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Learning is not through experience, but through freedom from experience

Vasanta Vihar Newsletter

KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA JULY - OCTOBER 2011 Rs.2/- VOL. VII ISSUE 2

The word *experience* in English means 'to go through'—to go through a thing. And when you 'go through', there must be no memory of what you have been through; otherwise you are not through the experience. We do not go through any form of thought or feeling if we don't go right through it; it must leave no mark, no imprint. That imprint, that mark, that memory directs the next experience, shapes the next experience. We have a thousand experiences, and each experience leaves a mark, and that mark leaves the memory which recognizes the next experience, and so shapes that experience, conditions it so that the mind becomes more and more conditioned by the past. So one discovers as one takes this journey for oneself that every form of experience has its own limitation. We have had thousands and thousands of wars; we have had millions of years of sorrow, and we are not free from it. So one wonders if experience teaches anything at all psychologically, or it only toughens the mind, makes the mind more dull. (*Talk in Paris, 18 April 1968*)

Flight from ourselves is called experience

Unfortunately, most of us do not seek self-knowledge, but cling to experience. And we use experience as a measure to discover truth, to discover reality, or God, or what you will. So experience, with most of us, has become the standard of valuation. But does experience reveal truth or whatever name you like to call it? Surely, experience is a distraction, a process away from oneself. That is, most of us are so unaware of the total process of our existence; we do not see

that we are running away from ourselves. In ourselves, whether we admit it or not, consciously or unconsciously, there is a state of poverty, an emptiness, which we try to cover up, from which we try to run away. And in the process of covering it up, we have various experiences; we cling to various points of view, beliefs. And these distractions, which are obviously away from ourselves, are experiences. This flight from ourselves is called experience; and to these escapes we cling, and therefore the means of escape become much more important than the understanding of ourselves. The means of escape from our own state offer happiness, and therefore experience becomes a hindrance to the understanding of *what is*. (*Talk in London, 23 October 1949*)

Questioner: Can we learn from experience?
Krishnamurti: Certainly not. We have innumerable experiences; we have had five thousand years of wars. We have not learnt a thing from them except to invent more deadly machinery with which to kill each other. We have had many experiences with our friends, with our wives, with our husbands, with our nation—we have not learnt. Learning, in fact, can only take place when there is freedom from experience. (*The Impossible Question, p 78*)

Wisdom has no experienter

Is wisdom the storing up of experience? Acquisition implies accumulation; experience implies residue. Residue, accumulation—is that wisdom? You accumulate to safeguard yourself, to live securely; you acquire experience

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gradually. The accumulation of knowledge, the slow gathering of experience—is that wisdom? Your whole life is accumulation, acquiring more and more. Will that make you wise? You have acquired something, you have had an experience which has left a residue, and that residue conditions your further experience. Your response is this experience, and it is the continuation of the background in a different way. So when you say that wisdom is experience, you mean the collection of many experiences. Why are you not wise? Can the man who is constantly acquiring be wise? Can the man burdened with experience be wise?

Wisdom is not a slow process, it is not to be gathered little by little like a bank account. To believe that gradually through several lives you are going to become the Buddha is immature thinking and feeling. Just see the truth that a mind that is acquiring can never be wise—in six lives or in ten. Knowledge always has the accumulator, the gatherer; but wisdom has no experimenter. (*Talk in Madras, 18 December 1949*)

Suffering has made you more cunning

Questioner: One has been told that wisdom comes through sorrow, but I have found quite the contrary.

Krishnamurti: I wonder what you have learnt from suffering? Have you learnt anything at all? What has sorrow taught you?

Questioner: It has certainly taught me never to be attached to people, and a certain bitterness, a certain aloofness and not to allow my feelings to run away with me. It has taught me to be very careful not to get hurt again.

Krishnamurti: So, as you say, it hasn't taught you wisdom;

on the contrary it has made you more cunning, more insensitive. (*The Urgency of Change, chapter on Suffering*)

Must you go through all phases of life?

