Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH & REVIEWS

journal homepage: www.ijmrr.online/index.php/home

CHOICELESS AWARENESS AND ETHICAL TRANSFORMATION: A CRITICAL STUDY OF JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI'S PHILOSOPHY

Sanjoy Kumar Roy

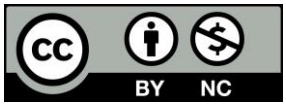
Designation: Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Krishnaguru Adhyatmik Visvavidyalaya, Barpeta , Assam-781307, India.
Mail ID: office@kav.ac.in

How to Cite the Article: Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.



https://doi.org/10.56815/ijmrr.v5i10.2026.91-98

Keywords	*Abstract*
Choiceless Awareness, Ethical Transformation, Self-Knowledge, Observer and Observed, Psychological Freedom, Human Consciousness.	The philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti offers a distinctive understanding of human awareness, self-knowledge and ethical transformation. Unlike conventional approaches to morality, which frequently depend upon established religious beliefs, social conventions, prescribed values and external authority, Krishnamurti emphasises the importance of direct observation and the understanding of oneself. According to him, genuine ethical transformation cannot be achieved merely through intellectual knowledge, external discipline or conformity to established moral standards. Rather, it emerges through an immediate understanding of the psychological processes of thought, fear, desire, attachment and conditioning. The present paper critically examines the relationship between choiceless awareness and ethical transformation in Krishnamurti's philosophy. It explores the meaning and nature of awareness, the relationship between the observer and the observed, the significance of self-knowledge and the possibility of psychological freedom. Particular attention is given to Krishnamurti's argument that the division between the observer and the observed creates psychological conflict and prevents the individual from understanding the total movement of consciousness. The paper further analyses how choiceless awareness may contribute to freedom from



The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

	psychological conditioning and bring about a fundamental transformation in human conduct and relationships. The study adopts descriptive, analytical and critical methods, primarily based on Krishnamurti's philosophical writings. It argues that his conception of ethics is not primarily a system of externally imposed rules but an inward transformation rooted in awareness, intelligence, compassion and freedom. The paper concludes that Krishnamurti's philosophy provides an important perspective for reconsidering the foundations of ethical life and the possibility of a conflict-free human existence.

1. Introduction

Ethics occupies an important position in philosophical inquiry because it concerns the nature of human conduct, moral responsibility, values and the foundations of a meaningful human life. Traditionally, ethical theories have attempted to establish principles and standards through which human actions can be evaluated as right or wrong. Different philosophical traditions have approached morality through reason, duty, virtue, religious teachings, social responsibilities and the pursuit of human welfare. However, the question of whether external moral principles alone can bring about a fundamental transformation in human behavior remains significant.

In this context, the philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895–1986) presents a distinctive approach to ethical life. He questions the conventional understanding of morality that depends upon authority, tradition, imitation and conformity. According to Krishnamurti, human beings often live under the influence of psychological conditioning, accumulated experiences, beliefs, fears and social influences. These factors shape human thought and behavior and frequently become sources of conflict in individual and social relationships.

Krishnamurti argues that genuine transformation begins with the understanding of oneself. For him, self-knowledge is not merely the accumulation of information about one's personality or psychological characteristics. It is a continuous process of observing the movement of thought, feeling, desire, fear and reaction as they arise in everyday life.

His concept of choiceless awareness is particularly significant in this regard. It refers to an observation of oneself and one's surroundings without immediate judgement, condemnation, comparison or identification. Such awareness makes it possible to understand psychological processes without escaping from or suppressing them.

The central concern of this paper is to examine how choiceless awareness becomes a foundation for ethical transformation in Krishnamurti's philosophy. It attempts to establish that ethical transformation, in his understanding, is not merely a change in outward behavior but a fundamental transformation in the structure of human consciousness.

2. Meaning and Nature of Choiceless Awareness

Awareness is one of the central concepts in Krishnamurti's philosophy. It refers to an attentive understanding of what is taking place within oneself and in the surrounding world. It involves observing thoughts, emotions, reactions and relationships without immediately attempting to control,

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

justify or condemn them.Ordinary human observation is generally influenced by past experiences, memories, prejudices and expectations. When an individual observes something, the mind often interprets it through previously acquired knowledge. Consequently, what is observed is not always understood as it actually exists; rather, it is understood through the limitations of accumulated psychological experience.

