating new religions or sub-cultures that feed on our fearful human demand for certainty and belonging, for psychological and social identity. It almost seems that our minds are programmed to do this and without sharp awareness we can easily become Krishnamurti-ites (see excerpt on pg. 59). But I feel that the essential kind of attention that K

talks about, which turns back on itself, the ebbing and flowing interchange in serious minds between observing and questioning, is what the teachings are about and is also its own protection. It also has the capacity to destroy the attempted use of the teachings for any particular aggrandizement. Consequently, we need not be too concerned about places that dilute or distort the purity of the teachings and, in fact, the mixups that we do occasionally come across could be viewed as challenging rather than discouraging.

As I traveled between the many places that are being created to facilitate the study of the teachings (which is really the study of oneself), I saw different combinations, often inadequate, of the ingredients necessary for this purpose. I saw serious minded people with insufficient resources, or people with resources but conflicting priorities, or potential schools with lots of

land and buildings and money but no interested parents or teachers etc. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a forum for ongoing communication between all the Krishnamurti places if we are interested in linking these expressions which, although different in size, scope, and activities, share the same concern. I don't have the answers but I feel there must be a way for us to focus our energies, to share our resources and ideas, to pool our talents to create a platform for the teachings, to help them last and yet keep questioning and observing alive so that we don't create yet another religion or another sub-culture.

We did come across some places where the people had organized themselves well, either through their own sensible efforts or because things fell into their right places or both. One such example is a group called THE KRISHNAMURTI SELF-EDUCATION SOCIETY in India which runs information center activities in the city of Mumbai (Bombay) and a retreat center near Badlapur, a rural suburb of the ever-expanding megalopolis.

Ramesh Kukreja, the live-in caretaker at Badlapur, had originally donated two acres of his own property to the Society which then purchased another three acres of an adjacent property. The setting is beautiful, under two hours by train from the city, surrounded by hills and farms. Ramesh is a widower with two children whom he educates himself. His two brothers live nearby and are also interested in the teachings. Despite being well educated, all three brothers have left city life, preferring to conduct small businesses in the local village to support themselves and to volunteer their time to take care of the property. They are currently experimenting with reforestation and organic farming, as this area has become a semi-desert through too much cattle grazing. In my opinion, this project contains one of the best combinations of the various factors needed to run a center:

## **Brazil, October '96**

TWO EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS HAVE STARTED IN Tiradentes, Brazil, four hours by road from Rio de Janeiro. Three years ago Rolf Mayr from Switzerland built a beautifully designed alternative school for local children half an hour out of town. Adapting a curriculum for their twenty students to local conditions of poverty and domestic violence is not an easy task, as he has found out. One of his biggest concerns is the effect of television on maintaining violence both in the home and in the classroom, and he has started parents' meetings to discuss the issue. His insistence on parent involvement seems to be a new thing for the area but slowly the families are coming to appreciate it. With help from his wife, Kathie, also a teacher, and two staff members, they continue the uphill battle with admirable determination. Rolf and Kathie welcome visitors and volunteers.

The other 'school' is located at Rachel Fernandes' Pousada, a small, private, Krishnamurti retreat where groups can arrange to meet for meaningful and serious discussions, or individuals can go for quiet retreat. Rachel conducts afternoon classes in weaving which fifty local children attend during the week. The children attend public schools in the morning. For people interested in exploring the art of relationship with children, this is an interesting concept. The classes are really more about learning to communicate, largely due to Rachel's ability to make spontaneous use of naturally occurring interactions, constantly bringing awareness of what we are as human beings. The learning of weaving takes second place to this more important function of this little after-school home-school. Fees are very low and we found that because the children often don't want to go home, classes can stretch on beyond the scheduled time.

It is a tremendous credit to Rachel that, for the children, this school has become a home away from home, an oasis of non-violent relationship. With this school, she has created an educational experiment with minimum infrastructure and expenses and maximum interpersonal contact.

