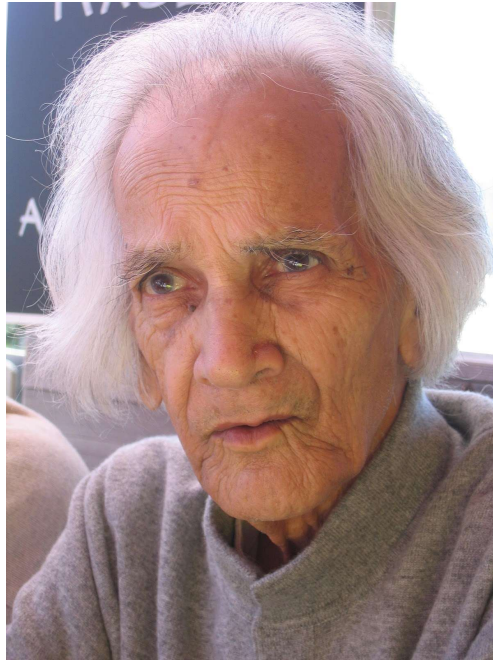


## Remembering U.G. Krishnamurti



U.G. Krishnamurti, lovingly called UG by his friends and admirers all over the world, is no more. The end came on 22 March 2007 at 2.30 pm at the villa of his friend, in Vallecrosia, Italy. As per UG's advice, with no rituals or funeral rites, the cremation was carried out the next day at 2.45 pm, in Vallecrosia, Italy. He was eighty-nine years old. UG is survived by his erstwhile family, comprising his two daughters, Usha and Bharati, and their respective families and his son, Kumar and his family. But his actual family is much larger than that, extending over the entire globe and consisting of numerous 'friends' to whom he has been closer than their own families and indeed their own selves.

Seven weeks before, UG had a fall and injured himself. This was the second such occurrence in two years. He did not want such an incident to occur once again which would make him further dependent on his friends for his daily maintenance. So he refused medical or other external intervention. He decided to let his body take its own natural course. He was confined to bed and his consumption of food and water became infrequent and then ceased altogether. 'It's time to go,' he declared, joined his palms in *namaste*, thanked his friends and advised them to return to their places. Only his longtime friends, the filmmaker, Mahesh Bhatt, Larry and Susan Morris, and few other friends stayed back to guard his body and do whatever was

necessary when the end came. UG did not die of any disease, although he suffered from 'cardio-spasm' for many years, which became quite severe in the last days of his life.

UG did not show the slightest signs of worry or fear about death or concern for his body even at the end of his life. He did not leave any specific instructions as to how to dispose of his dead body. 'You can throw it on the garbage heap, as far as I am concerned,' he often would say.

Responding to questions on death, UG said, 'Life and death cannot be separated. When what you call clinical death takes place, the body breaks itself into its constituent elements and that provides the basis for the continuity of life. In that sense the body is immortal.'

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UG was born on 9 July 1918, in a Telugu-speaking Brahmin family in Masulipatam, a coastal town in the state of Andhra Pradesh. He lost his mother when he was seven days old and was brought up by his maternal grandfather, who was a noted, wealthy lawyer and a prominent member of the Theosophical Society. UG grew up in a peculiar milieu of Theosophy and orthodox Hindu religious beliefs and practices. Even as a boy he was a rebel yet brutally honest with whatever he did.

He did his schooling in the town of Gudivada and then his B.A. Honours Course in Philosophy and Psychology at Madras University. But the study of the various philosophical systems and Western psychology made very little impression on him. 'Where is this mind these chaps have been talking about?' he once asked his Psychology teacher. It was something extraordinary coming from a student who was hardly twenty years old, particularly when Freud's ideas were considered to be the last word on human mind.

Between 14 and 21 years of age, UG spent seven years off and on with Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh practicing yoga and meditation. He had various mystical visions and experiences there, but he questioned their validity as he thought that he could recognize them only on the basis of his prior knowledge he already had about them.

In 1939, when UG was 21 years of age, he went and met Sri Ramana Maharshi and asked him, 'This thing called *moksha*, can you give it to me?' Ramana reply, 'I can give

it, but can you take it?' struck him like a 'thunderbolt' and set him up on a relentless search for truth that ended at the age of 49 with a totally unforeseen result.

