

Doubt the Liberator

by: Serge Brisy

Translated from the French by Margaret Sastri

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“In our doubt and our seeking, we cease to believe and then faith is born again; we pray, and suddenly prayer becomes empty and meaningless. We grope in the darkness of our hearts; we stumble and waver; we resist the torpor which hangs over a house in which people are vegetating. We try to think, that we may “live” and not stagnate, and in order to think and live, we doubt and question . . . But deep in our hearts we feel that some day the dark clouds will be dispersed, not by death, but by the Light of a Spiritual Dawn.”

Serge Brisy

THE contents of the present volume have been compiled from notes made at Ommen during the Star Camp of August, 1928.

I have considered my subject under the following aspects:

- (a) Doubt in the strict sense of the world.
- (b) Life and form, and the liberation of life and form;
- (c) The symbol, disconcerting for many, of the crutches which prevent our independent self-development.

My conception of doubt has made of doubt my best friend.

And the other two points are so intimately connected with the first that I do not see how they can be regarded except in the light of the doubt which liberates.

It is our imperious duty to free ourselves consciously and deliberately from outside influences and to accept only what is recognised as true by the inner self.

“Let understanding be the Law.”

At this time of spiritual upheaval and chaos, do not let us merely leave one rut to take refuge immediately in another, nor be content simply to go from group to group and from teacher to teacher in search of a

freedom whose true meaning we have failed to understand. Krishnaji says:

“I want you to be your own leaders.”

Serge Brisy

INTRODUCTION

SERGE BRISY was born in Brussels (Belgium) and is of Saxon-French descent. She comes from a family of lawyers and her father was a well-known advocate in Brussels.

Her gift for literary expression and her penchant for the theatre manifested themselves early; when only eight years old she was writing plays signed with the name of her doll, Jacques de Civreuse and which were acted by Serge herself with her brother and sister. At the age of 18, she won a prize in a competition organised by “Le Soir” (Brussels) for a play entitled “Satire against Catholic Dogma” (“The Bird of Paradise”).

Whilst still very young, Serge Brisy was assailed by the torments of doubt, rendered more acute by the atmosphere of free thought with which she was surrounded as a child, influenced and yet unsatisfied, by the atheistic ideas of her father, a man of profound culture and artistic refinement, who did not wish to give his children any religious imprint.

At the age of 16 her mind was already grappling with the problems of Life and death. Isolated in her own family, where no one shared her ideas, she withdrew into herself, seeking, alone and unaided, a solution to the problems which tormented her. With the passion for truth which fires every fine and noble character, Serge Brisy studied all the great religions of the world, and found a certain solace in the ritual of the Catholic church, as also in that of the Protestant Temple. During this period of spiritual seeking, she corresponded with a priest with whom she continued to analyse the “whys” which tormented her, without however allowing herself to be unduly influenced. But, still unsatisfied, she turned to philosophy; and Emerson, Maeterlinck, Ibsen and Nietzsche fired her imagination and enthusiasm. Thus, reading a great deal, but thinking even more, she gradually built for herself a system of philosophy based upon the hypothesis of reincarnation. In 1916, she became a member of the Theosophical Society in which she found a logical and satisfying explanation of the apparent injustices of life.

Out of her doubt, out of the profound suffering she experienced through her doubts and her isolation, a philosophy of strength and hope was born, the fruit of the years of solitude and struggle. Having found her own “natural ray of action,” she felt the urgent need to go out into the world and help others to find the truth for themselves.

Thus, inspired by her own ardent faith, devoted to the cause of social justice and peace, endowed with a splendid eloquence, Serge Brisy started her international lecturing tours in 1927, first of all in France and

Switzerland and later in North Africa (Algiers and Tunis). She speaks for the Theosophical Society but also quite independently under the auspices of the League for the Rights of Men and Citizenship, and of other Pacifist, and Feminist organizations.

Among her many social and philanthropic activities, Serge Brisy has made of "Prison Reform" a veritable apostolate. Lecturer at the prison for women at Forest-Brussels, she has founded a monthly review entitled "Bulletin of Light" (printed in the prison itself) and which is shortly to be distributed in all the prisons (for men and women) throughout Belgium by order of the Crown, and for which the Belgian Government has conferred upon her the ribbon of "Chevalier de l'Ordre de Léopold II". She visited Holloway Prison in England as well as numerous prisons in Belgium and Switzerland in order to study the different systems of amelioration and social re-adaptation. With the magnificent courage and sincerity which characterises all her work, Serge Brisy lectures upon this subject in all the countries she visits, and by the force of her own ardent sympathy, endeavours to arouse public opinion against the frequently disastrous and cruel treatment to which prisoners are subjected.

A great lover of children, Serge Brisy is passionately interested in all problems appertaining to education, and has made many illuminating experiments with children between the ages of 8 and 12 in what she calls the "Educative Theatre" (systematic development of the emotions with the aid of the theatre). Miss Audemars, a well-known educationalist in Geneva, says: "Serge Brisy is a born educator." She has developed to the full her innate love of the theatre and has written and produced numerous plays at the "Home of Artistes" in Brussels in which she herself has acted. The Belgian Press takes an interest in her Children's Theatre.

Believer, Mystic, constantly studying the occult laws which govern the universe, Serge Brisy sees in each individual the possibility of self-liberation through a healthy life, lived in accordance with universal laws. Severe for herself, living an extremely retired life, except when her international activities call her further afield, she emphasizes in her work as in her life, the indispensable necessity of free individual choice—each must follow his own "natural ray of action" (Count Keyserling). Tolerant herself for all convictions which, for her, only have value in so far as they are *lived* with sincerity by him who hold them, she insists upon this most important quality of "perfect tolerance;" the basis of her religious and philosophical conceptions being: the unity of life in a multiplicity of forms.

In love with life herself, radiating its beauty in her own life and work, Serge Brisy brings to all the message of liberation through personal effort to attain greater understanding and enlightenment.

For Serge Brisy, to "serve" does not mean to "convert," but simply to offer to men a fragment of the Eternal Truth; and in so doing, to teach them to live the only life which is worthy of being lived—that of human solidarity and universal brotherhood.

