



# Kundalini Awareness



## JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

### 20TH CENTURY PHILOSOPHER and MYSTIC

by

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*“There is a person called J. Krishnamurti who has had in his view the end he would reach and in search of that end he has passed through many struggles, sorrows and pains. He has explored many avenues thinking they would lead to the goal. And then came the vision of the mountaintop which is Union with the Beloved, which is liberation, and from that moment he set aside all affections, all desires, all things except the attainment of the goal. And now that goal is reached and he has entered into the flame. And what happens after that does not matter—whether the spark remains within the flame or issues forth. And you may have the Beloved with you constantly even before you have become one with the Beloved.”*

J. Krishnamurti, from "Krishnamurti—The Years of Awakening"

Throughout the known history of mankind there have been individuals in every culture who have experienced a ‘mystical’ perception beyond the scope of normal human understanding. Each has tried in vain to express in comprehensible language the Reality that they have perceived and to deliver the message that this state of Being is our eventual destiny. Likewise the geniuses, of the past and present, present a puzzle to modern science to explain how it is that certain individuals can be so extraordinarily talented compared to their contemporaries.

In his many books, the twentieth century mystic and philosopher, Pandit Gopi Krishna, expressed repeatedly his conviction that these transhuman states of mind are the outcome of a psycho-physiological mechanism in the human body, known from ancient times in India as kundalini. He claimed that the human brain and nervous system are in a slow but inexorable process of evolution and that through an as yet unknown transformation of the brain one can attain higher states of consciousness.

Gopi Krishna gives accounts of his own transformation and in many poetic volumes has displayed the inspired fruits of the higher conscious state. After many years of study of both the modern and ancient literature on this vast subject and decades of critical observation of the remarkable changes being brought about in his own being, he concluded that mankind is destined for a new, higher, expanded state of consciousness beyond anything which we can, at present, genuinely understand.

Gopi Krishna felt that a critical examination of the lives of mystics and geniuses would provide a wealth of corroborative evidence for his theories and would be the starting point for a comprehensive scientific investigation of kundalini as the mechanism of human evolution. It is with this in mind that the life of Jiddu Krishnamurti, modern day mystic, teacher and philosopher, is here explored.

On May 11, 1895 Jiddu Krishnamurti was born to Brahmin parents in Madanapalle, India. At about fourteen years of age he was discovered and 'adopted' by the Theosophical Society to be the vehicle for the return of the 'World Teacher'. Apparently he was selected in part because one of the clairvoyant leaders of the Society felt that Krishnamurti's aura was entirely free of selfishness. In fact, as a boy, he had on many occasions shown his generosity by sharing his belongings and his food with strangers, in spite of caste taboos.

During his early years with the Theosophical Society, Krishnamurti and his younger brother, Nityananda were educated, fed, exercised and taught good grooming, to complement the knowledge learned from their strict, orthodox Hindu upbringing and to prepare Jiddu to be the vehicle for the 'World Teacher' prophesied by the Theosophical Society. But in 1921, at the age of 26, he had an experience which irreversibly altered the course of his life.

Krishnamurti had always been a questioner of ceremony and dogma but starting at this time, and lasting for eight years, he began to speak forthrightly and critically of the methods and goals of the Theosophical Society which had endeavoured to place him in a position of authority and prestige. Then, in 1929 he publicly renounced the Society and embarked on his own mission, which lasted and flourished to his passing.

Whatever happened to Krishnamurti on that summer day in 1921 totally changed his life. Though they did not perhaps fully appreciate the magnitude of the event, some members of the Theosophical Society said, at the time, that he had aroused Kundalini. To verify this possibility, these events are here examined for the physical and psychological symptoms which are characteristic of the awakening of the 'Serpent Power'.

### *The Initial Awakening*

In August of 1921 Krishnamurti began practicing meditation for thirty to forty minutes a day. After five days, he began to experience extreme pain at the nape of his neck where a lump-like muscle spasm had appeared. The next morning, he seemed to fall into a semi-conscious state, characterized by fits of moaning and restlessness and accompanied by extreme internal heat. These states alternated with periods of relatively normal consciousness in which he became tranquil, generally at meal times. His digestive system tended to reject most of the food that was fed to him, but he slept at night as usual.

