

U. G. Krishnamurti

*The Mystique
of Enlightenment*

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—U.G.^[1]

The Mystique of Enlightenment **The unrational ideas of a man called U.G.**

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1. [↑](#) Krishnamurti, U. G. (2002). *The Mystique of Enlightenment: The Radical Ideas of U. G.* Sentient Publications. pp.168 pages. ISBN:0971078610.

Part One **U.G.**

(Compiled from conversations in India and Switzerland, 1973 to 1976)

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.

I discovered for myself and by myself that there is no self to realize — that's the realization I am talking about. It comes as a shattering blow. It hits you like a thunderbolt. You have invested everything in one basket, self-realization, and, in the end, suddenly you discover that there is no self to discover, no self to realize — and you say to yourself "What the hell have I been doing all my life?!" That blasts you.

All kinds of things happened to me — I went through that, you see. The physical pain was unbearable — that is why I say you really don't want this. I wish I could give you a glimpse of it, a touch of it — then you wouldn't want to touch this at all. What you are pursuing doesn't exist; it is a myth. You wouldn't want anything to do with this.

UG: You see, I maintain that — I don't know, whatever you call this; I don't like to use the words 'enlightenment,' 'freedom,' '*moksha*' or 'liberation'; all these words are loaded words, they have a connotation of their own — this cannot be brought about through any effort of yours; it just happens. And why it happens to one individual and not another, I don't know.

Questioner: So, it happened to you?

UG: It happened to me.

Q: When, Sir?

UG: In my forty-ninth year.

But whatever you do in the direction of whatever you are after — the pursuit or search for truth or reality — takes you away from your own very natural state, in which you *always* are. It's not something you can acquire, attain or accomplish as a result of your effort — that is why I use the word 'acausal'. It has no cause, but somehow the search come to an end.

Q: You think, Sir, that it is not the result of the search? I ask because I have heard that you studied philosophy, that you were associated with religious people ...

UG: You see, the search takes you away from yourself — it is in the opposite direction — it has absolutely no relation.

Q: In spite of it, it has happened, not because of it?

UG: *In spite* of it — yes, that's the word. All that you do makes it impossible for what already is there to express itself. That is why I call this 'your natural state'. You're always in that state. What prevents what is there from expressing itself in its own way is the search. The search is *always* in the wrong direction, so *all* that you consider very profound, *all* that you consider sacred, is a contamination in that consciousness. You may not (Laughs) like the word 'contamination', but all that you consider *sacred, holy* and *profound* is a contamination.

So, there's nothing that you can do. It's not in your hands. I don't like to use the word 'grace', because if you use the word 'grace', the grace of whom? You are not a specially chosen individual; you deserve this, I don't know why.

If it were possible for me, I would be able to help *somebody*. This is something which I *can't give*, because you *have* it. Why should I give it to you? It is ridiculous to ask for a thing which you already have.

Q: But I don't feel it, and you do.

UG: *No*, it is not a question of feeling it, it is not a question of knowing it; you will never *know*. You have no way of knowing that at all for yourself; it begins to express itself. There is no conscious.... You see, I don't know how to put it. Never does the thought that I am different from anybody come into my consciousness.

Q: Has it been so from the beginning, ever since you became conscious of yourself?

UG: No, I can't say that. I was after something — like anybody else brought up in the religious atmosphere — searching for something, pursuing something. So, to answer that question is not easy, because I'll have to go into the whole background. Maybe it comes, I don't know. (Laughs)

Q: Just out of curiosity, like Nachiketa, I am very interested in knowing how these things have happened to you personally, to the extent you are aware of.

UG: You see, that's a long story; it's not so simple.

Q: We would like to hear it.

UG: No, you see, I will have to tell you about my whole life — it will take me a long time. My life story goes up to a point, and then it stops — there is no more biography after that.

The two biographers who are interested in writing my biography have two different approaches. One says that what I did — the *sadhana* (spiritual exercises), education, the whole background — put me there. I say it was in spite of all that. (Laughter) The other biographer isn't much interested in my statement 'in spite of', because there isn't much material for him to write a big volume. (Laughter) They are more interested in that. The publishers too are interested in that kind of thing. That is very natural because you are operating in a field where the cause and effect relationship always operates — that is why you are interested in finding out the cause, how this kind of a thing happened. So, we are back where we started, square number one: we are still concerned with 'how'.

My background is *worthless*: it can't be a model for anybody, because your background is unique. Every event in your life is something unique in its own way. Your conditions, your environment, your background — the whole thing is different. Every event in your life is different.

