CONCLUSION

Hypothesis 1 - Earlier, religions and philosophy tried to answer man’s basic questions like who am I, what should be the ideal way of life etc. Later on with the advancement of scientific knowledge, people turned to science for these answers. But, science could not adequately answer these questions. J Krishnamurti goes beyond both religion and science and points towards answers that are not antagonistic to reason and do not put on blinkers of blind faith. Such answers are the need of the times. We find that he is talking about a universal element-which lies beyond religion- in man’s quest.

Along with ‘what am I to do’ come other questions like who am I, why me, what is good/ bad etc. Then there are questions about the world around us as regards its origin, purpose etc. Man has been asking these questions since ages. He tried to find answers to these questions through religion. Perhaps he turned to soothsayers in ancient times, then gradually to the head of the community and then, as religion became more organized, to the religious head or the seers. As philosophy developed, philosophers tried to answer these questions. The questions are put to Jesus Christ in the Bible and to Muhammad Paighambar in the Holy Quran. These questions are also found in the Upanishads. With the advent of science and scientific knowledge reason became prominent and people turned to science in order to find answers to their questions. In the light of scientific reasoning faith, beliefs, devotion, testimony were put under the scanner. Right from the structure of the human body to that of the far away stars various branches of science delved into these subjects. Science tried to answer the questions about the mind and the body, functioning of the brain, genetics etc. The inside story of an atom is being unfolded now. But with this journey newer and ethical questions arose. For example a sheep was ‘created’ out of a cell and the questions that arose were –is it right to intervene in the natural process, is it right to conduct the same experiment with humans or is it right to go for human cloning. Atom bomb was invented and the question arose- is it right to make use of atomic power for destructive purposes or for killing people. The point is -are the questions answered, the problems solved with the help of science?
There is the urge to understand the truth, something beyond science, beyond the senses is universal. Traditionally the concept of god as the ultimate knower, doer, the good etc. is there and religion is taken to be the vehicle that takes one to this ultimate understanding. Great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda tried to address this universal element and talked about universal religion. But, in spite of the propagation of the great thinkers the attempts to bring in universality amongst all seems to be unsuccessful; people have various deities/ gods/ symbols and they stick to those symbols. In this clinging the universality is lost and static symbols and rigid rituals are instated and they become an integral part of religion. Rather than the principles people go by these symbols. In order to preserve and maintain them institutions are formed and we have institutionalized religions. It is assumed that the concept of universality or universal religion is subtle and therefore difficult to understand; people want something concrete. Thus we have a particular flag or statue or way of worship or prayer representing a particular religion. Along with such concrete symbols people are given do’s and don’ts which are expected to be followed by all belonging to that particular religion. This actually is the institutionalization of religion; the concept behind is lost or is obscured. Then religion is taken to be equivalent to following the rituals and accepting a specific god/ goddess etc.

Then, instead of universalization divisions are created as ‘my’ symbol against ‘your’ symbol, one ritualism as against another. Efforts are made to prove my symbols or ritual to be better than yours. Thus we find that inclusion of symbols and rituals is actually doing away with universality.

JK seems to be avoiding this very phenomenon. Therefore we find that his teachings do not provide any kind of symbol/ rituals or methods/ systems or ideology/ theory. He does not provide details of do’s and don’ts. He had realized that once a word / symbol/ ritual is laid out men tend to follow it blindly. But according to him life is dynamic whereas these symbols are rigid and stagnant. Clinging on to them means putting on blinkers. He always urged everyone to think on his/ her own and find one’s way because only you can understand your life. Therefore the details are left to the individual. This way he goes beyond the differences amongst religions and this is the universal appeal that is found in his teachings.
Currently an area of great concern is environmental issues/problems. In order to fulfill his needs, comforts and luxuries man started consuming natural resources at a speed far greater than their creation. Indiscriminate felling of trees, mining, water consumption etc. have given rise to various environmental problems. Tampering with nature with the help of advanced technology is proving to be disastrous, unaffordable. For example building huge dams is said to be a threat to the ecosystem and to human habitat. Another example is making use of genetically modified seeds and chemical fertilizers for more, better and a specific agricultural yield. There are agitations against gm seeds and chemical fertilizers all over the world. The devastating effects of chemical fertilizers on birds, humans, animals are noticed and demand for organic products is increasing. We are now talking about sustainable agriculture. Again the point is can science and technology give solutions to these problems adequately? In order to deal with these problems one’s life style needs to be changed and this change comes from within. So where do we turn to for this kind of internal change-science, technology, religion, psychology, or guru?

Whoever gives the answer and whatever the answer, it is obvious that in order to live a happy and healthy life, some change, some transformation is required in the external world and that change begins from a change within. JK says that you are the world; he means that everything that is there in the external world is brought about by man by using his reason, thought. So a change in the thought or internal change is inevitable for an external change. But thought is rooted in the memory which is the past so what is called as ‘change’ is actually continuation of the past. The past gets carried forward, nothing new happens i.e. no change occurs. For complete transformation- JK used the word ‘mutation’ very often rather than transformation-one has to break away from memory, thought. Does this mean that we have to totally do away with the past and memory and thought? JK clearly says that for our routine life thought has to be there, but then thought has to realize its own limitations and that will be real transformation, that will bring something ‘new’ in the real sense.

JK talked about such a change with proper understanding of functioning of the brain in detail. That is evidently seen through many of his dialogues. His long discussions with Dr. David Bohm, the renowned physicist, were published under the title ‘Ending of Time’ in 1985. Here JK basically discusses ending of thought which is ending of psychological time. This is nothing
else but freedom. And, he shows the possibility of this freedom whereby a mutation of the brain cells occurs. Later on David Bohm remarked that modern research into the functioning of the brain and the nervous system actually gives considerable support to JK’s saying that insight may change the brain cells. The point is that what he said has a sound scientific basis. He does not show any antagonism towards science; he accepts the limits of science as far as man’s inner aspirations are concerned but does not discard scientific investigation.

And, very importantly, for this to happen, you have to be a light unto yourself. According to JK there can be no external help for this – after all your brain cells will be changed and that is something only you can go through. Hence be a light unto yourself. Also, no blinkers of blind faith in a guru or text or ideology, rituals are required here.

**Hypothesis 2**- In the Indian tradition Shadripus are looked upon as obstacles in the path to Moksha. J Krishnamurti talks about anger, fear, conditioning of the mind etc. as the obstacles to freedom. This has a universal appeal and application.

**Shadripus in the Indian tradition**

So far we have seen the importance of freedom or Moksha for putting an end to suffering or for transformation of man. The question that naturally arises here is- how to achieve it? Before we go into that let us see in brief what the Indian tradition says about that. The Indian tradition talks about ‘shadripus’ or six foes/ enemies of man that actually keep man away from Moksha.

The Gita (6.21) tells us that without conquering these neither the individual nor the society can become good. Various saints like Tukarama and Kabir have also talked about them. These are the internal foes that are discussed in the Gita and the Dnyaneshwari, two prominent and popular texts. Therefore let us first see what these two texts offer us as regard with shadripus and then go in to JK’s discussion about the hurdles to freedom.

We find that the Gita discusses three foes i.e. Kama or Desire, Krodh or Anger and Lobha or Greed in the beginning and says that these three are the gateways to hell and therefore must be
conquered or discarded or abandoned. No personal or social good can be brought about unless these three are completely conquered. Out of these three Krodha actually leads to total deterioration and destruction of man. Verses 62, 63 of chapter 2 of the Gita explain it this way—even memory of Vishaya or pleasure of the senses creates desire or Kama and one goes after the object of desire for satisfaction. Any obstacle to this satisfaction causes Krodha or anger. Reason does not function when one is angry. This causes confusion in the memory and this confusion is nothing but destruction of reason or intellect or Buddhi. And once the Buddhi is destroyed, total destruction of man occurs because ultimately it is the Buddhi that is behind man’s actions, it is the Buddhi that prompts the senses through the mind. Therefore internal control over the senses is necessary.

Also, when one’s mind is properly under control, there is no attachment of the soul to either the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the senses. This is the state of peace and stability of the soul and the Buddhi. When the Buddhi, soul and mind are detached you have no pleasure or displeasure caused by the senses. And, because there is no attachment your action does not become a binding (Bandh) on you. Verse 37, chapter 3 of the Geeta says that Kama and Krodha coming out of rajas (one of the three guna’s of Prakriti) are the most greedy, the greatest sinners. They are our enemies. Verses 10 to 20 reiterate the same point. But here the other three enemies are introduced. It is said that those who have Kama also have Dambha or deceit, Mada or lustful passion and Maana or conceit. Those who have these have incorrect ideas and thoughts and they go for wrongdoings; they are the sinners. Kama is always unfulfilled, desire for money, enjoyment, pleasure is unending and therefore such people can never have true knowledge and proximity with god. Verse 26, chapter 5 tells us that only those who do not have Kama, krodha, those who have self control can attain Moksha. Thus the Geeta shows that Kama, Krodha, Dambha, Mada and Maana are the internal enemies of man because they keep Moksha away from man.

