CHAPTER II
LIFE SKETCH OF J. KRISHNAMURTI
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Birth:

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born on May 11, 1895 in the small hill town Madanapalle of Chittoor District. Being born into a Smartha Brahmin family, as the eighth child he was called after Sri Krishna who had himself born the eighth child. When the baby's horoscope was cast next day, a renowned astrologer assured Narianiah that his son was to be a very great man indeed.

Krishnamurti's great grandfather had held a responsible position under the East India Company and had been an eminent scholar; his grand father had also been a very learned man and a civil servant, while his father Narianiah was a Tahsildar and later a District Magistrate. Krishnamurti's mother, Sanjeevamma had a premonition that this eighth child of hers was to be in someway remarkable. So she insisted that the baby should be born in the Puja room.

Boyhood:

Krishnamurti used to be generous. Krishnamurti would often return home from school without a pencil, slate or book having given them to some poorer boy. He always used to be fond of giving food to beggars and sharing his share of eatables with his brothers.

Narianiah's frequent transfers as well as Krishnamurti's frequent fevers interrupted his schooling and caused his backwardness in studies. He used to be a keen observer. When his interest was aroused, he used to stand for long stretches at a time watching trees and clouds, or squat on ground gazing at plants and insects. He was equally interested in mechanical objects and their operations. In 1905 he lost his mother who was very loving and whom he loved much. He never had the feelings of self-importance though his father became a District Magistrate. After retirement, Narianiah, joined as an assistant to one of the secretaries of the theosophical society in 1909.
Discovering Krishnamurti:

Leadbeater (1909) a prominent theosophist, clairvoyant and a mystic spotted Krishnamurti on the Adayar beach and was surprised on seeing a wonderful 'AURA' without an element of selfishness in it and talked about him to his theosophist friends, Wood and Richard Clarke. He predicted that this boy would become a spiritual teacher and a great orator. At that time Krishnamurti apart from his wonderful eyes was undernourished, extremely weak, scrawny and dirty, with crooked teeth, persistent cough, half-shaved head and vacant expression. Identifying the saviour of the mankind, Messiah in Krishnamurti by theosophists' mystic methods and on knowing the previous incarnations Leadbeater determined that Krishnamurti would be the vehicle which the Lord Maitreya had chosen for his next coming. He introduced Krishnamurti to Mrs. Besant. Convinced, she drew Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya into a sweet and motherly intimacy which continued till her death. She was also convinced of Krishnamurti as being the vehicle for the role that she was seeking to create within the theosophical society, a world teacher, with permission from their father. She took Krishnamurti and Nitya into the care of theosophical society.

In Theosophical Society:

Daily exercise and good food resulted in remarkable improvement in the physical health and happiness of Krishnamurti and Nitya. Dick Clarke, Subrahmanyam Aiyar, Ernest Wood, Don F. Ruspoli gave them regular lessons. Leadbeater himself taught them history at times. He took personal interest in Krishnamurti by taking him in astral form to Lord Maitreya about which Krishnamurti wrote, in a little book "At the feet of the Master", which has been translated into twenty seven languages ran into more than forty editions, and is still in print. After probation Leadbeater initiated Krishnamurti into occult life which demanded perfect physical health, absolute physical and mental purity, unselfishness of purpose, universal clarity, compassion for all animate things, truthfulness,
courage in any emergency and a calm indifference to but a jest appreciation of everything that constituted the transitory world.

At the age of fifteen he sought to teach first at Banaras when he went along with Anne Besant, what was taught by his master Maitreya to a group of people George Arundale, Principal of Central Hindu College, the Headmaster of Preparatory School, A.E. Wodehouse, Professor of English and two university men who had already taken the highest honours within their reach.

All these great learned men agreed that they had never heard such teaching and never been so strangely uplifted before. Wodehouse, a prize winner for poetry wrote about him as natural, serene, unselfish and deferential to his elders, courteous to all and to those whom he liked, he showed a kind of larger affection, which was singularly attractive. He never posed as the 'holy child' nor was he 'self-conscious'.

