

**J. Krishnamurti -  
Awareness in Action -  
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**Introduction**

Apart from Krishnamurti's deep insight into questions of spiritual life, his original approach to them has been a great attraction to all earnest and open-minded seekers. He does not base his teaching on any accepted dogma, any sacred book, or the doctrine of any reputed teacher. What he explains therefore is open to all religions, sects or parties; and this circumstance alone entitles him to be respected as a 'world teacher', as he was known in a different context. Though no authorities are cited in support of his teaching, none can complain that he builds on sand. No intricate or controversial scientific or philosophical theories indeed form the basis of his teaching; God, Soul and Immortality, which are the stock-in-trade of spiritual teachers do not figure very greatly in his talks. On the other hand, he depends for proof on what every one is directly acquainted with, namely, his own mind. Even here, his appeal is not to rare qualities of the mind, such as flashes of genius, imaginative conceits of poets, or visions of mystics. He draws pointed attention to some of the fundamental defects or deficiencies of our ordinary mind and shows how we are being led astray, mainly because we are unconscious of their existence. As soon as we become aware of these defects, all faulty habits of thought that owed their existence to our ignorance will vanish. 'Understanding' illumines and has its own way of prevailing against ignorance. We have merely to let it work smoothly; we do not need any particular effort, discipline or method, thought out by ourselves or suggested by others.

Why does Krishnamurti get annoyed when listeners make a demand on him for a method; when they ask him *how* his teaching, or any part of it, is to be applied in practice? He is at great pains to explain in detail how a problem originates and develops; he lays bare the whole anatomy of the problem, so that the very

sight of the exposed parts, their mutual dispositions and inter-relations would explain what had otherwise appeared a confused and irresolvable tangle. The problem, according to him, only needed exposure and understanding; when that is forthcoming, no further solution is needed and none should be expected; the laying bare is itself the solution; " the solution is *in* the problem not outside it".

Take for example the problem of nationalism, that gives rise to hatred among different sections of humanity. Krishnamurti's analysis of this hatred is that it is the product of our partial, conditioned mind. The nationalist is prejudiced in favour of his country, that appears on the map painted in its distinctive colour; he has been taught to be proud of its flag, and gets roused to heights of enthusiasm, and sacrifice at the sound of its national anthem. Unknowingly he gets conditioned *to* these habits; and a conditioned mind, Krishnamurti points out, is petty, limited and partial; it takes note of but a portion of the world and its inhabitants and loses sight of the rest of humanity; if foreigners enter the mind at all, they only evoke feelings of opposition and conflict. The problems of nationalism now appear in a new light; instead of being problems of diplomacy and war, they now appear as modes of working of a conditioned, partial mind. If the mind were free from partial views, there would be no hatred between nations and no problem of nationalism. For understanding the problems of nationalism, therefore, we must know how mind becomes partial and gets conditioned to past training and past prejudices. The ordinary listener, however, is not wholly satisfied with this explanation. He takes it to mean that instead of a partial mind he must have a full mind; and he asks: 'how am I to acquire a full mind? How should I develop a wide international mentality ?' Such questions of ' how' or method greatly annoy Krishnamurti and we must inquire why listeners think them to be legitimate questions but Krishnamurti dismisses them as just stupid.

One broad explanation is that Krishnamurti, like the ancient Greeks, led by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, has implicit faith in clarity of knowledge or wisdom. What we call virtue, to be

steadily and progressively cultivated, is to the Greeks 'knowledge' to be obtained by definition or greater clarification. If we fall a prey to vice or temptation, it is because of the obscurity and ignorance ever lurking in our minds. The common man and many modern thinkers have lost this confidence in the supreme effectiveness of reason. We are influenced, they say, by feelings of pleasure and pain, by strong emotions and passions, which greatly sway our will,—the executive part of our mind. Once the will gains a strong momentum, it cannot be dislodged from its urges and decisions, however clear our knowledge, however full our analysis, however sound our reasoning. Against this belief of the common man, supported by many moralists and psychologists, Krishnamurti is firm in his reliance on reason or 'understanding' as he calls it. Understanding for him has a wider meaning than the 'reason' of the Greeks; it comes from awareness which it will be our aim to study in the following pages. Unless we fully share this confidence with him, his teaching will have very little meaning for us.

