

## CHAPTER – 12

### J. KRISHNAMURTI : EDUCATION AS CULTIVATION OF AWARENESS

#### I

J. Krishnamurti has a critique of our present of education and while giving his opinion on education and its significance of life, has disapproved the modern education and conventional education. Conventional education, according to him makes independent thinking extremely difficult. When we look around us, we see all the so-called educated people throughout the world wrangling, fighting, killing each other in wars. Enough scientific knowledge is there in the world to provide the people food, clothing and shelter for all human being, yet it is not done. The politicians and other leaders throughout the world are educated people and yet they have not created a world in which man can live happily. So, modern education is actually an utter moral failure.

Conventional education makes a man to become mad about his success. The urge to be successful puts an end to spontaneity and breeds fear; and fear blocks the intelligent understanding of life. This fear of life, this fear of struggle and of new experience, kills in us the spirit of adventure; our whole upbringing and education have made us afraid to be different from our neighbour, afraid to think contrary to the established pattern of society. We falsely pay respect to the authority and tradition.

But fortunately there are, though a few, people who are willing to examine our human problems without the prejudice of the right or of the left. It is a kind of spirit of discontent, or of revolt. Revolt may be of two kinds : there is violent revolt, which is mere reaction, without understanding, against the existing order. There are

many who revolt against the established orthodoxies only to fall into new orthodoxies, further illusions and concealed self-indulgences. They break away from one group or set of ideals and join another group, take up other ideals, thus creating a new pattern of thought against which we will again have to revolt. Reaction only breeds opposition, and reform needs further reform.

There is the deep psychological intelligent revolt which is not reaction, and which comes with self-knowledge through the awareness of one's own thought and feeling. It is only when we face experience as it comes and do not avoid problems and we keep intelligence highly awakened and intelligence highly awakened is intuition, which is the only true guide in life.

Krishnamurti believe that our life certainly have some significance. If we are being more inclined to achieve distinction, to get a better job, to be more efficient, to have wider domination over others then we shall loose the significance of our life and contribute to the destruction and misery of the world. We may be highly educated, but if we are without deep integration of thought and feeling, our lives are incomplete, contradictory and torn by many fears; and as long as education does not cultivate an integrated outlook on life, it has very little significance.

Our present civilization have divided life into so many departments that education has very little meaning, except in learning a particular technique or profession. Instead of awakening the integrated intelligence of the individual, modern education is encouraging him to conform to a pattern and so is hindering his comprehension of himself as a total process. When we attempt to solve many problems of existence at their respective levels, we indicate our utter lack of comprehension.

The individual is made up of different entities. Education should bring about the integration of these separate entities-for without integration, life becomes a series of conflicts and sorrows. And if life leads to violence and utter misery what is the point of our existence? As we have sufficient knowledge, technical and industrial capacity, it is better for us to use them for the betterment of human being so that we have our pleasures and proper living with an end of conflict.

The personal and the individual are to be distinguished according to Krishnamurti. The personal is the accidental; and by the accidental he meant the circumstances of birth, the environment in which men happen to have been brought up, with its nationalism, superstitions, class distinctions and prejudices. The personal or accidental is but momentary, though that moment may last a life time; and as the present system of education is based on the personal, the accidental, and the momentary, it leads to perversion of thought and the inculcation of self-defensive fears.

All of us have been so trained by the educational system and environment as to seek personal gain and security, and to fight for selfish ends. Such a training must inevitably bring confusion and misery to ourselves and to the world, for it creates in each individual those psychological barriers which separate and hold him apart from others. Education is not merely a matter of training the mind. A mind that has merely been trained is the continuation of the past, and such a mind can never discover the new. That's why, to find out what is right education Krishnamurti inquires into the whole significance of living.

For mostly of us the meaning of life as a whole is not of primary importance. It merely makes us proficient in some branches of knowledge. Though knowledge and efficiency are necessary, we should not lay chief emphasis on them as it will lead

us to conflict and confusion. There is an efficiency inspired by love which goes far beyond and is greater than the efficiency of ambition; and without love efficiency breeds ruthlessness. Our present education is geared to industrialization and war, its principal aim is to develop cold efficiency; and we are caught in network of ruthless competition and mutual destruction. As the present system of education leads us to war, as it teaches us to destroy or be destroyed, according to Krishnamurti, it has utterly failed.

