



A Concise Biography of Jiddu Krishnamurti: An Indian Philosopher of Contemporary Society

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Abstract: Jiddu Krishnamurti was a spiritual Indian philosopher of contemporary society. In this essay, I will describe the most important milestones of his life, particularly the main works (talks, books, videos) performed by him in the field of meditation, relationships and education.

Keywords: Spiritual Indian Philosopher, Initiation (Mystical Union), Meditation, Relationships, Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born on 12th May 1895, in the town of Mandanapalle, in Andhra Pradesh from a family of Brahmins who spoke the Telegu. He was the eighth son of Jiddu Narianiah (father) and Jiddu Sanjeevamma (mother) who had eleven children. His mother died when he was ten years old, while his father worked in the Revenue Department of the British administration and was a member of Theosophical Society [1].

In 1907, after retired from his job, Narianiah became a clerk in the Theosophical Society, in Adyar. During this time, Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya were tutored by the theosophists Charles Lead beater and Annie Besant. In 1910, in his room of Adyar, Krishnamurti went through a spiritual experience designated by "Initiation of the Mystic Birth" by theosophists [2]. Meanwhile, the Theosophical Society inaugurated an organization named by «Order of the Star» that it had the purpose of preparing the coming of the next *World Teacher* that was identified as being Krishnamurti himself. So, he learnt several subjects, such as, meditation, theosophy and foreign languages. Then, Krishnamurti and Nitya went to England in order to complete their training. However, Krishnamurti was unable to enter both at Oxford University and at University of London. Then, he decided to move to Paris in order to improve the proficiency in French. After this short stay, Krishnamurti returned to England where he met Mary Lutyens who would become his main biographer and friend [3]. In 1922, Krishnamurti and his brother returned to India (Adyar) in order to give some conferences and write some articles to the journal *Herald of the Star* published by the «Order of the Star». Furthermore, during the involvement with the Theosophical Society and the «Order of the Star», Alcyone (pseudonym of Jiddu Krishnamurti) published some works, such as *At the Feet of the Master* [4], *Education as Service* [5], *The Immortal Friend (collections of poetry)* [6], *From Darkness to Light: poems and parables (1923-1931)* [7], *The Song of Life* [8] and many others.

In 1922, Krishnamurti traveled to Sydney where he responded to an "inner spiritual call" that led him to perceive the purpose of the training he had had up to that moment and the immediate objectives of his life [9]. Then, he moved to California (Ojai) which became his place of residence (known as "Arya Vihara") where he went through an intense spiritual awakening designated by "Initiation of the Mystical Union or Clairvoyance" by theosophists [10]. During this spiritual "process" of Kundalini awakening, Krishnamurti himself saw the "Presence" as described in his writings: «...I have drunk at the clear and pure waters and my thirst was appeased. I have seen the Light...I have drunk of the fountain of Joy and eternal Beauty...». Thus, the year of 1922 is an important milestone in Krishnamurti's life because it marked the beginning of his life as a teacher and spiritual philosopher.

This mystical experience continued until 1929 and is designated by “Initiation of the Sacred Mysteries” by theosophists [11].

In 1924, Krishnamurti made his first talks in Benares (India), Ommen (Netherland) and Ojai (United States of America) where he provided the audience with the right tools to *Life in freedom* [12], such as “Be in love with Life”, “Stand in your own strength” and many other topics. So, in 1929, he dissolved the «Order of the Star» and disassociate himself from the Theosophical Society because he claimed that everything that matters to man is within himself, not in any “guru” or social and political authority [13]. This was what the man has to deal in order to know the real Self [14], having expressed this idea by a “core” statement [15] described as «*Truth is a Pathless Land: man cannot come to it through any organization, through any creed, ...He has to find it through the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, through observation, and not through intellectual analysis or introspective dissection. Man has built in himself images as a sense of security – religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs...These are the causes of our problems for they divide man from man in every relationship*» [16].

From 1930 to 1970, Krishnamurti traveled around the world in a regular way, giving lectures on several subjects. The general teachings of Krishnamurti state that man is conditioned by the emotions and thoughts of fear due to innate conditions and by what is learned throughout life. So, the past is the memory of ancient patterns, while the present is the opportunity to change them in order to live in freedom, as stated before [17]. Then, he defended that the future depends on our current actions [18].