We usually dramatise the activity of our mind and consider will and emotion as the chief villains of the piece, constantly trying to undo the heroic and noble work of our reason and intellect. In Krishnamurti's view there are no such independent forces battling with each other. There is only one force working actively in the mind, the force of wisdom, truth, or reality properly understood; and *there is no counter-force*. Truth comes to us, not by accumulation of ideas or knowledge, but by understanding the whole process of the working of our mind. If truth sometimes fails us, it is entirely due to some trace of ignorance that may have lurked behind. And ignorance is no positive force; it is mere privation or absence of positive truth; not a counter-force but an absence, of force. Like light, truth alone illuminates; darkness cannot put out the light, nor ignorance truth; they are only absence of light and absence of understanding; mere negations. Will and emotions are merely forms of ignorance, having neither the status nor the power of a positive active force.

What then is wisdom or understanding? And how is ig-

norance to be equated with will and emotions ? To Krishnamurti, knowledge means self-knowledge, which does not mean knowledge of some transcendental Self, or some mysterious Atman, but a clear perception of our *own mind in action*. Again it is not introspection, because introspection gives us knowledge only of our conscious mind and leaves out much the largest part of the mind, which lies below the threshold of consciousness. Self-knowledge to Krishnamurti means knowledge of the whole mind, conscious as well as unconscious. The difficulty, of knowing the whole mind is that the unconscious does not come to us as an independent factor capable of being separately observed, but as a mass or volume of overtones lending colour to our *conscious* experiences. The unconscious which lends the overtones, pleasant or unpleasant, is an enormous region, made up of 'scars' of memory, remnants of past experiences, past training, past contacts with men, objects and books, our past *thoughts* and reasonings and even the whole weight of the racial memories we may have acquired in the course of our biological evolution. The unconscious can be distinguished, but not separated, from the conscious; it cannot therefore be introspected like our *conscious* experiences. The unconscious works secretly, below the surface; and our conscious mind cannot, by any activity of its own, reach the depths of the unconscious or understand its ways of working.

The unconscious includes, *not only memories of former facts* and events observed by us, — not only 'factual memories' — but also memories of our past values, or our past judgements of good and evil — the 'psychological memories' as named by Krishnamurti. Factual memories create *no* difficulties for us; we do not nurse them unduly and, except in our reminiscent moods, rarely try to revive them. Usually we do not 'identify' ourselves with them but leave them to work out their own destiny; and then they usually make for the success of *our ends or purposes*, whether implanted in us by nature (e.g. a child learning to walk or speak), or selected by our own choice (e.g. cycling, motor driving etc.). Factual memories, thus left to themselves, work *selectively for our success in acquiring skills*, including skill in reasoning or thinking. It is memories of value judgements, our

approvals and condemnations, our subsequent jealousies and hatreds, our pleasures and displeasures that make all the trouble for us. Not only do they affect our choice of means but they also shape our ends, in ways we do not know, or, if we knew, are not in a hurry to own up. Willy-nilly, our life is shaped by the unconscious in respect of both our means and ends. In fact the whole of our emotional life seems to be the outcome of our unconscious value judgements. As the unconscious never seems to take leave of us and always works secretly, we hardly know how we really stand with ourselves.

As Krishnamurti puts it, our mind is entirely conditioned by past psychological memories. We hardly perceive objects, or take note of persons, but are prejudiced or conditioned by past judgements. My adjoining country may have the same natural features as mine, but I consider mine as glorious while the other is hateful to me. The reason obviously is that I do not see the two countries 'as they really are', but see them through glasses coloured by past value judgements. But it is exactly these values that we term emotions, desires or conations. Emotion and will are not separate faculties to be set against intellect and understanding; they are merely the intellect clouded by the unconscious. It is therefore irrelevant to ask how I am to cultivate my will, or control my emotions. If we could bring into light the unconscious that was hidden below the threshold, emotions and desires would be laid bare and we would see things truly, 'as they are'. For example, we would not see our neighbouring country with a malignant eye, but would rather notice the similar natural features and the common humanity between neighbours and, besides them and detached from them, would be marshalled out memories of our past condemnations. We would then immediately weigh the points that are actually common against what are but memories of the past. We can then discern the true from the false and it is irrelevant to ask how I am to achieve the truth.