After leaving the university, UG joined the Theosophical Society as a lecturer and toured the country giving talks on Theosophy. Even after his marriage to Kusuma Kumari in 1943, he continued to work with the Theosophical Society and gave lectures in European countries, until, in 1953, he realized that what he was doing was not something true to his real self and quit the post in disgust. After that, he met J. Krishnamurti, who was by then famous as an unconventional spiritual teacher. For two years, he met him now and again and got into fierce discussions on spiritual matters, but later on, he was to reject JK's philosophy, calling it a 'bogus chartered journey.'

During this period, UG also underwent a life-altering, mystical experience, what he sometimes called a 'death experience'. But he 'brushed it all aside' as of no importance and moved on, further probing and testing and questioning every experience until he came into his own.

In 1955, UG went to America with his family to get medical treatment for his son's polio condition. When his resources began to diminish, he took to lecturing for a fee. He gave talks on the major religions and philosophies of the world and soon came to be recognized as a fine teacher from India. But, as it happened before, at the end of the second year, he lost interest in lecturing and then the inevitable happened. His seventeen years of marriage came to an end. His wife returned to India with the children. And UG drifted from one thing to another. After his aimless wanderings in London and Paris, like a dry leaf blown here, there and everywhere, he landed in Geneva and at last found refuge in Valentine de Kerven's chalet in Saanen. By then incredible experiences had started to happen to him and his body was 'like rice chaff burning inside'. It was a prelude to his 'clinical death' on his forty-ninth birthday (in 1967) and the beginning of the most incredible bodily changes and experiences that would catapult him into a state that is difficult to understand within the framework of our hitherto known mystical or enlightenment traditions. For seven days, seven bewildering physical changes took place and he landed in what he calls the 'Natural State'. It was a cellular revolution, a full-scale biological mutation.

In 1972, UG gave his first public talk at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore. He never again gave any public talk. But he did not/could not stop people from meeting and talking to him. He responded to their queries and answered their questions in the way only he could. He usually stayed with friends or in small rented apartments, but never stayed in one place for more than six months. He gave no lectures or discourses. He had no organization, no office, no secretary, and no fixed address. Despite his endless repetition that he had 'no message for mankind,' ironically yet naturally thousands of people the world-over felt otherwise and flocked to see and listen to his 'anti-teaching'. The first book, *The Mystique of Enlightenment—The unrational ideas of a man called UG*, put together by Rodney Arms, appeared in 1982. In 1986, he went public and gave his first TV interview, which was soon to be followed by several TV and radio interviews the world over. And UG made publishing history by not allowing copyright on any of his books saying, 'My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, distribute, interpret, misinterpret, distort, garble, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my consent or the permission of anybody.'

In the last seven years during his stay in Bangalore, he rarely engaged in serious conversations; rather he started to do something else other than answer tiresome questions, for he found all questions (except in the technical area, which is something else) were variations of basically the same question revolving around the ideas of 'being' and 'becoming'. There used to be long stretches of utter silence. It used to be embarrassing; also a tremendous relief from the burden of knowing. And then UG would start playing his enigmatic little 'games', or invite friends to sing, dance, or share jokes. And the room would explode with laughter: funny, silly, dark, and apocalyptic! At last freed from the tyranny of knowledge, beauty, goodness, truth, and God, we would all mock and laugh at everything, mock heroes and lovers, thinkers and politicians, scientists and thieves, kings and sages, including UG and ourselves!

Who was this UG? What kind of person was he? He was the most enigmatic person you could ever meet – at once kind and cruel, most loving yet stern, constantly talking about money, seeming to 'extract' it from friends, yet most generous in giving; seemingly abusive and punishing, yet showering affection on the same person the next moment; utterly carefree, yet worrying about what might happen to the person in front of him; directing people to act in specific ways, yet instantly accepting of any outcome; demonstrating the most incisive logic, yet making utterly

contradictory statements. For a man who complained that we are constantly preoccupied with something other than what is happening at the moment, he endlessly talked about himself and his past. One could never fathom UG's true intentions behind his statements or actions.

