

Module 6 : Jiddu Krishnamurti

Section 8 : Education

Krishnamurti's ideas of education are very instructive. His preference for an unconditioned mind keeps him as a lone candidate who stood for the sake of freedom and who advocated it to be the freedom from the known. He established schools in Europe and in America as well as in India. His schools mould his ideas into practice. He says that:

Since the times of ancient Greece and ancient India, schools have been places where you learn. Learn where there is leisure. Please go with me a little bit. But you cannot learn if you have no leisure –that is, time to yourself, time to listen to others, time to inquire. Such a place is a school⁵⁵.

Krishnamurti says that the modern schools all over the world are simply cultivating only one part of the brain. This part of the brain is engaged in the acquisition of knowledge, technology, science biology, theology and the like. This is a kind of knowledge which we can call as the outer knowledge. It will be useful to earn a livelihood. But this is not to the liking of Krishnamurti. He established his own schools to be entirely different. He wanted to make the students to inquire much more deeply. It is a kind of cultivation of an understanding into the whole psychological structure of human beings⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ J. Krishnamurti, *Meeting Life*, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Madras , 1991 Page 93-94

⁵⁶ Ibid., Page 94

Generally students enter the school in a conditioned status. But Krishnamurti aims at cultivating a mind, a brain that is holistic which will enable us to acquire knowledge for action in the world, without neglecting the psychological nature of man. It becomes the most important part of Krishnamurti's schools. Ordinarily the schools in general will train the student to earn a livelihood. But in Krishnamurti's schools not only this but has another aim also. It is to cultivate the human mind to face far deeper and greater problems of life. Here in these schools of his ideal type love rules and inspires. Such schools will make the students to grow into noble adolescents under the fostering care of teachers who feel greatness of their vocation. Krishnamurti had written a book titled "**Education as Service**". The title itself shows his ideas of Education. In his book "**Commentaries on Living**" he expresses his dissatisfaction over the present education system. Krishnamurti was aghast at the two world wars. He saw the defective education system which drove the people of the world to such wars of violence and aggression. He writes:

"The modern education system is a failure, as it has produced two devastating wars and appalling misery, learning to read and write and acquiring various techniques, which is the cultivation of memory, is obviously not enough, for it has produced unspeakable sorrow. What do you consider to be the end purpose of education?"⁵⁷

⁵⁷ *Commentaries on Living, Second Series*, Edited by D. Rajagopal, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Page 46

He says that the aim of education shall be to bring out an individual who is well integrated. He calls such an individual an integrated human being.

But this involves another conflict. It is the conflict of the importance. This importance is of the individual and the society. Who is important in this kind of integration? Is it the individual who shall live for the purpose of society? Or is it the society which shall live for the purpose of the individual? The following ideas will be implied by such an argument. He writes:

If society needs and uses the individual for its own purposes, then it is not concerned with the cultivation of an integrated human being; what it wants is an efficient machine, a conforming and respectable citizen, and this requires only a very superficial integration.

As long as the individual obeys and is willing to be thoroughly conditioned, society will find him useful and will spend time and money on him.

But if society exists for the individual, then it must help in freeing him from its own conditioning influence. It must educate him to be an integrated individual⁵⁸.

⁵⁸ Page 47

Krishnamurti thinks that education is necessary to face life really. And our education shall be the right education. We may come across the question. Who is this integrated human being? And what is that which Krishnamurti calls as the integration?

To answer that question one must approach it negatively, obliquely; one cannot consider its positive aspect⁵⁹.

And he also tells that to try positively, to state of this integration becomes only the creation of a pattern, a mould, an example to be imitated. But imitation is not really the integration. In fact it is the disintegration.⁶⁰

But if we try to know further the factors of such disintegration we can see that discipline becomes one such factor.

Imagination has no place in meditation; it must be completely set aside, for the mind caught in imagination can only breed the light of that clarity the timeless is revealed⁶¹.

⁵⁹ Page 47

⁶⁰ Page 47

⁶¹ *Commentaries on Living*, Third Series Edited by D. Rajagopal, Krishnamurti Foundation India Madras, 1996. Page 12

Krishnamurti thinks that our search for the permanent comes out of our aversion towards the impermanent. We require a comfort in the ideal of the permanent. But this ideal has taken its birth from the impermanency. There will be a pain existing through the constant change. To come out of this pain we have developed the idea of the permanent being. This becomes the ideal. Krishnamurti says that:

The ideal is unreal, whereas the pain is real. But we do not seem to understand the fact of pain, and so we cling to the ideal, to the hope of painlessness⁶².

This leads to the development of a dual state of fact and ideal. This will become the endless conflict between what is and what should be. Our motive is to escape from this conflict. This is a kind of escape from what is. In that process we develop the idea of the permanent one which will give us the everlasting bliss. Because it has its birth in sorrow it becomes the very impermanent one. He says that the opposite will always give birth to the seed of its own opposite. And thus our search becomes an ineffective one. It is only the urge to escape from what is⁶³.