Truth is unmistakable when it is fully presented to our view, — this is the basis of Krishnamurti's teaching about awareness. When the working of our mind at any moment is split up into its constituents, namely, a present perception and overtones un-

consciously added to it by memories of past experiences, we have simply to be aware of the factors, merely to hold them before our mind, 'without doing a thing to them'; i.e. we should neither praise nor condemn them, we should not try to alter them, should not desire to achieve the opposite of them if they are 'bad', or carry them on if they are 'good' or pleasant; in other words, it should be 'choiceless awareness'. Making any of the above 'choices' only means inviting more activity of the conditioned mind, adding to the already troublesome overtones of memory, and making confusion worse confounded. On the other hand, by our merely keeping quiet, 'truth will have its own action' and prevail against falsehood. This disposes of the objection, sometimes raised, that awareness is strenuous, or is as difficult to 'practise', as any of the traditional forms of meditation. The objection would hold if awareness needed effort; but Krishnamurti specifically tells us that awareness is completely effortless; the presence of the slightest trace of effort implies the presence "of choice; and awareness with choice is no awareness.

Effortless, indeed, but not lazy. The mind that holds its own workings in full view is quiet, unaffected by overtones, now that they are not allowed to trouble in secret. Though it is quiet, it is not 'the quiet of death'; on the other hand, being free from the conflicts and contradictions attendant on the overtones, it has an extremely clear and vivid outlook. It is alert and prompt in detecting and excluding the slightest trace of conditioning. It therefore keeps clear of all disturbances and is sensitive to truth, in a manner, and to a degree, unattainable by our conditioned mind, full as it is of its own disturbances. It is not a question of gaining sensibility which it did not possess, but one of recovering and retaining what already was there, and not allowing it to be obscured by accidental circumstances or overlaid memories. The question *how* we are to be aware does not arise.

Only if we are passively and effortlessly aware, i.e. take care not to agitate the already agitated mind, will the unconscious rise to the surface and show up how it has conditioned the mind. Only if we are choicelessly aware, i.e. do not try to condemn and change, or justify and continue, will our mind gain in sensitivity

or power to discriminate between truth and falsehood. And we may add that only if we remain in the state of awareness, i.e. a state in which we see truth as truth and false as false, shall our mind be transformed. Then there will be a true revolution, not a reform in details which will keep alive the seeds of decay, but one that is basic, in which exposure to light has brought in health and has arrested further deterioration. The question how to transform is as irrelevant as the other questions, of 'how' we have discussed. The transformed state- is a state of 'being', not a state of 'becoming'; it is not an ideal, an end to be desired and achieved. In the state that distinguishes the true from the false, truth will triumph of its own accord, our only concern being to see that falsehood does not creep in sideways or unawares. Transformation takes place spontaneously or not at all; and to retain that state, even for a short while, constant vigilance will have to be exercised against clandestine intrusions. The ways of the conditioned mind have to be carefully studied, if we are to keep them out at a safe distance, rendering them innocuous. But if we try to achieve transformation and seek ways and means for doing so, we shall walk straight into the trap of the conditioned mind.