1. A key person (Ramesh)
  - who is welcoming and friendly and has the right attitude (a questioning, considerate mind with interest in K's teachings as his personal priority)
  - who has excellent relationships with his two brothers (they live next door with their parents), who are interested in K's teachings and highly supportive of Ramesh and the Society's efforts
  - who has an excellent relationship with the local villagers
  - who has a private income (he owns livestock and a small business in the village).
  
2. A complementary base in a large city (Mumbai), located close by
  - which draws people to use and support the retreat center (in particular through one college teacher who, as an active member of the Society, arranges regular gatherings for his college students with accommodation informally provided at the neighbors of the center until the center's buildings are completed)
  - where there are people actively involved: conducting videos and discussions, promoting the retreat center to encourage visitors, raising funds to cover at least the running costs of the center, and securing volunteer technical and administrative help. (An idea is being floated to ask people to donate a small percentage of their income to help complete the center.)
  - where there are other K study groups (at least six), all of whose members have access to the center.

Slowly but surely, the Society is acquiring volunteers who offer professional and other help as well as raising funds in a variety of innovative ways to complete the buildings at the Badlapur retreat.

Education is another aspect of the Krishnamurti work that people focus on. Krishnamurti education has spanned decades and still it appears that, even within the schools established

## Guyana, October '96

UNTIL I VISITED THERE TWO YEARS AGO, Krishnamurti was unknown in Guyana, the country where the writer was born. Largely through placing selected quotes in newspapers, arranging videos on television and distributing handfuls of books and audiotapes, a few people have begun to show interest. With its large and well-established Indian community, the name Krishnamurti does not raise suspicions of "sect", so there is good potential in Guyana for introducing K to new minds. With some friends, I plan to start a Krishnamurti lending library there soon. Land has been offered for this purpose but so far funds are lacking. As we continue our efforts, largely by obtaining sponsors from the business community to pay for television time, I hope we can pool enough resources from within our small group to create this library. It will have to be a grass-roots effort, one step at a time.

Guyana is a small country of less than a million inhabitants with an African-Indian-Caribbean culture, blessed with still vast tracts of untouched Amazonian rainforest. Once we establish a base there, our goal is to introduce Krishnamurti to all the other countries in the nearby Caribbean islands. The ways to do this sometimes just show up: Raman and I were in Trinidad on our way to Venezuela, when Raman remembered that a former student from Brockwood Park was living there. We were able to make contact by phone and she, through her employment as a television reporter, is attempting to get some air-time for broadcasting K videos. Another Trinidadian has offered to donate space in a building for the development of the first Krishnamurti library in Trinidad.

If there is anyone from Trinidad, Guyana or anywhere else in the Caribbean reading this, please communicate with us through this publication.

during his lifetime, there are many variations in approach, many successes and failures, many joys and mistakes. These schools are a continuing experiment in a new kind of relationship, one that challenges the mediocrity of traditional society to the extent that the people involved are interested or able to do so. Because of various factors such as cost, location, curriculum, parental concerns or other things, some individuals have decided to start independent schools of their own in various parts of the world (see the very different school projects in Tiradentes, Brazil, on pg. 51). While not part of the Krishnamurti Foundations and consequently not using his name, these, if carried out responsibly, are nevertheless part of the same experiment.

I feel that this extension of the experiment in Krishnamurti education applies to the study

centers for adults which are being started outside the official auspices of the Foundations, and that both schools and study centers can be the background for real education for all the people involved.

In the interest of world-wide reach, it has become clear to me that the unofficial or grass-roots spread of awareness of the teachings, especially now that K himself is gone, can provide a quiet assistance to the ongoing work of the official K Foundations. The effect of any one of these unofficial places may be insignificant in itself but, taken together as part of an international effort, the combined effect of increasing awareness of the teachings is potentially great.

*Rabindra Singh, September 1997*

This year finds Raman and me visiting the following places after mid January. If you are in these areas please feel free to make contact.