Margaret Sastri

DOUBT AND UNREST

IN speaking of the doubt that liberates, I desire first of all to make a clear distinction between doubt and unrest, because they constitute two opposing forces which, at this time of chaos and struggle, distress and spiritual seeking, are ruthlessly striving for supremacy in our hearts. Doubt is like the cleansing fire that burns whilst it purifies; but the flame of unrest is destructive, it consumes and reduces to ashes. We widen our vision when we learn to welcome doubt and reject unrest. Krishnaji says: "Invite doubt" ["To welcome adversity—not thrust upon you by another—you must invite doubt. If doubt unconsciously insinuates itself into your heart, it will not purify it. You can only really purify it by deliberately inviting doubt." (Krishnamurti—*Life in Freedom*, p.121) "Invite doubt; for doubt is as a precious ointment; though it burns, it shall heal greatly; and by inviting doubt, by putting aside those things which you have understood, by transcending your acquirements, your understandings, you will find the Truth." (*Life in Freedom*. p.91.) but we can only invite it by conquering unrest, that subtle poison which creeps into the smallest thought, creating disharmony and awakening in us and around us futile discussions, fluctuating judgements, quarrels and discord.

Unrest may be likened to the fire that destroys dense woods, leaving nothing but the charred and arid ground, whilst true doubt is the intelligent pruning that preserves the mighty trees and gives life to the forest.

There are some people who say:

"I no longer know what to believe, what to accept or what to reject. I was happier before when I thought less and just lived."

To these I would reply:

"But you were not living. You were vegetating whilst waiting to live. Be grateful that some one awakens you to life in spite of yourselves."

The awakening may be painful, but then is not the first cry of the new-born babe one of distress? It cries before it smiles at life. We are born to conscious life, but we must give birth to our true selves if we are to find happiness. No one can give happiness to another, for each carries it within himself and must discover, through his own struggles and his own seeking, the hidden treasure, the unique riches of his heart.

Krishnaji affirms:

Do not follow, do not obey, do not be loyal to any person except to yourself, and then you will be loyal to every passer-by. (*Life in Freedom*, p.123)

Do we understand what this represents of obstacles to overcome, of questions to solve, of joyous doubt? Loyalty to ourselves, complete fidelity to what we believe, to all we love and feel and serve, herein lies

true freedom.

By focussing the searchlight of doubt upon all we have loved, or still love, by digging deep within ourselves in order to discover the hidden source of Light, not in the turmoil of uncontrolled emotions, but in the intense calm of thought that constantly seeks to understand itself, we break down the inner barriers and consciously free ourselves from our limitations, through our own efforts, independently of others. Others, after all, only represent an accumulation of errors or truths, more or less profound, which add their weight to individual errors or truths; no one possesses absolute truth. As long as we remain the slaves of prejudice, incapable of forming a personal conviction, relying blindly upon the small understanding and petty opinions and advice of others, we waver between this interpretation and that, without freeing ourselves of our errors or developing our intelligence. We receive an imprint, but do nothing to forge our characters. The most skilful spiritual workman has no other power than that of forging his own soul. He may point out the tools, or even place them in the hands of a less experienced artisan, but he refrains from striking blows which would destroy another's soul instead of stimulating it into life.

We have been left indifferent by the reading of books dealing with the power of thought which say: "We do not think sufficiently for ourselves; the thoughts we consider our own, in reality rarely belong to us and are like vagabonds gathered together in an inn." But now that a new voice is making itself heard—the first up to now to awaken in the mass a distinctly original thought (that of doubt which scrutinises and desires to understand)—we are floundering in uncertainty and cry aloud for help and guidance.

What is being taken away from us?

The comfort of a non-thinking state which is the outcome of our blind acceptance of the opinions and affirmation of others.

What are we being given in return?

The consciousness of our true selves, revealed by our own reflection.

Surely this is not a cause for suffering, but rather of rejoicing?

Doubt is a profound searching within ourselves. A feeling of security accompanies it, arising precisely from the will and desire to be intensely ourselves in all things. Life comes to us through doubt, life in all its simplicity, in all its freshness and purity, clear, free, bubbling life, so fluid that it is never still, so supple that it modifies form whilst unceasingly flowing through it. By inviting doubt, we open the door of our being to life and this surely should be our joyous and sacred task. When we have this conception of doubt, it will be reflected upon our faces, not as suffering, but as joy, as the radiant gladness of dawn and of victory.

If you would be free, you must widen and expand your consciousness of liberty, your feeling of freedom in your activity and self-expression, without being limited by the conceptions of others. Do not allow yourselves to be troubled by external judgements or let your calm be banished by an expression or a word. Have the courage to be entirely yourselves and act accordingly, without being held back by any convention or outside interpretation. Do not shirk action, nor be afraid to bear the responsibility, for to act avoids the poisoned stagnation of waiting. Shake off every external bond and limitation by obeying only the profound urges of your own inner self, not hurriedly or impulsively, but in the “one-pointed” feeling of liberty before your own conscience.

So that you may develop continuously, analyse in yourselves everything that hinders, as well as all that furthers, the free expression of your individual truth. Do not be content simply to recognise a weakness, only to forget it again immediately in the activities of daily life, but pursue and conquer it, for it represents an obstacle between you and understanding. Welcome with serenity everything that stirs the routine of shallow feeling and causes you to suffer, and then transmute that suffering into a flame of joy springing from the ashes of a pain which was really only an illusion. Do not reject doubt because it changes too completely the easy conceptions of your everyday life, but love it passionately, as the prisoner would love the key brought to him by his liberator and which would enable him to open all the doors of his prison himself.

For, in reality, the greatest liberator is he who gives us the key to our own hearts and in so doing, the key to happiness. He cannot bring anything else. If we do not seize the key, he passes on and offers it to others. He lovingly points out the path of freedom, which he knows because he himself has traversed every stage of it, but he does not force anyone to walk in it. He does not, under any circumstances, force doors that are closed. His own great love of liberty prevents him from violating another’s conscience.