If we want to live with the transformed state, we must understand one thing about it. Many of us desire the complete elimination, almost a physical removal, of the whole of our conditioned mind, so as to render ourselves completely pure and holy. Most of us secretly believe that by some practices, yogic or otherwise, it would be possible to achieve this result. Once we are pure, so we imagine, we have no further worries; self-knowledge, awareness, transformation and the rest of it will not be required any more. Krishnamurti has not the slightest idea of giving us such an easy time. In his view, awareness does not eliminate the conditioned states but, even when they are present, it reveals to us that they do not represent the truth. Awareness again is not expected to make us omniscient; the universe will still contain a vast field unknown to us. Nor does awareness completely ignore the known and the conditioned. What it does is to furnish a signpost with two arrows painted on it: one pointing towards

vast expanses of clear transparent truth and the other leading us into the thick jungle of half-truths, overgrown with bushes and thorns and full of boulders and pitfalls. We have no clear-cut paths or channels, not even fixed landmarks for guiding us to truth; at best we have only signs up in the sky and we have always to be on the look out and avail ourselves of whatever guidance from distant signals is vouchsafed to us. It is, however, a comfort that there are no absolute pitfalls from which we can never recover, no blind alleys that would permanently block our awareness of truth.

The conditioned mind is always with us but its hold on us is not unvarying in its strength or potency. As awareness gives insight into the truth or falsity of a particular conditioned state, the hold of the false and the accidental, which in our ignorance we had regarded as the whole truth, gradually slackens. Though conditioned states continue to exist, they lose much of their opaqueness; the shadows they cast on the screen of life become fainter and fainter, and truth begins to shine through them in increasing glory. We become more and more confident that conditioning cannot completely overshadow truth. In the last analysis, shadows cannot exist without light, though light can shine without shadows.

It is a psychological revolution, a revolution in our mental attitude, that is not only independent of our environment, but independent of the limiting conditions of the mind itself. The mind then comes into its own and lives in the fullness of its powers. This does not mean that the environment should be left untouched, nor that we should allow all mental defects to run their destructive course. On the other hand, Krishnamurti's revolution of the mind is fundamental, as it sets no limits to the reform of the mind through understanding how it gets conditioned. He insists that all reform must be drastic, ending not in mere superficial conformity, but in a real change of heart. Without a revolution in mind, reforms of environment will neither be honest nor permanent.

Krishnamurti thinks that this revolution takes place immediately and is final; it is not a gradual evolution or a slow growth,



but is instantaneous in its action. Changes in environment (e.g. distribution of food, clothing and shelter), training the will, or disciplining the mind all take time, but Krishnamurti relies on our clearly distinguishing truth from falsehood, a process which need not take time. Truth is not a matter of degrees; either you understand or you don't. We have, however, seen "that truth has no limits, no fixed frontiers; it is 'a voyage in uncharted seas'. What therefore can take place immediately is a perception that we have taken a wrong direction. Whether this alone will place us on the true path, how many stages we shall have to travel and what scenes will meet our eyes there, all these things will probably depend on chance and individual temperament. In the reported cases of religious 'conversions', the progress has been sudden and spectacular. Extraverts probably show tangible results, while introverts can only claim an inner change of heart that is not open to view. In all cases, however, there must occur a distinct and unmistakable change in one's appreciation of individual and collective problems.

Awareness, therefore, may be said to pass through three stages, not necessarily separable in time, but clearly distinguishable from each other. In the first place, it allows the unconscious part of the mind, consisting of traces of past value judgements, — past condemnations and justifications — to rise to the surface and present itself side by side with the direct challenge of the moment. Secondly, awareness distinguishes between the true, or the present challenge and the false or the memories that envelope the challenge with emotional overtones and make it seem different from 'what it is'. Lastly, awareness tends distinctly to shift the mind from the false to the true. The common feature in all the stages of awareness is that the mind is perfectly quiet, free from all disturbances. We shall treat these phases more fully in the next three chapters. The last stage raises very fundamental questions about truth and reality and, in discussing them, we may have to pinpoint 'the false in the false' and may have to be satisfied with only a marginal view of the true.