Q: I don't seek a model to give to the rest of the world — I'm not asking from that angle. We see a star, we see the sun, we see the moon — it is like that; not that I would like to imitate you. It may be relevant, who knows? That is why I said I am Nachiketa here: I don't want to leave without knowing the truth from you.

UG: You need a Yama Dharmaraja to answer your questions.

Q: If you don't mind, you be Yama Dharmaraja.

UG: I don't mind. Help me. You see, I'm helpless, I don't know where to begin. Where to end, I know. (Laughter) I think I will have to tell the whole story of my life.

Q: We don't mind listening.

UG: It doesn't come.

Q: You need to be inspired.

UG: I am not inspired, and I am the last person to inspire anybody. I will have to tell you, to satisfy your curiosity, the other side, the shoddy side of my life.

(He was born 9 July 1918 in South India into an upper-middle-class Brahmin family. The family name being Uppaluri, he was given the name Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti. His mother died soon after his birth, and he was brought up by his maternal grandparents in the small town of Gudivada near Masulipatam.)

I was brought up in a very religious atmosphere. My grandfather was a very cultured man. He knew Blavatsky (the founder of the Theosophical Society) and Olcott, and then, later on, the second and third generation of Theosophists. They all visited our house. He was a great lawyer, a very rich man, a very cultured man and, very strangely, a very orthodox man. He was a sort of mixed-up kid: orthodoxy, tradition on one side, and then the opposite, Theosophy and the whole thing, on the other side. He failed to establish a balance. That was the beginning of my problem.

(UG was often told that his mother had said, just before she died, that he "was born to a destiny immeasurably high." His grandfather took this very seriously and gave up his law practice to devote himself to UG's upbringing and education. His grandparents and their friends were convinced that he was a *yoga bhrashta*, one who had come within inches of enlightenment in his past life.)

He had learned men on his pay-roll, and he dedicated himself, for some reason — I don't want to go into the whole business — to create a profound atmosphere for me and to educate me in the right way, inspired by the Theosophists and the whole lot. And so, every morning those fellows would come and read the Upanishads, *Panchadasi*, *Nyshkarmya Siddhi*, the commentaries, the commentaries on commentaries, the whole lot, from four o'clock to six o'clock, and this little boy of five, six or seven years — I don't know — had to listen to all that crap. So much so that by the time I reached my seventh year I could repeat most of those things, the passages from the *Panchadasi*, *Nyshkarmya Siddhi* and this, that and the other. So many holy men visited my house — the Ramakrishna Order and the others; you name it, and those fellows had somehow visited that house — that was an open house for every holy man. So, one thing I discovered when I was quite young was

that they were all hypocrites: they said something, they believed something, and their lives were shallow, *nothing*. That was the beginning of my search.

My grandfather used to meditate. (He is dead, and I don't want to say anything bad about him.) He used to meditate for one or two hours in a separate meditation room. One day a little baby, one and a half or two years old, started crying for some reason. That chap came down and started beating the child, and the child almost turned blue — and this man, you see, meditating two hours every day. "Look! What is this he has done?" That posed a sort of (I don't want to use the psychological term, but there is no escape from it) a traumatic experience — "There must be something funny about the whole business of meditation. Their lives are shallow, empty. They talk marvelously, express things in a very beautiful way, but what about their lives? There is this neurotic fear in their lives: they say something, but it doesn't operate in their lives. What is wrong with them?" — not that I sat in judgement over those people.

Things went on and on and on, so I got involved with these things: "Is there anything to what they profess — the Buddha, Jesus, the great teachers? Everybody is talking about *moksha*, liberation, freedom. What is that? I want to know for myself. These are all useless fellows, yet there must be some person in this world who is an embodiment and apostle of all those things. If there is one, I want to find out for myself."

Then so many things happened. There was one man called Sivananda Saraswati in those days — he was the evangelist of Hinduism. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty- one (I am skipping many of the unnecessary events) I used to go there and meet him very often, and I did everything, all the austerities. I was so young, but I was determined to find out if there was any such thing as *moksha*, and I wanted that *moksha* for myself. I wanted to prove to myself and to everybody that there cannot be any hypocrisy in such people — "These are all hypocrites" — so I practiced yoga, I practiced meditation, studied everything. I experienced every kind of experience that the books talked about — *samadhi*, *super-samadhi*, *nirvikalpa samadhi*, everything. Then I said to myself "Thought can create *any* experience you want — bliss, beatitude, ecstasy, melting away into nothingness — all those experiences. So, this can't be the thing, because I'm the same person, mechanically doing these things. Meditations have no value for me. This is not leading me anywhere."