This continued for three days with his consciousness becoming more and more intermittent and the fits and heat intensifying. He had become unbearably sensitive and even the most minute physical sounds upset him terribly. On the evening of the third day, he went through an experience which is best described in an account which he wrote two days later:

*"I felt myself going out of my body. I saw myself sitting down with the delicate tender leaves of the tree over me. I was facing the east. In front of me was my body and over my head I saw the Star, bright and clear. Then I could feel the vibrations of the Lord Buddha . . . I was so happy, calm and at peace. I could still see my body and I was hovering near it. There was such profound calmness both in the air and within myself, the calmness of the bottom of a deep unfathomable lake. Like the lake, I felt my physical body, with its mind and emotions, could be ruffled on the surface but nothing, nay nothing could disturb the calmness of my soul. The Presence of the mighty Beings was with me for some time and then They were gone. I was supremely happy, for I had seen. Nothing could ever be the same. I have drunk at the clear and pure waters at the source of the fountain of life and my thirst was appeased. Never more could I be thirsty, never more could I be in utter darkness; I have seen the Light. I have touched compassion which heals all sorrow and suffering; it is not for myself, but for the world. I have stood on the mountaintop and gazed at the mighty Beings. Never can I be in utter darkness; I have seen the glorious and healing Light. The fountain of Truth has been revealed to me and the darkness has been dispersed. Love in all its glory has intoxicated my heart; my heart can never be closed. I have drunk at the fountain of Joy and eternal Beauty. I am God-intoxicated."*

Such excerpts from Krishnamurti's correspondence, in addition to the accounts of those near him, provide the details which suggest that his experience was a genuine case of the awakening of Kundalini and that the processes of transformation were active in him for an extended period. To get an idea of how far these processes went towards the full state of 'enlightenment', an examination of some of the aspects of Krishnamurti's experience will be necessary.

In his book *Cosmic Consciousness*, Dr. R.M. Bucke listed a number of characteristics which seem to be common, to a more or less degree, to individuals who have partial or full experience of cosmic conscious-

ness. These criteria have been clarified and augmented by Gopi Krishna and the physiological aspects of the condition developed so that a comprehensive set of criteria is now available for evaluating individual experiences. Krishnamurti's accounts and those of his acquaintances will now be considered in the light of these criteria.

### *Intellectual Elevation*

One definitive feature of the transformations brought about by an activated Kundalini is a marked intellectual elevation. In his youth, Krishnamurti was a poor student, referred to as 'particularly dimwitted' by the man who had tutored him in his school work. He had been repeatedly caned by his teachers for his inability to learn. Mary Lutyens, his biographer, called him 'almost vacant' in his early years. Yet many who read his books today agree that they are thought-provoking and profound. Anne Morrow Lindbergh reviewed his second book, *The First and Last Freedom*, saying . . . "The reader is given in one paragraph, even in one sentence, enough to keep him exploring, questioning, thinking for days."<sup>1</sup>

In the years 1926 to 1931 Krishnamurti wrote sixty poems. From 1926 until his passing, he gave innumerable talks worldwide, published dozens of books and founded eight schools. Hardly the outcome for one characterized as 'particularly dimwitted'. It is evident from the accounts of those who knew him from an early age that Krishnamurti's capacity for comprehension and expression changed markedly after his experience in 1921.

### *The Process*

Modern concepts of kundalini often do not take into account the biological aspect of this super-intelligent vital energy. Kundalini is viewed by some modern writers as either a psychological artifact or just 'energy which circulates in the body.' Gopi Krishna, on the other hand, has offered enough detail in his numerous books to make it clear that a knowledge of the biological aspect of the energy is absolutely necessary in order to understand its real nature. Accounts such as those of Krishnamurti can offer valuable information in this area.