We can illustrate the three stages by taking our former example of our hostile attitude to our neighbouring nation which has the

same features as ours and is separated only by a river flowing between. So long as our mind is disturbed by our grievances, we cannot but remain hostile. Awareness of the working of the hostile mind reveals the pent up memories which cause, or more strictly, which are the hostilities. Keeping a steady gaze on the whole object before the mind a little longer, we realise that the geographical and anthropological similarity between the two regions gives a truer picture of the scene than the accompanying memories that have prejudiced us. Lastly, there grows a tendency or readiness on our part to see the falsity of the past memories and the truth of the actual picture in the present. It may, however, be still necessary to specify what makes them false, especially as it is so difficult to define the true.

The state of awareness needs no prodding from outside to make it function. On the contrary, any prodding will undo its work and we shall revert to the conditioned state. Awareness works only if is allowed free play without interference. What then is the explanation of the persistent questioning about the method, or 'how\*' of awareness? Why does Krishnamurti's account of awareness fail to satisfy us ? and why do we demand to be further enlightened ? Several explanations come to our mind; we may be exaggerating the falseness of the false and may be tempted to throw away the baby with tide bath, to discard the true along with the false, so that we may be left with nothing on hand; and awareness may appear to us as a completely blank mind. Or, instead of treating awareness as an index of some pervasive presence, like the mariner's compass as an index of the magnetic field of the earth, we may ask such irrelevant questions as : who is it that is aware ? what is he aware of ? and we may form imaginary pictures both of the awarer and the awared. Again, the false of our conditioned mind is comparatively easy to detect, though even here we may commit mistakes; but the further questions: what is the Reality which awareness presents to us ? and how does that Reality entertain the false at all ? are hard to answer. Unless we satisfactorily understand Krishnamurti's few, but significant, references to these fundamental questions, his powerful teaching about our immediate daily problems will

not take firm root. Probably because we have not come to grips with these larger problems, our confusion takes the form of irrelevant questions at lower levels and in particular, the recurring question of *how*.

Krishnamurti's style of exposition may be partly responsible for raising the question of 'how'. It has the faults of its undoubted merits. His is the method of the discoverer, not of the exponent; he begins with the known and dives into the unknown; he begins with the concrete particular, wants each listener to begin the same way with his own particular problem and, in the course of listening, proceed from concrete to concrete steps and reach a conclusion that is clear to himself and may be acceptable to all. There are, alas, very few discoverers in the present day; in this game of discovery, as in all other games, specialisation has made most of us mere spectators of the performance of a few expert participants. Very few of us therefore have the will and the courage to take the perilous jump with Krishnamurti, or enjoy the thrills of creative venture. We are used to the passive role of pupils and imitators and are half-incredulous when he gives us credit for creativity. We are used to the teacher's sedate methods of exposition, giving us a complete account of the grounds on which the discovery is based, of every pitfall avoided, every step taken or rejected, and the conclusion finally and triumphantly reached as a matter of clear logical reasoning. Few know, and fewer can sympathise with, the inner history of the discoverer, the hopes, despairs, brilliant suggestions and doubts, risks, trepidations and joys that accompany search and accomplishment. Krishnamurti wants us to go through the whole of this gamut, in our discoveries about subjects which are near and dear to us, subjects which make up our total life. The demand probably proves to be too much for us.

The subject matter of Krishnamurti's discourses does not, it is true, lend itself to the usual logical treatment. The subject is Reality, or Life itself in its totality; and Life is too vast, too dynamic, and too subtle to be presented in a fixed pattern, from which conclusions can be safely deduced. Physical sciences once adopted a rigid framework of Nature—the conception of the

universe as a machine, but had to abandon it as subtler phenomena began to be noticed. The technique of human sciences ignores individual differences with a view to emphasise averages and patterns. Philosophers are attempting to create a terminology with fixed meanings, which will result in their ignoring everything in life that refuses to be defined and framed in patterns. Organised religions have also laid down, each its own pattern of ritual and dogma. Krishnamurti is filled with resentment at all this obsession for patterns. Patterns only give us secondhand knowledge; we deceive ourselves into the belief that we have understood the truth of a proposition, when we have only a superficial or a schematic acquaintance with it. To explain what happens when we are aware, or to lay down a theory of awareness is not awareness. Awareness is individual work and, even after studying the whole theory, one must personally go through the experience of awareness for understanding what it really is. We may do with second hand knowledge of the external world, but knowledge of the problems of life must be direct, if it is to cut any ice.

