

**: STRUCTURE :**

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**10.0 OBJECTIVES**

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In this unit we shall learn

- *The Purpose of life* essay by Jiddu Krishnamurti
- Tone, theme and language of the essay

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**10.1 ABOUT THE AUTHOR (SPEAKER)**

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J. Krishnamurti was born in 1895 in a town called Madanapalle in Madras Presidency. His father was a Telugu Brahmin named Jiddu Narayaniah. He was the eight child of Narayaniah and Sanjeevamma. Krishnamurti's parents followed traditional rituals and retained their orthodox roots. Krishnamurti father was an officer in the Revenue Department and he had to remain away from home most of the time. Krishnamurti's mother was a simple, religious woman with generous heart and love for the family. Krishnamurti's eldest sister and mother created a warm and loving atmosphere in the family.

Nityananda was Krishnamurti's younger brother whom he loved profoundly. When Krishnamurti was ten years old, his mother died and his beloved sister also passed away when he was hardly ten years old. Young Krishnamurti felt lonely and unhappy as no one was there in the family to look after him.

Annie Besant, the President of the Theosophical society adopted Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya in their youth. Dr. Besant and other theosophists proclaimed that Krishnamurti was the world teacher whose coming the Theosophists had predicted. Annie Besant and Lead-beater, trained J. Krishnamurti preparing him as the world teacher. They introduced Krishnamurti to occult

powers. Krishnamurti was made the Head of the organization called the Order of the Star in the East.

In 1925, Nitya died which made him deeply shattered and shocked. This sad event proved to be the turning point in the life of J. Krishnamurti. He revolted against the teachings of Theosophical society. He renounced the role he was expected to play and dissolved the Order of the Star in 1929. He proclaimed openly that truth was a pathless land and one has to search for the truth individually.

J. Krishnamurti died on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1986. All his life he travelled throughout the world talking to large audiences not like a Guru but as a fellow traveller. Krishnamurti was regarded as one of the greatest thinkers of our time. He belonged to no school of philosophy or thought. He encouraged questioning to find out the truth. He dealt with problems of modern society analyzing them critically. He wanted people to free themselves from fear, anger, sorrow and the bondage of conditioning. His teaching transcended belief systems, nationalism sectarianism and institutional religions. He explained the working of human mind with great precision and analysis. He told people repeatedly that we are all human beings and not Hindus, Muslims, Christians and so on. His teachings are highly relevant to the modern times.

Krishnamurti left a large body of literature in the form of public talks, writings, discussions with teachers and students. He established several schools in India, England and America which taught the students to question themselves and search for truth.

Major works of J. Krishnamurti are as follows:-

1. *At the Feet of the Master*
2. *Awakening*
3. *The Song of Life*
4. *The First and Last Freedom*
5. *Early Talks*
6. *Freedom from the Known*
7. *Meditations*
8. *Commentaries on Living* (First, Second, Third series)
9. *Krishnamurti Journal* (1982)
10. *Poems and Parables* (1981)
11. *Last Talks* (1992)
12. *Tradition and Revolution* (1990)

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## **10.2 J. KRISHNAMURTI'S PHILOSOPHY**

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(The core ideas of J. Krishnamurti's teachings)

To understand J. Krishnamurti, it is necessary to understand his core ideas. First of all, he believed that truth is a pathless land and there is no fixed path to truth. He was opposed to Gurudom, organizations, institutions, and followers. He also always questioned authority of scripture and so called shastras. He believed that religion was "a frozen thought of man".

According to J. Krishnamurti, people do not know how to listen and see. Usually when people listen, their minds either blindly accept or reject what is

said. The same is true of seeing. When people seeing something, they compare it with past experience or seeing. Thought is past and it always hinders present experience of seeing. J. Krishnamurti said that one must be totally attentive where is nor hindrance of past or ego. He called it choiceless awareness.

J. Krishnamurti said that the unconscious mind is a storehouse of desires, hopes, fears, worries, prejudices and so on. We give name to each experience and it is stored in our memory. When we experience or feel something, the past memory hinders it marring the present experience. Thinker is not different from thought and "I" is an illusion that always deprives us of pure perception and happiness.

J. Krishnamurti said that suffering is the greatest problem of mankind. He believed that suffering arises out of fear and insecurity. Fear exists in relationships and not in isolation. It is usually about past or future. If one is free from past or future, there would be no fear. Fear is born out of conflicts of mind. Desire is also the cause of fear. To be free from desire, one must understand the process of ego.