You find a poetic and lucid description of these Shadripus in the Dnyaneshwari. In the 7th chapter of Dnyaneshwari(verse 165- 167), Dnyaneshwara, the author of the book, says that when the body and the ego fall in love with each other they give birth to their daughter, Desire. As Desire grows up she marries Hatred and Dwandwamoha or Duality is born. (Desire breeds
duality because the sense of possession arises out of desire that leads to ‘yours’ and ‘mine’ which is duality. Out of the feeling of possession one is led astray and is ready to go in even for bad, banned deeds.) Ego, the grandfather nurtures Duality with Hope which is the nourishment for Duality. This Duality spreads thorns of Vikalpa on the path of internal or psychological purification and opens the door to Nishiddh Karma or banned deeds. And then man is completely entangled in the Samsara and suffering. In the third chapter (verse 242- 255) Dnyaneshwaratells us that Kama and Krodha- both being very dear to tamas (one dark, negative guna of Prakriti) - are nourished by Avidya or ignorance they are actually the enemies of life as they enjoy a good status in the city of Death. Their destructive movements are observed/ controlled by Hope. They are respected by Avarice and the Ego transacts with them. They have brought forth Dambha or deceit in this world. They have disrobed Peace and have done away with Detachment and Nigraha. Thus beginning with bodily senses and ego one is led to devastation via desire, anger, duality etc. Body and Ego falling in love means identification of oneself with the body or the ego; desire comes in to existence out of this identification.

These are the internal enemies discussed in our tradition. JK does not use the term ‘shadripus’ but talks about the hurdles to freedom. Let us see what are the hurdles to freedom according to JK.

**Hurdles to freedom according to JK**

In an interview taken by Mr. Levin of the BBC, JK was asked how to achieve clarity of perception. JK replied that rather than asking ‘how’ we should ask what the things are that prevent clarity because the answer to ‘how’ brings in a framework and such a framework becomes rigid, closed in the course of time. The same applies for freedom and meditation. JK rejected/ denied this ‘how’ because when you ask for ‘how’ you look for a method, a set path; once you get that following that method, path, and system becomes your focus and you are engaged in following that rather than understanding the meaning of freedom, meditation etc. Then rigidity and mechanicalness sets in and freedom cannot be there. That is the reason why JK never put forth any system or method for freedom or meditation; his emphasis was always on one discovering the meaning of these on his own. Therefore he talks about the hurdles that
create obstacles or prevent one’s understanding of these. He also says that seeing them clearly is getting rid of them. Traditionally it seems that it is assumed that human nature is such that the *shadripus* are inherent in it. If we accept it then the responsibility of the problems arising out of them goes to them and not to man. JK’s views are different in that according to him even the hurdles are a human construct and ultimately only you are responsible for them, that responsibility cannot be avoided. Advaita Vedanta talks of Ignorance and Buddhism talks of *Trishna* as being the root cause of bondage. JK goes ahead of these and puts the responsibility squarely on the human shoulder.

Nevertheless, whether you call them as obstacles or internal enemies or *shadripus*; they are very much there. From whatever I could gather from JK’s teachings, the hurdles to freedom according to him are fear, anger, conditioning and ego. These four and others like dependence on other, feeling of insecurity, public opinion, authority - of a religious head, a guru or a text- are all interconnected. Let us begin with fear because it is an abode of other hurdles like insecurity etc. and plays an important role in one’s life. It is a topic that JK discussed frequently and at length.

**Fear**

‘Fear’ is an emotion/ feeling common to all creatures. Everybody experiences it many times in one’s life; nobody seems to be able to escape it. We also know that fear can play havoc and ruin one’s life. Psychology studies fear and various forms of fear are described in that science. ‘Phobia’ is an oft used word in clinical psychology. Phobia is fear of something like flying, birds, chickens, closed doors, heights… the list is very long. It shows how fear has taken deep roots in the mind of man and how it exhibits itself in many forms. Of course, JK is not talking about psychological/ clinical method or approach to fear. JK has delved really very deep into the nature of fear in many of his dialogues. He looks at fear from various angles; one of his DVD’s is titled as ‘Jewel of Fear’. In this DVD he has talked in his usual patient and profound way about this phenomenon, how it takes roots, what is its nature, the importance of understanding- thereby dropping of – fear.
Commonsense understanding: Before going into JK’s understanding of fear, let us first look at the commonsense understanding of it. Usually, fear is associated with something; it is fear ‘of’ something or the other. There are various kinds of fears like fear of exams, darkness, relationship- entering into or breaking up- , the world coming to an end; and perhaps the biggest of all fears is the fear of death. The content may change, but ‘fear’ always takes an object. It is also generally believed that by removing the object, fear will be removed. For example you are afraid of the dark, you remove the darkness and the fear is gone. JK calls this as the fear of the known.

But not all kinds of fears can be removed this way. For example fear of death. You cannot remove death and therefore the fear continues. JK calls this as the fear of the unknown.

JK on fear

He says that fear exists only in relationship; it cannot exist by itself or in isolation. There is no such thing as abstract fear; it is always of the known or the unknown, past and future. He says that there are physical fears like danger to one’s body and those results into immediate reaction; but this fear is fairly easy to understand and he discusses only the psychological fears, or the inner fears. He has also said that fear takes many forms; when you understand the root of fear or the nature, structure, quality of fear, it vanishes. Fear takes on many branches and if we only “… trim the branches, fear will continue.”¹ So now onwards we will go into JK’s understanding of the structure, nature of fear.

JK says that the fact of fear and the idea of fear or the abstraction of fear, both are running parallel all the time. Unless we discard the idea, we cannot deal with the fact of fear. When the two are running parallel, there is a conflict between the two i. e. one of them tries to dominate the other. And this prevents clear understanding of either of them; without clear understanding one cannot be free from fear.

Fear, Thought and Pleasure - So how do these various kinds of fears arise, what is their origin? That is the important issue. There is the fear of the past, of what took place in the past, the fear of the known and there is the fear of the future, of what might happen in the future, or
fear of the unknown. Whatever the case may be, JK points out that fear arises out of the structure of thought. We think about what happened or what will happen and fear arises. Thought breeds fear. “Thought, thinking about an incident, an experience, a state in which there has been disturbance, grief or pain brings about fear.”

Thought, through its pattern, establishes a certain psychological security and does not want that security to be disturbed. Any disturbance or even the possibility of disturbance creates fear. Therefore even the memory of a fearful incident in the past gives rise to fear now. JK further says that thought is also responsible for pleasure. You have had a happy experience and thought wants to repeat it or perpetuate it. When this is not achieved there is resistance, anger, despair, and fear. JK has stated it very clearly that bliss and ecstasy cannot be equated with pleasure- “You come upon bliss or ecstasy only when you understand the nature of thought, which breeds both pleasure and fear.”

**Fear and time.**- One of the very profound observations of JK is that fear is time or that fear is a movement in time. Going into the depths of the meanings of the both, he uncovers the meanings and the interconnection of the two in a very clear way. He maintains that ‘time’ is of two kinds. One is the physical or chronological time. For example the time taken to travel from one point to another, whether a few moments or hours. Also, when you are learning a skill or a language time is involved. You do not learn a language etc instantly, it takes ‘time’. That is the physical time.

Then there is ‘psychological time’. This ‘time’ is present when one is going through the process of ‘I am this, I will be that’. I am ignorant, one day I will be enlightened; I am a clerk, I will be a manager one day. This distance between being and becoming is the psychological time. Also, there is time as the past, present and future. I was happy yesterday, I may not be happy tomorrow. I have a broken relationship with someone now, but we will patch up and be happy again. I have a lucrative job now, I may lose it tomorrow. This is the way man relates to time i.e. past, present and future. These are all examples of the ‘psychological time’ and time as past, present and future. JK says that ‘in the now, all the past and future are contained’. Today’s ‘I’ is the result of the past, modifying itself in the present; in the present we think of future i.e. of
‘becoming’, that is how the future is in the present—the future is the present. Thus the present is the past and the future, contained in the now. That, according to JK, is time.

So the next question is what is the relationship of time with fear? He says that both time and thought are the constituents of fear. We have a memory of an incident that caused fear; the fear is recorded in the brain like a tape recorder records and stores whatever is recorded. I recognize fear from the past. Fear is ‘remembered’ because of this earlier recording in the brain. The brain is a storehouse of many such recordings; we call them as ‘knowledge’. Thus the brain has knowledge of fear. So “knowledge is fear.”4 When you begin to experience fear, memory of fear or the recorded knowledge steps in and fear is recognized or recollected, here knowledge becomes fear. Even the word fear may also cause fear, here the word becomes fear. Thus fear is the movement of knowledge as the past, and that knowledge is time. And thus fear is also part of thought. For example there is the thought ‘I might be deserted tomorrow’, ‘I might die soon’ ‘I will be this tomorrow’—this tomorrow is time, which is thought.

