

## KANZ NEWS - OCTOBER 2015



**Education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered.**

The ignorant man is not the unlearned, but he who does not know himself, and the learned man is stupid when he relies on books, on knowledge and on authority to give him understanding. Understanding comes only through self-knowledge, which is awareness of one's total psychological process. This education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each of us that the whole of existence is gathered.

What we now call education is a matter of accumulating information and knowledge from books, which anyone can do who can read. Such education offers a subtle form of escape from ourselves and, like all escapes, it inevitably creates increasing misery. Conflict and confusion result from our own wrong relationship with people, things and ideas, and until we understand that relationship and alter it, mere learning, the gathering of facts and the acquiring of various skills, can only lead us to engulfing chaos and destruction.

[Click for full text:](#) From J. Krishnamurti, *Education and the Significance of Life* (New York: Harper and Collins, 1953)

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## MEETINGS WITH A REMARKABLE MAN

- a memoir by Terence Stamp, Actor.

Wow. This fella is a diamond, I thought, as the diminutive Indian sat down opposite me. It was Rome 1968. I was working with Fellini.

Initially on being invited to lunch with a Sage, I had been confused. Sage was something I had only encountered with onions inside a Christmas turkey. If a little explanation is needed, although I was a working actor, and had been known for some time, I remained an East-End spiv trying to come to terms with what had happened to me. Jiddu Krishnamurti or Krishnaji to his associates, was extremely well turned out, well-cut strides, wearing two shirts. The Indian silk bottle green under a paper-thin two-button cashmere.

We didn't speak, yet occasionally, when he noticed me checking him out, the edges

of those dark eyes would crinkle and make me feel self-conscious and, although I wouldn't have admitted it, shy. Other more assured guests, European stringers from *Time* and *Newsweek*, peppered him with questions. He didn't appear fazed. After the meal, delicious vegetarian fare, his secretary asked me if I would like to accompany Krishnaji on his afternoon walk. Is Maraschino a cherry? The fresh air, the energy of our stride evaporated my timidity, and I went into verbal diarrhea. I recall babbling on about my Uncle Bob who'd had major heart surgery and technically died for a moment. I couldn't stop. He didn't speak. At one point he stopped walking and said "Look at that tree." I did as bid. A tree, a sapling actually. Nothing to write home about.

I looked back at him. He smiled. I smiled back. We continued our stroll. I continued rapping. Some more time passed. He paused again, this time touching my arm and glancing up: "Look at that cloud." I did. A cloud, not evening pink or lit from within, rather mundane as clouds go. He looked back at me and smiled. I smiled back. We turned back, I took note of his shoes, bespoke and tiger-stripe brown.

I can't claim to have had any expectations, so I can't say I was disappointed, however I did feel I had somehow failed the audition. And yet it is, as they say, as if it happened yesterday. But with the benefit of hindsight and the passage of forty years those two incidents may have been what G. I. Gurdjieff intended with his "Stop" practice or what a fellow traveller entitles *"The pausing of thought!"*

Impressed as I was by the perfume of the little fella's personality, I struggled through his many books and lectures, when I could. Not a lot sunk in: "The observer is the observed." Rome. "When the eagle flies it leaves no mark." Wimbledon.

His favourite pal, the wondrously named Contessa Vanda Pasigli Scarivelli, basically encouraged me to adopt a vegetarian diet, gave me instruction in her "Hollow Yoga System" and taught me about "Complete Breath." Yet, I suppose I was too coarse a material. I sought instant gratification on the less demanding guru circuit, "enlightenment light" I think of those years now. I justified it to myself as acts of refinement, a rope ladder up to Krishnaji's austere (no toys) dialectic.

Years passed. Tai Chi forms. Whirling Dervishes, Tantric texts, enlightenment intensives, encounter groups, taste abstinence, continence.

A message from Brockwood Park. It is 1977; Krishnamurti has opened a school for children, he is encouraging artists to visit. I clamber on the Portsmouth train at

Waterloo, happy at the idea of seeing him again, bothered by a vague notion that it is the very seeking (during my ten years, forced, sabbatical from filming) which is distracting me from the moment, the "what is" as Krishnaji terms it.