To bring about the right system of education, we must understand the meaning of life as a whole, and for that we have to think, not merely consistently, but also directly and truly. A consistent thinker is a thoughtless person, because he conforms to a pattern. We cannot understand existence abstractly or theoretically. To understand life is to understand ourselves and that is both the beginning and the end of education. So, education, according to Krishnamurti, is not merely acquiring knowledge, gathering and correlating facts; it is to see the significance of life as a whole. But the whole cannot be approached through the part.

The function of education is to create human beings who are integrated and therefore intelligent. Degrees obtained through examinations make us mechanically efficient, but it cannot make us intelligent. Intelligence is not mere information; it is not derived from books, nor does it consist of clever self-defensive responses and aggressive assertions. Intelligence is the capacity to perceive the essential, that what is; and to awaken this capacity, in oneself and in others, is education.

Education should help us to discover lasting values of life. It should help us to break down our national and social barriers, instead of emphasizing them, for they breed antagonism between man and man. Unfortunately, the present system of education is making us subservient, mechanical and deeply thoughtless; though it

awakens us mechanically, technically and intellectually, inwardly it leaves us incomplete, stultified and uncreative. Without an integrated understanding of life, our individual and collective problems will only deepen and extend. So, it is by the right understanding of ourselves that fear, confusion, and uncertainty etc. would come to an end.

Education should encourage the individual to discover the true values which comes with unbiased investigation and self-awareness. E when there is no self-knowledge, self-expression becomes self-assertion, with all its aggressive and ambitious conflicts. Education should awaken the capacity to be self-aware and not merely indulge in gratifying self-expression. We may blame the system for destruction, devastations in the material and psychological sphere, but systems, whether educational or political, are not changed mysteriously; they are transformed when there is a fundamental change in ourselves. The individual is of first importance, not the system; and as long as the individual does not understand the total process of himself, no system can bring order, peace and prosperity to the world.

## II

In his educational thought Krishnamurti has given us a vivid description of the right kind of education. Because, in the present-day education we find invitation of misery and destruction disregarding the total process of life. The greatest need and most pressing problem for every individual is to have an integrated comprehension of life which will enable him to meet its ever increasing complexities.

Technical knowledge of the modern education is necessary, but it will in no way resolve our inner, psychological pressures and conflicts, as we have achieved

technical knowledge without understanding the total process of life. Our various professions may keep us busy for the greater part of our existence but our attitudes and values make of things and occupations the instruments of envy, bitterness and hate. The accumulation of facts and the development of capacity, which we generally call 'education', has deprived us of the fullness of integrated life and action. It is because we cling to capacity and efficiency.

Moreover technique cultivation gives us a sense of security, not only economic, but physiological as well. The whole content of life can never be foreseen, it must be experienced anew from moment to moment; but we are afraid of the unknown, and so we establish for ourselves psychological zones of safety in the form of systems, techniques and beliefs. So long as we are seeking inward security, the total process of life cannot be understood.

The right kind of education, while encouraging the learning of a technique, should also accomplish to help man to experience the integrated process of life. When a person has something to say, it creates its own style; but learning a style without inward experiencing can only lead to superficiality.

As long as we are concerned with principles, ideals and methods in education, we are not helping the individual to be free from his own self-centred activity with all its fears and conflicts. Ideals cannot change our present values; they can be changed only by the right kind of education, which is to foster the understanding of what is. When we are working together for an ideal, for the future, we are not concerned with human beings at all, but with our idea of what they should be. The should be becomes more important to us than what is. But if we are fully aware of what we are, we must stop struggling after something which we are not. Ideals, according to Krishnamurti, have no place in education for they prevent the

comprehension of the present. We need, not idealists or entities with mechanical minds, but integrated human beings who are intelligent and free. Merely to have a design for a perfect society is to wrangle and shed blood for what should be while ignoring what is.

The right kind of education is not concerned with any ideology, however, much it may promise a future Utopia. It is neither based on any system, however, carefully thought out, nor is it a means of conditioning the individual in some special manner. Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free. Instead of shaping the child according to some idealistic pattern, we should be interested in that.