I have to refer that during part of the years of World War II, Krishnamurti did not speak publicly [19] but he established a friendship with Aldous Huxley with the purpose of contributing to peace in the world [20]. In 1964, Krishnamurti met Mary Taylor Zymbalist and asked her to be a trustee of the schools that he had inaugurated in some parts of the world and to write about his life. This work was carried out, even after the death of Krishnamurti [21].

From 1970 to 1985, in the last stage of his life, Krishnamurti continued to travel (particularly) in India, Europe and United States of America. In this regard, I want to refer a series of ten totally free conferences that were given in Saanen, Switzerland, that aroused the interest of the scientific community, particularly physics and psychologists [22].

In 1985, Jiddu Krishnamurti made a speech to the United Nations, having been awarded the Peace medal [23]. Meanwhile, he made his last talk, in Madras, where he linked science/technology and philosophy/meditation in relation to the nature of Creation of the universe. So, he said that «...*the Origin is nameless...that's the most sacred thing in life...if you think straight, logically...you can't enter into this world, into the world of creation*».

At last, in the last months of his life, he made deep changes in all institutions created by him around the world in order to live and practice his own teaching [24]. He died on 17th February 1986 and his remains were cremated in Ventura, California [25].

2. METHODS

In this essay about the biography of Jiddu Krishnamurti, I collected and analyzed the main books and works on this topic that are available in libraries in order to be useful to the reader who aims to have just an idea of this subject, but maintaining the rigor of my research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, I will present the results of my investigation about the Jiddu Krishnamurti's most important works in the fields of meditation, human relationships and education.

In the field of *meditation and self-reflection*, I want to refer three books entitled *Commentaries on Living* [26], where Krishnamurti claimed that to find what really matters in life, we must go beyond the limits of ordinary thought/emotion. This topic is deepened in the book entitled *Meditations* [27], where he claimed that meditation is a dynamic process of self-observation that allows the man to transform himself in order to express new values [28] that might be useful to society [29].

In relation to *human relationships*, I want to refer the *Complete Teachings Project* [30] that are a collected work series on conversations, talks and writings carried out by Krishnamurti, between 1933-1967. In these talks, Krishnamurti highlighted the importance of the relationships as a mirror of

personality (described in the lectures *The Mirror of Relationship* and *The Observer is the Observed*) in which the personality is revealed (described in the lectures *The Origin of Conflict*, *A Light to Yourself*, *Crisis in Consciousness* and *A Psychological Revolution*). After this, meditation and self-knowledge (described in the lectures *The New Mind* and *The Answer is in the Problem*) are the basis for “right” love and clear action (described in the lectures *What is the Right Action?*, *Tradition and Creativity* and *There is no Thinker. Only Thought*).

Furthermore, Krishnamurti also wrote other books on relationships, such as *In Freedom, Love and Action* [31], where he also pointed out to love others without attachment because relationships are just a personal learning that once apprehended, we move to another stage of self-knowledge. Moreover, in the book entitled *On Relationships* [32], he claimed that the way we handle personal crises and relationships links us to the problems of all people. This topic is deepened in the book entitled *To be Human* [33], where Krishnamurti stated that through right relationships (to take care of woman/man, children, do the job in the right way), we could realize the purpose of our embodied soul on Earth. At last, in the book entitled *Love and Freedom: Approaching a Mystery* [34], he stated that love without expecting to receive anything in return is a great Mystery that makes no sense for ordinary people.

On the other hand, the field of *education* was also a major area of service for Krishnamurti. In fact, I have to mention that Krishnamurti founded several schools with the purpose to develop three main aims: holistic knowledge, concern for humanity and the environment, religious and scientific connection [35]. Moreover, in the early 1970's, he devoted himself to the writing of a set of manuscripts, called *Letters to Schools*, which were later compiled in the form of several books, such as, *Education and the Significance of Life* [36], where he claimed that education have to give an understanding of the whole human being (mind and heart) and not just a mere acquisition of intellectual skills (technological, scientific). This topic is deepened in the book entitled *Beginnings of Learning* [37], where Krishnamurti made the distinction between knowledge (linked with intellectual skills) and learning (linked with transformation of mind) on education. In this regard, I have to refer the book entitled *Holistic Education* that was the result of conversations between Krishnamurti and his friend Scott Forbes, where a holistic teaching for the human being is proposed by them [38].