According to JK, in order to be free of fear, you have to observe it. The question is can fear be observed without this movement of knowledge? Or to put it differently, can fear be not recorded at all? Because, if it is not recorded at all, there will be no chance of ever recollecting it. It means that can we do without carrying the memory of fear? Is it possible not to record psychologically? Our brain is recording all the time, can a halt be put to that recording? JK says that if you find it out for yourself, the brain will then see the fact of the whole thing and will be free from it, will be unconditioned from it, no recording will take place in the brain.

This movement of time and thought actually prevents us from seeing anything afresh or new. He says that if we can look at fear as it arises for the first time, you realize that it is a physical and psychological reaction. Thus the root of fear is the movement of time and thought. When you become completely familiar with this movement, you are completely attentive and, “…that very attention burns away fear.”5
Ending of Fear

He said that you should not run away from fear but should remain with the fact of fear. It is like holding a jewel and looking at the intricate pattern by the artist. You look at it, you don’t condemn it, you don’t say, ‘how beautiful’ and run away with words, but “… You turn it around, look at the various sides, the back and the front and the side and never let it go.”

Instead of getting nervous, apprehensive or saying ‘I don’t like it’ just be with it. Then fear becomes an actual fact which is there, whether you are conscious of it or not, whether you like it or not. JK points out that this very fact of watching fear - without analyzing or dissecting it - you begin to discover the origin, the causation of fear. This close ‘delicate’ watching will reveal the beginning, the cause of fear. And, where there is a cause there is an end. The cause can never be different from the effect. JK said this not about a particular kind of fear, a branch of fear but about the whole tree of fear. Generally we tend to think and be concerned about ending a particular fear. But a close observation will be putting an end to the total phenomena of fear. In JK’s teachings, effortlessness, non-imposition, non-coercion are the important ingredients if you have to ‘know’ or understand something. The same applies to observation and understanding of fear. He says that without striving to analyze, without forcing your mind to understand it, you have to observe. And then this very observation will show you the causation of fear as time and thought.

Dependence is one of the factors of fear. Dependence on the spouse, guru, priest, a book etc. for support, security and so on is found everywhere. Along with this dependence there is the fear of losing them or the fear of being rejected by them. The spouse turns away from me and I am lost and get angry, violent, jealous, brutal etc. Fear of loneliness is also attached with dependence. If the object or person of dependence moves away from me, I will be lonely and I am filled with the fear of loneliness.

Dependence and attachment go together; I am attached to something and I depend on it. This attachment could be of anything- furniture, belief, a book, family, god, drugs, drink etc. Then JK raises the question why are you attached. I am attached because I depend on these to give me prestige, comfort, social position. “So dependence is a form of attachment.” According to JK one depends on something because that something fills one’s internal emptiness. This
dependence not only fills the emptiness; it also covers the shallowness, stupidity, insufficiency, loneliness. For this covering up and filling emptiness, one depends on knowledge, book and then knowledge becomes extremely important. This is a fact and anybody can see it. He has explained this point beautifully in these words- “If I were not empty, if I were not insufficient, I wouldn’t care what you said or did. I wouldn’t depend on anything. Because I am empty and lonely I don’t know what to do with my life.” The act of filling up takes many forms like writing a book, painting a picture etc. You try to fill it with material things or with ideas, or with persons. He further says that I depend on something or someone means I am afraid of being lonely, I am afraid of that emptiness. Then the fear of losing the activities that fill the emptiness arises and one clings more and more to them and this clinging is attachment.

This, according to him, is fear coming out of dependence and attachment. But the matter doesn’t rest here. When you notice your emptiness, shallowness etc. you are frightened of it and you try to escape. You try to escape through another attachment; and you are back to square one! The whole circle begins again. And freedom cannot be there with attachment or dependency.

But, if you really discover this, the emptiness, dependency and attachment arising out of it what happens? You do not escape; then the question comes, who is aware of this emptiness? .Here JK’s deep and subtle thinking is clearly visible. Who could be saying ‘I am lonely’, or ‘I am empty’? Is the mind aware of it? Then it would be saying that a part of the mind is aware of another part which is lonely. If a fragment of the mind says this, then there is division. Freedom is not there when there is division. As long as there is division between the ‘observer’ and the ‘observed’, there will be contradiction and therefore conflict. He urges the listener to see this for himself, realize it for himself. There is no readymade method for it.

While discussing fear- attachment- dependence, JK has distinguished between the physiological/ biological and the psychological dependence. You depend on food, clothes and shelter; this is biological and natural dependence arising out of biological necessity. But, an attachment arises out of this necessity. For example, having a house is a biological necessity, but a psychological attachment to the house also emerges. There is attachment to certain forms of food etc. Another important point here is you are easily aware of the physical dependencies like
smoking, drinking, physical stimulants. But the psychological dependencies are not easily identifiable because they are inter-related. JK says that they flow into each other. You are scared of losing that to which you are attached and fear arises.

Identification is an outcome of fear

Having one’s own identity is considered to be very important for one’s existence. Identification with one’s country, religion, caste or some group seems to almost to be a precondition for a good life. Without identification there is the fear of social non-acceptance and one is afraid of being left out of the mainstream of life. But this is a kind of image building and strengthening of the ‘I’. There can be no freedom with this kind of image building and the fear that goes along with it. Then there is a peculiar kind of identification invented by man - identification with God. But God is something invented by man, “God has not made man in His image, man has made God in his image.” But this doesn’t really take you anywhere. Thus identification with god is also something that one tries to hang on to and then there will be no freedom.

Simple approach to fear

He says that fear is a very complex problem and every complex problem must be approached very simply; the simpler the better. He says that ‘simpler’ means you don’t know how to deal with the root of it; and because you don’t know, you begin to discover. If you have already arrived at a conclusion about the root or cause of fear then you don’t discover the root, you just look for your conclusion. He means that do not be prejudgmental or preconclusive and say that fear is xyz; go in to it ‘yourself’ and therein lies understanding of it.

According to JK, an important factor connected with fear is not, “…the mere observation, but bringing or having energy that will dissipate that fear, having such tremendous energy that fear doesn’t exist.” Here he has raised more questions about fear and they are- Is fear a matter of lack of energy, lack of attention? He further says that if it is a matter of lack of energy, how to come upon this tremendous energy that will push away fear altogether? Of course, he points out that one has to come upon this energy ‘naturally’, that is no coercion or forcible ousting of fear
will work. Things happening ‘naturally’, ‘effortlessly’ was a great concern for JK. The same applies here in connection with fear. So if you want to be free of fear you will have to have a great energy that will easily drive away fear. Further he says that most of us are constantly occupied with something or the other and a lot of energy is consumed or wasted in that occupation. A businessman, a housewife or a common man- everyone is perpetually occupied. Some are occupied with meditation or God. According to him such occupation, worry, concern, is a waste of energy. A mind that is afraid will find something or the other to keep it occupied; but that will not be observation of fear, it will only be another kind of occupation or an escape. “It is only a mind that is free from occupation of any kind that has tremendous energy.” 12

This point made by JK is extremely important. If we look closely we will find that yes, many times in order to get rid of fear we do engage ourselves in some activity that takes the mind away from fear. But, as he rightly points out, that is not freeing oneself from fear; it is only moving away from fear temporarily. And, this cannot be freedom from fear at all.

A mind that is fearful invents various symbols like god or different rituals and escapes into them to get over fear. That is why he says, “If you are not at all afraid psychologically, have no fear at all, you would have no gods, you would have no symbols to worship, no personalities to adore. Then you are psychologically, extraordinarily free.” 13

**Fear, action and thought**

JK says that any sense of fear generates all kinds of mischievous activity, not only psychologically and neurotically, but outwardly. You are walking in a forest and you spot a snake or a bear; there is an instinctive action of running away from it or you sweat. This action is only instant physical reaction; it is a conditioned response, you are told to be careful with snakes. The brain, the nervous system, responds instinctively to protect itself. That is a natural intelligent response. “It is necessary to protect the organism, the snake is a danger and to respond to it in the sense of protection is an intelligent action.”14 Is it an action arising out of fear?

When we consider pain, it is obvious that you have had pain previously and you are afraid that it might return. This fear is caused by thought- something that happened in the past and it may
occur again in the future. Here fear is the product of thought. So we have two movements of thought- 1- the intelligent action of protection, of self preservation, the physical necessity to survive, which is a natural, intelligent response. 2. Thinking about something and the possibility of its occurring or not occurring in the future. This is the root of fear. And the question is: can this movement of thought, so immediate, so insistent, so persuasive, come to an end? When you oppose it or make an effort to end it, you are still in the realm of thought. That will not help in being free from fear.

Thus JK has clearly shown the havoc that fear plays in one’s life and how it is a major hindrance to freedom because fear means being in the field of thought and time (psychological time). And, so long as you are in that field, freedom cannot be.