Krishnamurti challenges this habitual pattern of observation through his concept of choiceless awareness. Choiceless awareness means observing without selecting, rejecting, comparing or evaluating according to predetermined psychological standards. It does not mean the absence of intelligence or discrimination in practical life. Rather, it indicates freedom from psychological judgment that prevents the direct understanding of oneself. For example, when an individual experiences anger, the ordinary response may be to condemn it, justify it or suppress it. Such reactions may prevent the individual from understanding the actual causes and movement of anger. In contrast, choiceless awareness involves observing anger as it arises, including its psychological causes and consequences, without immediately identifying oneself with it or attempting to escape from it.

Thus, awareness is not a mechanical exercise or a particular technique of concentration. It is a quality of attentive observation in which the individual becomes conscious of the total movement of thought and feeling. Krishnamurti's understanding of awareness therefore suggests that the beginning of transformation lies in seeing things clearly rather than imposing an externally determined pattern upon the mind.

3. The Relationship between the Observer and the Observed

One of the most significant philosophical contributions of Krishnamurti is his examination of the relationship between the observer and the observed. He questions the commonly accepted assumption that the observer exists as an independent entity separate from what is being observed. According to Krishnamurti, the observer is largely constituted by accumulated memories, experiences, beliefs, knowledge and psychological conditioning. Therefore, when an individual observes anger, fear, jealousy or desire, the observer is not entirely separate from these psychological movements. For instance, when a person says, "I am angry," there appears to be a distinction between the person who experiences anger and the emotion itself. However, Krishnamurti asks whether this division is actually real or merely created by thought.

He suggests that the observer and the observed are fundamentally connected because the observer is itself part of the psychological process being observed. The observer is the accumulated past, and the observed emotion is also understood through that past. This division creates an internal conflict between what an individual is and what the individual believes ought to be. The individual attempts to overcome anger, jealousy or fear through an ideal of what should exist. However, the struggle between the actual psychological condition and the ideal condition may perpetuate conflict rather than bring about understanding.

The recognition of the observer as the observed becomes significant because it removes the artificial division between the individual and the psychological movement taking place within consciousness. This understanding does not imply passive acceptance of every emotion or behaviour. Rather, it

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

suggests that genuine understanding requires direct observation without psychological interference. Consequently, the insight into the relationship between the observer and the observed becomes an important foundation for freedom from inner conflict and ethical transformation.

4. Self-Knowledge and Psychological Freedom

Self-knowledge occupies a central position in Krishnamurti's philosophical understanding of human transformation. He maintains that the understanding of oneself is essential for understanding human relationships and the wider social structure. Generally, knowledge is understood as the accumulation of information, facts and experiences. However, Krishnamurti distinguishes between accumulated knowledge and the direct understanding of the psychological self.

Self-knowledge, in his philosophy, involves observing the entire movement of one's consciousness, including thoughts, desires, ambitions, fears, attachments and contradictions. It is not a fixed body of knowledge that can be acquired once and permanently possessed. Rather, it is a continuous process of understanding oneself through everyday experiences and relationships. For Krishnamurti, the individual is deeply conditioned by family, society, religion, culture, education and accumulated experiences. These influences shape identity and determine patterns of thinking and behaviour. As a result, individuals often respond to situations mechanically rather than through direct understanding.

Psychological freedom becomes possible when an individual begins to recognize and understand these conditioned responses. Freedom, therefore, is not simply the freedom to choose between different alternatives. It also involves freedom from the psychological limitations created by fear, attachment, imitation and dependence on authority. Krishnamurti's conception of freedom is closely connected with awareness because the understanding of conditioning is possible only through attentive observation. Thus, self-knowledge is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is an essential condition for understanding the psychological roots of conflict and bringing about a transformation in human life.