But we do not understand this conception. We violate the hearts and minds of others without scruple. We do not say: “Advance!” but “Follow!” because we ourselves are content to follow and obey blindly. If we were advancing, our march itself would be its own appeal.

We prepare ourselves for individual liberty—which is the only liberty—by analysing our character in order to discover what is lacking, that we may acquire it; by examining what we already possess, that we may get rid of the unessential, as one lets fall a cumbersome burden. What we lack is lying latent within us; the unessential is the corruption arising from an accumulation of past experiences which have now become useless, and a hindrance to further progress. Acquiring and rejecting are easy in themselves, but we have not always the courage to reject and acquire.

It is a mistake to imagine that because we doubt, it is better to stop all activity. On the contrary, we must persevere in our action in order to doubt more profoundly and more efficaciously, until doubt becomes such certainty that we are no longer undecided as to what to reject or what to affirm. But in order that our doubt may thus be transformed into certitude, we must be not only clearly aware of what causes doubt and our reaction to it, but also completely indifferent to what others think of our doubts, because in the acute period of questioning (the healthy analysis of everything external to ourselves) the soul has need of silence and peace. The more deeply the soul is able to retire into itself at this time of inner struggle, the more clearly it is able to establish the conception of its own faith. The doubts of others arouse unrest and uncertainty in the mind and heart of him who is seeking to understand himself, and the unrest veils the

reflection of Truth playing on the waters of the mind. By sharing our doubts, we fall into intellectual or emotional discussions; by doubting alone, we open up the path to intuition, and contact the true self. Doubt must certainly be invited, but his loving guest asks to be received in the closest intimacy of the soul.

As soon as doubt is changed into certitude, a choice, that is, a decision as to what we shall reject or retain, becomes inevitably necessary. But we shall find this choice difficult if we allow ourselves to be swayed by outside influences, because then we shall lose the sense of security which the soul has a right to feel when making its own intimate and independent choice. The choice which is born of solitude is a joyous one, because in choosing, the soul is singing its song of liberty.

What is doubt if not the glorious awakening of the true self that has been lying dormant under the dead weight of external beliefs accepted without analysis. Doubt helps the expansion of life in all its forms. It is the soul's torch-light; it demands the fruitful activity of original thought, freed from the thoughts of others, even though they be of the purest. It is the creator and genius in us, since it liberates the life imprisoned in the obscure forms of ignorance, incomprehension and routine. It is only through our own profound doubt that we can discover the true self which is liberation. Everything that comes to us from without is capable of stimulating our thought, but it cannot free us.

Do not let us deceive ourselves with mere words and uncontrolled enthusiasm, nor proclaim another's truth unless we have felt its burning reality in our own hearts. It is useless to set out to combat human suffering unless we have first filled our own lamps with oil. Let us beware of kindling shallow enthusiasms in our own particular circles to delude ourselves that we are "living". Instead of being merely passive beings, let us endeavour to free our thoughts from all external influence, so that we can stimulate independent thought in others. For, he who follows without doubting, that is, without seeking to understand for himself, again sinks into the stagnation which is death, and dogmatizes about things of which he is ignorant.

Dogma is the safe in which we proudly lock away life. We think it hermetic and never open it to look at the riches it contains. But he who has the courage to break open the locks, finds that the safe alone remains, solid, heavy and ... how empty! Life itself has vanished, for nothing can imprison it. The Life confined in dogma sooner or later escapes into the eternal flux, leaving behind a skeleton, an empty shell.. But all our acquired knowledge, our habits and conceptions are tested by doubt; it passes them through the fire of personal thought and analysis and separates that which is true, or rather that which each individual feels to be true for himself, from that which is but the accumulation of external experiences, blindly accepted or passed through in a state of inertia.

Doubt allows nothing to stagnate, it creates life from whatever we give it; it awakens or kills every seed sown in the heart and the mind; it brings them to fruition or stifles them; it encourages their birth or destroys them; it is the real annunciator of the truth in us, the triumphant herald of the soul. And because the soul has invited doubt, doubt invites the soul to live. It cries: "Among the dust-laden ruins of tradition, where art thou?" And the soul replies: "With life!"

Sometimes, it seems to me that the need and desire to convince others is only a sign of weakness. We

always want the crowd with us because we are afraid of solitude. But, it is noticeable that those who do not want disciples, generally have the most. Moreover, no matter whose voice it is, when it finds an echo in another heart, it means that it has awakened the inner voice of the individual. We understand the Master from the moment this Voice in us, of whose existence we were unaware, speaks in unison with His. And this inner Voice—the only one we can trust and obey—is the voice of silence, of intuition, which awakens with the conscience and speaks through it.

I want to say to those who imitate Krishnaji:

“His message is not either for monkeys or for parrots, but for men.” And to those who obey blindly without having given themselves time to reflect:

“His message is not for sheep, but for human beings.”

And again to those who, afraid of choosing wrongly, hesitate and finally adopt another’s choice:

“His message is not for hares, but for independent individuals.”

There are many people who try to go back and take refuge in former dreams and illusions, just as in winter we shut ourselves up in an overheated room where the body enjoys a feeling of animal well-being but in which the mind becomes heavy and dull. Such people close their windows and draw their curtains, so as not to see the snow or the rain falling. And because it is dark within, they light an artificial lamp and so forget the sun. But the courageous remain out in the open, bitten by the frost, struggling against the bitter wind, against the squalls and the tempest, for they feel that the winter alone, in all its nakedness, prepares the spring. And because they desire the spring, the renewal of their whole being, nothing seems too hard or too difficult in order to attain it.

Does this mean that we must immediately give up our particular form of activity? Certainly not. To give up violently and impulsively is to reject the doubt that liberates.

If you are wise, [says Krishnaji], you will not act in haste. Through haste you will find nothing. By patient understanding, by careful watching that you may not be caught up in things that are trivial, unessential, you will find that which you seek. [*Life in Freedom*. p.90.]