Academic education

Prior to his entry into theosophical society it was difficult for Krishnamurti to communicate at school where the lessons were conducted in either English or Tamil of which he knew a little. He was caned almost everyday for being late to learn his lessons. In Theosophical Society he had different atmosphere of consideration, concern and personal coaching. Krishnamurti was not good at studies. Though he studied hard he used to forget the material and failed in the entrance examinations when he attempted to join Oxford or Cambridge. He had no aptitude for cramming information. His teachers said that Krishnamurti had a wider grasp of a subject though handicapped in expressing his thoughts readily. He was especially fond of Keats and Shelley and was constantly murmuring the line, 'I am half in love with easeful death'. He was regularly participating in sports like tennis. He developed interest in photography.
Headship of the Order of the Star:

In 1911 Krishnamurti was named Head of the Order of the Star in the East which was founded to prepare for the coming of the world teacher. On 28 Dec, 1911 people fell at Krishnamurti's feet at Banaras while he was handing out certificates of membership to Order of the Star of the East. That day became a sacred day thereafter in Order of the Star of the East.

Away from the native land:

Anne Besant took Krishnamurti and Nitya to England with an intention of joining them in either Oxford or Cambridge. There he met Lady Emily Lutynes, wife of the architect, Edwin Lutynes whom he used to call "Amma". Apart from studies Krishnamurti devoted some of his time to the editorship of the Herald of the Star. He had to give time also to correspondence as Head of the Order of the Star as well as to his own private letters. Another duty which he alone could perform was to magnetise hundreds of yards of blue ribbon and hundreds of five pointed silver stars, passing all through his hands to be worn as badges of membership of the O.S.E. Blair Clarke wrote on his observation that Krishnamurti was feeling the pressure of all these duties and a spirit of unbroken revolt was rising slowly in his heart. This unspoken spirit of doubt and revolt in his heart however fermented slowly and it was also known to his chief confidents, Lady Emily and Nityanand. He felt that he was not ready whole-heartedly for the expected role he had to play.

His trained orations in Theosophical Society meetings and writings in the T.S. Magazine could fetch large donations and members to T.S. He rebelled against certain things he found monstrously unwholesome in theosophical society.

Sooner he decided to have eighteen months of uninterrupted study, in California and Switzerland, of Philosophy, Economics, Religion and Education and got approval of Mrs. Besant. There he
started meditating regularly. In course of time there started a "strange process" in Krishnamurti which was so painful bodily and psychologically which continued to occur for two years occasionally each time lasting for some days. This is really a turning point in his life during which time he had a lot of inner observations. He said, "forget yourself for then only I am to be found", when he presided over the first International Star Camp at Ommen in 1921.

In 1925 his brother, Nitya died at Ojai when Krishnamurti was on voyage to India, which really upset him but brought an inner revolution and added new strength to attend a T.S. convention. He spoke in that convention under the famous Banyan tree which was considered by many T.S. members as the speech of Lord through him.

He went to Madanapalle to look for a suitable site for setting up a University and could acquire land. Krishnamurti was distressed to find jealousies and warring factions at Adayar and wanted to bring every one together. Krishnamurti was unhappy and sceptical about occult experience and initiations which had been taking place on massive scale in the theosophical society. Anne Besant acquired land in Ojai valley for Krishnamurti's work.

He used to answer many questions at the meeting but they seemed to be contradicting the theosophical beliefs. Mrs. Besant used to bridge the growing gulf between his teachings and the theosophist's expectations. She even begged her readers and listeners to keep an open mind while understanding Krishnamurti. But with his revolutionary pronouncements the foundations of Anne Besant's world were rocked. Mrs. Besant was in conflict of loyalties between her full confidence in Krishnamurti and the responsible presidentship of T.S. In 1928 he gave his first public lecture in London at Friends Meeting House. His first public talk in America gathered 16,000 audience at the Hollywood Bowl.
Dissolution of the organisations:

At the peak of the events he dissolved all the organisations and properties around him dissolving the throne of the future world Guru First. In 1929 he dissolved the Order of the Star in the presence of Mrs. Besant and more than 3000 Star Members in Ommen Camp by saying, "truth is a pathless land". He declared that 'no system or organisation either political or religious can save man from conflict and misery'. He resigned from the various trusts wanting to be free from all responsibilities and returned the properties and left only with the income settled on him for life by Mrs. Dodge, who died. Then it was inevitable for him to resign from T.S., which he anticipated. When everybody turned quite emotional and indifferent Krishnamurti was calm and understanding and wrote to Mrs. Besant consoling her.... "All this is inevitable and in a way necessary".

From then on he had been moving about constantly, questioning, answering on talks, discussing with a wide variety of people. Many of his followers left him in the mean time. He wrote to Lady Emily, "My being alone like this has given me something tremendous and it is just what I need. I can never be finished but I want to finish with all the superficialities which I have". "I want to go and shout and urge people to change and live happily".

Mrs. Besant died peacefully on 20th September, 1933, from then on he lost his tie with theosophical organisations and had gone in his own way free from every form of spiritual organisation. From 1970's a great deal of interest in Krishnamurti's teaching has been aroused in the scientific world.

Education always has been closer to Krishnamurti's heart than anything else. There are five co-education schools one at Brookwood Park, England and another at Oak Groove, Ojai, U.S.A. and three in India at Rishi Valley, Madras and Varanasi. The main intention was to give a chance for children to grow up without national, racial, religious, class, and cultural prejudices that build barriers between
human beings. Krishnamurti used to visit them all every year for discussions with students and teachers, used to write to them, which were published under the title, "letters to schools" in two volumes. He lived up to nine two years and died at Ojai, U.S.A. on 17th February, 1986. His speeches, discussions with students, teachers, scientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, leaders, and monks were all authentically recorded and are in the form of audio and video cassettes and books.

Krishnamurti's style of communication:

The hallmark of Krishnamurti's style is simplicity. He faces the fundamental problems of human life with brevity which only a fearless mind unyielding to any pressure can possess. He explores life with a clear vision and his exploration is unique as it makes the reader or listener explore along with him. He never allows anybody to follow him or accept anything he says as a conclusion. He repeatedly reminds the audience that he is not a teacher or Guru and occupies the platform only for the sake of convenience.

He usually spoke in open places most informally. His usual gesture was folded hands to greet the people and he never allowed anybody to touch his feet or prostrate. He used to expect freshness and reaction in the faces of listeners. It was as if he expected to see a flash of change among audience. That was why he must have remarked many a time, while speaking, 'Oh! God you don't! Why don't you follow, sir?' or similar expressions.

He seems to be terribly afraid that the audience would be lost in the 'words' he speaks and repeatedly reminds them that 'word is not the thing'.

Whether he discusses with a scientist or speaks to a common audience or to a small boy the profound feature one can observe is that he never rushes to get a solution or an answer and always denies to give a ready made message. He raises questions which are common
to everybody. When he raises them we wonder why we have never asked and explored them so deeply before. And when he shows that the answer is in understanding of the question we will be left with no choice as his way is factual. We may feel totally destroyed after hearing him but his concern to human being touches us and makes us think again of what is said. One may feel totally lost or "call abstract" of what he said but when we see the facts and resistance to see the facts we agree that what we called abstract before have come to be facts of real living.

He tries hard not to allow the 'word' to stand between him and the listener. He always warns about the mischievousness of the 'word' and gives common examples like 'the word microphone is not microphone'. The statement may initially appear funny or fascinating but if we listen to the passion with which he tries to drive away the word 'microphone' between 'you and the microphone' it suddenly strikes to us 'yes', how can the 'word' microphone be a 'microphone', we suddenly understand that we are identifying things with words and we are caught in words and expressions.

