

# When intelligence awakens

WHAT IS THE  
TYPE OF  
INTELLIGENCE  
THAT FLOWERS  
AS WE COME  
CLOSER TO  
ENLIGHTEN-  
MENT?

by Suma Varughese



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**A**wakening of intelligence is a term very familiar to the readers of J. Krishnamurti. When we achieve the level of choiceless awareness or enlightenment, intelligence will flower, he tells us. But somehow he never explains what this intelligence is. Typical of Krishnamurti, he veils it in such abstract language that it defies penetration. Does one's IQ suddenly shoot up dramatically? Do you stand a chance at the Mastermind quiz programme? Do you suddenly win a Nobel Prize in science?

No, that's not the intelligence Krishnamurti talks about. Although he renounced all received wisdom vigorously, there is in Vedanta a concept that is akin to what he means. Vedanta distinguishes the intellect (buddhi) from the mind (manas). As long as the mind holds sway we are at the mercy of our emotions and impulses which means that our actions are rarely in our or the others' highest welfare. For instance, imagine getting into a quarrel with your fiancé and breaking off the engagement. It is an emotional impulse which you may regret, but the deed is done.

Think of the number of times when emotion led us into actions and words that we later regret. Fear, for instance, can lead us into the most irrational of actions. Fear of flying, for instance, may lead us to take a train even if our presence is urgently required leading to disastrous consequences. I read somewhere that a warring couple were divorcing and the judge had decreed that their assets should be equally divided. So determined was the man to ensure that she got as little as possible that he sold his \$10,000 car for \$250 and gave her half of it. We do this sort of thing all the time. Just so our colleague does not get a chance to get a promotion we mess up the joint project we are supposed to be doing together and blot our own record. All this is a dreadful betrayal of intelligence. Manas also controls us through desire. Even though we know that we will regret it, we cannot stop seeming to chase women, or alcohol

or whatever. Manas makes us prioritise desire over duty. Instead of studying, we watch a movie. We blow up the rent money on drinks and a good time.

Procrastination is another manas control game. Even though we know we will regret it and subject ourselves later to tremendous pressure, we put off preparing for that presentation and chill instead. Instead of filing our income tax on time we delay and delay and end up paying the late fee.

When the manas is in control, we also prefer short-term solutions to long-term ones, which are often injurious. For instance, in the short-term there is no reason at all why we should not live on biryani and pizzas for the rest of our lives. It is only in the long term that the consequences of such action becomes clear. Or why we should not use up our natural resources in wasteful living. Or why we should not throw away relationships like so much waste paper. Manas operates through impulses and rapid action emotions and when we are in its grip we lack the calm or composure to look into consequences. Therefore we are reckless, uncaring of where our actions take us, because we cannot see the road ahead.

It is only when our mind slows down that greater awareness becomes possible. Slowly, the buddhi awakens. Now we learn to think before we act, because acting is no longer so perilously swift. We take action that has favourable consequences, and that safeguards our welfare and that of others. When caught up in a confrontation with a partner or friend, we do not utter the hurtful thoughts that occur to us. Instead we listen to what they have to say and genuinely work on resolving the problem. When the buddhi takes over, the personal becomes less imperative. There is always space for the other person's point of view. Decisions and actions are consciously taken, with a full grasp of consequences. Buddhi enables us to be mature and wise. Perhaps that is as good a definition of intelligence as any. ☉