**Jan 15 – Feb 1 – India**  
 Bombay Krishnamurti Self-Education Society, Contact: Abijit Padte  
 Tel & Fax [91] 22 610 4962  
 e-mail: anaa@gias01.vsnl.net.in

**Feb 2-9 – Israel**  
 Western Galilee, Contact: Dr Stephen Fulder  
 Tel & Fax: [972] 4- 996 9414  
 e-mail: fulder@internet.zahav.net

**Feb 10-16 – Greece**  
 Athens, Contact: Nikos Pilavios  
 Tel: [30] 1- 643 2605

**Feb 17-23 – Cyprus**  
 Nicosia, Contact: Dr Panos Sopholeous  
 Tel: [357] 2 333 202, Fax: 2 333 203

## The Saanen Gathering 1997

THE SAANEN GATHERING OF 1997 HAS PASSED with its perfume of energy, warmth, laughter and challenge.

So it is now appropriate to review not only this last gathering but also one's understanding of the whole process involved in these yearly gatherings, with their innate strength and fragility. This year again many people came to Saanen with different

world views and expectations, but also seeking to nurture in some way the seed of personal enquiry. By doing so they came to share their doubts, enthusiasms and discoveries, and in spite of differences leading sometimes to frustrations, finding that there was movement both within themselves and between them. There was, from time to time, a tangible energy and also a sense of real silence from which, perhaps, that movement occurred.

As in the past, a range of activities was made available including the videos of Krishnamurti which have been, and remain for me, the backbone of these meetings. This year for the first time a variety of *workshops* was introduced for the three weeks. Many people found these workshops, which usually ran for one day with groups of 10-12 people, a real enrichment of the gathering.

... many people came to Saanen with different world views and expectations, but also seeking to nurture the seed of personal enquiry.

Each week had a noticeably different format. The first started with a speaker introducing significant questions and then throwing them open to the whole group once a deeper perspective on them was apparent. In the second week there was more structure with some specific strategies being used to bring people closer together and have them communicate with each other in a variety of ways: individually, and in both smaller and larger discussion groups. The theme of the third week, 'Love and Death', proved deeply involving and moving for a great number of those who came to hear the speaker, and that focused energy carried the meetings right through to the end of the gathering.

The differences in presentation caused some reactions from those who had more distinct preferences for one approach over another, but I think it is fair to say that virtually everybody became an active participant at some stage and many seemed able to be wholly committed throughout the three weeks. This certainly appeared to be the message transmitted through the replies to the questionnaire which was handed out towards the end of our time there, which also indicated that the great majority were

content with the overall format and the different activities included throughout the program.

As last year, we also had the parents and children week running concurrently with the main program in the first week, and the young people's group in the third week. Both were especially successful this year. Although I was not able to be personally present at the *young people's chalet* much of the time, it seemed that a great deal went on at differing levels amidst a feeling of real co-operation and enjoyment. The topic question, whether personal enquiry and career can move harmoniously together, does not appear to have been exhausted, and there was some consensus that a longer time to investigate such a question would be desirable in future years. There were also suggestions for more non-verbal activities and informal time, and more dialogues.

The *chalet for parents and children* inspired much goodwill and fresh creative thinking on the responsibility of being parents and the search for new perceptions about education. There were single parents, and parents with one or several children. The atmosphere was open and honest, but without any 'hiding' when difficult questions were raised.

It seems obvious that what have been thought of as the old 'family values' have largely ceased to exist. We now have to work at discovering a new ethic of family relationship, one not based on conformity, tradition and authority, but one which encourages the spiritual potential of the child through the adventure of living. All in all, this grouping had a very special quality, and Claire and myself are seriously considering proposing this experience for other times and places as well as Saanen.

Next year's gathering will take place at Saanen **from July 12th to August 2nd 1998.**

*Gisele Balleys, September 1997*

## **“Can Work and Career Go Together With Inward Flowering?” A Report of the Young People’s Week in Saanen 1997**

*We received a very interesting and observant nine-page report about the 1997 Saanen Gathering from Michael Lommel, a philosophy student from California. Unfortunately, we can include only an excerpt here, in which he describes mainly his participation in the Young People’s Week, which ran parallel to the third week of the main program.*

THE SAANEN GATHERING THIS YEAR WAS DIVIDED into three one week periods, each with a separate theme, the first week on ‘Creative Living in a Changing World’, the second week on ‘Conditioning and Truth’, and the third ‘On Death and Love’. Within these three weeks, Wednesdays were set aside for workshop-style groups and Tuesdays and Fridays were devoted to hikes in the mountains. Most participants lived together at a chalet a few kilometers walk from the valley below where the meetings were held in a school. We ate breakfast and dinner together at the chalet, and in the evenings it sometimes hosted music and dance.