J. Krishnamurti's idea on death is unique. To die means to be free from all attachments, fears and sufferings. In fact, we die every day, every moment. Love and death are synonymous. In true love, one is free from all attachments and fears. Love can exist only when there is total freedom. If individual is free and happy, the world too would free and happy.

J. Krishnamurti was against traditions of dead past. He said that traditions are sterile and stagnant without freshness. He was also opposed to narrow minded chauvinism, nationalism, war and violence of all kinds. At the core of his thinking there is the problem of conditioning. We are conditioned by our cultural social, political and religious milieu. Until, we are free from conditioning, we cannot be free and happy. The purpose of life is to de-condition ourselves and live in 'Present' - Here and Now.

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### **10.3 ABOUT THE SPEECH/TALK BY J. KRISHNAMURTI**

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J. Krishnamurti was a great spiritual teacher of our times. He was a revolutionary thinker who rejected dead traditions, customs and beliefs. He said that truth is not a ready-made road. It is a pathless land and one has to carve one's path. He opposed the tradition of Gurudom and accepted the famous dictum of Lord Buddha "Be your own light".

*The Purpose of Life* is a part of J. Krishnamurti's Talks *Life in Freedom* in Benares, Ojai and Ommen in 1928. J. Krishnamurti describes an eagle descending from the mountain tops. It came down into the valley without fluttering of the wings. It disappeared into shadows of the dark mountains. At the end of the day, it returned to its abode in the mountains.

J. Krishnamurti compares the man who has seen the vision of Truth with an eagle. One who has seen the vision of Truth may wander among the transient things of the world but his life is guided by his goal. Like the eagle, he returns to his abode of eternal peace and joy.

J. Krishnamurti says that the establishment of eternal goals is necessary if one wants to disentangle himself from the complications of life. It should not be the goal shown or suggested by someone else but it should be born of his

own experiences and understanding. Once such a goal is set, it will remove all confusions and make clear the purpose of life.

As the ship is lost in the sea without a compass, the man without the goal would be lost in the world of confusion. The man with knowledge of his goal can guide himself by the compass of his understanding.

If the individual does not know his purpose, he would be in a state of uncertainty and chaos. If the person has not solved his problem, the problem of the world will not be solved. If the person is unhappy and discontented, the world around him would be full of sorrow, discontent and ignorance. This means that the individual and the world are inseparable. Therefore J. Krishnamurti used to say “You are the World”.

To give understanding to others, the person should have understanding for himself first. J. Krishnamurti says that all people are in search of happiness through religion, scriptures, rituals, yoga, meditation etc. All people are seeking something all the time. The seeking is goaded by desires, passions and longings. When a person sets the goal, he is free from desires, fears and sorrows.

Such a condition exists throughout the world. Man is unconsciously trying to free himself from pettiness, and narrowness. The end of this search is freedom and eternal happiness. Man wanders from life to life, temples to temples, from one creed to another. He accepts, rejects and accepts again. The process of accumulation and rejection entangles him like a butterfly against the windowpane.

Life is molded by one’s desires of his heart. If the desire is for a noble life, the life of the person becomes beautiful. Like earthen vessels beautiful or ugly life is fashioned according to the purpose which one has established for himself. If the goal for happiness and freedom is established, life becomes simple. Time is a binder of life but the moment one is free, he is beyond time. Then one can guide himself without any outside authority. The person would be free from fear and his only ultimate goal would be absolute truth.

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#### **10.4 TEXT OF THE ESSAY**

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For the well-being of the mind and heart, understanding is as essential as a warm fire on a cold night.

People imagine that they can attain by some miraculous process, that they can find Truth by the mere outward form of worship, that they can discover their goal by the continual repetition of prayers and chants, or by the performance of yoga, puja and other rites. You can only discover that which you desire, that for which your heart longs, and for which your mind craves, by yourself, through the purification of the heart and mind.

If you would understand Truth you must remove from your heart those stones and weeds which strangle its full growth.

Where there is narrowness of mind and limitation of heart, Truth cannot enter. If you would climb to that height where there are eternal snows, you must leave behind you the accumulation of your possessions, you must be hardened and well trained; and your heart must be filled with the desire of attainment.

For those who have no fixed purpose there is renunciation and self-sacrifice; there is sorrow, grief and pain, endless struggle and violent dissatisfaction.

But for those who have the fixed purpose to attain the Truth which is the unfoldment of life -though they may dwell in the valley of the shadows- there is no sacrifice, there is no struggle.