Must you go through drunkenness to know sobriety? Must you go through all the phases of life to understand life? We think that to know wisdom, we must go through every phase of life and experience, from the rich man to the poor man, from the beggar to the king. Now, is that so? Is wisdom the accumulation of many experiences? Or is wisdom to be found in the complete understanding of one experience? Because we never completely and fully understand one experience, we wander from experience to experience, hoping for some salvation, for some refuge, for some happiness. So we have made our life a process of continuous accumulation of experiences, and therefore it is an endless struggle, a ceaseless battle to attain, to acquire. Surely, that is a tedious, an utterly stupid approach to life, is it not? Is it not possible to gather the full significance of an experience and so understand the whole width and depth of life? I say it is possible, and that it is the only way to understand life. (*Talk in Bombay, 26 February 1950*)

Experience conditions

What do we learn from experience? We learn things like languages, agriculture, manners, going to the moon, medicine, mathematics. But have we learnt about war through making war? We have learnt to make war more deadly, more efficient, but we haven't learnt not to make war. Our experience in warfare endangers the survival of the human race. Is this learning?

You may build a better house, but has experience taught you how to live more nobly inside it? We have learnt through experience that fire burns, and that has become our conditioning but we have also learnt through our conditioning that nationalism is good. Yet experience should also teach us that nationalism is deadly. All the evidence is there. The religious experience, as based on our conditioning, has separated man from man. Experience has taught us to have better food, clothes and shelter, but it has not taught us that social injustice prevents the right relationship between man and man. So experience conditions and strengthens our prejudices, our peculiar tendencies, and our particular dogmas and beliefs. Experience teaches me to strengthen the family as a unit opposed to society and to other families. This brings about strife and division, which makes it ever more important to strengthen the family protectively, and so the vicious circle continues. We accumulate and call this 'learning through experience', but more and more this learning brings about fragmentation, narrowness, and specialization. (*The Urgency of Change: Chapter on Learning*)

Experience dulls the mind

We all want more experience, more and more—more wealth, more property, more love, greater success, more fame, more beauty; and we also want more experience as knowledge. A mind that is experiencing is dependent on experience; and experience is, after all, the response to a challenge. The mind that is athirst for more, wanting more experience, more knowledge, more thrills, more ecstasy, is a mind that is dependent. And a mind that is dependent, leaning upon something—that can only indicate that it is asleep.

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Therefore every challenge to it is an experience of waking up for a moment, to go to sleep again. So every challenge and response is an indication of a mind that is asleep.

Experience dulls the mind. It does not enlighten the mind because that experience is the result of a response to a challenge, and that response is from the background of what you have already known. So every experience only strengthens what you have known, and therefore there is no freedom from what you have known. (*Talk in Bombay, 11 March 1962*)

Experience—a dividing factor

Experience becomes a dividing factor in our human relationship; experience is a way of deception. If I have experienced something, I cling to it, I do not go into the whole problem of the process of experiencing but, because I have experienced, that is sufficient and I cling to it; thereby I impose, through that experience, self-deception. Our difficulty is that each of us is so identified with a particular belief, with a particular form or method of bringing about happiness, economic adjustment, that our mind is captured by that, and we are incapable of going deeper into the problem; therefore we desire to remain aloof individually in our particular ways, beliefs and experiences. (*The First and Last Freedom, chapter 18*)

Experience—a process of pleasure and pain

Ignorance is strengthened by experience because experience is cumulative, additive. Experience is essential at one level as function, but experience which is cumulative in the sense that it strengthens the mind in its centre of self-interest only furthers ignorance, and that ignorance becomes what we call knowledge.

If you watch the operation of your own mind, you will see that it is always translating the new in terms of the old, that is, in terms of previous experience, which in turn is the result of your particular culture, of your beliefs, of your education, of your conditioning. So experience is never a liberating factor. Experience only strengthens the centre of ignorance. After all, experiencing is a process of pain and pleasure, sorrow and joy, denial and acceptance. That is all we know. That process of experiencing is going on all the time, and without understanding it, the mind will never come to that state in which it is fully active, but in which there is no experiencing. (*Talk in New Delhi, 11 March 1959*)

Are experiences enriching?