Contemporaneously with the third week there was a separate young people’s week held at a chalet in the nearby town of Gstaad with its own theme of ‘Can Work and Career Go Together with Inward Flowering?’

We wondered together what would motivate us if there wasn’t this motivation of expectation?

Thirty-seven people attended the week, with a few people coming for the program from outside the chalet. The week began with a meeting where we learned each other’s names by everyone introducing someone else so that nobody introduced themselves. We talked briefly about the theme for the week and decided our first planning meeting would be the next afternoon. Further scheduling suggestions were invited from everyone present and work arrangements were

sorted out by deciding on a sign-up sheet for chores.

That first evening we invited an actor who was staying for the three weeks of the gathering to come and do impromptu theater exercises with us. It involved exercises in standing still and unusual kinds of motion. He asked us to move together as a group in unfamiliar ways, requiring a heightened awareness of other people and the sense of the group operating as a whole. It was an ice-breaker. It happened more or less in silence except for his instructions to move or stop moving, or a sudden shout or clap of the hands to stir us to action.

In the planning meeting we discussed how people felt about the topic for the week. The word “career” itself came up as a stumbling block. Someone felt that “career” meant working in a corporation, “killing on the right and the left” to succeed, and they were disturbed therefore that it was in the same sentence with “inward flowering”. We discovered that as a French speaker that person gave a much stronger meaning to the word “career”. We suggested taking it as “livelihood” in a more general sense. By another it was suggested all such terms should be defined before beginning, because past experience had shown them that when people weren’t using language in the same way conversation went around in circles. Instead it was decided that in our first dialogue meeting people who felt strongly about the question would speak about what it meant to them. As it turned out, in that first dialogue meeting we decided to go one by one around the fairly large circle and describe what the question meant to us, telling the story of where we were in livelihood, how we came to that point and what challenges or issues were the

most pressing for each of us at this time in our lives. I have never been in a situation where such a large group of people were describing their backgrounds in any detail greater than name, residence, and vocation. It took the full two hours to make one circle of the group. There was, of course, great variety in people's stories but a sense of our shared humanity entered. The attentive quiet of seriousness descended on the room as people found themselves listening with deep interest to what people were saying. I think this established a ground for the rest of our talks together.

The dialogues which took place that week touched on the nature of expectations: how they influence our livelihoods and conflicts in that sphere, how they operate on a social level and, in the phenomena of expectations, seeing the lack of division between the social-outer and the psychological-inner. Following the concern of a woman who was home-schooling and her dilemma of what approach to take to setting goals for her children, we looked at expectations in education and whether they distort self-sufficiency in the child or whether they are necessary. We considered also that it is hard to see expectations because expectation equals normality, what is taken as normal, and, therefore, is not questioned. People notice expectations, it seems, only when they are disappointed. We asked therefore, "Is it possible to discover the whole field of expectations rather than wait for them to be disappointed one by one?" We asked, "Where do expectations come from?" We noticed the huge energy of expectation moving through society. The expectation, for instance, of material possessions which then influences life-style choices, creating huge pressures and distorting the possibility of finding one's own talents. We wondered together what would motivate us if there weren't this motivation of expectation? Could wanting to examine something motivate? An encounter with self-deception in this was related: "The shock I felt when I realized that I thought I had been wanting to look at something

when all along I realized I had simply wanted to get rid of it."

