

Does thought lead to understanding?

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Abstract: Thought, for ages, has been seen as a tool for survival. Ayn Rand too in her philosophy of Objectivism has laid enormous emphasis on the role of thought as she says " Thought is the only tool gifted to the man for his survival and that separates us from the animals."

Going beyond survival, man has always sought liberation from the known. He has forever pursued the unknown and tried to comprehend the spirit in search of permanence. This sought out the state of enlightenment would free man from all the suffering of this world and so has been widely observed in Indian mythology too. Can thought lead to complete understanding is the issue to be discussed?

Key Words: Thoughts, Understanding, Enlightenment, Awakening, Actualisation, Irrational, Insights.

1. INTRODUCTION:

In the Philosophy of J Krishnamurti, a lot has been emphasised on the complete understanding and comprehension of the known as this would lead one to be in a free state. The freedom from the known would help one drop the known and understanding is the only way to be there. This understanding would be the result of complete perception and there is no role that thought can play for one to arrive at that state of awakening. Why do one that gives so much importance to thought and thinking become the only path towards the truth?

2. DISCUSSIONS:

A lot has been thought over the worthiness and applicability of thought. So much so that it is now also perceived as an instrument for research under the domain of science. Less has been done to understand the nature and limitation of thought. What role does thought play in our day to day life and how can it be instrumental in fulfilling the higher-order needs of Man.

Let us ponder over a cardinal issue relating to the thought, whether it leads to human understanding, insight, awareness and awakening.

We humans have relied upon thought to a phenomenal extent to survive. Once the fundamental needs are met, one tries to fulfil higher-order needs and uses thought to accomplish that need of actualisation. One wonders if thought can be a vehicle to enlightenment. Thought has been the source of misery and escaping from the pain has been the challenge, humans could not succeed to deal within 40000 years of existence. As J Krishnamurti pointed that "Thought cannot solve any human problems, for thought itself is the problem", one wonders if the use of thought can bring around that transformation, that awakening and a complete mutation that one aspires for, under the umbrella of spirituality.

Thought can lead to intellectual understanding and higher the intelligence, higher is this understanding. Can a complete intellectual comprehension birth insight? Thought can be a tool to conduct more rational thinking but can rationality lead to awakening or a complete understanding of life? One further needs to questions the rationality of life. If life itself is irrational, how can logic or rationale by way of thought arrive at its comprehension? How can the rationality and its elevation make one perceive irrationality?

The thought is never new as it is born out of the experience, which itself is limited. The human experience recorded by memory gives rise to the thought which further leads to action. Action, in turn, cultivates experience and this vicious circle continues. Man gets caught in this web and seeks liberation using a theory or a philosophy which again is born out of this very thought which was limited. As the experience is limited, the vastness of life cannot be comprehended by limited thought.

A huge industry prospers on the network of thought, with spirituality as a banner and salvation or enlightenment as a concept that is branded and sold using the channels of communication. The word is not the thing. How can one thus connect with the "thing" using the words? The best cookery book is no substitute for the worst cook dinner. Still, one falls prey to the verbal articulation and gets caught in the web of words. Higher the intellect, higher is the level of abstraction. This leads one to make more use of the word to formulate a theory and a concept which is known real and serves the purpose of intellectual stimulation.

Similarly, thinking about sex has become a problem whereas sex was never a problem. Thinking about money and any other thing too becomes a problem. The thought has an enormous power to convert everything into a problem. Still one cannot free oneself from thought using the thought, or any conscious effort that is nothing but a thought.

Prejudice has something in common with ideals, beliefs and faiths. One must be able to think together; but our prejudices, our ideals and so on, limit the capacity and the energy required to think, to observe and examine together so as to discover for oneself what lies behind all the confusion, misery, terror, destruction and tremendous violence in the world. To understand, not only the mere outward facts that are taking place but also the depth and the significance of all this, one should be able to observe together. That observation, that examination, is prevented if we cling to our prejudices, to our particular experiences and our particular comprehension. Thinking together is tremendously important because one has to face a world that is rapidly disintegrating, degenerating, a world in which there is no sense of morality, where nothing is sacred, where no one respects another. To understand all this, not only superficially, casually, one has to enter into the depths of it, into what lies behind it. One has to enquire why it is that after all these thousands of years of evolution, the whole world, has become so violent, callous, destructive, enduring wars and the atomic bomb. The technological world is evolving more and more; perhaps that may be one of the factors causing the man to become like this. Can we think together, not according to anyone's way, but simply using the capacity to think.

Any effort to stop the thought from functioning leads to dulling of the mind. The role and design of the mind are to think. Can one let the mind perform its role without interference and let it work like a perfect dynamo which would be noiseless? In such a case, both thoughtfulness and thoughtlessness would become meaningless.

If thought is energy and energy is the matter, then the thought being matter cannot meet the spirit. Thought and its by-products like logic, analysis, diagnosis, rational and so on are nothing but sources of entertainment that do not qualify for any worship or higher order of hierarchical supremacy. The whole entertainment industry revolves around fulfilling the vacuum that could not be filled by a lack of insight.

Why does then one seek the spiritual awakening using thought? If one can see this paradox, one can drop it. Only the right perception of this process may generate an insight which would not be thought but away from it. Then thought becomes an entity which can be used to survive and not to arrive.

3. CONCLUSIONS:

Thought can be an instrument to survive but it has no value when it comes to awakening or understanding. One may use thought to intellectually comprehend the known but in order to go beyond the known, the thought has to be dropped. One needs to figure out the limitation of thought on his walk of life and when the time has matured to discard it. Thought cannot germinate an insight however it can help in internal rationalisation.

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Inputs from various learned men and women in my earlier life, subconsciously contributed to my evolvment and naming them individually over here would be practically difficult. I feel that consciousness had arranged for us to meet so that the bigger purpose of life would be fulfilled. I surrender my 'self' to that consciousness which not only brought people in my life but spirits a swell embodied and personified as humans too.

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