5. Awareness and Ethical Transformation

The relationship between awareness and ethics constitutes the central philosophical concern of the present study. Conventional morality frequently emphasises obedience to established rules, social expectations and external standards of conduct. Although such principles may provide social order, Krishnamurti questions whether conformity alone can bring about genuine ethical transformation.

According to him, outward discipline does not necessarily transform the inner structure of human consciousness. An individual may follow moral rules while continuing to experience jealousy, hatred, greed, ambition and psychological conflict.Therefore, he emphasises the importance of inward transformation rather than mere external conformity.

Ethical transformation begins when individuals become aware of the psychological roots of their actions. When a person observes greed, for example, without justification or condemnation, the individual may begin to understand the movement of desire and its relationship with insecurity, comparison and attachment. Similarly, awareness of fear may reveal how fear influences human relationships, decisions and behavior. Such understanding is important because ethical conduct cannot be separated from the psychological condition of the individual.

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

In Krishnamurti's philosophy, genuine ethical life is associated with intelligence, compassion, love and freedom. These qualities cannot be produced merely through imitation or the mechanical acceptance of moral instructions. He suggests that when the mind is free from psychological conditioning and self-centred conflict, relationships can become more harmonious and compassionate.Therefore, ethical transformation is not simply a movement from one set of moral rules to another. It is a fundamental change in the way an individual understands oneself, others and the world.

6. Freedom from Fear, Conflict and Conditioning

Fear is one of the major psychological obstacles to human freedom and ethical living. It influences individual thought, relationships and behaviour in numerous ways. Fear may arise from insecurity, uncertainty, social comparison, attachment, failure, rejection and the desire for psychological security. Krishnamurti argues that fear is closely connected with the movement of thought and time. Human beings frequently carry memories of past experiences and project them into the future. Consequently, psychological fear often emerges through the relationship between memory, thought and anticipation. For example, the fear of failure may influence an individual's decisions and relationships even before an actual failure occurs. Similarly, fear of losing social recognition or personal security may encourage competition, jealousy and self-centered behavior.

Krishnamurti does not suggest that fear can be overcome merely through positive thinking or suppression. Instead, he emphasises understanding fear through direct awareness.When fear is observed without escaping from it, the individual may begin to understand its psychological structure. Such observation can reveal the relationship between fear, thought, attachment and the desire for security.

Freedom from psychological conditioning is therefore essential for ethical transformation. As long as human beings remain governed by unconscious patterns of fear, ambition and attachment, their actions may continue to generate conflict. In this sense, awareness provides the possibility of a different quality of human existence based on understanding rather than psychological compulsion.

7. Compassion, Love and Human Relationships

Krishnamurti's understanding of ethics is also closely associated with compassion and love. He questions whether genuine love can exist where there is psychological attachment, possessiveness, jealousy and dependence. Human relationships are frequently influenced by expectations, personal interests, insecurity and the desire for emotional satisfaction. Such relationships may create conflict because individuals often approach others through their own psychological demands.

Krishnamurti suggests that the understanding of oneself is inseparable from the understanding of relationships. Relationships act as a mirror through which individuals can observe their own reactions, attachments, expectations and insecurities. When an individual becomes aware of these psychological movements, there is an opportunity to understand the nature of possessiveness and self-centered behavior. Compassion, in this context, is not simply an intellectual acceptance of moral responsibility. It emerges from a deeper understanding of oneself and others. Similarly, love cannot be reduced to an externally prescribed moral duty. It represents a quality of relationship in which fear, possessiveness

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

and psychological domination do not determine human interaction. Therefore, compassion and love are important ethical dimensions of Krishnamurti's philosophy because they indicate the possibility of relationships based on freedom, understanding and mutual respect.

8. Critical Analysis and Philosophical Significance

Krishnamurti's philosophy of awareness and ethical transformation presents a significant challenge to conventional approaches to morality. His emphasis on direct observation and self-knowledge shifts the discussion of ethics from externally imposed moral principles to the psychological foundations of human conduct.

One of the important contributions of his philosophy is the recognition that outward behavioral change may not necessarily indicate inward transformation. An individual may demonstrate socially acceptable conduct while remaining psychologically governed by fear, jealousy, ambition and attachment. His approach therefore encourages a deeper examination of the relationship between consciousness and ethical behavior.