In looking at the psychological-inner nature of expectations, jealousy became a topic of conversation also. The course of the dialogue followed these points and questions: Jealousy is really biological and not psychological since jealousy is not only "my jealousy" but something that belongs to the species. Something is psychological when it is taken up by thought. Do we make jealousy into a psychological thing when primarily it isn't? There are deep and

There was some concern for understanding . . . , which demanded going beyond our backgrounds, or attachment to a certain phrasing or set of conclusions.

superficial sources of emotion. There may be deep jealousy (biological) and superficial jealousy (psychological). But isn't thinking deep within our genes and thus also biological? There is a danger labeling things as biological, as it can be a way of excusing them, but on the other hand it may open our vistas toward that emotion. During the dialogue one person reflected, "If I am honest with myself I am not at all sure that I want to end jealousy, really end it. I think I just want to get away with it with as little suffering as possible."

I felt there was genuine honesty in our discussions that week. People were not putting up fronts and there was ease with one another. The dialogues were among the most mature that I've ever participated in. By this I mean, among other qualities, a lack of knee-jerk reaction to differences in vocabulary or quick negation of people who have little familiarity with K and express 'heretical' views, for example those based on psychotherapy. The group did not become divided



*Summer sunrise over Lake Geneva, Buchillon, Switzerland*

along lines of interpretation or take sides on an issue to the point where it became conceptually jammed. People were rarely interrupted. It wasn't a sense of tolerance which pervaded our being together; tolerance is simply knowing that you will eventually be proven right. Rather, I felt it was some concern for understanding which demanded going beyond our backgrounds and attachment to a certain phrasing or set of conclusions, and looking at views on their own merits instead of unconsciously comparing them to the words of Krishnamurti or something else.

Before coming to the gathering this year for the first time, I had spent about three years involved with Krishnamurti inspired activities, living near a school he founded and being occasionally involved with Foundation work, visiting Krishnamurti schools and centers. Over these years I attended seminars, workshops and dialogues in different formats, listened to talks

by people who had studied K very seriously, and watched many videos of his public talks and conversations. I took part in numerous conversations with people on life's questions and on questions related to understanding the teachings. I met people who had been close to K and heard their stories about him, and saw a great deal of people from around the world who had had this contact with his works and who had been engaged in K-inspired activities. I experienced the sort of things which the Saanen gathering provides the possibility of experiencing to those who come. What then, if anything, would make the gathering particularly meaningful to one who has had that kind of exposure? A friend of mine who has seen a great deal of the 'K world' has said to me that for him the main function of the gatherings is to make connections, to meet people with whom one can establish a real communication outside of the gathering itself. This is something that took place

for me. I did meet people with whom I felt an immediate connection and the possibility of real communication and friendship. The gathering has been the only time since having been in university that I have had the company of a group of others of my age, with the added bonus that they had similar interests and wished to look into these things too.

The meetings in Saanen also rekindled my interest in dialogue, though there were moments when it seemed like folly. Speaking together can become an activity with different interpretations rather than the result or meeting of a common interest to understand and a capacity to meet whatever energy is in a group of people. Perhaps the word "dialogue" is itself partly responsible for this. If we are not careful, when we give a name to something we will tend to meet it repetitively thereafter. And perhaps I should say that what I became interested in during Saanen wasn't simply dialogue as we are growing accustomed to it, but what inquiry with others can mean in a broader way. Whether inquiry becomes an excuse for the attractive search for novel experience must stay a question for us though.

One of the things I remember most strongly from my time at the gatherings was the walk each morning down from the chalet to the school in Saanen. First came the view of the mountains, snow-peaked, communicating enormous age in their utter stillness, but different each day in a new light or pattern of

cloud. One couldn't help reflect on the vastness of time and space, and feel the smallness of oneself. One then finds oneself on a footpath which skirts pine groves along the ridge of a steeply sloping meadow, now heading down into the valley, the purity of the air working its clarity through the pores of your lungs by this time. Then lastly the walk along the river, grey and always boiling with the sound of water rushing down it, as it shifts its standing waves and breaks into white where rock nears the surface, it and its sound tuning one to the flow of change in life as one follows the river's swift current along the bank until reaching the school. I took something away from those mountains and the river, or something disappeared. If I was pressed I would say that what left me during the time at Saanen was a certain amount of self-judgment. The essence of that was in the landscape itself, I think.