Our difficulty is not the understanding of the present. Our difficulty is our attachment to the past or to the future. So we have to investigate why it is that we are attached. Why is the past so important to old people, as the future is to others? Why are we so attached to it? Because we think, do we not, that the experiences have enriched us; so the past has significance. When one was young, one caught a light on the sea, a glimmer; there was a freshness which has faded now. But at least one can remember that glimmer, that extraordinary sense of elan, that feeling of otherness, of youth. So one goes back and lives there. That is, one lives in a dead experience. It is over, it is dead, it is gone; yet one gives it life by thinking about it, living in it. But it is a dead thing. So when one does that, one is also dead in the present—like so many people are—or in the future. In other words, one is afraid to be nothing in the present, to be simple, to be sensitive to the present, so one wants to be enriched by one's

experiences of yesterday. Is that enrichment? Are the experiences of yesterday enriching? (*Talk in Ojai, 24 July 1949*)

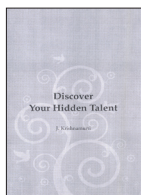
Belief begets experience

Through experience you hope to touch the truth of your belief, to prove it to yourself, but this belief conditions your experience. It isn't that the experience comes to prove the belief, but rather that the belief begets the experience. Your belief in God will give you the experience of what you call God. You will always experience what you believe and nothing else. And this invalidates your experience. The Christian will see virgins, angels, and Christ, and the Hindu will see similar deities in extravagant plurality. The Muslim, the Buddhist, the Jew, and the Communist are the same. Belief conditions its own supposed proof. (*The Urgency of Change, chapter on Belief*)

How an experience can wither away

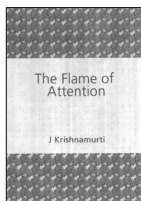
We give a name, a symbol to a sensation, to an experience calling it pleasant and unpleasant, meritorious or unworthy, good or bad, right or wrong, based on value, to fix the sensation in memory or to communicate. This gives it permanency and continuity. You must give continuity to an experience, otherwise the experiencer, the 'me' the desire, the thought ceases. The recognition, the registration, the giving of a name, a symbol to a feeling, to a sensation, to an experience is instantaneous. The 'me', the centre, the memory instantly recognizes the sensation and labels in order to give itself continuity and stability. If you did not fix the sensation, the feeling in memory, the experience withers away. (*Talk in Bombay, 29 February 1948*) ■

New releases



Booklets for Young People: Three booklets in this series—*Does School Prepare You for Life?; Have Strong Feelings: Don't be Frightened of Them;* and

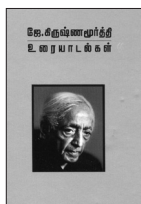
Discover Your Hidden Talent—are under print. They have been drawn from Krishnamurti's talks to students of the Rajghat Besant School in Varanasi and the Rishi Valley School, Andhra Pradesh. As the titles themselves suggest, the booklets address the concerns of young people in high schools and junior colleges, and Krishnamurti's challenge to them is bound to have a lasting influence on them. Price: Rs 10 each.



The Flame of Attention: This book, which has been out of print for a long time, is now available. Containing a selection of nine talks given by Krishnamurti in 1981 and 1982 in India, USA, UK, and Switzerland, this new edition runs to 150 pages and is yet to be priced.



Sambhashanangal: Malayalam translation of *Conversations* by P. M. Narayanan. Published by Mathrubhumi Books and available in all sales centres of Mathrubhumi in Kerala. This sleek, 80-page Demy edition is priced at Rs 50.



Uraiyadalgal: Tamil translation of *Conversations* by S. Rajeswari. Published by Narmadha Padhippagam, Chennai, this attractive hard-bound pocket edition runs to 198 pages and is priced at Rs 70.