In whatever sphere of activity we may be working, our task is to bring life to the world. We must transform the “congregation of the dead” into a living congregation, because we are ourselves convinced that life is revealed to us according to the measure of our understanding. We must widen our understanding, go beyond our present comprehension, if we want to judge otherwise than through external appearances which limit and enslave. Hesitant, not knowing what to choose, tossed hither and thither by different interpretations, fearing an opinion or adopting it incapable of freeing ourselves from the mirage of form, we certainly belong to the “congregation of the dead”. Like a butterfly, we flit indecisively from one form to

another. But whilst we are living upon this earth, we cannot dispense with form. Our body is a form continuously surrounded by other forms. However, the “true self” inhabits the body, and so long as we obey this self, we cannot become the slaves of our body. But if we continue to identify ourselves with our body, we shall be either aggressive egoists, or unhappy prisoners. From the moment we realise the existence of the spirit, our body, our emotions, our thoughts retain their value as expressions of our divine nature, and as such we should not think of scorning or despising them.

To live is to experiment, and experience is infinite. Our experiences come to us through form, but they become more subtle in the measure that we are able to detach ourselves from the attraction merely external experience has for us. Herein, it seems to me, lies our gradual liberation from the tyranny of form. Because our characters and temperaments are different, we do not all pass through the same experience at the same time, and consequently we do not use the same forms. It is therefore absurd to quarrel about these forms and try to decide which are to be rejected and which retained. I mean by this, that our decision must be a personal choice, not based upon the choice of others. Doubt and choose, in other words—live. Let us have an organisation if we feel that our presence in it is only a passive element. The movement will be all the better for it and we also. But we do not let us go to the other extreme and take up a negative attitude towards things by declaring that form does not exist! There are some people who are so afraid of becoming slaves of form, that they refrain from admiring a flower! How the flower must smile to itself as it lives and diffuses its perfume, not for men’s admiration, but simply as an offering to the sun and to life.

Krishnaji purifies every organisation worthy of enlightenment by eliminating from it those sorry disciples of Panurge in whose minds he creates unrest and dissatisfaction. Those who become the prey of unrest dare not doubt alone. They wait with anguish for the Master’s irrevocable decision and the Master only smiles and gives them new problems to solve. Perfect freedom of mind and a profound respect for the divine life flowing through all forms, facilitates the mastery of form. We dominate it by freeing ourselves from its power. To run away from it as if we were afraid, only tightens the bonds that fear entangles. Life is only active in the supple form.

The Divine Life is continually creating new forms, and the old ones crumble away of themselves as soon as they are no longer necessary. Does Krishnaji destroy? No, he simply points out the way, and urges people to leave the valley of bondage and scale the free spiritual heights. He passes by, radiant and simple in his truth; living forms are enriched by his regenerating influence, and decaying forms are emptied of their seeming life and are lost in the ruins of the past. To deny the existence of form is to deny one of the manifestations of life. Krishnaji’s books are forms, and in order to fix his thoughts and ideas in them, he has had to submit to the “form” of writing and printing. The “Star Shops” where his books are sold are also forms. The Camp at Ommen, which brings together thousands of people, is also a form. Even Krishnaji himself, powerful as his spirit may be, must use a form in order to communicate with us. If he dispensed entirely with this visible form, the majority—and among them the blind worshippers who, because they have not really understood the message, make themselves the destroyers of all form—would be unaware of his presence in the world, and would not hear his voice. But he uses the form without confusing it with life, and for this reason he is the only one to transmit his message in its integrity. Let us take care that we do not destroy this form through lack of understanding, because he has told us: “No one will imprison me.” If we try to imprison him in *our* forms, he will escape before his mission is fulfilled, leaving behind him an empty shell, doomed to destruction.

LIFE AND FORM

LET us then invite doubt into our conception of life and form, and we shall be more certain of ourselves, and less inclined to unthinkingly adopt the conceptions of others. Before rejecting the forms which stimulate our activities, we must know why, how, and for whom we are abandoning them. Irrational rejection is just as illogical as the blind clinging to things we have not made any effort to really understand. Impulse is unpremeditated action and by giving way to impulse we do not construct, but simply prove our instability. Doubt may give rise to the rejection of a certain form of activity, but it may also result in the continuation of that activity if, after analysis, it is recognised to be good and useful. Neither the rejection nor the continuation have any value except in so far as they represent the free choice of the individual.

To be "in love with life," we must commune with life in all its manifold forms. We are too much concerned with appearances, not only in ourselves, but also in others, and this prevents us from recognising the true self which slumbers in each one of us. We judge by and through the outer form; we become attached to this form and lost in it the sense of life. Our thought is confused by appearances, and we lost ourselves in the labyrinth of conflicting interpretations. We attach so much importance to form that we forget life. We love the outer form of those we care for, and this gives rise to complicated emotions and the need and desire for visible expression of affection. The fountain of life dances and sings within us, and yet we limit and restrain it in the mould of conventions. We set up rules which become limitations, and even whilst deploring the bonds we have created, we continue to imprison ourselves and others in them. And we condemn, fear or despise those who succeed in freeing themselves. We explain life in terms of form and so lose our comprehension of life. We shut ourselves in behind the ramparts of the past and try to forecast the future. That is why the future always disconcerts us, because it is that part of life which form has not yet touched. If we always succeeded in detaching life from form, we should live eternally in an ever-present future. Form would no longer be a hindrance, but an expression of life, and in and through every form, we should see, feel and love the one and only life. Thus our activity, our affection, our service, would be dedicated to life, and every form placed upon our path would become as a reservoir of the Unique Life. Our love, unified and rendered divine, concerned only with the imperishable life in each and all, would be a stranger to preferences, jealousies, sentimentalities, anger, rancour and suffering. The "chosen one" would be whoever happened to be present, the form placed momentarily in front of us, a simple instrument through which life is flowing. For to be in love with life, is to be in love with all that life animates, but without becoming a slave of the particular form through which that life is manifesting. Tree, flower, bird, insect, cloud, star, sky, the wind whistling in the branches, sun, moss, ant, friend, enemy, all are forms inhabited by life, and the exclusive love of life makes us love all forms without reserve. Form only veils the expression of love when we stop at the form, but when the form becomes absorbed in life, there can be nothing but love.