Any method which classifies children according to temperament and attitude merely emphasizes their differences; it breeds antagonism, encourages divisions in society and does not help to develop integrated human beings. As long as education is based on cut-and-dried principles, it can turn out men and women who are efficient, but it cannot produce creative human beings.

The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole. Another function of education is to create new values. Education is ultimately related to the present world crisis, and the educator who sees the causes of this universal chaos should ask himself how to awaken intelligence in the student. He must give all his thought, all his care and affection to the creation of right environment and to the development of understanding, so that when the child grows into maturity he will be capable of dealing intelligently with the human problems that confront him. But in order to do this, the educator must understand himself instead of relying on ideologies, systems and beliefs.

The right kind of education consists in understanding the child as he is without imposing upon him an ideal of what we think he should be. To enclose him in the framework of an ideal is to encourage him to conform, which breeds fear and produces in him a constant conflict between what he is and what he should be; and all inward conflicts have their outward manifestations in society.

A person who really desires to understand his child does not look at him through the screen of an ideal. To help the child, one has to take time to study and observe him, which demands patience, love and care; but when one has no love, no understanding, then one forces the child into a pattern of action which we call an ideal. If the teacher is of the right kind, he will not depend on a method, but will study each individual pupil. In our relationship with children and young people, we are dealing with living beings who are impressionable, volatile, sensitive, afraid, affectionate, and to deal with them, we have to have great understanding, the strength of patience and love.

While the children are young, we must of course protect them from physical harm and prevent him from feeling physically insecure. But unfortunately we seek to fulfill ourselves in our children, so we condition them by our beliefs and ideologies, fears and hopes – and then we cry and pray when they are killed or maimed in wars, or otherwise made to suffer by the experiences of life. Such experiences do not bring about freedom; on the contrary, they strengthen the will of the self. As long as we translate experience in terms of the self, of the 'me' and the 'mine', as long as the 'I', the ego, maintains itself through its reactions, experience cannot be freed from conflict, confusion and pain.

Present education does not encourage the understanding of the inherited tendencies and environmental influence which condition the mind and heart and

sustain fear, and therefore it does not help us to break through these conditionings and bring about an integrated human being. Only through individual freedom love and goodness can flower; and the right kind of education alone can offer this freedom. Such educators, seeing the inward nature of freedom, help each individual student to observe and understand his own self-projected values and impositions. They help him, as he grows to manhood, to observe and understand himself in relation to all things, for it is the craving for self-fulfillment that brings endless conflict and sorrow.

Some may say that the full development of the individual will lead to chaos. But we find confusion already in the world, and it has arisen because the individual has not been educated to understand himself. Against this regimentation, many are revolting; but unfortunately their revolt is a mere self-seeking reaction, which only further darkens our existence. The right kind of educator helps the student to alter present values through understanding the total process of life.

For political and industrial reasons, discipline has become an important factor in the present social structure, and it is because of our desire to be psychologically secure that we accept and practice various forms of discipline. One of the dangers of discipline is that the system becomes more important than the human beings who are enclosed in it. Discipline thus becomes a substitute for love. Freedom can never come through discipline, through resistance. Freedom is an end to be achieved. The teacher who is sincere will protect the children and help them in every possible way to grow towards the right kind of freedom; but it will be impossible for him to do this if he himself is addicted to an ideology.

The purpose of education is to cultivate right relationship, not only between individuals, but also between the individual and society; and that is why it is essential

that education should, above all, help the individual to understand his own psychological process. Intelligence lies in understanding oneself and going above and beyond oneself; but there cannot be intelligence as long as there is fear. Discipline may suppress fear but does not eradicate it, and the superficial knowledge which we receive in modern education only further conceals it.

While we are young, fear is installed into most of us both at home at school. The right kind of education must take into consideration this question of fear, because fear wraps our whole outlook on life. To be without fear is the beginning of wisdom, and only the right kind of education can bring about the freedom from fear in which alone there is deep and creative intelligence.

The right kind of education will encourage thoughtfulness and consideration for others without threats of any kind. To understand the significance of life with its conflicts and pain, we must think independently of any authority, including the authority of organized religion; but if in our desire to help the child we set before him authoritative examples, we shall only be encouraging fear, limitation and various forms of superstition.

Religion, as well we call it, is merely organized belief, with its dogmas, rituals, mysteries and superstitions. Though all religions assert that they worship God and say that we must love one another, they instill fear through their doctrines of reward and punishment, and through their competitive dogmas they perpetuate suspicion and antagonism.