Booklets in Oriya: KFI's Cuttack Centre has brought out five booklets in Oriya specifically for students on the following themes: Fear (*Bhaya*); Ambition (*Uchhavilasa*), Attention (*Manajoga*), Pride (*Garba*) and Love (*Bhala Paiba*)

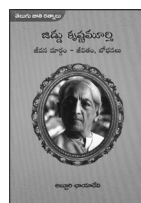
Five more are to be released shortly: Mind (*Mana*), Desire (*Kamana*), Awareness (*Sajagata*),

Discipline (*Srunkhala*), Education (*Sikhya*). Price Rs 5 each.

An Oriya translation of *Conversations* has also been released.

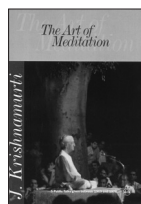
A six-page newsletter in Oriya *Jibaba Katha* was released in May and is mailed to nearly 3000 people. It will be published in January, May, and September.

For details, contact: Cuttack Centre, KFI, Purighat Road, Upper Telenga Bazaar, Cuttack - 753 009, Orissa. E-mail: kficuttackcentre@sify.com., Tel: 0671-6417990



Biography in Telugu: *Jiddu Krishnamurti* is the title of a biography of K in Telugu, written by Abburi Chaya Devi. A brief and eminently readable introduction

to Krishnamurti's life, this biography, which carries a large number of photographs, has been published by C. P. Brown Academy, 53 Nagarajuna Hills, Panjagutta, Hyderabad—500082. Pp. 152. Price Rs 95



The Art of Meditation: An MP3 (audio) containing five talks on meditation. These talks, given between 1969 and 1978, show how Krishnamurti approaches the same

theme from quite different angles, so that each talk is fresh and insightful.

1. Meditation is Not Different from Daily Life: Talk in London on 23 March 1969

2. Find Out What Meditation is Not: Talk in New Delhi on 24 December 1970

3. Meditation Implies the Ending of All Conflict: Talk in Ojai, California, 17 April 1977

4. The Art of Meditation: Talk in San Francisco on 25 March 1975

5. Silence That is Not Created by Thought: Talk in Brockwood Park, England, on 3 September 1978 Price Rs 100.

Back-numbers of Jeevita Yatra:

We have a large number of back issues of the newsletter in Malayalam (*Jeevita Yatra*); we have made sets of the available issues. (Kindly note that we have exhausted the stocks of our old English, Tamil, and Telugu newsletters.) If you would like to distribute these in your locality and in educational institutions, we will be happy to send them to you free of cost. Kindly specify the approximate number of copies of each that you would like to have.

Redesigned website: To know more about the activities of the Study Centre at Vasanta Vihar and the activities of the KFI headquarters, visit www.kfionline.org. This website has been recast and redesigned completely to make it more user-friendly. It has links to all our schools and study centres, besides information about our books and DVDs and regular programmes.

Whom to contact in Vasanta Vihar

As you know, Vasanta Vihar, the headquarters of the Foundation, has several units, and to enable people to make the right contacts, we give the following e-mails and for what they should be used.

1. Information about KFI and Foundations abroad, financial and administrative matters, donations, etc: kfi@touchtelindia.net & kfihq@md2.vsnl.net.in. (For particulars regarding various schools, contact the schools directly—visit www.kfionline.org)
2. Information about The Study, week-end retreats, video screenings, other programmes, besides accommodation at Vasanta Vihar: info@kfionline.org
3. Information about availability, and purchase, of books (English, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam) and DVDs, subscriptions to *KFI Bulletin* and *Journal of the Krishnamurti Schools*, despatch of newsletters, catalogues, and brochures, and other trade enquiries: publications@kfionline.org.
4. Mailing List update—addition, alteration, deletion: info@kfionline.org
5. Editorial policies (English books, translations in Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam, and related matters: editor@kfionline.org
6. Outreach programmes and donation of books to individuals and institutions: outreachkfi@gmail.com
7. Archives: vvarchives@airtelmail.in

News & Notes

KFI Annual Gathering 2011

Krishnamurti Foundation India's Annual Gathering will be held this time at its Sahyadri Centre near Pune. The Gathering, which is open to all, is meant to help us re-examine our life and share it with others. Talks, group dialogues, screening of Krishnamurti videos, time for study and reflection will be the chief features of the event. Details are as follows:

Arrival of participants: 19 November (Saturday)

Gathering programmes: 20, 21, 22, & 23 (end by lunch time on the last day.)