⁶² Ibid., Page 13

⁶³ Ibid., Page 13

This shows that we may wish to be free of the sorrow we had within us. But the immediate

question that will arise is "can the mind ever be free from sorrow?" This needs an enquiry. Krishnamurti writes:

To conclude that it can or that it cannot be free from sorrow is to put an end to all inquiry and understanding. We must give our complete attention to the understanding of sorrow, and we cannot do this if we are trying to escape from sorrow, or if our minds are occupied in seeking the cause of it. There must be total attention, and not oblique concern.⁶⁴

And he further feels that:

Then the mind is no longer seeking, no longer breeding conflict through its wants and cravings, when it is silent with understanding, only then the immeasurable come into being⁶⁵.

Krishnamurti denies the possibility to know the very nature of integrated human being positively. We have to know this human being in a negative manner. If we try to identify one being as the integral human being moulds one particular pattern or an example or that model to imitate. But this is not that integration which we think of generally. It is the disintegration. Such a kind of models which will be useful to copy and imitate cannot but be the modes of conformity. They cannot make us integral individuals but just will mould us as the conformists.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Page 14

⁶⁵ Ibid., page 14

Thus discipline is the first factor which imposes conformity upon us. It also carries with it Resistance, Opposition and Conflict. These are the general factors of disintegration. Discipline incorporates within us fear which compels us to behave in conformity with an ideal or authority. It will lead to the correlated question of anarchy also if we won't follow any discipline. Krishnamurti writes:

Understanding the false as the false, seeing the true in the false, and seeing the true as true, is the beginning of intelligence⁶⁶.

Krishnamurti advises us not to allow replacing fear with something else. It will not solve the problem. Fear will be there still surviving. He writes:

You may successfully cover it up or run away from it, but fear remains.

He affirms that it is the elimination of fear, and not the finding of a substitute for it, that is important⁶⁷.

Krishnamurti is very explanative here. He tries to describe fear in the following terms:

Discipline in any form whatsoever can never bring freedom from fear. Fear has to be observed, studied, and understood⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Page 48

⁶⁷ Ibid., Page 48

⁶⁸ Ibid. Page 48-49

Regarding fear in an educational sense Krishnamurti writes:

But how is one to be free from fear? In a class of many students, unless there is some kind of discipline--- or, if you prefer, hear—how can there be order?

By having very few students and the right kind of education⁶⁹

Krishnamurti expresses his opinions on the state sponsored education systems. He says that right kind of education is not possible with state mechanism. In his book Commentaries on Living Second Krishnamurti says:

This, of course is not possible as long as the State is interested in mass- produced citizens. The state prefers mass-education; the rulers do not want the encouragement of discontent, for their position would soon be untenable. The state controls education, it steps in and conditions the human entity for its own purposes; and the easiest way to do this is through fear, through discipline, through punishment and reward⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ Ibid., Page 49

⁷⁰ Ibid., Page 49

Krishnamurti considers that freedom from fear is different from fear itself. He writes:

Freedom from fear is another matter; fear has to be understood and not resisted, suppressed, or sublimated⁷¹.

Krishnamurti not only considers discipline as one of the factors of disintegration but reveals that conflict also as another factor of disintegration. But at the same time Krishnamurti sees the very essential nature of conflict in human life.

But conflict is essential, otherwise we should stagnate. Without striving there would be no progress, no advancement, no culture. Without effort, conflict, we would still be savages⁷².

He defines savagery in the following lines:

We are obviously savages when we kill thousands for some cause or other, for our country; killing another human being is the height of savagery.⁷³

⁷¹ Ibid., Page 49

⁷² Ibid., Page 49

⁷³ Ibid., Page 49

Krishnamurti enumerates the characteristics of this conflict which is a factor of disintegration.

1. Conflict is in every form; between husband and wife, between two groups of people with conflicting ideas, between what is and tradition, between what is and ideal, there should be, the future.
2. Conflict is inner and outer strife.
3. It exists at different levels of our existence. These levels are conscious levels and the unconscious levels.
4. Our life is a series of conflicts. Our life is a battle ground.
5. To understand the other person in a proper manner we shall have some peace but shall be not in conflict.
6. Creation can take place only when there is peace. Creation becomes possible in happiness.
7. Conflict will not help to be creative or to achieve creation.
8. Conflict is the constant struggle between what is and what should be. It is the struggle between thesis and antithesis.
9. Krishnamurti claims that we have accepted this conflict as the inevitable one. Finally it has grown up to the norm, the true. But it is not there.

We have already seen that Krishnamurti enumerated so many kinds of conflicts. Now he brings out a new kind of conflict. It is the conflict of learning. It is the conflict of learning how to do a thing, and how to acquire that technique. Learning involves a great deal of trouble and a good amount of pain.