I find myself beside him at lunch, this meeting is two tiered, starting out as two fellas interested in threads. Current shirt maker, price of bespoke shoes etc. However there occurs a disconcerting shift in his voice and manner best likened to Cole Porter's lyric "how strange the change from major to minor". "Why do you choose to live superficially?" he asks. I look around at the close proximity of the other diners. "Shall we walk?", he asks.

We stroll toward the ornamental woods and an impressive "handkerchief tree", which I hadn't seen in bloom before, and is a favourite of his. He takes my hand and fixing me in his glance "I don't mean to be hurtful but you won't get this in a supermarket." He had obviously heard about my sojourn in India, decked in saffron.

"I get caught up in distractions, I guess. I can't grasp your stuff. It's above my ceiling."

"Thought can't grasp it", he replied. "The mind can't grasp it."

"That's what I mean - you always talk about what it isn't."

"Exactly. Any movement of thought is away from it. Yet ask yourself what you can't get away from. Look into it. We'll talk again."

As it turned out, a few years passed while I was looking into it. And then in the Eighties I am in California and I hear he is in Ojai, the place where it "happened" to him all those years before. On impulse I ring the Foundation and speak to Mary Zimbalist, his current secretary. "Come on up" she says, "He always enjoys seeing you". It is only a two-hour drive on the motorway toward San Francisco. Ojai is an American Indian word; it means "the nest". They considered it an enchanted valley and only smoked pipes of peace there. It is high desert festooned with orange groves and often permeated with fragrance of their blossom.

I am taken to the old house where he and his younger brother were billeted to get them away from the London Blitz during World War II. We pass the old pepper tree he leaned against the night "the ocean was poured into the drop". Mary sees my look "Yes, it is still here" she says. He is waiting on an old sofa in the main room.

Krishnaji is usually dressed in the style of the country he is in but today it is unusually dry and hot and he is wearing his Indian khadi white pyjama draw-string trousers and knee-length kurta. The house has been kept the same, carpets, furniture, fittings all Twenties period. He is austere without harshness. I sit. We sit in silence for some time.

Finally he says "Haven't seen you in any films lately."

"My films don't pull in big audiences. As it happens my public is almost as small as yours."

This draws a chuckle "It's true."

"Why is that?"

"It's like what we were talking about at Brockwood; people choose to live superficially. They have a vested interest in thought. Years, lifetimes, centuries. Can't give it up or rather can't see beyond it."

I try a different tack.

"It's known you don't like to talk about yourself, but I feel we've known each other a long time." He doesn't appear to object, so I press on. "I heard you liked motorbikes."

"No", he replies, "cars, fast cars".

I take a deep breath. "Before this happened to you." I am thinking of the Pepper Tree, "What were you like?"

"I was an idiot." Then he corrects himself and letting his jaw slacken he pulls it down. "No, I was gormless. No thought in the head. My parents would give me money, I would give it to the first beggar who asked. They would send me out for a walk, I would just keep walking. That's why they had my little brother keep an eye on me. When the realisation came that the mind could observe itself, there were no distracting thoughts."

"I find that depressing", I said.

"Why?"

"Well it's been nearly twenty years since our paths crossed. I've sweated through your books, tried to stay alert during your talks, always assuming you had a radio in your head, always on. Now you tell me you're not a free diver but a fish."

His voice segued into its minor key. "You don't have to be Edison to switch on the electric light."

"Listen", I said, "I am a simple guy, self taught mostly..." He reaches out. His hand on my arm warm and dry.

"What you are...what you actually are, is being. Being is not the mind thinking. Thinking is a movement, a motion. Being is the silence that precedes the motion. You cannot see it; you cannot grasp it because you *are* it. The feeling that you are. The unadorned naked awareness that is always there, rarely heeded, is what you always have been, always will be. Cannot *not* be. You can't look for it, because it *is* what is looking. It is like space, you can't see it but everything is *in* it. Everything *is* it. So I say to you, "be aware when you are unaware" let its presence warm you, fill you. Be present in the Presence." He smiles the serene smile. How could I not believe him? It's okay. It's really O.K.

It was to be our last conversation. He passed away shortly thereafter.

"Each of you hold a hand" he told Mary Zimbalist and a young man who happened to be with him in Ojai "and you will feel me go". They did. And, they did.

*Terence Stamp*

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