It needs a Krishnamurti to lead others to a direct experience. He has an uncanny way of entering into the heart of his questioners. The most unintelligible, and even the most inaudible of the questions is neatly repeated by him and his version not only illuminates the mind of the questioner but even indicates what turn the discussion may take. He has an amazing quickness of grasp and is impatient of verbosity. None among the audience can anticipate how a theme is going to develop or how an argument is going to end. And yet the by-paths never lead him astray and he is back on the rails in a moment. His method of exposition is original and inimitable. He has roused a genuine interest in spiritual matters among thousands who have begun to feel convinced that the true salvation of the world, especially in its present critical state, lies in the understanding and adoption of the spiritual point of view. He has also created a confidence that the religious or spiritual mind is not beyond the grasp of the man of ordinary intelligence.

And yet listeners have an uneasy feeling that they have not

caught the spirit of his teaching. Krishnamurti attributes their failure to want of keenness or genuine interest on their part. This is not the whole truth, because crowds are seen listening to him year after year with rapt attention. Even as they listen, they are probably plagued by the forbidden questions of *why* and *how*: why does interest flag ? how is interest to be stimulated ? The real reason may be that we have become unfit for his direct approach. The scientific spirit with its 'illumination' has penetrated our being and we have become lop-sidedly intellectual. All kinds of intellectual doubts assail us and we cannot rest until they are intellectually resolved. To take an instance, Krishnamurti often makes the challenging statement that if we see a bottle marked 'poison', we would not dream of drinking from it; why then do we cling to conditioned states after being told that they are conditioned ? The intellectual unconsciously draws a distinction like this: about poison, we condemn its use universally; but about conditioning, we are expected to shed it without condemnation. Harboursing doubts like this, we falter in proceeding with our experiment. Again our scientific theories of, say, the relation between brain and the mind, or our philosophical theories of causation and free-will surreptitiously come in the way of free experimentation.

Not that Krishnamurti has neglected the intellect. In fact, it has been one of his greatest achievements that he has brought spiritual teaching in the open, when formerly it used to be based on faith, which tended to become blind faith, on instructions and practices that were conducted in secret, or on logic which preferred transcendental entities like God, Soul or the Absolute to actualities in life. He begins with the known and, pointing out the limitations of the known, leads us to the unknown. The actual manner in which the transfer from the known to the unknown takes place is not easily grasped by the intellectuals. Krishnamurti's is a negative approach to the unknown, while intellectuals are in the habit of thinking positively of the known and therefore speculatively make positive pictures of the unknown. By pointing out, however, the limitations of the known, Krishnamurti may be said to treat the known negatively: to show that

the known is *not* true, that the conditioned mind is the *negation* of the true mind. And by insisting that the unknown is really unknown and by rejecting all speculation about it, he treats it also negatively. It is this negative approach in the last stages of understanding that puzzles the intellectuals. We shall try to clear the confusion, if any, in our concluding chapter. Intellectual satisfaction, however, is not our aim in studying Krishnamurti. We satisfy the intellect lest it comes in the way of the transformation of our mind. We realise, however, that transformation is possible when the mind actually discards the domination of the "known and allows itself to swim freely in the unknown. Intellect has to prepare itself for this transformation but finds the task too hard and too much against the grain.

Different persons emphasise different aspects of Krishnamurti's teaching. Some think that all our troubles are due to the confusion in our mind and everything will be all right if we attain peace. Others think that our main trouble is our 'I'-obsession, and somehow we must eliminate the 'I' from our life. Similarly, greed, fear, authority, anger, pride, time-sense, and many other states of mind are regarded as our trouble-makers and every one has his pet remedy against them. Krishnamurti takes up all these and similar subjects, one at a time, in his talks and all partisans think they have his implicit support in their respective diagnosis and treatment of the ills of the mind. Questions of 'how' are bound to be raised if Krishnamurti's teaching is studied piecemeal, but he also takes a comprehensive view of the working of our mind and wants us to be so aware of it, that all partial views will take their right place in the total without any conflict. This comprehensive view is not a goal or an ideal, not a state of 'becoming'. It is a state of 'being' and to raise questions about the 'how' of such a state is as irrelevant as asking, say, how we are to make the apple gravitate to the earth.