Departure of participants: 23 (Wednesday) after lunch.

For more details contact: Krishnamurti Study Centre, Tiwai hill, Rajgurunagar (Khed), Pune, Maharashtra - 410 513. Tel: (02135) 284278, 284346, 288348. E-mail: kscskfi@gmail.com

Study Retreats

The Krishnamurti Study Centre, Valley School, Bangalore, offers residential retreats every month. The dates and themes are:

June 9-12: Do I know myself?

July 7-10: Harmony in relationship

August 11-14: To listen, to look, to learn!

September 8-11: What is right action?

November 10-13: Why do I resist change?

December 8-11: Freedom from fear

December 23-30: Youth Gathering: What are you doing with your life?

January 25-29: Silence, stillness, meditation.(4 days)

February 9-12: The ending of conflict.

March 8-11: Freedom, responsibility & discipline.

April 7-10: Karnataka Gathering: What is a religious mind?

For all the retreats, the number of participants will be 12. Each person will be allotted a cottage. Accommodation will be shared during the Karnataka and Youth gatherings. Suggested contributions

vary. Please get in touch with the Study Centre for more details. Participants can come before the retreat or stay on afterwards on additional payment. For all programmes, pick-up from the city and drop back have been arranged, the timings for which will be specified before the events.

Visit www.kfistudy.org for further information on the Study Centre. Write to the Study Centre Coordinator, The Valley School Campus, 17th km Kanakpura Road, Thatguni Post, Bangalore—560 062. E-mail: kfistudy@gmail.com. Phone: 080-2842-5790. Registration forms can be downloaded from the website.

Retreats at Rajghat

The Krishnamurti Centre, Rajghat, Varanasi, is organizing the following Study Retreats and Gatherings:

Learning and Creativity—(Hindi-English Retreat for young people and educators)—13 to 17 August

The Need to Understand Oneself—Public Gathering in Hindi—30 October to 3 November

Love, Beauty & Death—Study Retreat in English—17 to 21 December

The programmes include silence sessions, group dialogues, video screenings, and nature walks. The number of participants is limited to 25 for study retreats. For the Gathering in Hindi, the number can go up to 150. Participants may reach by evening on the day of arrival and leave after lunch on the day of departure. The minimum contribution for a retreat/gathering is Rs.1600 per person. For registration and further details, please contact The Coordinator, The Krishnamurti Centre, Rajghat Fort, Varanasi 221 001. E-mail: kcentrevns@gmail.com Tel.: 0542-2441289

Week-end Retreats at Vasanta Vihar

Vasanta Vihar, Chennai, holds residential retreats every

month; generally held from Friday evening till Sunday night, these retreats consist of dialogues among participants, video-screenings, time for individual study, and so on. Each retreat can accommodate about 25 participants. The two forthcoming retreats are from 26 to 28 August and from 30 September to 2 October. For more details, contact The Study, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Vasanta Vihar, 124 Greenways Road, Chennai-600 028.

E-mail: thestudykfi@yahoo.co.in.

Events in Bhopal and Indore

A programme around Krishnamurti's teachings was held in Bhopal, at the Chinmaya Mission Centre, Saket Nagar, and was attended by more than 20 people. It was not publicly announced but was held by sending out individual invitations. Books and audio and video CDs were made available for sale. A video presentation was made to a small group subsequently at Gautam Nagar where the Hindi version of *The Challenge of Change* was screened. Attempts are on to create a Krishnamurti Study Circle in Bhopal by those who had organized the programmes. For more details, contact Prof. Mukesh Shrivatsav, National Law University, A58 Fine Avenue, Phase II, Nayapura, Kolar Road, Bhopal—462 044. E-mail: mukesharunachala@gmail.com. Cell: 99770 16848.