Then, you see, sex became a tremendous problem for me, a young human boy: "This is something natural, a biological thing, an urge in the human body.

Why do these people all want to deny this sex and suppress something very natural, something which is part of the whole thing, in order to get something else? This is more real, more important to me than *moksha* and liberation and all that. This is a reality — I think of gods and goddesses and I have wet-dreams — I have this kind of a thing. Why should I feel guilty? It's something natural; I have no control over this kind of thing happening. Meditation has not helped me, study has not helped me, my disciplines have not helped me. I never touch salt, I never touch chilies or any spices." Then one day I found this man Sivananada eating mango pickles behind closed doors — "Here is a man who has denied himself everything in the hope of getting something, but that fellow cannot control himself. He is a hypocrite" — I don't want to say anything bad about him — "This kind of life is not for me."

Q: Between your fourteenth and twenty-first year, you say, you felt a great urge for sex. Did you marry then?

UG: No, I didn't rush; I allowed that. I wanted to experience the sex urge: "Suppose you don't do anything, what happens to that?" I wanted to understand this whole business: "Why do I want to indulge in these auto-eroticisms? I don't know anything about sex — then, why is it that I have all kinds of images of sex?" This was my inquiry, this was my meditation; not sitting in lotus posture or standing on my head. "How am I able to form these images?" — I never went to a movie, I never looked at, you know, now you have all kinds of posters — "How is it? This is something inside, not put in from outside. The outside is stimulating — stimulation comes from outside. But there is another kind of stimulation from inside — this is more important to me. I can cut out all that external stimulation successfully, but how can I cut out this from inside?" I wanted to find this out.

And then, I was also interested in finding out what this sex experience was. Although I myself had not experienced sex, I seemed to know what that sex experience was like. This went on and on and on. I did not rush to have sex with a woman or anything; I allowed things to happen in their own way. That was a time when I didn't want to marry. My aim was to become an ascetic, a monk, and all that kind of thing — not marriage — but things happened and I said to myself "If it is a question of satisfying your sex urge, why not marry? That is what society is there for. Why should you go and have sex with some woman? You can have a natural expression of sex in marriage."

I arrived at a point when I was twenty-one where I felt very strongly that all teachers — Buddha, Jesus, Sri Ramakrishna, everybody — kidded themselves, deluded themselves and deluded everybody. This, you see, could not be the

thing at all — "Where is the state that these people talk about and describe? That description seems to have no relation to me, to the way I am functioning. Everybody says "Don't get angry" — I am angry all the time. I m full of brutal activities inside, so that is false. What these people are telling me I should be is something false, and because it is false it will falsify me. I don't want to live the life of a false person. I am greedy, and non-greed is what they are talking about. There is something wrong somewhere. This greed is something real, something natural to me; what they are talking about is unnatural. So, something is wrong somewhere. But I am not ready to change myself, to falsify myself, for the sake of being in a state of non-greed; my greed is a reality to me." I lived in the midst of people who talked of these things everlastingly — everybody was false, I can tell you. So, somehow, what you call 'existentialist nausea' (I didn't use those words at the time, but now I happen to know these terms, revulsion against everything sacred and everything holy, crept into my system and threw everything out: "No more *slokas*, no more religion, no more practices — there isn't anything there; but what is here is something natural. I am a brute, I am a monster, I am full of violence — this is reality. I am full of desire. Desirelessness, non-greed, non-anger — those things have no meaning to me; they are false, and they are not only false, they are falsifying me." So I said to myself "I'm finished with the whole business," but it is not that simple, you see.

Then somebody came along, and we were discussing all these things. He found me practically an atheist (but not a practicing atheist), skeptical of everything, heretical down to my boots. He said "There is one man here, somewhere in Madras at Tiruvannamalai, called Ramana Maharshi. Come on, let's go and see that man. Here is a living human embodiment of the Hindu tradition."