One feature of Krishnamurti's experience which suggests this biological aspect is the pain in his neck and spine, which he suffered intermittently from the time that he started to meditate, and continued to experience for years afterward. Another feature was the intense internal heat which he felt during these periods. He dubbed the physical and mental effects of what was happening to him as 'The Process', a name which suggests that he was aware of a purposeful, controlled activity going on in his body. His pain was often chronic and acute at the sacral region (lower spine) and the neck area. ". . . at present it is rather awful . . . It goes on all day and all night now . . . I feel as though I want to cry my heart out."<sup>2</sup> Frequently he was sick with the pain for weeks, unable to work or sleep properly.

Years later, the pain was accompanied by other feelings; "Several times, after sleeping, he woke with a sense of special joy, feeling that the room was full of 'eminent holy beings' . . . and he felt, as always at such times, that something was happening to his brain, expanding it."<sup>3</sup> The pain of the process came on most often when he was quiet and alone and perhaps significantly also when he was talking with others about matters of consciousness or spirit.

Krishnamurti writes, "the body does not resist or protest against the pain . . . There is an unknown energy involved in all this."<sup>4</sup> And later again; "But there was an activity deep within which was wearing out all obstructions."<sup>5</sup> Additionally he says; "Deep inside me I know what has happened. I have been stocked with gasoline. The tank is full."<sup>6</sup> And also, "The purification of the brain is necessary. Only when the brain has cleansed itself of its conditioning, greed, envy, ambition, then only can it comprehend that which is complete. Love is that completeness."<sup>7</sup>

## *Inner Light*

An 'illuminated' mental perception is probably the single most definitive feature of mystical experience. The perception of internal light has been mentioned repeatedly by countless mystics throughout history. Light has been a symbol in all sacred lore since prehistory. The term illumination, as applied to mystical perception, comes from this aspect of the phenomenon. The accounts of the experience of the 'Inner Light' made by Krishnamurti and others suggests that the mental processes become powered by an as yet undetectable, luminous energy.

In 1924 Krishnamurti wrote in a letter: "Whatever it is, the force or whatever one calls the bally thing, came up my spine, up to the nape of my neck, then it separated into two, one going to the right and the other to the left of my head, till they met between the two eyes just above my nose. There was a kind of flame and I saw the Lord and the Master . . . .Of course the whole thing was painful, in the extreme."<sup>8</sup>

Mary Lutyens reported that Krishnamurti would awake at night for several hours with "an extraordinary light burning in his mind."<sup>9</sup> He wrote in his Notebook; ". . . there was an intense bright light at the very center of the brain and beyond the brain at the very center of consciousness, of one's being. It was light that had no shadow nor was it set in any dimension . . . with that light there was present that incalculable strength and beauty beyond thought and feeling."<sup>10</sup>

In his autobiography, Gopi Krishna describes at one point a radical, permanent change in his visual perceptive faculty which transformed the appearance of the external world from mundane to a 'fairyland', an 'extraordinarily rich blend of colour and shade, shining with a silvery lustre'<sup>11</sup> which lent an indescribable beauty to everything that he saw. To a somewhat lesser degree, Krishnamurti's external perception also changed. "Colour, shape, line, and the total form of things have become more intense and extraordinarily alive!"<sup>12</sup> Many similar comments appear in his Notebook.

## *Psychic Gifts*

If it is accepted that the human brain is evolving under the influence of a super-intelligent life-force, then perhaps it is reasonable to view paranormal states of mind such as psychic phenomena as additional, evolving faculties of mind, rather than pathological states, as is commonly done.

From a very early age Krishnamurti had a tendency to be clairvoyant, seeing deceased or absent loved ones; occurrences which could be brushed off as fanciful if they hadn't been witnessed in some cases. When asked about this ability he replied, "It was a faculty he could still have but did not choose to."<sup>13</sup> Perhaps he felt that such an ability was not an end in itself, but rather a distraction from real spiritual development, and also that it could be an intrusion upon others' privacy.

