

Module 6 : Jiddu Krishnamurti

Section 7 : Freedom

Krishnamurti's ideas of freedom are very similar to the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore advocates a mind free from fear. Basically this might be the impulse existing as a motivating factor in the background. Krishnamurti says in the same manner,

Unless the mind is absolutely free from fear, every form of action brings about more mischief, more misery, and more confusion⁴².

Krishnamurti expects a total revolution, a revolution without violence, with love. What he expects is a fundamental change in the human psyche itself. This becomes possible only with a complete freedom. The meaning of the word freedom shall not be taken from the meaning provided by a dictionary. Often the word freedom misleads us. We try to use it in accordance to our own individual (tendencies, fancy, and political ends. It shall not be used like that. It carries with it an inward psychological meaning.

To know what is freedom and to understand freedom clearly we have to know something about learning as well as discipline. Learning doesn't mean that we hear something from a speaker and then we learn. **We may be using the speaker as a mirror to know something.** A speaker generally sits on a platform only to be convenient to speak to you. There is no authority in such positionality. We are in fact learning from the observation of our own psyches and ourselves. But freedom becomes the prerequisite to learn. Curiosity, intensity and passion to learn shall also exist. Without them it becomes impossible to learn. We shall keep at a distance prejudice, bias, likes and dislikes and condemnation. With the above qualities instead of learning we simply start to distort.

⁴² J. Krishnamurti, *Beyond Violence*, Krishnamurti Foundation in India, Chennai, 2005. Page 17

The word discipline in the same manner carries with it the meaning of learning from a person who knows what we have to learn well. When we lack that knowledge of a thing then only we try to learn. The word discipline implies following a person who knows it well. This becomes the general meaning of learning. That is, we try to know what is unknown to us from a person who knows it well. Krishnamurti says that we shall think in a somewhat different manner. We are learning not by learning from another, but by observing ourselves. It also requires discipline. It is not suppression, not an imitation, or conformity or even the adjustment. It is the sheer observation. Observation is itself the act of discipline. In this we had the mechanism of learning through observation. The act of learning becomes the discipline itself. In that act we use a lot of attention, good amounts of energy and the non-postponement or the immediate execution of that act.

As we have already seen Krishnamurti thinks that our minds shall be without fear. So we have to understand his ideas of fear also. Krishnamurti tries to explain this complex phenomenon of fear. He asks us to be free, absolutely free from fear. If we are not free from fear our acts will result in mischief, misery and confusion. We shall be free from fear not tomorrow, not yesterday, but today itself at this moment itself. To understand fear we have to understand gradualness. Our freedom from fear shall be a gradually cultivated thing. But such gradualness is not possible. Krishnamurti says that:

Either you are completely free of it, or not at all; there is no gradualness, which implies time—time not only in the chronological sense of that word, but also in the psychological sense⁴³.

⁴³ Ibid., Page 19

So we shall attempt to bring to an end to achieve such fearlessness slowly, gradually. But it is going to be the first difficulty we face. We will think of this difficulty in detail. If we consider that two affectionate people started to inquire into this problem whatever they can they have already done that. Whatever cannot be done, it can never be. It means that it is impossible. Interestingly Krishnamurti says that when we are concerned with that "impossibility of being free from it completely therefore what is "impossible becomes possible". Our problem here is confronting fear, the complex problem. History

shows that man was never free from this fear. To some extent only he might have been freed from fear. But he did achieve an escape. It is in the forms of entertainment, religion and through other means. These escapes are nothing but the avoidances of "what really is".

What is actually meant by the word, fear? We have already known that man was never free from this fear not only physically but inwardly also. Psychologically also he is not free from fear. Physical fears can be understood easily. Psychological fears are not that much simple to understand. To inquire even we shall have freedom to inquire. Denying to form an opinion or to have a dialectical analysis of the possibility of ending fear Krishnamurti asks us to consider the problem of physical fears first. They will naturally affect our psyches. In a dangerous situation there will be an instantaneous physical response. Can we call it as fear? We come across certain events now. Let us think that we have seen a precipice, or we have met a wild animal. Then let us assume that there is a response. Is this response the fear/ or is it intelligence? When we meet a snake we respond immediately in which existed our past experience as the response. It had given us an insight to be cautious and careful with that snake. And our psycho somatic response is immediate. It is a conditioned one. Here the question arises whether it is fear that made us to behave carefully or the intelligence that made us to respond carefully fulfilling the necessity of self-preservation.

