

FREEDOM OF THE SELF

BY J. KRISHNAMURTI

[The following is the substance of an address delivered at Adyar, Madras, on the 22nd December.]

TRUTH is not of persons; it is of no class; it does not belong to a set of people who can interpret it; it does not belong to the chosen few who can transmit that knowledge to others. Truth and the attainment of Truth is purely individual, and it has nothing to do with any other person. Surely, it is worthier, greater, nobler to think for oneself and act, whatever the consequences may be. Because when you have that capacity to think, you are living, you are in contact with life, you are in love with life. The moment you put that aside and become a thing to be utilized by another, you are betraying the very thing which you are seeking. Do not listen to any one except to your own minds and to your own hearts, for there lies greater wisdom than in all the prophets. What you think matters, and the consequences of your actions born of thought have greater value, greater strength, greater immensity than to obey and follow blindly, even to follow openly any one. In spiritual matters there is neither Christ nor Buddha, except yourselves. It is the self that must be purified and ennobled, set free in the individual. There alone can lie Eternity, there alone can lie the full flower of spirituality.

Every man, at whatever stage of evolution, is seeking that perfection which is the poise of reason and love, which is liberation from all experiences of the self. In manifestation there is always change, contradiction, variety, diversity. But in the attainment of the self, in the purification of the self, in the poise of the self, in the perfection and liberation of the self, there is omniscience. You have to look to that alone, to nothing else, if you desire to understand. For the man who understands alters his whole vision of life; he is master of circumstances and destroys the barriers around him.

I have said and I still maintain that Truth, the highest form of spirituality, is a pathless land. To approach that Truth you cannot go by any path. You cannot approach it by any path; because Truth is Life and in the love of that Life, in the fulness of that Life, lies Truth, the attainment of spirituality, not in developing one particular quality, one particular attribute of virtue. For the man who seeks there cannot be a path. He must take the whole—the open sky, every cry, every laughter, every song, to his heart and mind, and not exclude himself in certain limitations, in temples, in churches. If you walk of an evening on a road, you will hear the cry of many people, the song of a bird, the laughter of children. If you understand these and if you love them, then you understand Truth.

Truth defies all competition. You must make yourself competent and worthy of Truth, not reduce Truth to your level. Therefore, it has no special people of its own, no special chosen individuals, no favorites, people who have the capacity to interpret that to you. A man that makes distinctions in spirituality, seeks favors in the spiritual life, is not capable of understanding its full significance. It has nothing to do with the mass; and yet the mass *is* the individual, the whole is composed of individuals.

Truth is against authority, against organizations for the mass, religions for the whole. It defies all such things, because Truth is purely, wholly, for the

individual. Truth defies all authority, whether it be moral authority, spiritual authority, the authority of the learned or of the prophets; it defies all authority wherever it is, because authority is always seeking to dominate, it is its duty to dominate, and therefore it can never approach Truth. And as you are burdened with this yoke for centuries, you are frightened to relinquish it, you are frightened to stand alone and see, enquire and search out for yourself that Truth which is not within the circle of authority. But no one can lead you to the Truth. No prophet, no learned persons, no amount of sacrifice by others, nor the force of another, however spiritually advanced, can lead you. As none can relieve you of your pain except yourself, as none can give pacification to the turmoil of the self except yourself, you have to look to the self which is within you. That self is greater, far more immense, than the people that have attained, than the prophets that lead you by the hand.

Truth is not pious worship, for piety is mediocrity. Truth has nothing to do with worship. But if you must worship, worship the man that walks down the road. Do not seclude yourself in temples and worship some god. You are seeking spirituality, not by immortalizing another, but in creating immortality within yourself. In search of Truth there is neither prophet nor seer, neither sacred book nor ceremonies, neither religions nor Christs and Buddhas. There is only yourself, and in purifying that self, in liberating that self, lies the freedom of the self. It cannot take comfort in the shelter of others' authorities, others' wisdom. Of what value is it to you, if I am happy and you are unhappy; if I am surfeit and you are hungry; if others have attained and you have not attained? Worship, piety, will only lead to forgetfulness of the self—to the domination and the repression of the self. The self can only attain greatness by its growth, by its fulfilment, by its fructifying contact with life. Ask yourselves what you are seeking, what you want. Are you seeking that spirituality which has nothing to do with any religion, with any ceremonies, with any gods? If you answer that question, you will discover that which is around you is your own creation. It has nothing to do with Truth, it is the invention of the mind.

What are you seeking? If you are seeking comfort, that putrefying satisfaction, then you will naturally invent many things to support you in your sorrow, but never eradicate the root of the sorrow. But if you are seeking freedom, you are beginning to destroy all these limitations, you are not a worshipper of anything, you are seeking that perfection of the self which is the perfection of the whole.

Therefore, the self which is in every being is life; and life is thought in action at the beginning, and as it grows to its final fulfilment, it is thought in being. Do not accept anything unless your hearts, your minds are certain without a shadow of doubt; and then alter and destroy the unessential things that are around you and be free. Then you will be in the full ecstasy of life, in love with life, with every dancing shadow, with every cry, with every laughter.

time . . . The majority view must prevail, and not only are the majority of the territorial members staunch supporters of the Reforms, it is the general wish of the country that they should be accepted.

The *Ceylon Observer* writes:

The Donoughmore scheme is to come into being and grave as one's doubts and misgivings may be in regard to it, the Government of Britain will be just as keen to watch the sincerity with which the Ceylonese endeavor to put it into operation as whether it proves to be of itself a success or not. . . . Ceylon's Councillors have given a clear call to pioneer work.

In England, of course, the decision of the Council has been appreciated. Practically all the leading newspapers and the statesmen there were keenly watching the trend of events here regarding the

Reforms both in the Council and outside it. The *London Times* has thus expressed its view:

Those two votes, by which the Donoughmore Reforms were passed in the Legislative Council, may become memorable, for neither friends nor critics minimize the far-reaching character of the coming changes. The new regime will start with the advantage that no race or section solidly opposed the proposals. The rut in which literary and political education has for so long run in the East makes any system other than Parliamentary Party Government unfamiliar and suspect, but any wide survey of the organs of Representative Government now at work in the world shows that no universal sanctity attaches to the system of Government and Opposition and to administration by a Cabinet chosen from the largest body.

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