Thus, in the presence of the Master, we are in truth the "chosen one," we have the right to consider ourselves as such. But this certitude cannot awaken any feeling of pride in us, because if he raises his eyes to the heavens and observes the rapid flight of the swallow, the "chosen one" immediately becomes the bird: the only communion is that of life with life.

Let us then seek life, and love will dance eternally in our hearts. Do not let us try to separate life from form, but be content to observe life pouring itself out through the multiplicity of forms. Let us become one with this life which is the same in all, for what we possess, another possesses also. Let us free ourselves

from the delusion of appearances, and become a vital expression of life so that we may give our sympathy and understanding to others who are manifesting the same life. Instead of saying: "Where should I go and how," let us communicate direct with the life in others by means of the life in us. It is not even necessary to seek unity, for in simply seeking life we shall find unity because life is one. Let us reject all interpretations which are not clearly and definitely our own; they are but empty forms. Let us be content to interpret all things for ourselves, and refrain from trying to impose our conceptions upon others, for whom they will perhaps only be lifeless forms, devoid of meaning. Because life is more powerful than form, it is constantly destroying existing forms, and building new ones. There are no forms that we can reasonably call stable; they are changing continuously, even if we are unaware of it; they are never exactly the same because they are the changing receptacles of life. Form along changes, life remains eternally the same, adapting form to its needs. Thus, because form is the servitor of life, we must not be the slaves of a slave, but the king of our own individual life and the friend of the life in others. Do not let us bow before the ephemeral, but worship that which is eternal and unchanging. Let us not become attached to the form which is destined to disappear, but exalt life which passes unceasingly from form to form. Life has no special form because it takes all forms. Therefore let us refrain from trying to explain life; it explains itself in every creature and in every form. If we try to explain it in the light of our own narrow and limited understanding, we deform it and only offer to others a distorted fragment of what life really is. Can we explain the river by the water taken from a pitcher? How then can we explain life which is infinite and boundless, flowing from form to form, divine, free, without first or second, so absolutely one that it animates every form and is yet equally present in each. We imprison life in forms which we make rigid and inflexible and then in our worship of the form, we forget life itself; the letter takes the place of the spirit and herein lies our betrayal of truth. Words are forms through which thought manifests itself, and thoughts in their turn are also forms of fragmentary truths, and every fragment is an echo of the Absolute Truth.

Very often, we are only in love with our own words!

I drink eagerly from a Cup of Wisdom and I hand it to you, but you say with disdain: "There is nothing in your cup, drink rather from mine." And I too find the one from which you have drunk empty. Shall we look upon each other as enemies because of this, or shall we drink from our own cup whilst continuing in the path we have chosen?

Why is it always at another's cup that we must quench our thirst?

We can only quench our thirst at the fountain of life . . .

Where is this fountain?

It is to be found somewhere upon the mountain-top outside ourselves or upon the summit of our own self-realization? Our thirst will remain unquenched until we find the source of life which is within us; then, and then only, shall we conquer that peace which passes all understanding and which is composed of an intense feeling of reverence and love. So long as we have not established it firmly in our hearts, it remains crystalline, fragile, the slightest thing troubles its diaphanous limpidity. It descends into the heart lovingly, tenderly; it expands with the profoundest respect for every manifestation of life. It refuses to be

imprisoned in the complexity of feelings, it puts conflicting passions to rout and raises the individual to its own serene heights. Whilst we remain on the heights of our self-realisation, we become one with it, but immediately we descend into the valley of personal feelings it disappears until the new ascension. A time will come however when we shall be able to come down into the valley and mingle with its life without losing the serenity of the mountain-top. We only lose it when we allow ourselves to be caught up again in the illusions of the outer self.

If I am an apple-tree, no one will make apricots ripen on my flower-laden branches.

And what shall my task be?

To struggle fruitlessly with the ignorant in order to try and make apricots ripen instead of apples?

God only expects apples from an apple-tree, and therefore He created the apricot-tree to bear its own fruit.

To me, the greatest teaching is that received by each individual in the sanctuary of his own heart; the message he has sincerely understood and feels he must put into practice immediately, not in a fragment of his life only but in his whole life. Words only have value in so far as their meaning is lived. A theory, beautiful as it may be, demands realisation because it inspires and creates ideas, and an unrealised idea is only half alive. The conversion of ideas into acts never is, and never can be, routine-like nor blind. Action alone proves understanding, or rather, the degree of understanding of the individual. It is so easy to discuss with the intelligence, or with the emotions, and to establish rules which are perfect on paper. But life is not made up solely of straight lines. It cannot be imprisoned in rigid rules; we follow its curves and meanders in ourselves by the progressive development of distinctly original thoughts.

Krishnaji speaks to us, and because we receive his words in the light of our own temperament, we understand and apply them differently. Hence, if we desire to put them into practice, we must find in his words the enlightened application of our own activities, aspirations, needs and desires, in short, all that enlarges our individual expression. He does not demand the same understanding from all. He speaks to all of us and to each one individually. He comes to awaken the lazy intelligence, and to stir the heart as yet untouched by profound emotions. He brings an inexhaustible manna and he invites each one to take from it as he desires and according to his needs. He stirs traditional routine and offers new ideas, "those which are ageless and of all time". [Someone said to me with a prophetic air: "Since Krishnamurti is with us, don't you find that books like *The Voice of the Silence* or *Light on the Path* have aged?" Perhaps the words of Buddha and all the Great Ones have also aged. It is true that for a certain group of people only Krishnamurti's books are of interest. But what good are they, if we interpret them imperfectly and make of them weapons of strife and discord?

"I do not come to destroy but to build." (Krishnamurti—First Message, Adyar Convention, November 1925.)] It is therefore more important to analyse our own convictions than to try to convince others. It is futile for everyone to try to follow the same path, and by so doing create a new rut for old fanaticisms. What is important is that each individual should find his own path for himself, not because Krishnaji has spoken and we follow blindly what he says, but because his words have awakened the Unique Word,

which each one carries in his own heart.

Does Krishnaji ask us to merely follow him blindly? No. He desires us to become free. His affirmations in this connection are quite clear:

But if you merely obey me or use me as an authority, as a steppingstone towards your goal, you will fail, because it will not be your own desire that urges you. Whereas, if you strengthen the understanding of your own desire and use all experience to that end, no one can destroy or take away that which you have gained. [*Life in Freedom*. p.59.]

