

Krishnamurti's Teachings and Theosophy

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Do J. Krishnamurti's teachings contradict modern Theosophical teachings? Or do they reflect H.P. Blavatsky's words and those of her Masters? In fact they complement and shed light on each other.

However there are many who cannot see this connection. Perhaps it would be necessary to investigate certain aspects of both teachings in order to discover their deep similarity. We shall then examine some points from J.K.'s perspective and also from that of H.P.B. and her Masters.

The Illusion of 'I'

HPB and JK both warn us regarding the illusion of the 'lower self', the personality. But, what is that self, that centre with which we identify ourselves and from which generally we act?

HPB says:

... the personal self is the creature of its environment and the slave of the physical memory.¹

JK reflects:

... The observer is the past... The continuity is the observer who is the past

meeting the present, modifying itself and continuing the present.²

The knowledge of self (*kāma-manas*, the brain mind) is based on memory and in the past. That which we call 'character' is the result of genetic characteristics, the experiences lived as a result of our contact with the world, family, etc. The individual is conditioned also by culture, climate, food, hormonal functioning and as occult science tells us, by the tendencies we have been accumulating in our previous lives.

The self is only a product of the past, modifying itself constantly and creating a continuity. The sense of 'I am that who lived the past experiences' is the result of the actions of memory which associates all the changing experiences with a centre (illusory) with an apparent permanency which is being called 'I'. However, each one of us thinks that he or she is an independent, self-determining entity and not the result of innumerable involuntary influences.

It is *kāma-manas*, or the lower Ego, which, deluded into a notion of

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independent existence, as the ‘producer’ in its turn and the sovereign of the five *tanmātra-s*, becomes *Egoism*, the selfish Self. (HPB)³

Enchanted by the sense of being an independent existence, each individual feels he is the ruler, the ‘producer’ of his personality and is not aware that his personality is the ‘product’ of the functioning of his senses. This is *maya*, an illusion, because if we look at the way we live, this ‘I’ is a centre of the reaction towards diverse influences, it is an illusory entity, another thought that, through memory, generates a sense of continuity.

But this thinking entity is not the Real Self (which according to H.P.B. ‘does not *think—it knows*’); he who dwells in the Silence of pure Perception, because the thinking faculty acts within the limited acquired elements and in the midst of multiple conditionings. Therefore, the decisions that come out from thought are the result of their influences affecting the personality and have only a secondary value in the spiritual field. This is the reason why JK used to say that choice is part of the movements of the ‘I’ and that the correct action comes out from a state ‘with no option’ that comes from another source. But then, what is will? Is it a movement of the ‘I’? Is it not a means towards spiritual development?

Will

The way to the supreme does not lie

through will, through desire. The supreme can come into being only when the maker of effort is not. When the mind which is put together through desire comes to an end, not through effort, then in that stillness, which is not a goal, reality comes into being. (JK)⁴

Some individuals become confused when JK questions the validity of the use of will in order to awaken to Reality. Should we not make an effort in order to evolve?

JK says: ‘As long as the ‘self’ is active and creating a projection, there is no possibility to realize the reality’.

And HPB says something similar: ‘...the Spiritual Ego can act only when the personal Ego is paralyzed’.⁵

Therefore, the conscience of the self must be ‘paralyzed’ (JK would call the state ‘passive alertness’) in order that That may become manifested which is the main principle of Rāja Yoga. But we could ask: Is not Will an aspect of the Soul? Sometimes words may lead to some confusion, as often the same word denotes different things in different contexts. Let us first see what is Will and how it differentiates from desire. Often both energies become fused and this may cause losing sight of the way. H. P. Blavatsky as well as the Masters in various passages of their writings define Will as an activity of the fourth principle (*Kāma*, the principle of desire.)

For example, in one of the Mahatma letters we read:

* (in Samkya philosophy *tanmātras* corresponds to the five primordial elements of matter, one of them being the five senses)

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The whole individuality is centred in the three middle or third, fourth and fifth principles (*Prāna, Kāma and Manas*). During earthly life it is all in the fourth, the centre of energy, volition — will.(M)⁶

J. Krishnamurti challenged strongly the idea of 'spiritualizing' the Will, because he said that what we call Will is nothing more than desire, an 'egocentred will'.