Religious education in the true sense would encourage the child to understand his own relationship to people, to things and to nature. Of course, to explain this fully to a child is impossible; but if the educator and the parents deeply grasp the full

significance of relationship, then by their attitude, conduct and speech they will surely be able to convey to the child, without too many words and explanations, the meaning of a spiritual life.

Most people who are religiously inclined do not fundamentally believe in individual freedom and integration; yet religion is the cultivation of freedom in the search for truth. Conditioning of any kind, whether political or religious, is not freedom and it will never bring peace. Stillness of soul or peace only comes when the mind understands its own ways, which are the ways of the self.

True religious education is to help the child to be intelligently aware, to discern for himself the temporary and the real, and to have a disinterested approach to life. If those who are young have the spirit of inquiry, if they are constantly searching out the truth of all things, political and religious, personal and environmental, then youth will have great significance and there is hope for a better world.

To educate a child is to help him to understand freedom and integration. To have freedom there must be order, which virtue alone can give; and integration can take place only when there is great simplicity. Education is at present concerned with outward efficiency, and it utterly disregards the inward nature of man; it develops only one part of him and leaves the rest to drag along as best it can. To educate the student rightly is to help him to understand the total process of himself; for it is only when there is integration of the mind and heart in everyday action that there can be intelligence and inward transformation.

While offering information and technical training, education should above all encourage an integrated outlook on life. Teaching should not become a specialist's

profession. To be integrated there must be freedom from fear. The integrated human being will come to technique through experiencing, for the creative impulse makes its own technique – and that is the greatest art. Thus people who are experiencing, and therefore teaching, are the only real teachers, and they too will create their own techniques.

To understand a child we have to watch him at play, study him in his different moods. If we are constantly judging the child according to our personal likes and dislikes, we are bound to create barriers and hindrances in our relationship with him and in his relationships with the world. Unfortunately, most of us desire to shape the child in a way that is gratifying to our own varieties and idiosyncrasies. This process is mere imposition, and it is therefore essential to understand the difficult and complex desire to dominate. To dominate is to use another for self-gratification, and where there is the use of another as a means there is no love.

When there is love there is consideration, not only for the children but every human being. Unless we are deeply touched by the problem, we will never find the right way of education. Mere technical training inevitably makes for ruthlessness, and to educate our children we must be sensitive to the whole movement of life. What we think, what we do, and what we say matter infinitely, because it creates the environment, and the environment either helps or hinders the child.

Obviously, then, those of us who are deeply interested in this problem will have to begin to understand ourselves and thereby help to transform society; we will make it our direct responsibility to bring about a new approach to education. We must begin to understand our relationship with our fellow-men, with nature, with ideas and with things, for without that understanding there is no hope, there is no way out of conflict and suffering.

The bringing up of a child requires intelligent observation and care. The present educational and social structure do not help the individual towards freedom and integration; and if the parents are at all in earnest and desire that the child should grow to his fullest integral capacity, they must begin to alter the influence of the home and set about creating schools with the right kind of educators. The influence of the home and that of the school must not be in any way contradictory, so both parents and teachers must re-educate themselves.

This conflict or contradiction is encouraged and sustained through the wrong kind of education, and both governments and organized religious add to the confusion by their contradictory doctrines. If we love children and see the urgency of this problems then we will set our minds and hearts to it. Then, however few we may be, through right education and an intelligent home environment, we can help to bring about integrated human beings, for only then can there be the true salvation of mankind.

What is remarkable is that Krishnamurti's ideas on education have inspired various educational project schools in different parts of India. Krishnamurti's emphasis on creativity, integration of the faculties of the child has much in common with Tagore and Sri Aurobindo's thought. Freedom is a basic concept of Krishnamurti's philosophy. This freedom is not a negative idea, it connotes positive achievements of integration and expansion of consciousness in a non-mechanical manner. Perhaps Krishnamurti's implicated is that potentially (as Vivekananda also said) every is immensely creative but routinized mechanical approach turns him on conformist, non-daring, information laden creature. Education should be non coercive and awaken spontaneity in the expression of the child whatever implies the free growth of the child it is educationally misdirected for Krishnamurti.