Spiritual life as envisaged by Krishnamurti affords little scope for a method, such as our verbalising mind demands. This mind of ours is selective and attends to the selected aspect to the exclusion of all other aspects. That is why its conclusions can be neatly represented as a system or pattern. There can be e.g.

a materialistic view of the universe because we neglect all other views. All our intellectual appeals aim at referring us to wider and wider systems; and our highest aim is to discover, if possible, an all-comprehensive pattern or system. Krishnamurti no doubt has to use words but, at every talk, he warns his listeners that the talk should be taken to be addressed individually to each listener who is expected not to be passive, not to listen merely to the words, nor to interpret them in terms of his own past knowledge, but to experiment along with the speaker, so that each talk could be ' a common voyage of discovery'. Such procedure excludes all formal method based on a pattern; it is an invitation to direct communion and direct understanding.

In the following pages we shall attempt to show how, without need of any method, discipline or effort, awareness can effect a complete transformation of the mind, which will help us to understand the world and life around us. Awareness is undoubtedly the central theme of Krishnamurti's teaching. At its earliest stage he describes it as observation 'without condemnation, without justification and without identification'. The qualifying words, he explains, distinguish awareness from introspection with which we are familiar in all our reflective moods. When, for instance, I am introspecting jealousy, the observed mental state as well as the observer ' I' are involved in the meshes of jealousy. Both are borne along and swept away by the current of jealousy. When, on the other hand, I am aware of jealousy, only the mental state is caught in the turmoil of the current, while ' I' in the state of awareness seems to be observing it from a safe distance outside the sweep of the current. In awareness therefore the observer, standing out of the turmoil, seems to transcend it to that extent. Such transcendence is the distinctive mark of awareness at all stages. We must take note of its presence in this its earliest stage. This warning is necessary because many students of Krishnamurti are inclined to consider awareness as a kind of mysterious experience, totally out of reach of the ordinary man. No doubt awareness does present difficulties when it has to reach



'the deeper layers of consciousness', but we need not be scared into the belief that awareness is beyond our powers of comprehension and attainment.

The state of awareness cannot be cultivated; it is not to be conceived as a goal, to be reached in progressive stages by some kind of discipline. It is not a state of 'becoming' but a state of 'being', a posture or attitude of mind that carries its own understanding with it, and effects a transformation, not in course of time but immediately. Like awareness, understanding also passes through many phases and, at every stage of awareness, helps us to transcend our ordinary, conditioned, verbalising mind. At the earliest stage, which we are describing now, understanding comes in the shape of a contrast between the intense turmoil of the observed mental state and the comparative quiet, or freedom from disturbance, of the observer. Such silence, – not dead silence but best described as 'passive alertness' – is the characteristic of awareness at all stages; without it, it is not awareness at all.

From this small beginning, awareness proceeds to survey the whole field of our disturbances; our fears, jealousies and hatreds, our love of the past and neglect of the present, our love of security and accumulations, our desires and ambitions, our sorrows and frustrations, – in short, the whole life guided by our conditioned mind, in other words, the whole of our present life. Introspection of these states can reveal at most their conscious causes or antecedents, but awareness reveals their unconscious causes as well, – memories of past training and past experiences working below the threshold of consciousness. These memories and their compounds cast their dark shadows over the whole field of human life, and, by exposing them, awareness shakes us out of our implicit trust in the mind of our daily use. Awareness shows us that our verbalising and conditioned mind is partial and separative, seeks to 'become' different from what one 'is', and is time-bound and possessive. How the 'passively alert' state of awareness gives us all this 'understanding' is explained in our *First Chapter*.