Anger

Another hurdle to freedom is anger. JK has shown how anger arises and how it is connected with other emotions like possessiveness etc. Anger is a common experience, we get angry many times. JK says that most of us do not mind being angry, in fact we find an excuse for it. Ill treatment given to me makes me angry and I feel ‘righteously’ angry. That is, we try to justify anger. JK observes that we do not stop at getting angry, an explanation or justification immediately follows. We go into the causes of it and try to prove that it was valid to get angry in that situation. The anger is thus sustained through justification. According to JK the elaborate justification, explanation, the verbalization- silent or spoken- sustains anger and gives it scope and depth. We hide behind the shield of explanations and such hiding is a hindrance in knowing one’s true self. That is how anger is a hurdle to freedom because it stops self-knowledge which is freedom. Usually I get angry when someone utters bitter words about me, when my expectation to be praised is not fulfilled and I feel hurt. I put the blame for the hurt on the other person. But here, I am depending on the other person for my happiness. Out of this dependence arises possessiveness. JK says that disappointment, bitterness, jealousy, resentment etc. are the various forms of anger. Out of these, resentment is stored up anger and the antidote to it is forgiveness. If there is no anger or no accumulation of anger, forgiveness is not required.
One gets angry when one’s self-importance is hurt. But then, JK asks, why is there self-importance? He says that you create an image of yourself- what I am, what I should be or should not be. If there is no such image, there will be no self-importance, no hurt and therefore no anger. This image is created because you never go into what you actually are. When the idea of what I am is attacked, I get angry. For example, if you are actually observing the fact that you are greedy and if you are told that, there is no hurt because the fact is that you are greedy. When you create an image of yourself as non-greedy and when you are told that you are greedy then you get angry. Thus image is a great cause of anger.

Anger also leads to violence; ‘you hurt me so I hurt you back’ this kind of attitude can get developed and this is nothing else but violence. Also, when you are angry and I too get angry the result is more anger, we just add to anger. Is this what one wants? You may feel righteous about it but your anger is only adding to the other’s anger and to the violence that follows.

JK unfolds yet another facet of anger. He says that anger has the quality of isolation; it cuts one off from the rest and at least for the time being all relationships come to an end. Isolation is despair and so there is despair in anger.

People often talk about getting rid of anger, being free form anger. And one way is said to be by will. Your will can get rid of anger. But, JK says that anger cannot be gotten rid of by will because will is the outcome of desire, and desire by its very nature is aggressive and dominant. And therefore you have to understand the nature of desire. Then only you can understand anger.

Now we move on to the next hurdle to freedom as per JK and that is desire.

**Desire**

We have seen earlier that the Gita views anger to be the origin of one’s total destruction. It is also said that if you will, you can get rid of anger. JK differs in that he says that will is the outcome of desire and desire by its very nature is aggressive and therefore can lead to violence.
(This is how desire, anger and violence are connected.) And so, if you want to be free of anger understanding the nature and process of desire is the key.

Thus from anger we come to understanding desire. According to JK the beginning of the process of desire is sense perception. You see, touch, contact something beautiful and there is sensation and thought. The thought creates an image of you owing that thing- a diamond, car, clothes, whatever. This image is the beginning of desire. Can that image come to an end or not arise at all? This image is created because of thought; then you engage yourself in possessing the thing for yourself. This requires/ involves some activity or effort. If the process is halted at the beginning i.e. at the point when thought enters into it, all the effort will not be there. It means that happiness in fulfilling desire and frustration upon not fulfilling it will not be there; when there is no frustration there will be no anger. This is how anger is related to desire. It may begin with irritation and turn into fury or rage which then can lead to violence. He says that if you are aware at the moment when desire arises, when thought starts creating an image you can be free of it because then thought will have no scope to create an image. Then all the activity, the effort to fulfill the desire will not arise.

Pleasure is also related to desire. You want to sustain your pleasant experience; for that you desire to possess various things- a beautiful house, car, wife/husband, money, power etc. All these are part of your image as well. So the key to stop anger is to watch the moment when thought starts interfering with sensation and creates images.

In the Indian tradition Kama or desire also includes sexual desire and its fulfillment. We know that unfulfilled sexual desire leads to anger. Therefore, it will not be out of place to see JK’s views on sex. Unlike a lot of great thinkers, saints in the past, JK never advocated Brahmacharya or celibacy. According to him sex has its own place in one’s life. It is something natural. But, when thought starts seeking more of it for the sustenance of pleasure there is a problem. He clearly says that the act, being something natural, is not the problem but thought about the act is the real problem. If you think about it all the time, then it becomes a problem. The cinema, magazine etc. add to the thought. But why does the mind think about it so much? There are more urgent issues that demand your attention, why do you give complete attention to
this thought over and above other thoughts? The simple reason is, “… it is a way of complete self-forgetfulness.”\textsuperscript{15} At least for those moments you forget your self- your religion, god, business, leaders, activities- everything. It thus becomes the ultimate avenue of escape. The ‘me’ is not there at the moment and that is real happiness; that is why you seek it, cling to it more and more. The problem sets in when you become a slave to it and you want to be free of it. Ideas of chastity, celibacy through suppression follow. Then celibacy becomes a problem. The problem can be solved only when you observe the process of desire and the structure of ‘me’. So long as the ‘I’ is fed with ambition, success, my-mine thoughts, self-forgetfulness will be sought and the problem will continue. “You are creating, feeding, and expanding your self on the one hand and on the other you are trying to forget your self.”\textsuperscript{16}There is contradiction in this. Rather than sex this contradiction is the problem. Understanding the nature of the self can put an end to this problem of sex.

Something akin to JK’s process of desire is found in the Dwadashanidan or the twelve Links of the Causal Wheel of Dependent Origination given by Gautama Buddha. The twelve links are – Avidya or ignorance, Samskara or impressions of Karmic forces, Vidnyana or initial consciousness of the embryo, Nama-rupa or psycho-physical organism, Shadayatana or the six sense organs including the mind, Sparsh or sense-object contact, Vedana or sense experience, Trishna or thirst for sense enjoyment, Upadana or clinging to this enjoyment, Bhava or the will to be born, Jati or birth/ rebirth, Jara-marana or old age and death. Here we see that Trishna arises out of sense experience and that is beginning of the whole cycle of birth and death.

But, how does it arise? JK says that after sense experience, thought enters there and then desire arises. So in a way, by introducing ‘thought’ as the origin of desire/ Trishna JK has made the process of desire clearer.

Activity based on desire is, JK says, rooted in ‘thought’ and as we have seen earlier thought is always limited, goes by memory and therefore cannot meet the new moment which is fresh and not of the past. Hence desire is a hurdle to freedom.
Conditioning

Another major hurdle to freedom is conditioning. What is conditioning? Man is born in a particular society and at a particular time. All the external forces/ factors like religion, nationality, culture, political ideology etc. act upon man right from birth. For example, I am not born a Hindu/ Muslim/ Christian but the society in which I am born gives me this identity and an image of myself as a Hindu etc is built up. I grow with that, I identify myself with that; all the symbols, rituals that go with it are accepted by me as sacred and I start looking at others through these. This is conditioning. It is like putting on blinkers. Then you measure everything, see everything through these windows. The thought that I am a Hindu etc. is rooted in me and I go by that thought. In short you go by thought that is past, memory. Freedom lies beyond the field of thought and thus conditioning which is a play of thought is a hurdle to freedom.

Also, man does not live in isolation; he lives in a society and is in relationship with others. JK says, “This relationship is one of use, need, comfort, gratification and it creates influences, values that bind us. The binding is our conditioning.” He further maintains that the social or environmental influences, the society in which we are born, the culture in which we have been raised, economic and political pressures etc. – all these make for conditioning. We live by ideas, beliefs, and ideologies and there is struggle and conflict amongst them. We are aware of the conflict, the pressure, the pain that is involved in it. But we are not aware of our conditioning. He says that in order to understand conditioning one has to be aware of it. According to him, conditioning is one’s attachment to all these. We should know the process of this attachment. We are attached to our work, tradition, ideas, nation, property, people etc. Through this attachment I identify myself as ‘someone’, giving rise to self-importance. But, he holds that attachment is a kind of escape which adds to the ‘I’ and strengthens conditioning. You start clinging to the identification- that is attachment. The ‘I’ becomes the conditioning factor. Without such attachment one feels empty and therefore one seeks attachment. Then the pushes and pulls of these factors start taking their toll and one starts escaping from them through work, religious ceremonies, knowledge, god, drink, amusement, etc. Sometimes you substitute one escape with another but still it is the same- an escape. Therefore, only by being aware of this whole process can one be free of conditioning. Again, he adds that instead of mere verbal or intellectual discussion, you have to try it actually and you will know what it is.
Security

This word is perhaps the most used key word at present. Everyone seems to be struggling, making efforts for various kinds of security—job security, financial security, health security, security in relationship, emotional security and so on. But, at the back of the mind everyone is aware that money, job, property, relationship—with spouse, child, friends, society—none of these is permanent and therefore not secure. Political upheavals, natural calamities, death can destroy these any time. Yet the mind, out of fear of losing these, clings to these and looks for permanency. We also cling to these because of conditioning and because we go by images. For example I am conditioned to think that to have property, money, name etc. is being successful. We go by the image that we have built up of being successful and we stick to it. Even in relationships we have our own image and that of the other and we go by those images. This clinging on is to look for security according to JK.