In Indore, a programme was held at Shakuntal Premises, AB Road, on 13 March. Around 50 people participated in the video programme followed by a dialogue among about 30 participants. The Indore Plus supplement of *The Times of India* gave good coverage of the event. Books and CDs were available for sale. Here also a Study Circle and a sales outlet are taking shape. For details, contact Mr Sameer Golwelkar, 28/29 Royal Residency, Pipliyana, Indore – 452015. Cell: 98260 47187
E-mail: sameer@orientwireropes.com.

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K Library in Beijing

A Krishnamurti English Lending Library has been started in Beijing, and KFI is happy to associate with it—last year it donated to the library a large collection of Krishnamurti books and DVDs. Set up by one Ms. Mei Lan Frame, it is located in a small, traditional courtyard in a historic section of the city. Membership of the library is free, and books can be checked out for free as well. The aim of the library is to have a resource centre mainly for the English books of Krishnamurti, though it would also be possible to buy Chinese translations too. Because of strict public security laws in China regarding what foreigners (the lady is an American) can do in China, the library will not be a place for dialogues, though there are Chinese groups that meet regularly to discuss the teachings, says a report from the Library. ■

Gujarati Translations of Krishnamurti's works

Jeevan Mimansa – 1 (Commentaries on Living–1) Rs. 200/-

Gnat Visarjan (Freedom from the Known) Rs.20/- (Subsidized edition)

Mukta Jeevan (The First and Last Freedom) Rs.180/-

Parampara Ane Kranti (Tradition and Revolution) Rs. 100/-

Shikshan Ane Jeevan Rahasya (Education and the Significance of Life) Rs. 60/-

Aapna Astitvanu Swarup (Washington D.C. Talks 1985) Rs. 30/-

Sangharsha Vagar Jivavu (To Live Without Conflict, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Swa Ni Olakh (On Knowing Oneself, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Dukhano Anta (The Ending of Sorrow, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Sambandh Etle Shun? (What is a Relationship?, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Samasya Shi Chhe? (What is a Problem?, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Sukh Vishe Shikhie (Learning about Pleasure, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-



The Bookshop at Vasanta Vihar, Chennai, was renovated recently to make it more spacious in order to accommodate the increasing number of books in English, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. (Note that translations in the other Indian languages are sold by the other Centres of KFI.) The renovated Bookshop, inaugurated formally in May, is also the main outlet for sale of DVDs and MP3s, besides despatch of the KFI Bulletin and the free newsletters in English, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam. For catalogues and other details, contact publications@kfionline.org or visit www.kfionline.org

Bhayni Samasya (The Problem of Fear, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Shu Salamati Jevi Koi Chij Chhe Khari? (Is There Such a Thing as Security?, Pocket Edition) Rs. 13/-

Agnatne Avakarva Nikhalas Thau (On Being Open to the Unknown, Pocket Edition) Rs.13/-

Jeevanni Akhandata (The Wholeness of Life) Rs. 75/-

Tamej Vishwa Chho (You are the World) Rs. 60/-

Ahambhavamathi Mukti (Surely, Freedom from the Self) Rs. 55/-

Pragnano Panth (The Way of Intelligence) Rs.83/-

Map Vinanu Mann (Mind without Measure) Rs. 110/-

J. Krishnamurti Vyakti, Sandesh Ane Tame (J. Krishnamurti: The Man, the Message, and You) Rs. 35/-

DVD with Gujarati Dubbing: Parivartanano Padkar (The Challenge of Change) Rs. 200/-

These can be ordered from Krishnamurti Foundation India, Mumbai Centre, Himmat Niwas, 31 Dongersey Road, Malabar Hill, Mumbai—400 006.

Tel: 022-23633856.

E-mail: kfimumbai@gmail.com. ■

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