Because you have no fixed purpose all the shadows of the valley entice you, wrap you in their soft fogs, so that you lose the ecstasy of life. But if you have established your goal, which is the goal of the world -the attainment of the Kingdom of Happiness through freedom from all experience- then you can control the future, then you are the creator of that which you desire. If you can pass through the valley of the shadows with eyes eternally fixed upon the mountain-top, then you can have all experiences without creating barriers between yourself and the goal. This is the understanding of life which will bring order out of chaos and it is for that purpose that the Beloved has come. As the true artist, who by his imagination creates beauty out of the chaos around him, out of the confusion which exists in the world, so the Beloved, Truth, creates order in the mind and heart of those who understand. When you understand, you will have solved the problem of your daily life. If there is no struggle within to free yourself from the cage of sorrow and pain, from the limitations which cause confusion, then, however much I may knock at the door of your heart, there will be no response. But the moment you yourself are dissatisfied, the moment you yourself desire to escape and to attain liberation, then you yourself seek the source of Truth.

Those who seek for an understanding of life must fix their inward perception on eternal Truth which is the unfolding of life.

To those who live and have their being in the valley, the mountains are mysterious, hard, cruel, and eternally aloof. The mountains never change; they are ever constant, never yielding. So it is with Truth. To those who live in the valley of shadows, of transient things, Truth seems terrible, hard and cruel.

Everywhere, among all people, there is a search for something hidden, for some realization, which will give wisdom, greater knowledge, greater vision, greater understanding; this the people call Truth.

They think that Truth lies hidden in some distant place, away from life, away from joy, away from sorrow. But Truth is life, and with an understanding of life there is born an understanding of Truth. When you are fulfilling life with understanding you are the master of Truth.

Though there is at the present time a revolt against tradition and the established order of things, against morality in the narrow sense, yet the majority of people still judge and try to understand life from the prejudiced point of view of a limited and settled mind. A Hindu will only recognize Truth when it is presented to him through the medium of Hinduism, and so it is with the Christian and the Buddhist. But Truth is never contained in a particular form or medium. Truth can only be understood with an unbiased mind, capable of detachment and pure judgment.

As every human being is divine, so every individual in the world should be his own master, his own absolute ruler and guide. But if he would guide himself intelligently, he must be able to judge all things with an open mind and not reject what he does not understand because he is prejudiced.

Truth is the power within each one of you which urges you on to attainment. It is the consummation of all intelligence. It is Absolute. There is no god

except the man who has purified himself and so has attained to Truth.

When you bind life to beliefs and traditions, to codes of morality, you kill life. In order to keep alive, vital, ever changing, ever growing, as the tree that is ever putting out new leaves, you must give to life the opportunities, the nourishment which will strengthen it and make it grow. When life desires to find its freedom the only way by which it can attain is through experience.

There can be no understanding of life, which is Truth, when there is not the thrill, the agony, the suffering, the continual upheaval, discouragement and encouragement of life.

In the olden days, especially in India, those who desired to find Truth imagined that they could discover the way by withdrawing from the aching world, from the transient things, from the shadow of the real, by the destruction of the physical. But now you have to face life as it is, for you can only conquer life when you have a complete and not a partial understanding of it.

Once there was a man who kept all the windows of his house well closed except one, hoping that through that window alone the sunlight would come, but it never came. That is what those people are doing who are bound by tradition, by narrow sectarian beliefs, and who think that Truth is contained in any of those beliefs. You cannot bind life, which is the Truth, by anything, for life must be free and untrammelled. If you do not understand that the purpose of life is freedom, then you are only gilding the bars of your cage by the invention of theories, of creeds, of philosophies and religions.

The basis of all these innumerable beliefs is fear. You are afraid for your salvation, you are afraid to test your own knowledge, and hence you rely on the assertions, on the authority of another.

In order to be happy need we have religions? In order to love need we build temples? In order to fulfill the self need we worship a personal god?

You must give to the suffering world, not beliefs, creeds, dogmas, but new understanding which comes from intelligent cooperation with Nature, through observation of all the events of daily life.

Those who would understand Truth, who would give of their heart and their mind to that Truth, must first have grown in experience. Then experience will guide them, for experience gives intelligence, and intelligence is the accumulation of all experience. The web of life is spun out of common things and the common things are experience.

Learn from every event, from every activity in daily life, and assimilate the experience every moment of the day.

You go to temples or to churches or to other places of worship and there you imagine that you are purified. But does that purification stand the test of daily life?