Again we are having some painful past experience. That will also make us to fear. Is it going to be intelligence? The above phenomena may lead us to conclude that it might be an action of thought. And thus thought may be due to our memory. It may lead to a response of fear that it may happen again. Throughout these steps what we can clearly apprehend is that thought produces fear. These are the fears regarding, death, society, respectability, people's opinions regarding us, and the fear of darkness. All the above fears are psychological fears. Here we shall notice that we are not analyzing. Analysis and observation are different. In an analysis there will be the duality of analyzer and the thing analyzed. The analyzer becomes the fragment. All the others will be other fragments. In this process a fragment assumes the authority of the analyzer and performs analysis. That analyzer will act as a censor. He shall be fair and without any prejudice. Then only it works. In that process the analyzer thinks that he is having knowledge and he can perform the censoring. Thus it is very difficult to have a true picture in this process and it is not free from duality of the analyzer and the thing analyzed. It is not this much only. Time will also account in our analysis. This will involve analyzing bit by bit which will consume years even to analyze the whole thing with the condition that we are free and absolutely clear of all faults.

Such an act enumerates the following events. A fragment himself assumes the duty to analyze all the other fragments. He declares that he is going to analyze. Next there is the involvement of time. It takes the shape of some mental fiats like observing, criticizing, condemning, judging, evaluating and remembering.

The whole argument of Krishnamurti rests on the following ideas:

1. The society or the whole consists of parts or what he calls as fragments.
2. Nobody can assume the role of this whole.
3. Even though whole is the sum of these fragments, whole is none of these fragments.
4. One individual as the analyzer to analyze involves the contradiction.
5. It becomes only a projection or imagination.
6. All individual knowledge shall depend upon our past experiences like knowledge and evaluation.
7. Every individual (these fragments) forms a particular centre.
8. From this centre or with respect to these centers only our examination of the world takes shape.
9. These centers are nothing but the centers of fear, anxiety, greed, pleasure, despair, hope, dependency, ambition, and compassion.
10. All our thought or thinking acts shall proceed from and with respect to these centers only.
11. The center from which he assumed the charge of analysis becomes the center of many fragments.
12. As we are in a fragmented state one of the fragments within ourselves starts playing the role. This is not good. It is an absurd act.
13. In fact as the analyzer is the analyzed it becomes our delusion to think that we are analyzing all the others or the whole.
14. This is required to understand our deep rooted and secretly established fears.

It is very interesting to note that Krishnamurti assured his audience when once they follow his lecture in his lecture hall after completion of his lecture that they will feel freed of their burdens. He says:

You have to understand it completely, because when you leave this hall you must be free of it so that

you can live, enjoy and look at the world with different eyes; so that you can have your relationships no longer burdened with fear, with jealousy, with despair, so that you become a human being, not a violent, destructive animal.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ibid., Page 21

The duality of the analyzer and the analyzed cannot make it possible to assume such roles. This duality Krishnamurti identifies as the base of all conflicts.

Analysis involves time also. The duration of time may be equal to one life time. And this shows that Krishnamurti is not accepting the method of analysis. He asks us:

The mind must be completely free of the idea of analysis, because it has no meaning. You must see this not because the speaker says so, but by seeing the truth of the whole process of analysis⁴⁵.

We shall start now to examine fear itself as a whole. It is a look into the fear.

There is fear. There can be different causes for this fear. Fear is not an object. Fear exists with respect to something objective. It can be demonstrated or stated like this:

One is afraid of something; of the future, of the past, of not being able to fulfill, afraid of not being loved, of living a lonely, miserable life, of old age and death⁴⁶.

This fear exists hidden but it is recognizable in essence. Here Krishnamurti says that fear exists not in a particular form only, but in its totality. That is fear exists in its conscious as well as the hidden form.

Well it is very common with Krishnamurti to think in terms of opposites. Fear is painful non lovable, non livable. Pleasure is lovable and livable. In understanding this fear Krishnamurti seeks the understanding of pleasure also.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Page 22

⁴⁶ Ibid., Page 22

He says:

Because fear and pleasure go together. You cannot discard fear without an understanding of pleasure; they are two sides of one coin. So in understanding the truth about fear, you also understand the truth about pleasure. To want only pleasure and have no fear is an impossible demand. Whereas if you understand both, you would have quite a different appreciation, a different understanding of them. Which means that we have to learn about the structure and the nature of fear as well as of pleasure. You cannot be free of one and hold on to the other⁴⁷.