Another significant aspect is his rejection of psychological dependence on authority. By questioning the role of tradition, imitation and established beliefs, Krishnamurti encourages individuals to examine the foundations of their own thinking. However, his philosophical position also raises certain critical questions.

First, if ethical transformation emerges through individual awareness, how can a society establish common standards of justice, responsibility and social accountability? Individual awareness may contribute to better relationships, but social institutions also require publicly understandable principles and procedures.

Second, Krishnamurti's rejection of psychological choice and judgment requires careful interpretation. Practical ethical life often involves making distinctions between harmful and beneficial actions. Therefore, choiceless awareness should not be understood as the rejection of all practical judgment or moral responsibility.

Third, the concept of awareness raises questions concerning how psychological transformation can be understood and evaluated. Since Krishnamurti does not present a systematic ethical theory with fixed principles, the relationship between awareness and concrete moral decisions requires further philosophical examination.

Nevertheless, these questions do not diminish the significance of his contribution. Rather, they provide opportunities for critically examining his understanding of consciousness, freedom and ethical life. His philosophy is particularly relevant in contemporary society, where competition, materialism, psychological insecurity and social conflict continue to influence human relationships. Krishnamurti's emphasis on self-understanding and inward freedom provides an alternative perspective for reconsidering the foundations of ethical living.

9. Conclusion

The present study has examined the relationship between choiceless awareness and ethical transformation in Jiddu Krishnamurti's philosophy. It has explored the significance of awareness, the

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

observer and the observed, self-knowledge, psychological freedom, fear, conditioning, compassion and human relationships.

The analysis indicates that Krishnamurti understands ethical transformation as a fundamental change in human consciousness rather than merely the adoption of externally established moral principles. According to his philosophy, genuine transformation becomes possible when individuals observe their psychological movements without judgment, comparison, suppression or escape.

The understanding of the observer as the observed challenges the conventional division between the individual and the psychological processes taking place within consciousness. Similarly, self-knowledge provides an opportunity to understand the influence of conditioning, fear, attachment and desire on human behavior. The study further suggests that compassion, love and freedom are closely connected with the transformation of consciousness. Ethical life, therefore, is not merely a matter of following prescribed rules but involves understanding the psychological roots of human actions and relationships. Although Krishnamurti's approach raises important questions concerning the relationship between individual awareness and collective moral responsibility, his philosophical contribution remains significant for contemporary ethical inquiry.

Ultimately, his philosophy suggests that the transformation of society is deeply connected with the transformation of the individual. Choiceless awareness provides the possibility of understanding oneself, overcoming psychological conflict and developing a more compassionate and responsible way of living.

Thus, awareness is not simply a psychological phenomenon but an essential dimension of ethical transformation in Krishnamurti's philosophy.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

The writers affirm that they have no connections to, or engagement with, any group or body that provides financial or non-financial assistance for the topics or resources covered in this manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

All authors declare that any kind of violation of plagiarism, copyright and ethical matters will take care by all authors. Journal and editors are not liable for aforesaid matters.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The authors received no financial aid to support for the research.

REFERENCES

Krishnamurti, J. (1954). The First and Last Freedom. New York: Harper.

Krishnamurti, J. (1964). Think on These Things. New York: Harper & Row.

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License

Sanjoy Kumar Roy (2026). Choiceless Awareness and Ethical Transformation: A Critical Study of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Philosophy. International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Reviews, 5(10), 91-98.

Krishnamurti, J. (1969). Freedom from the Known. New York: Harper & Row.

Krishnamurti, J. (2013). The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti, Volume IV: The Observer Is the Observed (1945–1948). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Krishnamurti, J. (2013). The Collected Works of J. Krishnamurti, Volume V: Choiceless Awareness (1948–1949). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

Lutyens, M. (1990). The Life and Death of Krishnamurti. London: John Murray.

Shakuntala. (2015). Rethinking: Philosophy of Jiddu Krishnamurti. Guwahati: Pranjal Kumar Mahanta.

The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercia 4.0 International License