The power to heal was also possibly at his disposal. According to Mary Lutyens. "He undoubtedly possesses a power of healing."<sup>14</sup> Krishnamurti had written to friends years earlier that he was developing that power and was gaining success. However, he later down-played the assertion because he did not wish to be known as a healer. He emphasized throughout his teaching that internal personal growth is far more important than the development of psychic abilities.

There are very few statements made by Krishnamurti which can be proven to be prophetic. These, however, are from an early age; "I know my destiny and my work. I know with certainty and knowledge of my own, that I am blending into the consciousness of the One Teacher."<sup>15</sup> "I will never give up anyone but everyone will give me up."<sup>16</sup> Both these predictions have been born out.

## *Compassion*

Krishnamurti's compassionate nature was noted earlier and is conveyed by Mary Lutyens and others. "It is evident that he has a tact for working around peoples' doubts and criticisms. The New York Times reported that even though many interviewers had tried to corner him with complex questions, he skillfully avoided being trapped and eventually earned their admiration."<sup>17</sup>

The feeling was similar in India when he spoke there. "Unperturbed and with infinite sympathy he listens to their harangues and tries to answer them in their own language and idiom, and gradually leads them step by step to see his point of view, to understand his approach to their problems; and in the end, invariably, they say to him: 'Well Sir, we do not pretend to have understood you, but we feel you are right.'<sup>18</sup>

## *Personal Magnetism*

It is very common for those in whom kundalini is active to display a powerful personal magnetism which greatly influences people in general and the opposite sex in particular. Mary Lutyens describes Krishnamurti as modest, polite, elegant and "as perfectly formed as a human being could be."<sup>19</sup> George Bernard Shaw said about Krishnamurti; "He was the most beautiful human being he had ever seen."<sup>20</sup>

In letters, Krishnamurti's friends and acquaintances express their admiration in words such as 'wonderful', 'beautiful', 'pure'. His manner of speaking to large audiences was remarkable; "Then he spoke with inconceivable majesty and power with a flow of beautiful words. Such sternness and such compassion."<sup>21</sup>

Those near and dear to Krishnamurti have commented that on occasion a sort of light and love, a presence, seemed to accompany him. Mary Lutyens witnessed these seemingly extraordinary happenings on many occasions. There is little doubt that Krishnamurti had an intense personal magnetism which allowed him to influence people. He had faithful support for years to create his schools and consistently drew large audiences on his annual speaking tours.

## *Expanded Consciousness*

The development of the cosmic sense, in which reality comes to be perceived as an infinitely vast, all-knowing, all-powerful consciousness, is the definitive sign of mystical perception. Krishnamurti writes about such a state in his Notebook. ". . . fullness—the benediction, not only in the room but it seemed to cover the earth from horizon to horizon."<sup>22</sup> "An immense vastness . . . there is no space, nor time to cover space."<sup>23</sup> ". . . intense stillness of the brain and a feeling of vastness,"<sup>24</sup> "experiencing of an incalculable expanding state of mind,"<sup>25</sup> and later, "the benediction came and went leaving a feeling of vastness whose height was beyond words."<sup>26</sup>

He comments on 'the benediction':

*"Most unexpectedly, the sense of immensity and that extraordinary benediction . . . that imminent feeling of sacredness, began to take place . . . the pressure and the strain were intense and there was acute pain at the back of the head. There was only this state and there was no observer. The whole body was wholly in it and the feeling of sacredness was so intense that a groan escaped from the body . . . It was as though one was looking not with eyes only but with a thousand centuries; it was altogether a strange occurrence."<sup>27</sup>*

These experiences continued at intervals throughout his life. In 1974 he was awakened at night with "something spreading out to take in the universe."<sup>28</sup> The pain in Krishnamurti's head still persisted as late as the 1980's and he expressed the conviction that 'the process' was 'part of his expansion of consciousness.'<sup>29</sup>

## *Religious Impulse*

Mankind has always held some kind of belief in a creator or a unity of existence beyond our immediate knowledge. Religious faith has pervaded every culture of which we have knowledge. Whether or not the masses have ever experienced a genuine spiritual or religious realization is not necessary as somehow this religious feeling or desire has persisted through thousands, even tens of thousands of years. Even today when science, technology and gold appear to be the means and the goal of human life as we live it, religion survives. Dr. R. M. Bucke claimed quite emphatically, as did Gopi Krishna, that religious desire would, upon the awakening to higher consciousness, bloom into a conviction, a spiritual realization, a new perception which surpasses our present concepts of Reality, Self and Creator.