Krishnamurti says that we can simply overcome that conflict through creation. Not only this. Krishnamurti says that to overcome this conflict the understanding of what actually exists is verily required. This particular what is can never be understood through the screen of an idea. This is never static. Our mind shall be free from our knowledge of our ideologies, of our own beliefs. And we shall not be bound to "a" particular conclusion. Conflict generally is separative and imposes on us exclusion. This generally becomes the factor of disintegration. And that finally leads to degeneration. Krishnamurti says in his commentaries on Living:

All ideas, belief, systems of thought, are separative, exclusive. Effort, conflict, cannot under any circumstances bring understanding, and so it is a degenerating factor in the individual as well as in society.

It is very interesting to note the ideas of Krishnamurti regarding the True and the False.

Everywhere in this world we come across facing different problems. This world appears to be chaotic and mad. We have to understand such a world where insurmountable number of conclusions, descriptions and analyses come from people. There are so many extra ordinary complex problems. Explanations were offered by experts, intellectuals, the holy gurus, the theologians, the priests. All these explanations testify their individual conditioning, their particular beliefs and so on. With confusion there will be the increase of sorrow. If we want more and more security or clarity we have to listen to what is offered by different kinds of men. All these men offer their explanations with respect to their condition and cultural context. They carry within them these formulae of thousands of years old. When we need a real and reawakened interest, these formulae will not allow us to do so. They generally offer some formulae to follow whereas Krishnamurti says:

Actuality is the daily living which has nothing whatever to do with concepts; that is the first thing to realize. One has to scrap completely all the formulas, all the methods; one has to rethink the whole thing anew; one can no longer be a Hindu, a Christian, a Buddhist, a Muslim⁷⁴.

⁷⁴ J. Krishnamurti, *Meeting Life*, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Madras , 1991 Page 124

Krishnamurti comes out with the observation that Living is a relationship. Formulae cannot do this. They fail to establish such a relationship. Living according to Krishnamurti becomes the daily contact with the daily sorrow, misery, loneliness, despair. This requires not the abstraction, not the brilliant articles written by clever writers. Ideologies will make our life shoddy conforming and meaningless. If we can realize that we are conditioned that will relieve us of this situation. And Krishnamurti feels:

What one has to do is to be aware of one's conditioning-just to know that one is conditioned, that one has been conditioned for centuries. If you do not realize this then you will continue to create great confusion, great misery, for others and for yourself.⁷⁵

Krishnamurti tries to put the question whether we know what is love? Krishnamurti feels that we really do not know what love is. We have grown to be clever only to be indifferent to the reality of nature, existence of misery and all such. Our competitive world in which we live now in our contemporary days will not allow us to express our love towards the other fellow beings. He simply observes the absence of love within us.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Page 124

He affirms that with the existence of love within us, which goes beyond the prejudicial separation of one from the other in the name of caste, race, sex, nation and class. He expresses his idea of love in the following words:

I mean by love, a quality of mind that knows no separation. You understand.⁷⁶

According to Krishnamurti this separation is the root of all conflicts. It will lead us to be envious, to be jealous, to be antagonistic, to desire power, position etc. All these qualities have developed due to our cleverness of this worldliness⁷⁷. Krishnamurti describes in the following words:

When there is separation between you and another, there is no relationship- though you may be married, have children, have sex- and when you feel separate from another you have no love, and without love you will not be able to solve the problems of this world or any problem with which you are faced.⁷⁸

Whether god exists or not is not the important question to Krishnamurti. Why you have no love becomes the fundamental question to Krishnamurti. As he says:

Love is not sentimental, or emotional, it has nothing whatsoever to do with devotion, or loyalty.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Page., Page 125

⁷⁷ Page., Page 125

⁷⁸ Page, Page 126

⁷⁹ Page , Page 126

He strongly opines that without this thing called love our life will be a sorrow, the unending grief. If at all there is any disorder in the society, it will be only due to the disorder within us. Order cannot be achieved through intellectual organization or through a plan. Nothing had ever been proved to be living with such a planning and organization throughout history. Every new plan failed because all these new plans were mere ideas built upon some kind of formulae, or built upon basing on a concept. Even it might be true that they have been developed depending upon some ideology. Here Krishnamurti thinks of the problem of existence. It is the daily torture of living, the daily misery, the daily confusion, the passing joy, the passing pleasure which is called life. He says that we cannot solve this thing called life without understanding it. He writes,

You cannot solve it without understanding it, which is to live it⁸⁰.

But to understand love we shall have an understanding of separation and relationship. We have to examine it actually. This examination shall not be an intellectual or a verbal examination. This we can do simply by observing our relationship with our better halves, our family members, our bosses and with our neighbors. We have to examine the possibility of going beyond this narrow and seperative existence.

Krishnamurti tries to emphasize the arts of seeing and listening. It is the art of how to look at a tree, how to look at the world in which we live, to look at sunset etc. It is the feeling of beauty.

⁸⁰ Page., Page 127

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