I would not accept anything as Truth until I found the Truth myself. *I never opposed the ideas of others*, but I would not accept their authority, their theory of life. † [*Ibid.*, p.61. (Italics mine.)]

But if you seek my authority you will remain in your dark valley of limitation. It is much easier for you to follow and worship blindly than to understand and so become truly free. ‡ [*Ibid.*, pp.77, 79 and 79.]

If I were to use authority today, and you accepted my authority it would not make you free, you would be merely following the freedom of another. In following the freedom of another, you are binding yourself more strongly to the wheel of limitation. ¶ [*Ibid.*, 77, 79, and 79.]

If you would create greatly, if you would have the creation last eternally, you must develop your own individual uniqueness, your own perfection, with understanding of the Truth, and not imitate the perfection of another. [*Life in Freedom*. p77, 79, and 97]

Krishnaji is working through a form which, like all forms, is ephemeral, and our desire to deck out this form and give it a name, prevents us from understanding his message, even though that message be eternal in its truth. We want to be assured of his identity before we accept his teaching and because this assurance is not immediately forthcoming, we impulsively reject and deny what we formerly worshipped. What is the reason for these sudden changes and our new certitudes? Are they based upon the opinion of the crowd, upon the declaration of a certain group of people, upon the faith of others? Or are they the result of our own verification of the facts examined in the light of our own intuition? Does the bird need an aeroplane guided by a pilot in order to fly? No, it flies alone and unaided because it is enraptured by its flight. So we too must try to be completely independent because we are in love with liberty and desire to live it to the full. Can the nightingale give its song to the chirping sparrow, or the seagull the strength of its wings to the finch? Can the eagle give the piercing clarity of its vision to the barn-owl, or the swallow the rapidity of its flight to caged birds? We can only become the possessors of those qualities which we make a serious effort to acquire, and they only become really ours when we master them with patience.

When listening to Krishnamurti we ask ourselves: "Who is he? rather than: "Do I agree with his teaching?" We ask ourselves innumerable questions concerning his personality and forget to analyse the essential things. We waste our time with futilities; we reject the teaching through fear, or accept it because we have been trained to do so. We engage in empty discussions about things which have no

value, and try to become an authority at the side of one who rejects all authority.

After all, what is most important, the name or the message? Are spiritual passports delivered in the same way as a charter is given to an association or a certificate to an individual? Does light bear a name, or is it content to be just white? Is it more richly clothed when I call it "brilliance"? Are we waiting for a Messiah or the truth? Are we so unsure of ourselves that it is necessary to cry aloud that the Messiah has been born before we consent to receive his message? Are we going to receive Krishnaji in this way? Shall we understand him better by paying so much attention to the discordant interpretations of those who imagine they are following him?

His message is given to the world and therefore it is for each one of us individually. But if we are to understand it, we must take it in all its purity, straight from the fountainhead, and not after it has passed through other brains. Do not let us wait to have it explained to us by others, but let us be ever on the alert, ready to listen and observe, and, by doubting all that has been, have the courage to choose our own mode of expression in order that we may awaken our "individual uniqueness," that which resembles nothing and no one—ourselves.

CRUTCHES

READERS of Krishnaji's works have become familiar with the expression "crutches" which, shrouded as it is in doubt, troubles many minds and hearts. The cry we hear today is: "No more crutches," which in other words means that we must stand alone and throw off our dependence upon outside aids; we must no longer take refuge in ancient beliefs and outworn dogmas, but abandon the temples and churches in which we no longer believe but to which we cling through fear of what others will think, or through habits contracted in childhood.

This conception is logical. Yet, it calls forth an incomprehensible buzz of comment and argument from a whole group of spiritual agitators, I cannot call them by any other name. And it is those who have a crutch under each arm who shout the loudest, and what they put forward as an article of faith is but a parody of the teaching they are claiming to understand and to follow. Like sheep lost in a storm, they rush wildly from one tree to another to find shelter for their own fear. They agitatedly question each other as to what tree they shall choose as their refuge, and when that tree falls, struck by the lightning, they try to take shelter elsewhere, always with the same cry: "No more crutches . . . let us be independent!" And no one has the courage to remain standing erect and alone; all, thinking they are freeing themselves from form, are merely taking refuge in their own forms.

During the war, things seen and experienced were recounted. For instance, a woman escaping from her bombarded house opened her umbrella in order to protect herself from the bullets. Another covered her head with her apron, and both cried to the imprudent passers-by who had neglected to take this precaution: "Take care, they are firing!"

There are many people today who, when put to this spiritual test, act in exactly the same way. Their candour is touching, but their stupidity makes one despair. They advise gravely, violently sometimes, so

fervent is their desire to save others: “They are firing, open your umbrella!”

But the most disconcerting thing is that many actually follow this advice and walk with their umbrellas open!

We laugh at monkeys and parrots, but we never think to laugh at ourselves. They are animals and we are men-monkeys and men-parrots.

Parrots and monkeys show their intelligence by imitating us. What do we prove by imitating them?

“No more crutches! No more crutches!”

When I hear these words, I seem to see a picture in my mind of the whole of humanity, composed of a crowd so dense that it is impossible to count or define the different types. It is trying to force its way through the tangled undergrowth. Each individual is leaning on crutches and drags himself along through the starless night of his ignorance. The crutches knock against each other, causing cries, abusive language, sometimes even blows, the crutch serving as a weapon to beat down the adversary, and the latter, full of hate, used his own crutch in self-defence.

The crutches broken in the conflict are more or less patched up again—we fall back into our old habits, our old routines and conventions; our mask and our “attitude,” momentarily upset, is again adjusted—unless we discard the broken crutch altogether and find another which is thought to be stronger than the first.

The Great Helpers of humanity look down and smile at this child’s play and in their compassion they beckon the lame ones towards them, those crippled and halting beings whose infirmity alone makes them quarrelsome. And these Splendid Ones open wide their arms and their wings to show men that crutches are a hindrance to flight.