Physical and psychological security both are sought by all. The fear of insecurity drives man to no end. JK talks about both outward and inward security. Outward security can be brought in by reputation, money, fame etc. Inwardly one finds security with an ideal. I consider xyz to be an ideal and secured person and I feel that if I become like him/her, I will be secure, I will have no problems. And the process of ‘I am this, I want to become that’ starts. Rather than looking into what I really am, I start to follow the ideal. This creates division and conflict between the real me and the ideal that I try to achieve. And, upon not becoming the ideal, sorrow, pain and suffering begins. The only way is to see the falseness of having the ideal and it will drop away. Observe yourself as you are without any interpretation, comparison, judgment or condemnation. JK says, “This will be arduous, but there is delight in it. Only to the free is there happiness, and freedom comes with the truth of what is.” Thus, according to JK both the outward and inward securities are ‘shallow’, not securities at all and there is no freedom if you go by them.

All these thoughts about security and the activity towards it actually take you away from what you truly are; you move away from the real nature of the ‘me’. Then it is a hurdle to freedom because freedom is to know the self.
It is clear that when you are thinking about security and acting accordingly, all your thought and action is from the centre i.e. the ‘I’ to the periphery i.e. the rest of the world, life. When this happens it creates division between this so-called ‘I’ and the rest. Freedom has no such division, it is not thinking from a centre to the periphery; freedom means understanding the whole process of thought. Therefore, thought from a centre to the periphery is a hurdle to freedom. JK also says that insecurity is the nature of all things. Then you try to build protective walls –like investing more in insurance schemes, having more property etc. But the fact is that there is nothing permanent so insecurity is always there in spite of all your possessions.

Thus we have seen Shadripus from the Indian tradition and hurdles like fear, anger, desire, conditioning and security as given by JK. Again, the aim is not to compare and find out plus and minus points from either; it is only an attempt at understanding JK’s teachings in the light of the other. One major point of difference that is noticed here is that of conquering over or suppression of these. Shadripus, as per the Indian tradition that we have seen here, are the internal enemies and are to be conquered. The senses that are always seeking, desiring are to be controlled with concentration, great efforts or suppression- especially in case of Kama or desire. JK, on the contrary, never advocates any coercion or imposition or conquering over. He does not call them as ‘enemies’; he simply says that rather than concentrating your efforts on winning them over, observe them and they will drop.

What we need to understand is that whether we call them as Shadripus or not, they are very much there and cannot be wished away. It is also a common experience that the more you try to suppress them the more they bounce back and one’s energy goes just into the suppressing. So, it seems that JK is pointing at the right direction. Especially now when we are constantly bombarded with attractions and offers of various kinds of pleasures of the senses, entertainment through the media, saying ‘no’ to temptations or suppressing the desires is very difficult. Thus we come across techniques for controlling the mind or how to say ‘no’ in the same media. All in all, what JK says is extremely meaningful to all, applicable to all. You need not enroll yourself for some programme or workshops for doing away with these ‘enemies’; observation as given by JK will suffice, though of course, as he says it is arduous. And with this observation of what
you actually are, without any conditioning, without any coercion - which is meditation - you will come upon freedom.

**Hypothesis 3**- “JK’s teachings on freedom, mediation, love and truth are not merely conceptual. Though he does not give a readymade answer to the question as to how to arrive at them, he has given us a very strong guideline by way of his ‘Art of Living’ which includes the art of seeing, listening and learning.”

JK’s teachings as regards freedom, meditation, love and truth are not merely concepts or theories. How to live is a universal question and man seeks answer to that. Though JK does not give a readymade answer to this question, he has certainly given a strong guideline by way of his three arts of living - the art of seeing or observation, the art of listening and the art of learning. These three are practical and are connected with living.

As we have seen all through this study, JK’s concepts of freedom, meditation, truth and love are meant for all. The oft-asked question is how to arrive at them. JK says that wherever you are, whichever your religion, nationality, caste or race, you can come upon these on your own; no preconditions are required for that, no guru is mandatory for that. As he mentioned in his famous speech ‘Truth is a pathless land’, the key to the kingdom of freedom, meditation, love and truth does not lie in the hands of a chosen few. Anyone can find the truth and the three arts of living can prove to be helpful in that direction.

Let us come back to the important question of how to live. In spite of all the scientific and technological advancement this question is nibbling our hearts for ages. Various thinkers and gurus of different times have given answers ranging from complete renunciation to a totally materialistic way of life. But the question still persists. We find JK looking at it from a very fresh perspective. He does not give us a method or a system or a readymade answer, but, most certainly he directs us and goes into the various aspects of the ‘Art of Living’. And, he has been talking about this since 1948. Now let us see what he has offered us.
JK’s Art of Living

He begins at the very beginning i.e. the etymological meaning of the word ‘art’. Art means to join, to adjust, to put things together, to put things in order. (He also mentions the Sanskrit word ‘Kala’ for art which means measure, manner, use.)

JK says that usually people associate ‘art’ with painting, sculpture, music, dancing etc. They visit museums all over the world to look at pieces of art made by artists; they go to the theatre for concerts or various performance. But, come to think of it, JK asks, is art limited to these few hours that one spends in museums or theatres? On the part of an artist, once the piece of art is completed, once the performance is over, what about the rest of his/ her life? JK always takes a holistic view of life so this is division or fragmentation of one’s life into artful and non-artful life. But life cannot be divided in such a way; it is a one, unitary process. When one concentrates on one particular act/ activity for a certain period, only a little field of life is there and the rest of the life is disregarded. Therefore art should be something that includes the whole of life and not a few hours/ days/ months or only a painting, sculpture or a concert / performance.

According to JK an artist is the one who is skilled in action and life is action. Therefore the action is very much ‘in’ life and not outside of life. And so, skillful action cannot be limited to only one part of life. He says that living skillfully truly makes an artist. And if art is putting things together and in their proper places then living is continually placing things. This is order. Thus art means order as well. One cannot be orderly at some time and not so at other times; that will be contradiction. Then conflict will follow and there will be struggle, disturbance all over one’s life. Surely this is not art.

Thus art of living is a continuous and holistic process. JK’s art of living consists of three arts- the art of seeing, the art of listening and the art of learning. Let us now look into these three.
The art of seeing/ observation

JK says that the art of seeing is to see or observe without any distortion or disturbance. We look at something in order to understand it. Understanding will take place only when the seeing is free of disturbances or hurdles. Then only there will be great clarity and correct understanding will take place. The distortion or disturbance is nothing else but one’s motive or purpose or direction while one is seeing anything. These interfere in the seeing and hide the truth, the true nature of the thing. Personal likes and dislikes, prejudices, judgments, feelings like jealousy etc hamper clarity of seeing and that is why they are hurdles in seeing. These are one’s personal attachments so the seeing should be without any personal attachment. Then only you will see a thing ‘as it is’ and not as something which is a projection of your mind.

When one is watching something external like a tree, it is external seeing and when one is watching one’s own thought process, it is internal seeing. For both these it is essential not to have any interference from personal attachments or like- dislikes etc. as mentioned above. This internal seeing is of great importance because that reveals the true nature of the ‘I’. When the true nature of ‘I’ is understood, freedom, beauty, love, truth, peace will arrive along with that understanding.

We often look at external objects or nature- trees mountains, clouds, open skies, oceans etc. But, JK questions, do we really see a thing as it is? We always look with some attitude, some conclusion, likes- dislikes, and prejudices. Also, we look at a thing with some utilitarian view or motive. An attitude or a motive actually stops us from a clear seeing of a thing or a person. We look through the glasses of our thoughts, motives etc. and thus we miss the understanding of the real nature of a thing or person.

But then, why should I see things without any glasses? JK says, “Try it and see what actually takes place when you observe a tree with all your being, with the totality of your energy. In that intensity you will find that there is no observer at all, there is only the attention/ seeing.”

There is no ‘I’ in such seeing and, he further tells us that then only there will be beauty and
love. This he says is something to be experienced; no theoretical discussion or analysis can take you there. This also shows how his teachings are practical and not theoretical.

JK says that art is putting things together harmoniously. When we talk about internal observation what is it that we have to observe? Do we see harmony inside? He says that we have to observe the contradictions that are there inside. Observe all these without creating an opposite of each and that will bring about a life of melodious harmony. Also, watch your identities like a Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Indian etc. and see the causes of those identities. If you see that this kind of identity is one of the causes of unrest, strife, war- internal and external- the identities will drop. Because, then you will see the danger of division and conflict involved in these identities. And, once you see the danger, you act instantly- like you act instantly when you see a cobra in front of you. This seeing or perception also requires attention and care.

