



## The concept of freedom and love in J. Krishnamurti's philosophy

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### Abstract

This research paper examines the concepts of freedom and love in the philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti. According to Krishnamurti, freedom lies in understanding bondage, not merely escaping from it, and is intrinsically linked to living in the present moment. Love, in his view, is a state free from jealousy, possession, or dependency, where the sense of 'self' ceases to exist. The paper also explores the interconnectedness of freedom and love, as freedom from the 'self' enables the possibility of love. This analysis connects Krishnamurti's ideas with Indian philosophy, offering a comprehensive understanding of these concepts.

**Keywords:** Freedom, love, J. Krishnamurti, philosophy, liberation

### Introduction

Every human being aspires for freedom and love. Freedom is often understood as the ability to do what one desires or to be free from external constraints. People seek to live life according to their will, pursue their chosen work, and enjoy their preferred food, drink, and attire. They yearn to be free from societal restrictions, fear, suffering, confusion, and conflict. In Indian philosophy, the concept of *moksha* (liberation) is central, signifying freedom from the cycle of birth and death, which is considered the root of human suffering and the ultimate goal of life. The discourse on freedom has persisted for centuries, with philosophical debates questioning whether humans are truly free, whether complete freedom is attainable, whether freedom is natural or granted, and whether it can be achieved.

Love, similarly, is a fundamental aspect of human existence. It is seen as a force that strengthens relationships and fosters inner balance and peace. However, love is often misconstrued as emotional attachment, dependency, or possession, which limits its true essence. In Indian philosophy, love is closely associated with compassion (*karuna*) and liberation, where it becomes inseparable from freedom. This research paper delves into Krishnamurti's philosophy, analyzing the concepts of freedom and love individually and exploring their interrelationship. The paper is divided into three main sections: the concept of freedom, the concept of love, and the relationship between freedom and love. The conclusion synthesizes these insights and highlights their relevance.

### Concept of Freedom

Krishnamurti asserts that freedom lies in understanding bondage, not merely escaping external or internal constraints that enslave the human mind. He questions whether we truly seek complete freedom or merely freedom from specific undesirable conditions. He states, "When we talk about freedom, are we talking about complete freedom, or do we mean freedom from something unpleasant, painful, or unwanted? We want to be free from troubles, painful memories, and distressing experiences, but we cling to relationships, beliefs, and ideologies that give us pleasure. How can we be free from one while holding onto the other?"

It is impossible, as we have seen, to separate pleasure from pain." Humans seek freedom from what causes suffering, distress, or trouble. Krishnamurti challenges whether freedom from something is true freedom, arguing that the desire to be free from something is merely a reaction that leads to further reactions. For instance, wanting to be free from a religious institution, ideology, or belief does not constitute true freedom, as it is a reaction and, therefore, a form of bondage.

Humans often treat freedom as an ideal, creating a gap between the ideal and the self striving to achieve it. When freedom is idealized, it leads to a duality between the concept of freedom and the individual pursuing it. This pursuit involves effort and adherence to a method, which Krishnamurti argues cannot lead to freedom. He explains that an ideal of freedom is constructed when one becomes aware of their bondage, creating a division between the ideal and the seeker. This pursuit is futile, as ideals are mere imaginations, while bondage is a fact. He states, "All contradictions arise from within; ideals are a reaction to 'what is,' and the struggle to achieve ideals is like flapping wings uselessly in the cage of thought. No freedom can come through this conflict, no human liberation. Without freedom, there can be no happiness; and freedom is not an ideal, nor can freedom be achieved through any method." He emphasizes that freedom is the first step and must exist from the beginning, not as a destination or goal. Future freedom has no reality; it is merely a thought. True freedom lies in perceiving 'what is'—the present reality—without the interference of past or future.

Krishnamurti asserts that freedom cannot be attained through any method, as methods are tied to outcomes, which are rooted in the future and connected to the past. The past shapes the present and projects the future, rendering methods incapable of delivering freedom, as they are bound to the known. Discipline, often seen as a means to freedom, also creates bondage. Krishnamurti states, "Freedom is not an ultimate goal; it must be there from the very beginning, must it not? A disciplined, controlled mind is free only within its own boundaries, but that is not freedom. Discipline aims to conform to a pattern; it leads to the known, and the known is never free. Discipline, according

to Krishnamurti, does not lead to freedom but creates another form of bondage. It involves an attempt to escape problems, but this effort perpetuates the conflict between 'what is' and 'what should be.' Even the desire for freedom becomes a form of bondage. He explains, "The mind cannot free itself, for any effort to be free weaves another net in which it will be trapped again. Freedom is not the opposite of anything; to be free is not to be free from something, not to escape bondage. The desire to escape creates its own bondage. Freedom is a state of being that does not arise from the desire to be free."