Another book written by Krishnamurti was *Unconditioning and Education* [39], where he proposed a new set of values in education that might promote the broadening of the student's mind, such as creativity. Moreover, in the book entitled *The whole movement of life is learning* [40], Krishnamurti considered that in the process of learning both scholar and pupil might have the opportunity to explore the outer world (of knowledge) and the inner world (of mind) in order to unfold the full human potential that allow a truly service to society.

Furthermore, Krishnamurti also performed some dialogues with scholars of religion, physicists, psychiatrist, Buddhist monks, philosophers, and other people. In this regard, I want to mention the eighteen dialogues between Krishnamurti and Allan Anderson, scholar of Religious Studies at San Diego University [41], where both agreed that misunderstanding of Eastern and Western Holy books have not contributed to solve the concrete problems of mankind. I have also to refer some conversations between Krishnamurti and the physicist David Bohm [42], where they claimed that the situation of mankind on the Earth (war, pollution, etc.) in contemporary society is the result of the choice that humanity has made over time. This topic is deepened in another set of dialogues between them [43], where they suggest that if humanity really wants to get out of the current situation (referred to above), it will have to change its values to more altruistic ones [44].

So, I also want to refer five discussions that Krishnamurti had with Buddhist scholar Walpola Rahula and Zen scholar Irmgard Schloegl, where they focused on the importance of human consciousness and its potential for transformation in order to find a solution to solve the problems of human being on Earth [45]. Krishnamurti also referred to the importance of creativity in science and generally in any work of creation [46]. In this regard, I have to mention the dialogues that he had with his friend Popul Jayakar on biological survival, ageing and renewal of brain cells [47].

He also performed a set of question-and-answer sessions with a variety of professionals, such as the philosopher Iris Murdoch, the physician Jonas Salk, the journalist Bernard Levin and all the others professionals mentioned before, on the ultimate purpose of the human being [48]. Many others have benefited from the teaching of Krishnamurti, such as, the physicist Fritjof Capra, the physician Deepak Chopra, the biologist Rupert Sheldrake, the psychiatrist Carl Rogers, the mythologist Joseph Campbell, and many others.

At last, I want to refer that some authors claim that Krishnamurti had some healing skills in non-conventional medicine, although he referred to it as a secondary activity in relation to his main work in teaching. In fact, he defended that being cured psychologically (to be inwardly true, uncorrupted) by a spiritual teacher is as important as healing the physical body by a physician because psychological health affects the body[49].

4. CONCLUSIONS

Jiddu Krishnamurti was a spiritual Indian philosopher of contemporary society. His philosophy can not be identified and classified as belonging to a given "school of philosophy" [50]. In fact, Krishnamurti is considered the "perfect flower of humanity" by some authors [51], but who defended the "non-deification" of personality. In this regard, I have to mention that he referred to his teachings as "the" teachings and not "my" teachings. This is where the innovative and originality of his message lies and which was briefly explained in this essay [52]. Furthermore, I have to mention that the thematic contents of his talks were published in books, videos and other works (some of them mentioned in this essay) [53], first under the patronage of "Star Publishing Trust" or SPT (financed by D. Rajagopal), then by "Krishnamurti Writings Inc" or KWINC and currently by Krishnamurti Foundations [54].

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- [53] In these References, I want to refer some other Krishnamurti's works, such as, the «Books» entitled *Awakening of Intelligence*, *On Truth*, as well as some «Audios and Videos» entitled *The Nature of Love*, *Washington Talks*. His teachings are published in 75 books, 700 audiocassettes, and 1200 videocassettes.
- [54] There are 4 main *Krishnamurti Foundations*, namely, Krishnamurti Foundation of India, Chennai, India; Krishnamurti Foundation Trust, Brockwood Park, Bramdean, England, United Kingdom; Krishnamurti Foundation of America, Ojai, California, USA; Fundacion Krishnamurti Latino americana, Barcelona, Spain. Information about the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust is available at: <http://www.kfoundation.org>, while the information about the other Krishnamurti Foundations are available at: <http://www.jkrishnamurti.org/world-wide-information/foundation.php>.

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