JK differentiates between the art of seeing and the art of perception. According to him, perception is not of time but the seeing and translating of it into action involves a certain period of time. The gap between seeing and doing is time. You see something and you want to do something. But then, you probe into it, analyze it; consider the positive and negative points of doing it- this is time. And this delays action. Perception is the seeing and doing without an interval between the seeing and doing. It is an instant action like when you act upon seeing a cobra in front of you.

What he means is that the art of seeing also implies action and the action will be the right action only when you see with full clarity, without the interference of personal interests etc. In other words ‘to see clearly’ is an answer to the question ‘what am I to do’.

**The art of listening**

The art of listening is not merely hearing words. The process of hearing words is quite different from the art of listening. The art of listening is to listen to what the other is saying without any interpretation of the words or without agreeing/ disagreeing with them. JK says, “…you are not the translator of what is being said.” As in the art of seeing, you do not bring in your own judgments, conclusions, prejudices, opinions etc. while you are listening. This requires certain
attention and in this attention you as a listener disappear; only the listening is there. This also means that during such listening your senses are fully active, you are fully sensitive. Then only the listening is complete. According to JK this kind of listening is not like listening of one’s words/ arguments as against another’s- however reasonable or crooked or illusory it is. This is listening in which there is silence because there is no interference of your own judgments etc. JK says that this silence is the miracle of listening.

To listen attentively, intensely is to listen beyond words and it is difficult because your thoughts keep interfering in the listening. When both the speaker and the listener put these aside can they be on the same level and then there will be true communication between the two. This act of listening can bring about a change because here both the listener and the speaker are still/ quiet. JK gives a very simple and beautiful example to make his point clear. He says that it is like when you drop a stone in a very calm pool of water, waves are formed, if the water is not still, formation of waves is not possible. Similarly, when the mind is quiet in listening, the listening can be effective and can bring about some change in the listener. Thus without full attention and quiet mind, listening will be just hearing words. There will be no understanding involved there.

Once he narrated this story to his audience. It beautifully sums up what he means by listening. There was a religious teacher who gave a sermon to his disciples every morning. One morning he was about to begin and a bird perched itself on the window sill and started singing full heartedly. The teacher kept silent till the bird stopped singing and flew away. Then he turned to his disciples and said, “The sermon for this morning is over.”

The art of Learning

The third important art of living is the art of learning. It is not mere accumulation or acquisition of knowledge or information. JK, though, makes it very clear that such accumulation is necessary for your daily living and for the skillful actions involved in it. We are all familiar with this kind of learning but there is another kind of learning- learning without accumulation. Thus there are two types of learning. One is acquiring and accumulating knowledge through experience. This comes with education, reading books, going to school, college or university,
learning subjects like science, history, mathematics etc. We gather this knowledge and make use of it in our day-to-day living, for earning a living. Learning languages or various skills come under this type of learning. In this process of learning, the brain registers whatever is presented to it. Then the brain stores it and makes it available for use in the future. This is memory. This learning is essential for carrying out our day to day tasks so you have to have such knowledge. Without the storage or memory simple activities like going from one place to another, talking to others will not be possible. It must be noted that JK does not oppose this kind of memory. The brain is used to, trained to function in this way and that is necessary to a certain extent. But there is another form of learning wherein there is no registration, no accumulation, no storage but of the essentials. Only that which is absolutely necessary is registered.

According to JK the art of learning is to learn what to register and what not to register. Out of all the experiences you must learn to discern those which need to be stored up and those which should not be / need not be stored up. This way the mind and the brain are less cluttered up or burdened with knowledge and the movement of thought i.e. registering and storing of experiences. With the recording and registration you go on carrying that burden for a long time or forever unnecessarily; non-recording means that much less burden to carry.

Usually all that is stored in thought – except for the essentials like language or driving skill etc.- only adds to the ‘me’ because the ‘me’ is not different from this storage. The ‘me’ becomes stronger and stronger as you go on accumulating, adding to the storage. One’s name- fame, past experiences, opinions, judgments- all these build up the ‘me’. JK calls it as “the gathering up of the energy of the self.”

Our knowledge is a process of ‘accumulation- recollection- use- addition’ kind of process. We are quite used to this process. JK says that because of this we actually use a very small part of the brain. This kind of knowledge gathering is not the only function of the brain; its function is vast but we limit it to just this process. We make the brain function in one particular way only. By non-accumulation we allow the brain to have more scope or area to function in a different way. Accumulation of knowledge, thought is the ‘me’; so, in a way you tie down the brain to the ‘me’ and to the memory which is the past. Then all the time the brain is chattering with this
storage. Also, when one considers oneself as an artist, businessman etc, he is dividing the activity of the brain in many parts or fragments and you are not operating with the whole brain. JK says that when the whole brain is acting, that action is something totally different because then it is not an outcome of the storage or thought. And when the brain is allowed to function without the interference of thought, it finds its own natural rhythm. This rhythm actually rejuvenates the brain because then it is not under any pressure; as we know pressure brings deterioration.* This is freedom and then there is beauty, truth and love.

This is the deeper meaning of the art of learning wherein JK says that learning is to learn what to register and what not to register. He also calls it as awakening and actually all three arts contribute to or bring about this awakening. Then you are completely sensitive and completely free. Then your action will be the right action, then there will be peace, meditation, freedom, beauty, love and truth - all will be com-present. His art of living points out a way to arrive at truth.

*Fear is one factor that distorts the brain and fear is rooted in thought. We have discussed it under fear as a *ripu* or hurdle to freedom.
After having gone through JK’s teachings on freedom, meditation, love and truth it seems pertinent that we also take into account some points of criticism. Here are the points on which JK is criticized.

**Some points of criticism**

So far we have seen the teachings of JK on freedom, meditation, truth and love. We have also seen that his teachings have a universal appeal and people from various walks of life are attracted to the teachings. But, along with great admirers he also had critics. He is usually criticized on the following points-

1. **JK is criticized on the point that his teachings are too theoretical to practice.** This does not really hold true for the basic reason that he did not present any theory as such of his own. Also, all through his teachings we find that he always emphasized that over and above or besides all the philosophies you have to observe and know your life on your own. Mere theoretical discussion of any philosophy- including his own teaching- was not meaningful to him. According to him unless you ‘actually’ understand your living and yourself any philosophy will be just words. Thus, to understand JK’s teachings is not an academic or verbal activity; it is also not mere analysis or comparison of what one thinker says as against another thinker. Consistently and continually JK urged, coaxed, nudged his audience to look at their own lives. It can be clearly seen that he never side winked the actual, practical life. Rather he insisted on being with the present.

2. **Repetition** is one point on which he is criticized. They say that all through his life he talked about the same topics or themes like freedom, truth, meditation, time and thought, love, self-knowledge etc. It is true to say that he so to say sang the same song. But that is what his teachings are. He consistently talked about these topics for over 60 years without deviation, without trivialization. It is also said that repetition loses the quality of freshness or newness. In my view, his dialogues and talks were like concerts of classical singing. The singer presents the same *raga* in a number of concerts but each rendering of the *raga* is fresh and new to the listeners. The *basic surs* of a raga are well-defined and predetermined but that does not diminish the beauty of the presentation, of the singing. And, when the singer is superb, people are
magnetized to each concert. There were people, here in India, who traveled long distances to attend his talks regularly. This happened in other countries as well. Had there been no freshness, people wouldn’t have followed him in this way.

‘Repetition’ suggests an element of mechanicalness, doing something over and over again out of habit and therefore a kind of dullness is noticed. But his talks were never mechanical; every time he talked he put his heart, mind and brain into it. His videos are proof enough for this. Every time he talked about a certain topic, he brought out a newer, finer nuance of it and/or pointed out interconnections between any two topics in a different way. For example he would talk about love in a netineti manner at one talk; in another talk he would point out how there is love when there is meditation or freedom. Thus, though repetition was inevitable it always had an element of freshness in it. Also, it was never a mechanical repetition of words because in any repetition what is repeated is very important.

3. Another criticism that was leveled against him was that he never provided answers to questions like how to meditate, how to reach Truth or how to observe etc. This criticism does not really hold because he never ever claimed that he was the one to provide you with readymade answers or to take on the right path. On the contrary, he always insisted that you have to find answers or the path on your own and that no external help is really useful to anyone in these matters. ‘Be a light unto yourself’ was an essential part of his teaching. He has talked about the futility of trying to gain readymade answers externally- from a text, a guru etc. A readymade answer, according to him, means following a certain method or system so you are engaged more in ‘following’ the method than understanding the problem and actually the answer or solution lies in understanding of the problem. Also, only you can know the inner process of your mind, your thought, chattering of the brain.