HPB warned about this same aspect: 'most of men live in and by desire, mistaking it for will'. But not always are we aware of this fact. Confusing desire with Will, the individual becomes a slave of the impulses of his *kāmic* principle thinking that he is developing a 'spiritual will'. The book *Light On The Path* says: 'kill the thirst for growing' as the Will, focussed on a 'spiritual development' is often the product of ambition, a desire for personal greatness, which is an activity of *kāma*.

We might ask if there exists a personal pure Will, that is, an energy which is not a (personal) activity of *kāma*. HPB. wrote something that can put light on this matter.

... Will and Desire are here considered as opposed. Thus Will is the offspring of the Divine, the God in man; Desire the motive power of the animal life. Most men live in and by desire, mistaking it for Will. But he who would achieve must separate will from desire, and make his will the ruler; for desire is unstable and ever changing, while will is steady and constant ... His task is twofold; to awaken the will, to strengthen it by use and conquest, to make it absolute ruler within his body, and, parallel with

this, to purify desire. (HPB)⁷

We have here various aspects to be examined. First, HPB postulates that there exists a Will different from what we generally refer to as will, which is nothing else but desire. That Will must become awake as it is not expressed in the majority of us and therefore, is something unknown. What we generally know is desire. We must take this into consideration in order not to confuse this real Will and desire. JK on one occasion said: 'the self-centred will and desire nurture and strengthen the self' all, of this being against what is required to tread the spiritual way.

HPB also says that Will (in its impersonal aspect) and Desire (personal) are opposites and that we must learn to – 'separate will from desire'. How can we identify the spiritual Will from the self-centred will or desire?

A key could be found in what HPB says: 'desire is unstable and ever changing, while will is steady and constant'. Let us refer to a description JK made about this theme that may help us to find its meaning.

We are, in the majority of the cases, creatures identified through our moods and by the way these change ... We like this changing state, we think that this movement in our moods is part of the existence ... But there are a few who are not caught by this movement, who are free from the battle of the future, in such a way, that in the inner recess there exists a steadiness which is not a product of these activities. This comes only with the cessation of the self-centred will.⁸

Here JK is talking about something that we know, our multiple changes of mood that are responsible for the fact that one day we are very energetic, the next day we are indolent; we show interest in 'growing' but fear frustration, etc.

All this type of activity is related with desire and not with Will. Will is a steady force, but tranquil, which does not create any deviation because it is not in search of anything 'visible or audible'. When Will starts expressing itself, the individual remains serene performing the diverse activities in life without inner struggle but with the softness that is the outcome of the understanding. Will is not struggle; desire or self-centered will is struggle. However, JK as well as HPB say that it is possible to get out from this instability and to attain an inner steadiness. But the awakening of the spiritual Will will take place when the self-centered will or desire ceases. As we have seen: 'Will and Desire are opposed'.

Some people think that if they become entities without desire, without ambition, they might fall into a vegetable state and this perhaps may be true for those who are not treading the spiritual path. But for those who are trying to tread this path, there exists a much greater energy behind our self-centred will waiting to appear as soon as it is being allowed to do so. We have to *let this go* in order to allow *that* to come.

And if we want to discover reality we must move towards that which will stop the activities of the self. The question comes 'how can desire or self-centred

will cease?'

It is obvious that spiritual perception is not needed in order to go beyond thought, will and the other activities pertaining to *kāma-manas*. JK says that 'when there is an intelligent perception of all this, then, the real miracle takes place, the self-centered will ceases'.⁹

BEYOND THOUGHT

Once J. Krisnamurti said:

We have used thought in order to discover Truth, but Truth can only be discovered when the mind is totally empty.