Your theories, your superficial knowledge of life, do not help you at moments of crisis. When death comes and takes away your friend, your beliefs and theories do not help you to overcome your loneliness and the sense of separation. You will only overcome it if the poison of separation has been destroyed, and you can only destroy that sense of separation by observing others in sorrow, in pain and in pleasure like yourself, and finding that in suffering as well as in pleasure there is unity.

No one can develop that power which dwells within you but yourself, for that power grows by experience. But experience alone, undirected by the goal you would attain, produces chaos, the chaos which prevails in the world at present. Without the understanding of the purpose of life there is bound to be chaos.

The first demand upon those who would seek the understanding of true happiness, is that they should have the burning longing to be free from all things, to gain that freedom which comes when you are beyond the need for further experience because you have passed through all experience.

If you would understand what I mean by the freedom of life, you must establish for yourself the goal which is liberation even from life itself.

For the understanding of life you must have revolt, dissatisfaction and great discontentment. Many people in the world imagine that they have found Truth by adopting some theory or other, and hence that they have solved the whole problem of life.

Contentment without understanding is like a pool covered with green scum, which does not reflect the bare eye of heaven. It is very easy to be ignorantly discontented, but to be discontented and to revolt intelligently is a divine gift. Revolt with intelligence, with understanding, is as a great river that is full of power.

Revolt is essential in order to escape from the narrowness of tradition, from the binding influences of belief, of theories. If you would understand the Truth, you must be in revolt so that you may escape from all these -from books, from theories, from gods, from superstitions- from everything which is not of your own.

If you would understand the meaning of my words, then throw aside all your mental conceptions of life and begin again from the very beginning. Then you will see for yourself how life works, how life which is the accumulation of all experience speaks through that voice which we call intuition, which guides you and helps you on the onward path.

I would urge you to be free -free from the very gods whom you worship, from the very beings whom you hold dear, because freedom is necessary for the growth of the soul and without freedom there is decay.

Because you do not wish to be free, you seek comfort, and comfort is like the shadow of a tree, it varies according to the sun from moment to moment, and those who seek comfort must move from one abode to another. Comfort cannot dwell with understanding.

The man who seeks comfort, who searches for the satisfaction of the moment, will never find real and lasting joy, for the momentary comfort is as transitory as the flower that is born of a morning and withers at the ending of the day.

When a pond is not touched with the breath of air, the waters become stagnant, and no animal comes to it to slake its thirst. But when the fresh winds come and breathe on its face, then animals and human beings alike can quench their thirst.

So if there is not in you the fresh wind of desire for freedom from all things, you will not find the Truth which alone can remove the thirst of the world.

When you are free, as the bird in the skies, your life becomes simple. Life is complicated only when there is limitation. Then you need traditions and beliefs to uphold you.

But when you desire to be free from all things, then you break away from the old order and enter upon that new life which will lead you towards perfection which is liberation and happiness.

When you are able to become a flame of revolt, then the means to reach the Kingdom will be found.

We have to create a miracle of order in this century of chaos and superstition. But first we have to create order in ourselves, a lasting order which is not based on fear or on authority.

I have found and established for myself that which is eternal, and it is my work to create order in your mind, so that you will no longer depend on outward authority, no longer be the slave of superstition or of those trivialities which hold life in bondage, and divide you from your goal.

Because you have no true purpose in life there is chaos within you; there is misery without understanding, strife without purpose, and struggle in ignorance. But when you have established the goal of the Beloved in your heart and mind there is understanding in your life. There may still be struggle but it will be with understanding, and there will be greater love and greater happiness. Establish, therefore, within you that which is eternal, and the present shadows will pass away.

When you have established the Beloved in your heart, the source and the end are united and time no longer exists, for you hold eternity within you.

When you have established the Beloved in your heart, you are ready to face the open seas, where there are great storms, and the strong breezes which quicken life.

Because you have the Beloved in your heart, you must be a lighthouse on a dark shore, to guide those who are still enshrouded in their own darkness.

Of what value is your understanding, of what value are your high and noble thoughts, your pure life, if you do not help those who are in constant pain, who are in darkness, and in confusion? Of what value is the Truth you have seen if you are not able to give of that Truth to those who are hungering and thirsting after the eternal?

Because you have understood, be courageous with that understanding, and give of your life to those who are in darkness.

**- J. KRISHNAMURTI**

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## **10.5 KEY WORDS**

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breeze	: gust of wind, gentle wind
awaken	: rouse from sleep
peak	: summit, top
jostle	: push, elbow, bump roughly
strife	: struggle, conflict, discord
transient	: temporary, short-lived, momentary
abode	: residence, a place of living
soar	: fly high in the air