4.JK is also criticized on the point that he denied knowledge altogether. But if we carefully go through his concept of freedom we realize that it not the case. Freedom according to him is freedom from the known or from the field of thought. But he always says that in your daily, routine life you have to use thought, say for learning a skill or a language or for earning your livelihood. But ultimately knowledge, the whole process of knowledge, which includes the
storehouse of your memory, ends and you are free. Does this suggest two levels of living/existence? One of the daily routine or empirical life and another of a different dimension? How can one live with this kind of duality and division? This is a question that comes to mind. Another sub-question that follows is- does it mean that once you arrive at the other level everything becomes clear and all duality vanishes? Here we are at a problematic juncture. It is like till you are enlightened you will experience duality, suffering will continue; and how to be enlightened cannot be chalked out for you by anyone. You have to find it out for yourself. No belief, guru, system is of real help. The carpet under your feet is pulled and you stand suspended and alone! But understanding this is in itself realizing the limits of thought and transcending thought. At some point or the other this leap from the known to the unknown has to happen. Even after that leap thought will continue to exist and operate in its own field. So though anapparent duality seems to exist, there is in fact no duality as such. Reason or thought has to be employed all along but there comes a time when one has to let go of it this is what he means.

5. As Ronald Vernon has pointed out in his ‘Star in the East, Krishnamurti, the invention of a Messiah’ (Seatieal Publications LLC, USA, 2002, p 214), it is also said that nothing JK taught was new. This is true to a certain extent in that a feeling of *déjà vu* comes to the mind at many places in his teachings. For example, living by the moment, denial of the self as a separate entity reminds you of Buddhism. His teachings on non-duality, dawning of freedom reminds you of Advaita Vedanta. His thoughts on modern technical society are also seen in those of Rousseau (as explained in the earlier chapter on freedom) and others. He does not give us a new logical, epistemological, metaphysical system. Nonetheless, his simple straightforward communication with the audience was something unique. Again, are we concerned with having new philosophical systems or are we concerned with what actually is? As he has pointed out, we have had a number of philosophers and systems of philosophy, but, where are we today?

His honesty and sincerity is almost tangible through even the videos. His communicative style was totally new and appealing, touching the hearts of the listeners. The impact of his lecture or talk is seen when, after he ended his talk, the audience used to be completely silent and still; in some videos we see JK himself breaking the silence and asking them, “May we get up?” in a very humble way. Whether new or not, his words held the listeners spell-bound and made them
think differently. His love and concern for the people is apparent and that really enthralled them, so did the content of his teachings. Thus more than giving a new philosophy he made his audience think for themselves about their lives and that is quite important.

6. One more point of criticism is that JK denied all tradition. But, in my view, he did not really deny tradition as such, more than denying any tradition he denied blind acceptance and blind following of any tradition. This is very important for any man. Also, such blind acceptance is carrying a kind of dead weight. JK seems to be against carrying any such dead weight in the name of tradition.

**JK and psychology**

It is true that some notions, issues of philosophy and psychology are closely connected; both take into account the ways of the human mind and human behavior and both are concerned with the well being of man. Some people see and describe JK as a psychologist. This could be because he delves deep in the nature and the functioning of the human mind. But, is it right to label him as a psychologist? During this research while studying his teachings from a philosophical perspective the following is what comes to notice.

1. What is psychology? As per the Oxford Dictionary, “Psychology is the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context.” A psychologist, then, is a person who conducts such a scientific study and makes use of his findings in real life situations, applies his knowledge to solve problems of the mind. This gives us the scope of the study which is limited to human mind and its functions with reference to a particular context. Also, psychology studies particular cases and then to generalization and then universal psychological claims are made. This is not seen in JK’s teachings. Though JK talks about the human mind and its function at great lengths he does not talk about one specific mind in connection with a specific situation. His discussion takes in all of the human mind, not a mind at a particular time or place but at all times and places. Therefore he actually crosses the boundaries of psychology. And, JK does not stop at the functioning of the human mind he also talks about the functioning of the brain, a neurological topic.
2. Again, a ‘scientific’ study involves a method, analysis, experimentation, hypothesis, conclusions, theorization etc. JK never engages himself in any of these. He did not study the human mind from a laboratory perspective, nor did he apply his understanding of the mind to individuals in order to develop tools or techniques to solve their problems. He does not propose diagnostic methods, treatments or remedies for mental disorders. Therefore we cannot truly say that he was a psychologist.

**JK and Buddhism**

It is held by some that JK proposes nothing else but Buddhist philosophy in a different garb. In order to understand why this cannot be taken to be true, let us first see the basic tenets of Buddhism - of both Hinayana and Mahayana schools- thereupon the departure of JK from Buddhism will become clear. Also, we notice that great thinkers belonging to different schools of philosophy have some similar thoughts. Thus though we find similarities between Buddhism and JK’s teachings can we really say that he borrowed from Buddhism or talked Buddhism?

There are five fundamental principles that are accepted by every school of Buddhism. They are- 
1. the doctrine of momentariness or that everything, every existence is momentary, 2. life is sorrowful, 3. There is no Atman or soul 4. the true nature of thing is ‘tathata’ or suchness; a thing is what it is, this is also called as ‘swalakshana’, 5. Nirvana is what one should seek. It is an extremely peaceful state where Trishna or desire is absent.

JK does not seem to be advocating these principles like Buddhism does. This is how the difference is quite apparent-

1. Buddhism holds that everything, every existence is momentary. According to Buddhism, a thing ‘exists’ means there is Arthkriyakarakatva i.e. potential to change/ to bring about a change in it. If there is no change the existence of the thing is tantamount to nonexistence; in a way change is the proof of the existence of the thing. There is a lot of logical, technical discussion about the doctrine of momentariness in Buddhism. JK does not go into any such discussion. He only says that every arriving moment is completely new and in order to meet with it one has to be free from the past and the future i.e. from the storage of memory and the thoughts of
‘becoming’. Also, JK does not deny the existence – momentary or otherwise- of the external world; he does not deny the existence of the internal world of thoughts, ideas etc. of man. Mahayana Buddhism denies the existence of the external world.

2. Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent Atman that continues through all the change*. JK too does not talk about Atman and its being permanent. He only talks about the ‘I’ that everyone experiences and how it is formed. JK clearly states that the ‘I’ is a bundle of consciousness, there is no ‘I’ beyond this bundle.

3. Buddhism says that we do not know a thing as it actually is because of the name, form, quality, action and species (nama, rupa, guna, kriya, jati) that we give to it. These are all mental constructs and because of them we do not know the ‘swalakshana’, or ‘tathata’ i.e. the real nature of it. In connection with seeing or observation JK says that if you really want to see/ know anything you must put aside all your personal thoughts, likes- dislikes etc. and then only you can really see the thing as it is. Thus perhaps both are pointing at the same thing; the difference being Buddhism talks of five mental constructs that obstruct knowledge of a thing whereas JK says that the entire storage of your memory and your conditioning thwarts clear seeing/ knowledge of a thing.

4. According to Madhyamika Buddhism realization or experiencing of this ‘tathata’ is Nirvana. Nirvana is also taken to mean extinguishing the fire of sorrow that is there in every life. This is the ultimate state where there is complete peace as well. JK does not talk about Nirvana- or Moksha, Kaivalya etc for that matter. He only talks about freedom and the coexistence of it with meditation, love and truth. Again, Gautama Buddha stated the four Noble Truths and then proposed the AshtangaMarg for the annihilation of suffering and for the attainment of Nirvana. JK never proposes a fixed path, method or system for arriving at freedom or for putting an end to sorrow.

*Existence of a substance over and above various qualities is also not accepted by Buddhism.
5. Gautama Buddha gave different sets of rules for monks and for common people. JK does not give any such sets of rules for anybody. This is a major difference between them. Gautama Buddha was also called as a teacher; JK never became a teacher. Again, Buddha did not talk about or answered questions on topics like eternality/ non-eternality of the world, body and mind being one or separate etc. (These are called as ‘Avyakritas’in Buddhism.) JK does not have any such topics in his teachings.

Now, after studying and presenting JK’s teachings- his concepts of freedom, meditation, truth and love in particular- I would like to sum up the thesis with the following points-

As stated earlier, one of the major questions that haunts man is- what am I to do in a particular situation or in order to end suffering. In answer to the first half of the question, i.e. what am I to do, the Indian tradition has given the Varna and Ashram duties, and for the other half i.e. how to end suffering Moksha, Nirvana, Kaivalya are put forth by the various Darshanas. The Yoga Darshana is completely devoted to the path of Kaivalya and has given its eight-step programme for the attainment of it. JK does not provide us with an answer like any of these; he points out that one has to find the answer on his/her own. This leaves no scope for blindly following any system or method. He shakes up this type of intellectual complacency and dependency by going into the very nature of the ‘I’ that has this question. He says that the ‘I’ is the foundation of our questions and problems and the ‘I’ is nothing else but a bundle of thoughts, feelings etc. According to him as you understand the nature of the ‘I’ the problems will be understood and right action will follow out of that understanding. For him to know is to act. By pointing this out, he tries to drag us out of the habit of looking for readymade answers. This is very much in keeping with the scientific spirit and also with the spirit of enquiry that is undertaken in philosophy.

