

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS: Conference Proceedings
J. Krishnamurti and the Contemporary World Crises

Practitioners' Panel

Session Two

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Can Non-action Bring Global Order?

Ashutosh Kalsi

There is a widely held belief that more action is required to solve the many problems facing the world today—environmental crises, global-social-personal conflicts, mental disorders, the pandemic, etc. We need to examine whether that is indeed the case, or whether another approach is required. Do we need to go into each problem one by one, or is there a way to approach the whole problem of human disorder all at once?

In addressing this question, Kalsi uses his own life experience as a starting point. He shares the story of a time in his life when everything felt empty and without meaning. He was rushing from one goal to another without pause, solving problems with action and identifying productivity as noble. As he reflected on his own life at the time, he saw the same restless movement playing out in the world around him. He began to see that the answers to the world's problems do not lie in scientific knowledge, and that technology can be destructive if not rooted in wisdom. It was at this point that Kalsi discovered Krishnamurti and the exhortation: stay with what is.

Our whole conditioning is to move away from what we truly are and escape from our vanities and fears. It is very difficult to stay with “what is,” especially if it is full of pain, but Krishnamurti pushes us to ourselves with no escape; he asks us to simply be. For Kalsi, Krishnamurti is a mirror through which you look at yourself; if you simply observe what is, without interfering thought, a totally new mind comes into being. In the same way that nature rejuvenates itself if it is left alone, if we give our minds the space it needs to simply be, it also revives.

Kalsi asks us to consider that the problems of the world are both caused and exacerbated by the constant cycle of thought, solution, action. He suggests that, rather than asking “what is the solution?”, we should be asking “can we be still?” In the simple act of being, there is integration of life and revival.

Acknowledgements: I want to sincerely thank Bonnie Petersen for helping to expand my abstract.

A Crisis is an Invitation for Deeper Learning and Transformation **Mukesh Gupta**

Most of our crises and sufferings are a result of lack of self-knowledge and consequently a way of living dominated by unawareness, self-centredness and absence of love. When we do not know and understand ourselves as we are, or, in other words, when we know ourselves only through the limited and conditioned tool of thought, we live under the spell of illusions and false identifications. Pure observation or attention, the only tool not conditioned and distorted by thought or past knowledge, is the doorway to freedom and transformation. The way we live our daily life psychologically, directly contributes to the condition of our society. One can be truly responsible only when one knows oneself as one is in the present moment and not what one was in the past or what one should be in the future.

Self-knowledge is a movement of learning about oneself through choiceless listening, looking and awareness. Self-knowing process helps us to discern what is essential and real, and what is non-essential and unreal. Mistaking non-essential as essential and giving all importance to it is the root cause of our miseries and crises. The crux of all problems and sufferings in my life is that I keep desiring those things which I may not actually need and that they may not have any value or existence apart from my imagination. A quiet mind is able to look with full energy and therefore respond to any challenge with the deeper intelligence of life. When there is a quality of silence and observation, the reactive mechanism of the ego/old mind loses its power to dominate the human psyche. Any crisis could be turned into an invitation for an inward journey and transformation. Freedom lies in my potential to look at things directly without any distortion.

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Mukesh Gupta is an international speaker and regularly gives talks and retreats inspired by the teachings of J. Krishnamurti in India, Europe, Israel and Canada. He has been engaging with the teachings of J. Krishnamurti for two and a half decades now. He sees that a deep non-authoritarian meditative process of self-inquiry, based on love, listening and looking from a silent state of mind and heart, is essential to establish peace and harmony in society. Mukesh currently lives in Varanasi, India and is the director of "School For Self-Inquiry," a global forum devoted to conducting dialogues around fundamental questions of life inspired by Krishnamurti's teachings. He can be contacted at: info@schoolforselfinquiry.org
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