The process of thinking is the product of the activity of *kāma-manas* (also referred to as lower *manas*) and we must understand that the *kāma-manasic* conscience cannot perceive that which is out of the 'material perimeter. It can think about the spiritual; talk about it and consider it as a logical possibility, but it can never perceive it fully. This is explained by H. P. Blavatsky as follows:

Since *manas*, in its lower aspect, is the seat of the terrestrial mind, it can, therefore, give only that perception of the Universe which is based on the evidence of that mind; it cannot give spiritual vision.¹⁰

Self-knowledge of this kind is unattainable by what men usually call 'self-analysis'. It is not reached by reasoning or any brain process; for it is the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man.¹¹

The spiritual vision will not come through any activity of the lower *manas*,

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our brain conscience. In order to be able to perceive Reality, the human being must change his ordinary state of conscience, he must 'awaken the conscience of the Divine Nature in man'. This divine conscience is unitive, not dualist. Patanjali's commentaries on the Yoga-Sutras indicate that as long as duality between the knower and the known exists, spiritual perception is not possible and JK and HPB and her Masters postulate the same: in order to discover truth, the psychological ego (which creates duality) must cease.

After all, the thinker is part of thought, is he not? There is no thinker if there is no thought; but we have divided the thinker from the thought. . . Now, as long as there is the thinker separate from thought, there must be conflict, the process of duality. (JK)¹²

And, so long as the contrast of Subject and Object endures . . . so long will it be impossible for the personal Ego to break through the barrier which separates it from a knowledge of things in themselves. (HPB)¹³

The Real Knowledge here spoken of is not a mental but a spiritual state, implying full union between the Knower and the Known. (M)¹⁴

Therefore, taking into account the dualistic activity of thought and its incapacity to reach the Real, it is obvious that what is needed is to go beyond thought. But, does there exist in the human being the possibility of having a vision that can transcend thought?

Theosophy talks about this possibility and that is what JK calls 'insight' and HPB

'spiritual intuition' or *buddhi*.

Only those who realize how far Intuition soars above the tardy processes of ratiocinative thought can form the faintest conception of that absolute Wisdom which trans-cends the ideas of Time and Space. (HPB)¹⁵

The Spiritual ego reflects no varying states of consciousness; is independent of all sensation (experience): it does not *think* — *it KNOWS*, by an intuitive process only faintly conceivable by the average man. (HPB)¹⁶

Therefore, we must investigate deeply what are the conditions that make possible the outcome of this intuition.

I do not know if you have noticed that there is understanding when the mind is very quiet even for a second; there is the flash of understanding when the verbalization of thought is not. Just experiment with it and you will see for yourself that you have the flash of understanding, that extraordinary rapidity of insight, when the mind is very still, when thought is absent.¹⁷

It is upon the serene and placid surface of the unruffled mind that the visions gathered from the invisible find a representation in the visible world. Otherwise you would vainly seek those visions, those flashes for sudden light which have already helped to solve so many of the minor problems and which alone can bring the truth before the eye of the soul. It is with jealous care that we have to guard our mind-plane from all the adverse influences which daily arise in our passage through earth-life. (KH)¹⁸

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HPB and her Masters as well as JK are encouraging us to discover how to realize that state of Wisdom which is beyond what is merely human, that state of *Theosophia* or Divine Wisdom. Perhaps our task as aspirants to become Theosophists could be to keep that matter always in mind; what tools do we have available? What should be our attitude towards the possibility of realizing that state?

The subject is very complex and has various aspects which cannot be totally covered in an article or even in a series of articles. We shall only give some general references which we found in JK's teachings and in the Theosophical literature which can point out the way to be followed.