I didn't want to see any holy man. If you have seen one, you have seen them all. I never shopped around, went around searching for people, sitting at the feet of the masters, learning something; because everybody tells you "Do more and more of the same thing, and you will get it." What I got were more and more experiences, and then those experiences demanded permanence — and there is no such thing as permanence. So, "The holy men are all phonies — they are telling me only what is there in the books. That I can read — 'Do the same again and again' — that I don't want. Experiences I don't want. They are trying to share an experience with me. I'm not interested in experience. As far as experience goes, for me there is no difference between the religious experience and the sex experience or any other experience; the religious

experience is like any other experience. I am not interested in experiencing *Brahman*; I am not interested in experiencing reality; I am not interested in experiencing truth. They might help others; but they cannot help me. I'm not interested in doing more of the same; what I have done is enough. At school if you want to solve a mathematical problem, you repeat it again and again — you solve the mathematical problem, and you discover that the answer is in the problem. So, what the hell are you doing, trying to solve the problem? It is easier to find the answer first instead of going through all this."

So, reluctantly, hesitatingly, unwilling, I went to see Ramana Maharshi. That fellow dragged me. He said "Go there once. Something will happen to you." He talked about it and gave me a book, *Search in Secret India* by Paul Brunton, so I read the chapter relating to this man — "All right, I don't mind, let me go and see." That man was sitting there. From his very presence I felt "What! This man — how can he help me? This fellow who is reading comic strips, cutting vegetables, playing with this, that or the other — how can this man help me? He can't help me." Anyway, I sat there. Nothing *happened*; I looked at him, and he looked at me. "In his presence you feel silent, your questions disappear, his look changes you" — all that remained a story, fancy stuff to me. I sat there. There were a lot of questions inside, silly questions — so, "The questions have not disappeared. I have been sitting here for two hours, and the questions are still there. All right, let me ask him some questions" — because at that time I very much wanted *moksha*. This part of my background, *moksha*, I wanted. "You are supposed to be a liberated man" — I didn't say that. "Can you give me what you have?" — I asked him this question, but that man didn't answer, so after some lapse of time I repeated that question — "I am asking 'Whatever you have, can you give it to me?'" He said, "I can give you, but can you *take* it?" Boy! For the first time this fellow says that he has something and that I can't take it. Nobody before had said "I can give you," but this man said "I can give you, but can you take it?" Then I said to myself "If there is any individual in this world who can take it, it is me, because I have done so much *sadhana*, seven years of *sadhana*. He can think that I can't take it, but I can take it. If I can't take it, who can take it?" — that was my frame of mind at the time — you know, (Laughs) I was so confident of myself.

I didn't stay with him, I didn't read any of his books, so I asked him a few more questions: "Can one be free sometimes and not free sometimes?" He said "Either you are free, or you are not free at all." There was another question which I don't remember. He answered in a very strange way: "There are no

steps leading you to that." But I ignored all these things. These questions didn't matter to me — the answers didn't interest me at all.

But this question "Can you take it?" ... "How arrogant he is!" — that was my feeling. "Why can't I take it, whatever it is? What is it that he has?" — that was my question, a natural question. So, the question formulated itself: "What is that state that all those people - - Buddha, Jesus and the whole gang — were in? Ramana is in that state — supposed to be, I don't know — but that chap is like me, a human being. How is he different from me? What others say or what he is saying is of no importance to me; anybody can do what he is doing. What is there? He can't be very much different from me. He was also born from parents. He has his own particular ideas about the whole business. Some people say something happened to him, but how is he different from me? What is there: *What is that state?*" — that was my fundamental question, the basic question — that went on and on and on. "I must find out what that state is. Nobody can give that state; I am on my own. I have to go on this uncharted sea without a compass, without a boat, with not even a raft to take me. I am going to find out for myself what the state is in which that man is." I wanted that very much, otherwise I wouldn't have given my life.

Q: This giving-taking business, I don't understand.

UG: I can't say anything about what he meant when he said "I can give it, but can you take it?" but in a way that helped me to formulate my own question. You see, if somebody were to ask me a similar question now, I would say there isn't anything to get from anybody. Who am I to give it to you? You have what I have. We are all at 25 Sannidhi Street, and you are asking me "Where is 25 Sannidhi Street?" I say you are there. Not that I know I am there. This wanting to know where you are — you are asking that question.

(UG says he never again visited Ramana or any of "those religious people," and never again touched any religious book except to study for his philosophy examinations.)

Then my real search began. All my religious background was there in me. Then I started exploring. For some years I studied psychology and also philosophy (Eastern and Western), mysticism, all the modern sciences — everything, the whole area of human knowledge, I started exploring on my own. The search went on and on and on, and "What is that state?" was my question, and the question had an intensity of its own. So, "All this knowledge doesn't satisfy me. Why read all this?" Psychology was one of my subjects for a Master's degree — unfortunately, at that time it was part of our syllabus. I