When he speaks to us it is as though the meaning and the substance of the words flow to us and not mere empty words. It is astonishing to see how he can express so much in simple words. We wonder why such simple facts have not struck us before. The illusive life we build on the false foundations naturally collapses in the brightness of light of dawning truth. As we listen to him we may be initially frightened and emptied. A little more patience and little more tenacity to see "what is frightened and what is emptied" elevates us to a different sphere.

Krishnamurti thoroughly discourages people from having illusions and hallucinations. He was often blamed by close people around him who comment. "He opens the doors and as we try to peep in he suddenly closes them on our faces". Even though it appears as a complaint we must realise it is the helpless expression of a person who wants ready made answers and solutions. We want to
see a solution or light or truth or God or whatever we call if somebody shows us.

He is strongly against it and many a time points out that he is only a 'pointer' whom others can use. His aim is only to raise an honest enquiry. He tries to show us the obstacles in the way of honest enquiry. He tells us to understand 'what truth is not'. Any number of words can't describe what love is unless one experiences it. Hence, he asks us to see that love is not hatred. Love is not violence. Love is not jealousy etc.

One may not experience love but at least questions whether the feeling that is overpowering him is love or not. The enquiry makes us honest and a quality like honesty cannot lead us anywhere except to truth.

Some say his teaching is close to destructive (Nihilistic) philosophies. This criticism appears to be shallow and baseless as we go on seeing the intense concern and passion for human beings. It is improper to mistake laziness with effortlessness, keeping mum and silence, etc. Often what he speaks about psychological field is mistaken for technical field. In fact Krishnamurti is very much interested in the latest development of technical fields like computers.

It is not the passion and enquiry of Krishnamurti or of you or of mine or anybody but the burning passionate enquiry which makes life living. Then death no more frightens, the 'me' disappears and hence death is not the end. He says 'the strength of the blade of the grass is its non-resistance to wither away'.

Psychologist in Krishnamurti:

In self-exploration his observation of the mental phenomena, their origin, effect and modifications in different ways are really marvellous and to the astonishment of the psychologist. His enquiry
peeps through the hidden corners of the mind, lights them up in awareness. He makes us read through the pages of book of life of each of us thoroughly and scientifically and to go on continuously in self-observation. By relieving the experiences and finishing with them there is every possibility of lessening the burden of consciousness.

As an analyst he draws out and picturises vividly what is the latent part of the mind. His choiceless awareness and flowering of the feelings stand for his role of a therapist who can diagnose and remedy the mental problems.

While many human scientists have discovered how much of human capacity is being wasted he discusses how it is being wasted and when there cannot be that much of wastage. He makes each one of us responsible to find out in what ways it is wasted in each one of us.

Teacher in Krishnamurti:

Many people used to come to Krishnamurti to clarify their doubts by way of discussing with him. Krishnamurti listens to all of them with earnest interest like a true teacher who cares for his students and what all they express to him. He questions, makes the person enquire and in enquiry he takes the person to the root of the problem or issue at hand. He exposes the issue unveiling the different layers of masks. He discusses in a simple language, without any element of persuasion to convince the other or without allowing any unscientific conclusion or vague opinion to find a place in the discussion. He shows alertness and genuine interest through out. He even sets right the verbal form or preposition to suit to the description of the exact nature of the state of anything for providing the total meaning. He does not exercise a pinch of authority over the other but tirelessly and seriously questions and makes the other too arrive at the actual fact along with him. While doing so he does not sympathise unnecessarily, which tends to develop dependence on him. His sincere effort to see that the person understands the
problem on his own. He tries hard at every meeting that the audience is not conditioned to what he says but free to explore on their own. Krishnamurti's teaching is an invitation to develop the independent effort to discover what exactly is there, its very nature.

Like a genuine educationist he cares to see that the child develops body, mind, and heart without giving emphasis merely on any one or two aspects as it disintegrates. His wish to draw out the innate capacities of each child on attending them individually, his emphasis on the security, freedom for children in school and home, his concern to develop intelligence, body and heart rather than intellect alone and his broad vision to see that the energies are not to be wasted but to be used totally and rightly are like the efforts of any genuine educator.