Krishnamurti questions whether freedom is related to choice, which is often equated with freedom. He argues that choice arises from confusion, stating, "When do you choose? Only when you are confused, when you are not certain. When there is clarity, there is no need for choice." Confusion stems from thought, which is limited by experience and knowledge. Since thought is limited, choices made through thought are also limited, and limitation is bondage. Thus, choice cannot be equated with freedom.

Krishnamurti concludes that freedom is not something to be attained or an escape from something; it is freedom in itself, found in understanding bondage. He states, "Freedom is not about escaping the net; it is in the absence of the net. Freedom from something is not freedom; it is merely a reaction, the opposite of bondage. Freedom lies in understanding bondage." This understanding requires perceiving the entire structure of the mind—conscious and unconscious—without division, in a state of choiceless awareness.

### Concept of Love

The word 'love' is used universally, yet the world seems devoid of it despite endless discussions. Literature is filled with stories, poems, and dialogues about love, yet cruelty, war, hatred, violence, and competition persist. In Indian philosophy, compassion (*karuna*) is emphasized, but love is rarely discussed explicitly. Krishnamurti offers a profound perspective on love, questioning its true nature and defining it by what it is not.

Love is commonly understood as a relationship involving mutual care and fulfillment of needs. It often involves expectations of reciprocity, possession, and emotional attachment, linked to pleasure and physical desires. Some distinguish between worldly and divine love. However, Krishnamurti presents a radically different view, describing love as an unknown state free from possession, dependency, and emotionality. Krishnamurti argues that when we say we love someone, it often implies possession or ownership. This sense of ownership leads to jealousy and fear when it is threatened. He states, "This bondage, this sense of possession, gives rise to jealousy, fear, and countless conflicts that stem from ownership. Surely, this possession is not love, is it?" Love rooted in possession creates a need to secure relationships legally or emotionally, driven by a fear of loss and emptiness. Krishnamurti asserts that love is not dependency. Dependency arises when one seeks happiness or relief from emptiness through another, leading to possession and conflict. He explains that dependency creates slavery, which breeds suffering, preventing true love. Krishnamurti distinguishes love from emotionality, arguing that emotions are a product of thought and not love. Emotional individuals prioritize their feelings and can be

easily provoked to hatred or violence. He states, "An emotional person can be incited to hatred, war, or slaughter. There is no love in the heart of an emotional person."

Love is often associated with memories and thoughts of a loved one, but Krishnamurti argues that thought, rooted in the past, cannot be love. He states, "When you are with a friend, you do not think about them; it is only in their absence that you recreate memories and experiences that are gone. Reviving the past is called love. For many, love means death, a denial of life; we live in the past, with the dead, and call it love." Love exists in the present, free from past memories or future expectations. Krishnamurti questions whether love involves suffering. He argues that suffering arises from the 'self'—the bundle of desires, memories, and experiences. As long as the 'self' exists, suffering persists, and where suffering exists, love cannot. He explains that understanding suffering, not through methods but through choiceless awareness, liberates one from it, allowing love to emerge.

### Relation between Freedom and Love

In Krishnamurti's philosophy, freedom and love are deeply interconnected, inseparable from one another. Freedom is the understanding of bondage, liberating the mind from internal and external enslavement, particularly from the 'self' or ego, which is tied to thoughts, memories, and desires. When one is free from the 'self,' they live in the present, unburdened by the past or future. This freedom gives rise to love, as love is only possible in the absence of the 'self.' Krishnamurti states, "Where there is love, there is no 'self.'" Love is an unknown state free from jealousy, possession, or dependency, where suffering and conflict cease.

The relationship between freedom and love is evident in their shared existence in the present. Freedom lies in perceiving 'what is' with choiceless awareness, and love manifests in the same awareness, where thought and the thinker dissolve. Without freedom, love is unattainable, as bondage breeds jealousy and fear, which obstruct love. Conversely, in the state of love, freedom is naturally attained, as love is free from demands and bondage. Thus, freedom is the foundation of love, and love is the fruition of freedom. In comparison with Indian philosophy, Krishnamurti's ideas expand on concepts like *moksha* and *karuna*, where liberation (freedom) gives rise to compassion (love).

### Conclusion

In Krishnamurti's philosophy, freedom and love are fundamental to human existence. Freedom lies in understanding bondage and perceiving 'what is,' while love emerges in the absence of the 'self.' Their interdependence reveals that love is impossible without freedom, and freedom remains incomplete without love. Freedom and love are inseparable, where freedom from the 'self' enables love to manifest, and love completes the state of freedom. These ideas not only align with Indian philosophical concepts but also offer solutions to modern human challenges, such as conflict, hatred, and imbalance, by fostering inner and societal peace. Future research could explore these concepts in comparison with other philosophies, potentially opening new avenues for applying Krishnamurti's insights practically.

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