Krishnamurti experienced much of this and it runs throughout his teachings. His sense of 'unity' is revealed in his Notebook: "There was a flash of that unapproachable power and strength that was physically shattering . . . one had to shut one's eyes not to go off in a faint . . . everything that was didn't seem to exist. It burned out the limitations of sight and sound."<sup>30</sup> He said this about himself in 1927: "There is no Krishnamurti—the river and the sea."<sup>31</sup> Perhaps he had lost his sense of aloneness or separateness and gained a unity with something greater, yet unexplainable.

Even before his transforming experience on that summer day in 1921 there is evidence that Krishnamurti carried within a powerful spiritual urge. He wrote in a letter in May 1920, "curiously all day I have been very dreamy, more dreamy than usual and in my heart there has been a continual thought of Lord Buddha. I was in such a state that I had to sit down and meditate."<sup>32</sup>

An excerpt from a talk he gave in 1928 summarizes in part his early view on religious striving.

*"I hold that there is an eternal life which is the Source and the Goal, the beginning and the end, and yet it is without end or beginning. In that Life alone is there fulfillment. And anyone who fulfills that Life has the key to Truth without limitation. That Life is for all. Into that Life the Buddha, the Christ entered. From my point of view I have attained, I have entered into that Life. That Life has no form as Truth has no form, no limitation. And to that Life, everyone must return."*<sup>33</sup>

## *Sense of Immortality*

Another hallmark of the cosmic sense is an absolutely unshakable conviction in the immortality of the spirit and a total absence of the fear of death. Krishnamurti had this to say about immortality in 1935; "Now I can say there is immortality, to me it is a personal experience, the mind must free itself from the habit of self-protecting acquisition; when it is utterly naked, then there is immortality."<sup>34</sup> These comments are all the more significant when it is noted that often Krishnamurti's health was bad. He many times fainted and at other times his energy seemed to be all but completely drained. The pain of the 'process' on some occasions persisted for weeks, and yet he was absolutely certain that the spirit was indestructible.

## *Mystical Perception*

Perhaps the most dramatic and compelling evidence of the development of the cosmic sense is mystical perception and the ecstasy which accompanies it. Krishnamurti gives us some examples of his inner and outer experience in the Notebook:

*" . . . what took place was beyond all words and description. It was the center of all creation; it was a purifying seriousness that cleansed the brain of every thought, and feeling; its seriousness was as lightning which destroys and burns up; the profundity of it was not measurable, it was there immovable, impenetrable, a solidity that was as light as the heavens . . . There was only seeing, the eyes that saw beyond time-space."*<sup>35</sup>

*“ . . . all of a sudden, that unknowable immensity was there, not only in the room and beyond but also deep, in the innermost recesses, which was once the mind . . . that immensity left no mark, it was there, clear, strong, impenetrable and unapproachable whose intensity was fire which left no ash. With it was bliss.”<sup>36</sup>*

*“Suddenly one felt this immense flame of power . . . It is beyond all thought and words to describe what’s going on, the strangeness of it and the love, the beauty of it. It’s beyond and above all faculties of man.”<sup>37</sup>*

Krishnamurti hints at the brain’s part in this, “The brain had lost all it’s responses; it was only an instrument of observation, it was seeing, not as the brain belonging to a particular person but as a brain which is not conditioned by time-space . . .”<sup>38</sup> And also, “All this seemed to affect the brain; it was not as it was before. Because of it, relationships seems to have changed. As a terrific storm, a destructive earthquake gives a new course to the rivers, changes the landscape . . . so it has leveled the contours of thought, changed the shape of the heart.”<sup>39</sup>