The Master himself becomes a crutch as soon as we stop at the letter of his teaching. He is the Inspirer, and his magnificent gift to us is the awakening of our own inspirations. By causing us to doubt, he is opening up to us the path of life, but we ourselves must choose whether or not we shall walk in this path.

He says:

I have painted my picture. I want you to create because of that picture, a new picture for yourself. I want you to fall in love with the picture, not with the painter, to fall in love with the Truth and not with him who brings the Truth. [*Life in Freedom*, p.78.]

In fact, does he not say to life’s paralytics:

“Rise and walk!”

But if we neglect to make the effort, we shall remain lying on our pallet of misery. We are dependent upon that which we accept blindly without analysis and this alone constitutes the crutch. It is through doubt alone that we arrive at understanding. For only the one who dares to doubt with faith, that is, in the certitude of finding the solution in the doubt itself, awakens to life.

In the same way, we too shall become crutches for the weak by merely admitting our own point of view, and in trying to impose it upon them.

Our understanding is still so limited that it is foolish to think that it is capable of affirming the absolute. Our comprehension is transformed from day to day as we ourselves change. Do we read a book twice and understand it in identically the same way each time? Do we not reject what we loved and return enlightened to that which we formerly denied? Do we not suddenly stop before a phrase which before had seemed devoid of meaning and which now becomes clear to us? Do we not suddenly and instinctively understand a landscape or a work of art which had previously left us unmoved? We are fluid and moving because we are of the stuff of life, and it is the life in us which is in love with life. Does not Krishnaji's affirmation concerning the Kingdom of Happiness remain a hypothesis for the majority? Until we have crossed its threshold, our happiness remains uncertain, unsteady, because circumstances not yet mastered disturb our stability. We all pass through periods of joy, discouragement, enthusiasm and melancholy. We do not possess the harmony which comes of serenity, and our transitory happiness is like April-showers.

I am afraid many people are anxious to prove their intelligence and their moral strength to others, and they proudly *affirm* in words borrowed from others, that which the Master *lives* in the great simplicity of his soul. True understanding transcends pride. It is so far beyond us that we can only comprehend the “small” understanding, that which comes within the confines of our narrow and limited vision.

If we are to really “understand,” we must see big in all things, and what is more important, we must see big in ourselves. Krishnaji's message is so infinitely greater than our small comprehension that when we try to make it fit in to our narrow conception of life, we only distort and belittle it.

He gives us life.

But if we refuse it because we are not prepared to rise to its heights; we only want life to adapt itself to our smallness.

Life consents.

Why?

Because in coming down to us in all its greatness, in all its force, it breaks and shatters the narrow forms

which are keeping us prisoners, so that we are obliged, even in spite of ourselves, to mingle and become one with it.

Let us form our own conception of what constitutes a crutch. For me, nothing, no matter whether it be a belief, a philosophy or a person, can become a crutch if my true self consciously recognises it as good. I ask myself honestly: "Will it deepen my understanding of life?" If the reply is in the affirmative, why hesitate to accept it, since it will enable to give more complete expression to my individual life within the universal life. But my analysis must not be concerned with the interpretations and opinions of others, otherwise my judgment will be influenced by their judgment, and my doubt, coloured by their doubts, will cease to be the doubt which liberates. If, on the other hand, I decide that by adopting a certain thing, I shall be limiting myself and becoming dependent, then I reject it without hesitation. Why should we be afraid of making a mistake, since an error recognised is knowledge gained? In what does the awakening to life reside if not in knowledge? It is dangerous to let ourselves stagnate in a belief or a faith, but doubt keeps the mind constantly alert, and will not allow it to accept or reject anything without analysis. I energetically refuse to let others doubt for me and try to drag me into their doubt. I have still less need of being hedged in by their certitudes which, like my own, only as yet represent fragments of truth. I want to be "myself" in all I do and in all I think. For I can lay no greater offering upon the altar of life.

Besides, nothing is in itself a crutch; it is only we who make it such by our attitude of unthinking acceptance and blind dependence. The person we love, and who has become necessary to our happiness, ceases to be a crutch from the moment we succeed in transforming our feelings, in sublimating our love, our affection or our friendship.

In reality, we are not dependent on others, but solely upon the feelings others arouse in us. We can only attain true freedom by sublimating and controlling these feelings and by courageously rejecting the feeling of dependence even when we are most conscious of our own weakness.

Take, for example, sentimentality with its ridiculous train of petty joys and sorrows. The day we decide to have done with this sentimentality, the one who arouses it remains the same, but we transform our attitude to such an extent that he no longer recognises us. He was not the crutch: our sentimentality itself was the crutch. This being so, how many are the temples and sanctuaries we build up within ourselves, accomplishing in them secret rites and complicated ceremonies. As long as we remain attached to our alters, we crystallise our feelings in them, we bind ourselves to our own limitations, and that is why we are told:

"You are not big enough."

The Christ in Your Heart

THUS, to abandon our faith, our beliefs, our philosophy, without reflection and through suggestion from without, is a sign of weakness, the road of ignorance posing as wisdom, which leads to the slough of unrest and uncertainty.

Do not let us become the prey of those false disciples who talk more than they act. Do not let us clumsily

copy a work of art, but create our own. I have always pitied those painters who shut themselves up in a gallery in order to copy a picture, instead of going to nature and creating their own. Perhaps the sole beauty of our work will be its simplicity and sincerity, but it will at least have the inestimable value of being our own creation. "Noise kills thought." says Nietzsche. Let us then discover ourselves in the silence and in no way seek to imitate others.

Is it really necessary to be actually in the presence of a saint or a sage in order to commune with his teaching and find the truth? If I am sitting at his feet, letting my thoughts wander, I penetrate his heart and mind less than one who, thousands of miles away, is acting in harmony with him. Physical proximity does not necessarily imply a spiritual bond. I see those who are near Krishnaji and whose conceptions are different from my own. I do not judge these conceptions; it is not for me to judge them. I am content to remain faithful to my inner conscience, because I am convinced that it is the only way to widen my understanding. If their conceptions are better than mine, I shall come to them one day through my own seeking. If they are not better, I shall not have been troubled by examination of their ideas or by the false lustre of an empty admiration. There are no chosen disciples. Therefore, as long as we continue to scrutinise with intensity the expression of our own truth, we are coming nearer to Truth and are the disciples of that Truth. The fact of being with Krishnaji or not is a pure question of . . . form!