His answers to our questions came straight like arrows, unsettling our minds. He was well-known for striking down not only the edifices we have so carefully built in our own minds but the foundations of human thought as a whole. UG was truly enigmatic, subversive and revolutionary, and totally fearless.

There was a unique energy with UG: in speech or in stillness it was constant and vibrant, and had a profound effect on those who were around him.

And let this be told: when UG rejected the notion of soul or atman and declared that our search for permanence was the cause of our suffering, he sounded like the Buddha; when he blasted all spiritual discourses as 'poppycock' and thrashed the spiritual masters as 'misguided fools', we thought of the fiery and abusive words of the great 9<sup>th</sup> century mystic of China, Rinzai Gigen, who declared, 'I have no dharma to give... There is no Buddha, no Dharma, no training and no realization...' When he spoke of 'affection' as 'thuds' felt in the spot where the thymus gland is located, we related it to Sri Ramana's declaration that the 'true heart' is located on the right side of the chest. Likewise we sometimes connected his radical statements to certain expressions or declarations in the *Avadhuta Gita*, *Ashtavakra Gita*, the Upanishads and Zen Koans, or compared them with the teachings of J. Krishnamurti, Nisargadatta Maharaj and even the post-modern 'deconstructionists'. We could go on thus, making such connections and comparisons, but that did not help us to get a handle on the mystery that was UG!

That mystery, that enigma, is no more. Once, a couple of years back, when Mahesh Bhatt had asked him, 'UG, how would you like to be remembered?' UG had said, 'After I am dead and gone, nothing of me must remain inside of you or outside of you. I can certainly do a lot to see that no establishment or institution of any kind mushrooms around me whilst I am alive. But how do I stop all you guys from enshrining me in your brains?'

UG Says  
Quotable Quotes

I have no teaching. There is nothing to preserve. Teaching implies something that can be used to bring about change. Sorry, there is no teaching here, just disjointed, disconnected sentences. What is there is only your interpretation, nothing else. For this reason there is not now nor will there ever be any kind of copyright for whatever I am saying. I have no claims.

There is no teaching of mine, and never shall be one. "Teaching" is not the word for it. A teaching implies a method or a system, a technique or a new way of thinking to be applied in order to bring about a transformation in your way of life. What I am saying is outside the field of teachability; it is simply a description of the way I am functioning. It is just a description of the natural state of man -- this is the way you, stripped of the machinations of thought, are also functioning.

My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, distribute, interpret, misinterpret, distort, garble, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my consent or the permission of anybody.
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My interest is to point out to you that you can walk, and please throw away all those crutches. If you are really handicapped, I wouldn't advise you to do any such thing. But you are made to feel by other people that you are handicapped so that they could sell you those crutches. Throw them away and you can walk. That's all that I can say. 'If I fall....' - that is your fear. Put the crutches away, and you are not going to fall.

People call me an 'enlightened man' -- I detest that term -- they can't find any other word to describe the way I am functioning. At the same time, I point out that there is no such thing as enlightenment at all. I say that because all my life I've searched and wanted to be an enlightened man, and I discovered that there is no such thing as enlightenment at all, and so the question whether a particular person is enlightened or not doesn't arise. I don't give a hoot for a sixth-century-BC Buddha, let alone all the other claimants we have in our midst. They are a bunch of exploiters, thriving on the gullibility of the people. There is no power outside of man. Man has created God out of fear. So the problem is fear and not God.

The natural state is not the state of a self-realized God-realized man, it is not a thing to be achieved or attained, it is not a thing to be willed into existence; it is there -- it is the living state. This state is just the functional activity of life. By 'life' I do not mean something abstract; it is the life of the senses, functioning naturally without the interference of thought. Thought is an interloper, which thrusts itself into the affairs of the senses. It has a profit motive: thought directs the activity of the senses to get something out of them, and uses them to give continuity to itself.

God is the ultimate pleasure, uninterrupted happiness. No such thing exists. Your wanting something that does not exist is the root of your problem. Transformation, *moksha*, liberation, and all that stuff are just variations on the same theme: permanent happiness.

All your experiences, all your meditations, all your prayer, all that you do, is self-centred. It is strengthening the self, adding momentum, gathering momentum, so it is taking you in the opposite direction. Whatever you do to be free from the self also is a self-centred activity.