From the Notebook we get some idea of the immediate physical and emotional effects of the experience. “One was awakened this morning with a living feeling of joy . . . It was coming, this ecstasy, from ‘outside’, not self-induced; it was being pushed through the system, flowing through the organism with great energy and volume.”<sup>40</sup> And later, “the benediction came bringing pure cheer. This cheerfulness was pouring out of one’s whole being . . . but the heart and the mind would never be the same again.”<sup>41</sup>

### ***The Product Of Illumination***

If illumination, as has been theorized above, is the goal of human evolution, then the attributes of one blessed with it will be a gift and a blessing to all humanity. Whether it is poetry, music, science or healing, the expression in some way will uplift the civilization. This is true in the case of Jiddu Krishnamurti. A few quotes from observers give an impression of the impact he made on audiences. The Time Literary Supplement said, “The insight, spiritual and poetical, of these commentaries is as simply expressed as it is searching in its demands.”<sup>42</sup> The author Francis Hackett wrote in New Republic; “I feel that he has hold of a major secret.”<sup>43</sup> In The Observer, his second book *The First and Last Freedom* was acclaimed: “For those who wish to listen it will have value beyond words.”<sup>44</sup> Mary Lutyens says; “I find I understand him with that sense, that intuition, which grasps the meaning of difficult poetry, rather than through my intellect.”<sup>45</sup>

Krishnamurti confessed that he did not rehearse his teaching. “It is like, what, what is the biblical term—revelation. It happens all the time when I’m talking. This simple person Krishnamurti has not come to the teaching through thought.”<sup>46</sup> This too suggests that the talks, the talents of Krishnamurti are not just his but are for all who listen. At the core of his teaching is the message that ‘profound psychological transformation’ is the aim of his teaching and the goal of each life. “Liberation—each individual must hold a mirror to his own consciousness and strive to develop freedom. There is a direct line to Truth within each individual.”<sup>47</sup>

### ***Other Factors***

The dawning of the new sense quite often occurs in the prime of life, with variations which appear to be a consequence of the person’s heredity, lifestyle, spiritual practices, etc. The average age of occurrence is about 33 to 34 years; in Krishnamurti’s case, he was 26, slightly young by the general standard, but well within normal limits.

Another marked feature of Krishnamurti’s life was his lack of physical relationships with women. Although many of them fell in love with him, he seemed to have no need for the physical expression of sex and, in the first half of his life, even had a strong aversion to it. It would seem that the sexual energy was primarily directed upwards and was used entirely for the evolution of the brain and nervous system.

## *Summary*

In summary, we have seen that Krishnamurti's experiences conform to many of the criteria outlined above. But, although he seemed to display some of the features of expanded consciousness, it is evident from his accounts that the condition was not perennial, that is, a permanently functioning feature of his awareness. The development of the nervous system to the point where the cosmic sense is completely functional is, it would seem, a very, very rare occurrence.

Another main feature of full enlightenment, that is, the revelation of new knowledge which more clearly defines the direction the race must take in its evolutionary development, is there to perhaps a lesser degree. His advice to individuals concerning the transcendence of the normal thinking patterns is not an entirely new idea in the history of spiritual teaching. When questioned about the source of his knowledge and the mechanism by which he manifested it, he was at a loss to explain it. Thus, the physiological and other scientific aspects of his experiences, necessary for a clear understanding of the phenomenon, are to a large degree absent from his teachings.

But despite this, the message that Krishnamurti taught is in no way less relevant. The knowledge that he shared and the schools which he founded have come from his conviction of the importance of that psychological freedom he teaches. Mary Lutyens capsulizes the philosophy behind the schools, "He feels that the best hope for the world's sanity lies in the right education of children from the earliest age . . . without national and racial prejudices, without competitiveness or any of the cultural traditions and ideologies that divide man from man, there might be peace."<sup>48</sup>

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