All controversial discussion as to the value of ceremonies and ritual, which organisations to retain and which to reject, seems to me to be pure folly in itself. The essential is to seek life. Temples and churches become pitfalls on the roadside when they are composed of a "congregation of the dead," dogmas are nets thrown by human beings to trap souls who are afraid; they forbid doubt, the sign of courage and proof of reflection. But when those who believe, offer themselves consciously as instruments for the diffusion of spiritual forces, when priests and ministers become the magicians of light for the enlightenment of the world, then temples and churches will represent the direct path for those people who are able to find in them their free expression and development. The magician of form makes of the outward form a supple instrument through which life can flow. He is not its slave because he uses it with knowledge and understanding, and he teaches its right use and significance to those who are seeking to free themselves from the bondage of form. He is thus the conscious servitor of life, and is spreading the message of Truth. To attack such people with hostile clamour, scorn or sarcasm, only proves intolerance, and intolerance has never formed part of the teaching of any Master.

It will perhaps be asked: who shall decide who belongs to the congregation of the dead or the congregation of the living?

The individual himself, because when he ceases to vegetate and awakens to the full consciousness of life, no matter what the "form" through which this awakening of consciousness takes place, there will no longer be any "congregation of the dead"!

Krishnamurti's blessed presence is like a storm which stirs the ocean of contradictory thoughts and conceptions, but those who follow his teaching dogmatically will remain the prey of the tempest, and will become akin to those who cling superstitiously to beliefs they do not understand, to the fanatics of every religion and every philosophy. They will reject certain forms, not because they feel an inner necessity to do so, but simply because "the Master says we should abandon this or that"! These people will be the first to become his enemies, and the worst enemies, because they will make of their dogmatic love (dogmas are

created from all teachings) an instrument of discord and hate. Their love will be all the more dangerous because they will pose as the defenders and disciples of the Master. It is doubtless because of this that he declares now: "I do not want disciples!" They will not say as Krishnaji does: "Invite doubt," but rather, and alas, they are already saying this, "because the Master does this or does not do that, do it or don't do it." And the more fanatical will say: "In all things act as he does, and because we are doing as he does, follow our example!"

What does Krishnaji himself say?

I am now sure of myself. I am certain of what I say, even if no one agrees with me, even if everyone is against me and does not understand what I am saying. The more lack of understanding and divergence of opinion there is, the more certain I am of myself. (*International Star Bulletin*, 1929.)

Here at the outset is the tragedy of solitary greatness. Are we henceforth going to witness an Inquisition concealing itself behind the word "liberty" in order to give confidence to the blind? And will this Inquisition exploit the present Master? Let us beware of those who imagine they understand him too well. He is alone because he is greater than us all.

Moreover, his teaching is still young. It has even greater things to offer us. He is stirring the world in order that new ideas may break down the strongest resistance, and, in arousing the world, he troubles each individual. The small, scattered lights seem insignificant at the side of his spiritual force, but each one of us can become a flame in his cleansing fire, a gleaming torch at the service of the Messengers of Light in their great work of purifying the world. The penetrating light is spreading throughout the world, kindling every mind and heart, but as long as we do not seek our own individual path and allow others to seek theirs, the road ahead will remain shrouded in darkness.

We are watching the preparation of the ground, but do not know what is going to be built? The Great Architect has revealed His plan to no one. The form of this edifice, which will be so entirely different from anything seen or imagined up to now, is still unknown. Who can tell where the walls, and towers and windows will be placed, who can say where the Holy of Holies will be hidden? Where is the mind that can conceive its flowers and works of art, its music and its songs?

Can we say we have understood?

Understand! That mighty word! How can it be expressed? To open wide the gates of our being to Life, and to love with Christ in our hearts. Is anything else required of us?

The Christ in your heart is—yourself. It is the conscious recognition of the real "self," the communion of this self with the mighty creative life, the voluntary rejection of weaknesses, their control, the fusion of your whole being in the Light. Thoughts coloured by emotions reflect the character, and these defective reflections are deformed by passion. But the thought that is illuminated by divine intuition and spiritual love is the faithful mirror, even more, the loving spokesman of the soul.

We should never enter into a discussion without first being sure that Christ is in our heart, that we are not reasoning in the illusory light of our own shortcomings. For all such discussion, no matter who is in the wrong, degenerates into conflict, and degrades the one who allows himself to be carried away by anger. The moment anger is felt, even though we succeed in cleverly hiding it from others, Christ is no longer in our heart. The passion which tries to reason is a parody of reason. Why always identify ourselves with the puppets in our show?

My friends, let us doubt continually, and with intensity, let us examine everything, the old as well as the new, with doubt, so that we may create a certitude for ourselves in all things. Doubt, but do not give way to unrest. Distinguish in yourselves the differences between these two forces, the one awakening to life, the other sowing destruction. Do not accept any judgment unless it is based upon your own conscience; reject nothing without analysis; follow no one but yourselves, so that you may consciously follow the Messengers of Light. Learn to know yourselves by using your inner and profound thought; it is only "yours" when you have the courage to strip it of all external influence. Do not stop at interpretations as a message, but receive the message in the inner sanctuary of your own hearts, so that you yourselves may be the living embodiment of spiritual unity. We reflect in our own lives as much of the truth as we have assimilated and understood. Therefore, do not let us merely echo words which, on our lips, are devoid of meaning so long as we have not "lived" them.

Krishnaji asks us to live, to act, to be loyal to our own conscience. He forbids us, in spite of ourselves, the mirage of his physical presence. He desires us to be free and he is only concerned with our liberty. He says:

Because One greater than all these is with you, I hold it dear and precious that you should understand in the fullness of your heart, and mind and so create the light which shall be your guide, which is not the light of another, but your own. [*Life in Freedom*. p.126.]