As physical man, limited and trammelled from every side by illusions, cannot reach truth by the light of his terrestrial perceptions, we say — develop in you the *inner* knowledge. . . Man has to *know himself*, i.e., acquire the inner perceptions which never deceive, before he can master any absolute truth. Absolute truth is *the symbol of Eternity*, and no *finite* mind can ever grasp the eternal.¹⁹ (HPB)

When the individual consciousness is turned inward, a conjunction of *manas* and *buddhi* takes place. In the spiritually regenerated man this conjunction is permanent, the Higher Manas clinging to Buddhi. . . ²⁰ (HPB)

In man the mind can be in two alternative states: the personal and conditioned — *kāma-manas*, or the spiritually illuminated state — *buddhi-manas*. What is that which can open the door to that spiritual perception? HPB says that we have to

develop the 'inner knowledge'. In the majority of us consciousness is directed towards outside; we are partially conscious of the things we do, but we are not conscious of what is going on inside ourselves during the action; we do not perceive that centre which is acting, judging, thinking, reacting, etc. On the other hand we have read that in order to attain spiritual perception the brain-mind has to cease. These two questions are very much related because as JK has written, it is only through a deep self-observation, through understanding of ourselves that the mind starts to become quiet.

Only in understanding ourselves does the mind become quiet: and without understanding ourselves, the tranquility of the mind is not possible. When the mind is quiet, through discipline: when the mind is not controlled, not encased in condemnation and resistance, but is spontaneously still — only then is it possible to find out what is true and what is beyond the projections of the mind.²¹

This observation is not another activity of thought, of *kāma-manas*. As it is mentioned in the last quotation from HPB, the fact that the manasic perception is led towards the centre, it starts producing the conjunction with *buddhi*, and this is what creates the silence in the mind. Let us see this fact in a more detailed way. HPB says that when we fix the attention not only towards outside, but towards the *perception we have* of the facts and what we do, the manasic consciousness places itself in its highest state.

(The seventh state is) Spiritual, entirely

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conscious apperception; because it reaches the Higher, self-conscious Manas. Apperception means self-perception, conscious action. . . when attention is fixed on the perception. (HPB)²²

Why is this state the highest state of *manas*? Because in this type of self-observation, the *kāma-manasic* self is not any more the one which observes and judges, but that which is being observed. We could ask: if this observation does not come from the 'I', where does it come from? The observation takes place without an observing centre; it comes from that which is impersonal. When this happens, the duality generated by the 'I' ceases and there is no dual perception but that of the silence of the pure perception, or *buddhi*.

For, in the act of self-analysis (self-observation), the *Mind* becomes in its turn an object (of perception) to the spiritual consciousness. It is the over-shadowing of the *Mind* by *Buddhi* which results in the ultimate *realization of existence* — i.e., self-consciousness in its purest form. (HPB)²³

Conclusion

We have read that by means of a life in that state of conscious action (not negligent or mechanical), and with a deep attention to the way the 'I' responds to things, self-knowledge appears to open a possibility for that action which is not of the personality, to take place, with that strength which is not ego-centered will, that embracing perception which is not of the brain mind.

It is through this perception (holistic,

silent and alert) that we can start to 'see the lower self in the light of the Higher' as HPB suggested, because it is there where in a non conceptual way, the 'I' is seen as an illusion, and that our real identity is not all that activity of thinking and feeling.

What is the state of pure observation which is not of the mind? What qualities does it have? HPB gave important indications and universal principles about this subject although she did not give a detailed description, but fortunately, JK gave much attention to this aspect. We could even say that this has been his main work. He did not talk much about the macrocosmic aspects, something that had been sufficiently commented by HPB and her Masters, but JK dedicated his life to show patiently and with great intelligence and depth this other aspect of the work towards developing the state of Divine Wisdom (*Theos-Sophia*).

Therefore JK's teachings do not oppose Theosophical teachings but they are an integral part of them because Theosophical work involves two aspects: the philosophic-metaphysical and the experimental — psychological. If we only touch the first one, then Theosophy is being presented as a theory and not related to life and it does not offer tools for self-transformation. If, on the contrary, we give our attention only to the psychological task, then the mind remains enclosed within circles which are difficult to break and so, the mind being self-centred, loses the universal transcendent perspective of life.

In creating an equilibrium between these two fields of work we find the way

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that leads towards the development of that Theos-Sophia, and if we learn to build a bridge between them, probably it will appear in us as a deeper vision in regard to the spiritual regeneration of humanity which is the real objective of Theosophy. ✧

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**Do you need prrof of God?
Does one light a torch ton see the sun?**

Oriental Wisdom