The last thing is an image. On a meadow hillside, a small wooden farmer's hut sat hunched by itself. The hay for the winter feed for the cows had been cut that morning and raked. The rows hashed out squares around the hut which gave a sense of concentric square-ripples radiating outward with the hut at the center. I saw this in the clear sun of an alpine afternoon and the phrase came into my mind "to put your house in order." Here order seemed to emanate out into the world from that innocuous hut. Saanen has now in my mind that sense of a starting point.

*Michael Lommel, October 1997*

## Krishnamurti on 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 oneself 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 favoured leader.

The other day someone said that he was a “Krishnamurti-ite,” 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 “Krishnamurti-ite”? 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 defence, 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 defence?

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 safeguards 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 – 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 is projected by the inner demand, then there is a possibility of discovery and happiness. He who has identified himself can never know freedom, in which alone all truth comes into being.

*Commentaries on Living (First Series),  
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## ■ Editor's Afterthought

READING AN ARTICLE LIKE 'THE RIGHT PLACE OF Thought' (see pp 8), I felt partways through, that the world I live in is 'my' world and that the real world is unknown. Yes, thought deceives itself, it is limited and therefore it cannot ultimately solve its own problems. At the same time the thought of one person might be less incomplete and less disordered than the thought of another. Such thought is able to offer solutions and avoid traps another person does not have access to or constantly falls into. Clear thinking is essential to our existence, but at every step there is the danger that thought presents an idea as reality and confusion begins.

We live in a virtual world, and we are pre-occupied with it, while the real world – nature and the fragile balance of life on this planet – is getting destroyed. The virtual world is, to put it simply, the imagined world. It is my every image, wish, thought, idea, memory, theory, perspective, world view, value and meaning. This sounds as if the whole inner world, almost everything we consider human, would be virtual. But feelings like joy, sexual desire, hunger are not just imagined. They are a physical reality beyond the thoughts and feelings and fantasies – although thought might have caused them in the first place, and continues shaping and evaluating our bodily reactions and sensations. Thought is crucial to our lives, but its problem is that it too easily forgets what it is doing, that ideas are presented as reality, and that, by trying to protect the self, for example, thought forgets that it might be its own creation. The most painful moments in many people's life are times of emotional and psychological anguish and hurt. But why is the virtual so powerful if it is only imagined? The answer is that we do not know that it is virtual. I can still remember the awe and mystery (and fear) in front of Santa Claus when I was a child. The power and magic were irrevocably gone when I discovered two years later that it was a young man from the neighbourhood.

There is a wonderful two-page article called *Virtual Virus* by William van den Heuvel (publication not known), in which he explains the interplay of our presentational system with our reactive system and the confusion which often occurs. What one 'sees' is a mixture of real sensory perception and the attributes one gives it from past experience, and this mixture is displayed as a whole. The reactive system takes whatever is in the display as real. A danger, even an imagined one, will cause the reactive system to produce adrenaline and will make the heart beat faster. In this way the (virtual) psyche will influence the (real) body. But to the idea(!) of danger we should respond with another idea, not with hormones and knives. The problem lies in the tendency 'of the presentative system not to distinguish between virtual and real. ... Virtual injuries really hurt because the reactive system secretes the hormones. But we cannot blame the reactive system; it only does it because the presentation shows the injury as real. ... If the injuries were properly labelled as virtual, then they would be recognisable as such and the reactive system would not secrete the hormones. That is the end of real suffering for virtual reasons.' (quoted from William van den Heuvel's article).

It would also be the end of real pleasure for virtual reasons. A movie is only entertaining and gripping as long as I 'forget' that it is a movie.

At the same time there are situations where one knows that a fear or suspicion is unfounded, but one is nevertheless driven by it, which probably means that on a deeper level we do not see that it is unfounded. So there might be multiple levels of reality and meaning.

A comment made by Gary David, who has widespread experience in dialogue, seems to be appropriate here:

'Many of us still have a lurking tendency to identify or confuse what we say with what we live on the silent level, the level that is not words. If that identification occurs, living sanely becomes a hopeless task.'

*Jürgen Brandt*



*Misty winter morning at Brockwood Park*

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