Life Krishnamurti says:

All life is an escape from fear. Your gods, your churches, your moralities are based on fear, and to understand that you have to understand how this fear comes about. You have done something in the past and you do not want another to find out; that is one form of fear. You are afraid of the future because you have no job, or you are frightened of something else. So you are afraid of the past, and you are afraid of the future. Fear comes when thought looks back to things that have happened in the past, or to events that may happen in the future⁴⁸.

Thought is responsible for this.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Page 23

⁴⁸ Ibid., Page 23

This is the last word Krishnamurti can say. Krishnamurti states the examples of the Americans who avoid thinking of death. Yet death is there in America. All our theories of resurrection, re-incarnation are nothing but the escape fictions (neurotic fictions) we have developed out of this fear of death and the senses of time, like yesterday and tomorrow also. They will be the brooding soils of these fears. The pleasures due to sunset, the movement of water, the brightness of light and its effect on water showing the image of bursting light, and when we move, the movement of trees along with our movement all are very delightful. When we want to have these pleasures of delight again and again we have to think of them again and again. From our memories we revisit them again. Thus thought breeds the soils of our mind with pleasure or fear. Hence, we can conclude beyond agreement or disagreement that thought is responsible.

It is a novel idea of Krishnamurti regarding freedom. For Krishnamurti thinks that freedom means freedom to take new paths, to begin new practices and to follow the timelessness and the eternal. To attain this freedom, knowledge and learning will become the obstacles. Krishnamurti writes in his book ***The First and Last Freedom***

A mind that is crowded encased in facts, in knowledge—is it capable of receiving something new, sudden, and spontaneous?⁴⁹

⁴⁹ J. Krishnamurti, ***The First and Last Freedom***, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Madras , 1998. Page 153-154

Krishnamurti did not satisfy himself with the known facts of life. He wanted to know the unknown. He strongly feels that knowledge contains only the facts of the known. It cannot provide us with the perfect knowledge of the still unknown, the totally new, and the completely unknown. To have an experience of that we shall keep or create some space to know the unknown. This unknown is supposed to exist beyond any kind of measure. He writes:

If your mind is crowded with the known, is there any space in it to receive something that is of the unknown?⁵⁰

Surely knowledge is always of the known; and with the known we are trying to understand the unknown, something which is beyond measure⁵¹.

Krishnamurti is not at all satisfied with such a kind of attempts. Such an attempt was considered by Krishnamurti as perversion. He stated:

But there is this extraordinary perversion taking place in the world at the present time; we think we shall understand if we have more information, more books, more facts, more printed matter⁵².

When we really attempt to know the unknown, the one that is beyond any kind of measure, the immeasurable, we shall eliminate whatever we had in the form of our knowledge. He writes:

The unknown can come into being only when the known is understood, dissolved, put aside⁵³.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Page 154

⁵¹ Ibid., Page 154

⁵² Ibid., Page 155

⁵³ Ibid., Page 155

Krishnamurti explains the phenomenon of our experience and our knowledge. We generally try to

translate (reduce) the content of our experience into the already known facts. These facts were named, tabulated and recorded into definite patterns of knowledge. Such knowledge becomes a hindrance to know the unknown. And learning of such knowledge is also another hindrance. But here Krishnamurti excludes the technical knowledge of the kind of driving a car, and running machinery like that. He thinks that such efficiency turns us efficient. Krishnamurti thinks that kind of knowledge which provides us with the required security we need. Such knowledge cannot make us truth seekers.

Krishnamurti is very particular of his idea on the discovery of Truth. He believes that there is no path to seek, to discover the Truth. He writes in his ***The First and Last Freedom***

You must enter the uncharted sea—which is depressing, which is not being adventurous. When you want to find something new, when you are experimenting with anything, your mind has to be very quiet, have I not? If your mind is crowded, filled with facts, knowledge, they act as an impediment to the new; the difficulty is for most of us that the mind has become so important, so predominantly significant, that it interferes constantly with anything that may be new, with anything that may exist simultaneously with the known⁵⁴.

Krishnamurti thus explains that knowledge and learning will become the obstruction or the impediment to know, to understand that which is timeless.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Page 155-156