The result of this survey gives us a shock, as it shows our mind



to be thoroughly memory-ridden, full of—so full indeed that it seems to be made up of—our conscious and the more numerous unconscious memories. These memories are bound to intervene between us and 'Reality as it is' and we are unable to wipe them out. It is then borne in upon us that, in our dealings with our fellow men, and generally in the conduct of all our affairs, we are working through a permanent and irremovable screen of individual memories and prejudices. This is not a serious handicap to our scientific investigations and factual judgements because, in this region, we, as a rule, do not press the claims of our individual opinions against the general laws and working ideas of common sense. In our judgments of value, on the other hand, there are no universally accepted norms, ethical, political or economic, while our own prejudiced memories die hard and are constantly pitted against the various versions of the 'good' and the 'unexceptionable'. In the absence of sure guidance from without, we begin to examine with a critical eye our own selections and preferences, our ambitions and longings to become different from 'what we are', our emphasis on the past and future as against the present, our reference of all our acts and experiences to an overrated, little understood, imaginary 'I'. We conclude that our conditioned, verbalising, partial mind is thoroughly unreliable and cannot give us access to the true and the real. This is elaborated in our *Second Chapter* entitled 'conditioning withers'.

This negative knowledge, says Krishnamurti, is most valuable. Without it, we may have gone on seeking guidance in the wrong place, i.e. from our conditioned mind. With that knowledge, we look elsewhere for relief and help. We are now placed in an extremely tantalising position: we cannot rest with a negative conclusion, but negative conclusion is all that we can have. It is a situation which puts to a severe test our sincerity and earnestness to find out the truth. If we take up the problem seriously, and *only if we do so* we find ourselves in a crisis: the more we try, the more we discover our helplessness. Exhausted, we STOP; our mind is quiet or silent, not made silent, but turned silent of its own accord. This silent mind is a new experience,

a new freedom from disturbances, a new welling up of its inherent powers, a new sense of strength. Disturbances of the conditioned mind are no longer there; even if the conditioned states are there they do not disturb, and in the fullness of its calm, there may lark new potentialities and new hope.

Our rational mind now comes forward to confirm this new hope. The term 'conditioned' (like 'limited') is not, we are assured, a mere negative term, conveying (like 'darkness') mere absence of light; it seems to possess the positive power of leading us to an unnamed positive, of which 'conditioned' is the absence. In logical terminology, it is a privative term, implying privation or deprivation of something positive. 'Conditioned' thus leads us to its positive 'unconditioned', which though negative in form is (like 'unlimited' or 'infinite') positive in meaning. Consciousness of the conditioned mind therefore leads us to the discovery of a new working of our mind, its working as unconditioned, undisturbed, or silent mind, a mind which works totally and has not yet been dragged by us into partial ways. Our attention is then drawn to the total working of the mind in experiences like our intuitions, our uninvited joys, our spontaneous actions etc. Though these are few and far between, they are undoubtedly there and we begin to place more reliance on them than on the clamorous states of the conditioned mind. Awareness, which we saw transcends conditioning, has affinity to such unconditioned states and gives us the best clue to their nature. This result of the 'negative approach' of awareness is the subject of our *Third Chapter*.

Our interest in the unconditioned mind, variously named as the 'total' mind; the 'religious' mind, and 'mind-in-mutation' cannot end here. We are indeed thankful to it for undermining the alarming influence of our memory-ridden, conditioned mind. We are, however, bound to feel increasingly curious about the new mind; we like to learn more about it and taste its sweets, if any. The greatest difficulty in our way is that the unconditioned mind cannot be verbalised or described at all. It can give us a new and momentary feel and a sensitiveness to the various nuances of that feel. We do not destroy our conditioned mind

but place it beside the intimations of the unconditioned mind, with a definite preference for the latter. This is complete self-knowledge, knowledge of the whole mind, of the conditioned as well as the unconditioned parts, and of their relations to each other. This transformation of the mind is the culminating triumph of awareness and forms the subject matter of our *last chapter*.