Another important point that strikes us is that he does not deny the world at all by saying that it is Mithya or illusory. On the contrary, by questioning the very existence of the ‘I’ he seems to be denying the existence of the ‘I’. But he also says that for all practical purposes the ‘I’ is very much there. Here we are reminded of Shankaracharya’s Sattatraya where he says that the
world exists on the empirical level and from the ultimate standpoint it is *Mithhya*.

JK was not a verbal preacher only; he lived his teachings. For example, he did not believe in forming a cult, having rituals, building Ashrams, having a hierarchy of disciples and authority and being the head of it or being at the helm. And actually there is no cult, Ashram or discipleship that is carried out in his name- not during his lifetime nor after he passed away. He denied ‘world teacher-ship’, a very lucrative and tempting position, openly at the camp at Ommenn, Holland and returned all the donations including a castle and 5000 acres of land around it. This speaks volumes about his honesty, sincerity and simplicity- rare qualities especially now when we see some spiritual gurus and their followers, entourage, velvet thrones, expensive *Satsangs* etc. Anybody could meet him without the hurdles of hierarchy of disciples and irrespective of his/ her national, social, religious or financial status. To put it in other words, he did not make a ‘business’ of his teachings.

The 20\textsuperscript{th} century was also the century of scientific and technological, and medical development. JK, having a holistic view of man, was abreast of the latest developments or findings in these fields. He was interested in psychology/ psychotherapy, functioning of the brain and was aware of latest research in these areas. Thus, for example, when he talked about transformation of man, he also talked about functioning of the brain and mutation of brain cells. Though JK always said that transformation of man has to happen from within, he was not overlooking the scientific aspect of it at all.

A speciality of JK’s teaching is that he never ever quotes from any text or person. But without such quotations or references, he drives home his point very clearly. We are not used to reading or listening without any quotes/ references. Perhaps this is why there is freshness in his teachings because there is no clinging to the past even by way of a quotation.

There are no airs of self-importance in his teachings; he never says ‘I know all’. His dialogues or talks do not exhibit any of his personal life. The ‘I’, ‘me’ and ‘mine’ are kept to the minimum all through his teachings. He allowed his biography to be written and published just to make the point that if a poor, unhealthy boy from a remote village in India can get transformed into a free man, can have love, meditation, truth etc. why not anybody else?
He is perhaps the only ‘world teacher’ who never sought Moksha, Ultimate Freedom, Liberation, Salvation etc. deliberately. He never aspired to be thus freed, i.e. he was never a Mumukshu. And yet, he did become free and wanted to spread the message of freedom all over the world- not so that he gets name or fame but so that mankind becomes free. This also proves a point that he often talked about- freedom is not something that can be gained by Tapas or penance or subjecting the body to hardships.

Some called him as a ‘Failed Messiah’, for some he was like a lighthouse emitting rays of light all around and guiding ships in troubled waters; some find his teachings difficult or impractical, some say he is speaking their minds. But then, it is up to the reader/ listener to embark on the journey that he directs and find out the meaning of his teachings by- as he often said- going beyond words.

JK maintained that even if one man is transformed, it affects or influences the whole of mankind. There have been many such transformed people before him and there will be many after him. All the realized ones talk about transformation within and without so that all can live in peace and happiness. And still human suffering, pain, violence has continued. So is this realization or transformation or freedom some kind of dream that man likes to pursue? Why the insensitivity and brutality continues in spite of having liberated souls? Once JK was asked this question. Dr. David Bohm* happened to be present there and JK asked him, “How would you answer that question? Why don’t we see the change?” DrBohm thought for a few seconds and replied, “As a physicist I only know that 99% of all phenomena occurring in matter and energy are invisible.”

*Prof. David Bohm was a theoretical physicist and a pioneer of quantum mechanics and had also worked with Einstein and Oppenheimer. After 1960 he came into contact with JK and both of them shared a very special relationship with each other. It is said that both of them were quite excited with the ‘prospect of physics pointing a gateway to the transcendent’. There dialogues are profound, passionate and intense, taking up topics like Time, Being and thought.
It is said at the beginning of the thesis that JK’s concepts are interconnected. At this juncture let me try to put forth some such interconnections between freedom, meditation, love and truth.

The basis of all these concepts, as we commonly understand and assume, is the structure of the ‘I’. JK draws our attention to the structure of the ‘I’. according to him this ‘I’ is just a bundle of one’s thoughts, feelings, emotions, likes- dislikes, prejudices, conditioning, memory and so on. Whether it is freedom, meditation, love or truth, if you want to know these you have to put aside this bundle. This putting aside of the bundle in itself is being free from it. Once this happens, along with freedom there will be meditation, love and truth. It is freedom from all the internal attachments in the form of identifications, images and that is realization that the ‘I’ is actually a construct of thought, of social- religious- political forces that shape it up. This is coming upon truth. Once this realization sets in the ‘I’ gets dissolved i.e. it merges with the rest of the world. And therefore, thereafter there is no love ‘for’ a particular person or objet, sheer love exists there. Because, then there is no division between the ‘I’ and the rest; the particular feelings/ thoughts of love, jealousy, hatred, competition, liking etc. that go with the ‘I’ do not exist. According to JK, in this state there is no duality of the observer and the observed, there is only observation. This observation is meditation in which there is no duality of the thinker and the thought. You become one with the movement of life. This is also a state where there is beauty and order.

JK’s art of living, is related to this as well. When he says that thought must be put aside, it is not that you become blank; you retain whatever is necessary for your daily life, for your earning bread and butter like some skills or language. Learning, according to him, is understanding the difference between retainable experience and non-retainable ones. Learning is to know the difference and get rid of the unnecessary, burdensome luggage that is carried for years in the form of memory. Then there can be no freedom. His art of listening is also related here because we always co-exist with others and it is important to have a peaceful co-existence. For such co-existence, understanding of the relationship between the ‘I’ and another is necessary. And the art of listening can bring this about. Art of seeing is also meditation. Thus all these concepts are interrelated and related to JK’s other concepts as well.
JK says that truth is in the living, active present. It means that one has to meet every moment anew, without the burden of the past or the anxiety of the future. It means living by the moment and for that freedom, meditation, art of living all are together.

### JK’s concept of death

So far in this study JK’s concept of death is not discussed and put forth. But, in my view, it would not be inappropriate to go in to it—though briefly—at this juncture because that concept is also connected with freedom, meditation, love and truth.

The general reaction to the very word ‘death’, JK says, is that of fear. Discussion of this topic is mostly avoided. But he questions us that if you have never experienced it, if you do not know what death is, how can you be afraid of it? And why should you be afraid of something that is unknown to you? He says that you must find out on your own whether it is the fear of the physical death i.e. the ending of the body or whether it is the fear of the ending of the ‘I’ which is psychological death. As with other concepts you meet with this concept with pre-conceived images and ideas and try to escape it. But the fact is that it is there walking everyday by your side. The ending of the ‘I’ or psychological death scares you and theories about life after death, existence of a permanent soul or atman etc. emerge out of that fear. All this is very much in the field of thought and if you want to be free you have to be free of the thoughts, feelings, emotions, pre-established notions or theories of death and understand that there is nothing permanent. Using his own words, “To discover that nothing is permanent is of tremendous importance for only then the mind is free, then you can look (observe) and in that there is great joy.”

This is how his concept of death is related to freedom—and joy as well.

This is what he says about life after death, reincarnation etc. He says that we research, build theories like reincarnation, are scared of death or worry about death. But what about living? Isn’t it ignoring the living present, the ‘now’ and think about something unknown? We live in the constant fear of death, under the shadow of death and the present is lost. The right approach according to him, would be to die every minute to all the psychological contents of the ‘I’ so that every new moment will be fresh, truly new to you; then life will stop being boring, insipid because the new moment will bring freshness to living that was not there earlier. In order to
know this, he says that one must inwardly die to the things that one loves or is bitter about. Then there will be transformation because then there will be freedom.

What he means can be summed up in his own words, “Death is a renewal, a mutation, in which thought does not function at all because thought is old. When there is death, there is something totally new. Freedom from the known is death and then you are living.”25 Thus we find that transformation of man is also related to the psychological death. Again, dying this way is meditation which is pure observation. He also holds that a man who lives without any conflict, without any division, a man who lives with love and beauty is not frightened of death; according to him, to love is to die psychologically.

This is how death is related to freedom, mediation, love and truth.

Thus, according to JK freedom, meditation, love, truth and happiness are not just words or illusive dreams. It is up to us to find out for ourselves their meaning, to experience the meaning and not just go for their intellectual or verbal understanding. And, importantly, their interconnections are not to be overlooked.