There is nothing there, only your relative, experiential data, your truth. There is no such thing as objective truth at all. There is nothing which exists outside or independent of our minds.

Mind or thought is not yours or mine. It is our common inheritance. There is no such thing as your mind and my mind (it is in that sense mind is a myth). There is only mind, the totality of all that has been known, felt and experienced by man, handed down from generation to generation. We are all thinking and functioning in that thought sphere just as we all share the same atmosphere for breathing.

You have been told that you should practice desirelessness. You have practiced desirelessness for thirty or forty years, but still desires are there. So something must be wrong somewhere. Nothing can be wrong with desire; something must be wrong with the one who has told you to practice desirelessness. This (desire) is a reality; that (desirelessness) is false – it is falsifying you. Desire is there. Desire as such can't be wrong, can't be false, because it is there.

Human nature is basically violent, because thought is violent. Anything that is born out of thought is destructive. You may cover it up with all wonderful and romantic phrases: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Don't forget that in the name of 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' millions and millions of people have died, more than in all the recent wars put together. But we now have come to a point where we can realize that violence is not the answer, that it is not the way to solve human problems. So, terror seems to be the only way. I am not talking of terrorists blowing up churches, temples, and all that kind of thing, but the terror that if you try to destroy your neighbour you will possibly destroy yourself. That realization has to come down to the level of the common man.

The real problem is the solution. Your problems continue because of the false solutions you have invented. If the answers are not there, the questions cannot be there. They are interdependent; your problems and solutions go together. Because you want to use certain answers to end your problems, those problems continue. The numerous solutions offered by all these holy people, the psychologists, the politicians, are not really solutions at all. That is obvious. They can only exhort you to try harder, practice more meditations, cultivate humility, stand on your head, and more and more of the same. That is all they can do. If you brushed aside your hope, fear, and naiveté, and treated these fellows like businessmen, you would see that they do not deliver the goods, and never will. But you go on and on buying these bogus wares offered up by the experts.

I can never sit on a platform and talk. It is too artificial. It is a waste of time to sit and discuss things in hypothetical or abstract terms. An angry man does not sit and talk and converse pleasantly about anger; he is too angry. So don't tell me that you are in crisis, that you are angry. Why talk of anger? You live and die in the hope that someday, somehow, you will no longer be angry. You are burdened with hope, and if this life seems hopeless, you invent the next life. There are no lives to come.

My interest is not to knock off what others have said (that is too easy) but to knock off what I am saying. More precisely, I am trying to stop what you are making out of what I am saying. This is why my talking sounds contradictory to others. I am forced by the nature of your listening to always negate the first statement with another statement. Then the second statement is negated by a third and so on. My aim is not



some comfy dialectical thesis but the total negation of everything that can be expressed.

### TELLING IT LIKE IT IS:

A messiah is the one who leaves a mess behind him in this world.

Religions have promised roses but you end up with only thorns.

Going to the pub or the temple is exactly the same; it is quick fix.

The body has no independent existence. You are a squatter there.

God and sex go together. If God goes sex goes, too.

All experiences however extraordinary they may be are in the area of sensuality.

Man cannot be anything other than what he is. Whatever he is, he will create a society that mirrors him.

Love and hate are not opposite ends of the same spectrum; they are one and the same thing. They are much closer than kissing cousins.

Gurus play a social role, so do prostitutes.

By using the models of Jesus, Buddha, or Krishna we have destroyed the possibility of nature throwing up unique individuals.

It would be more interesting to learn from children, than try to teach them how to behave, how to live and how to function.

All I can guarantee you is that as long as you are searching for happiness, you will remain unhappy.

You eat not food but ideas. What you wear are not clothes, but labels and names.

The plain fact is that if you don't have a problem, you create one. If you don't have a problem you don't feel that you are living.

That messy thing called 'mind' has created many destructive things. By far the most destructive of them all is God.

Atmospheric pollution is most harmless when compared to the spiritual and religious pollution that have plagued the world.

Nature is busy creating absolutely unique individuals, where as culture has invented a single mold to which all must conform. It is grotesque.

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