

## Chapter 4.

### SENSITIVITY & IMAGE MAKING

I think ~~px~~ it is part of education to function without creating images. You then function without the battle, the inward struggle that goes on within yourself. 49 - J. Krishnamurti

In our ordinary life from childhood to death, Images play an overriding role. Images we follow or worship, become ambitious for or make relationship on. Further, Intellectualism consists in being obsessed with images, multiplying them innumerable, strengthening them and finally, being devoted to certain images. Ordinary men, on the other hand live and pass away with the available images of gods, gurus and governments etc. In a way this is an age of images.

#### What is an Image :

"You...have an image", says Krishnamurti, "about yourself, ...made by the mind, by thought, by experience, by knowledge, by your struggle, by all the conflicts and miseries of your life." 50 The word image is used by Krishnamurti in a very broad sense. An image is commonly a mental picture, stored in memory. Mental pictures

are formed of all kinds of things - objects, persons, events etc. They become instruments of interpretation of experience. Images thus distort or prevent objective perception, block understanding of things as they are. The image one has of oneself obstructs self-knowledge. Images conflict and generate more conflicts.

Images source of unending human misery :

"You have your images not only inwardly but also deeper down", Krishnamurti maintains, and further continues, "they are always in conflict with society, with your neighbour as long as there is an image."<sup>51</sup> Images have become the source of all human misery as evidenced in the long years of civilization. Even the images of happiness and pleasure act as precursors of sufferings at a later period. Perhaps this extension of suffering can be deeply felt in Gautama Buddha's one of the four noble truths, i.e. Sarvam dukkham or there is sorrow in everything.

An image is derived from experience. It is a thought-construct. It does not capture the whole experiencing, but is built on isolated aspect or

aspects of it. Image is therefore abstract. It is faint, dead or static, while experiencing is lively, moving. Image is fragmentary, while experiencing may be holistic in the sense that one's whole being, not merely the intellectual side, may be involved in it.

Further, an image (which is made out of thought etc.) is always old, because the content of thought is always past and old. Krishnamurti says, "The challenge is always new but our response is always the old", that because the response is almost based on images. With the continuous change of space and time, with the continuous manifestation of energy in the things of the earth and in the cosmos, every challenge takes the form of something unexperienced before. 'A challenge is a challenge because it is new'. So there cannot be any two exactly similar situations, therefore responding to a single challenge from the memory reservoir (past) may not be an adequate response, for that will always lack the quality of having the similar effect as the challenge is. For example, caning a child for mischief-making without trying to understand his/her psychology is surely an old response to a new challenge; This response is more likely to be a failure

like many of our everyday custombound responses. So "the problem throughout the world is," Krishnamurti thinks, "the inadequate response to the new, changing challenge of life." (KFI Bulletin 2/91)

Secondly, Image always stands as an obstacle to direct relationship with any problem. It occasionally emerges as a third factor between - the observer and the thing observed, e.g. between I and the tree; between I and my anger, envy or fear. From our childhood days we are trained in the image making process and have tried to make an image of nearly everything. "As you grow older," says Krishnamurti, "that image becomes stronger, larger, all demanding and insistent." 52

An image is more than a mentally construct photo-copy of an entity; it is a growing and living actuality. It has a movement of its own, through which it sheds some of its contents, connects (relates) it with others, grows into a different form and thereby continues. An image is a capsule of all our knowledges, sentiments, emotions and hurts on a particular thing. I have an image of my wife which means I have certain expectations out of her. The irony of our present living is that, we mostly live on the basis of these images, they stand between me and the actuality and so one can neither touch nor see nor hear anything directly

without their mediation. According to Krishnamurti, this happens for "...we have lost this extraordinary feeling for beauty, ...the sense of the beautiful ...primarily because we are so concerned with ourselves. We have an image of ourselves." 53

Thirdly, man's image making habit has produced some fascinating results at different periods of history. The study of philosophy and religion are full of such interesting images. In metaphysics there are abstract images like substance, general-name, reality, God etc., which received enormous importance in that particular branch. In religion, images of prayer-priest-prophet or God have tremendous influence. Plato, for example, once propounded the Theory of Ideas, where he gave ultimate value and permanence to ideas of the utopian world. Even many years after that in the history of European philosophy Meinong has produced some pseudo-images of square-circle etc., and demanded their existence of somekind.

In our day to day life also, we have divided humanity into different segments - of castes, classes, communities, sexes and made images of all these. As a result we have distanced ourselves from the actuality

of life. In a sense images have burdened and polluted the mind in the name of clearing its confusions. Our hope of liberation through the image-making process (through ideas etc.) and the consequent failure of our approach reminds one of Krishnamurti's sayings, "...the idea, the ideation, the ideal, is a mythology" 54

Why have we built up these images ?

Man wants pleasure and dislikes pain naturally. Escaping pain through images is one of the best known ways that man practices always. By invoking an image of a God, by constructing a theory, by holding on to a belief - ideal or principal, man always finds momentary respite. For years oppressed men everywhere sustained themselves mentally by reading, chanting or clinging to some scripture or other. Escaping into religion into its various images, ignoring the painful actuality was once a common behaviour particularly among Asians and Africans, this may be one of the reasons for their long sufferings under imperial forces. However, the same mentality still prevails in some quarters of the greater mankind. To elaborate the nature of our escape Krishnamurti once observed, "You

would not want to escape from what is if it were pleasurable ....But if it is painful we want to escape from what is, into a concept. This is our daily life".<sup>55</sup> Images thus come automatically in our eternal endeavour to fly towards happiness from the wretched existence of our being, and in this process we never bother to look at life face to face.

The very essence of this flight is, "One is absolutely nothing. But we can't face that, therefore we have those images about ourselves."<sup>56</sup> says Krishnamurti. Different names, titles and forms e.g. doctor, professor, engineer, that are imposed on us by the society have only superficial but no fundamental (basic) value. In our collective life too, we have given enormous importance to our culture and civilization. But after a minute scrutiny, the marginality, or in other words, the superficiality of our external attainments can be understood, which most of us don't want to entertain because that harms the images which we have built with so much love and care. As a doctor or an engineer never likes to hear that he is basically ambitious or envious of others, similarly we dislike hearing that our civilization is morally

poor and basically hypocritical.

Further, there is a deep rooted discontent in man to happiness, to find order in everything he does or expects. But he has a scheming mind as his tool which only acts through certain images which again made out of his self-interest and motive, and any other vision (process) is totally unknown to him. In most occasions he lives in inattention. But Krishnamurti reminds us, "When the mind is not completely attentive at the moment of action, then the mechanism of building images is set in motion,"<sup>57</sup> i.e. our inattention is the source of all images. In another way, there is a peculiar dichotomy - of Being and Becoming in man; when we try to live a life of Becoming, which we most do, we create images but when we start from Being (what-is), as Krishnamurti occasionally emphasizes on, perhaps there may not be any image of desires or depressions at all.

However before entering into the deeper chambers of Krishnamurti's teachings we can normally ask, whether image-making is inherent in human nature and if so, then is it not the case that



the possibility of getting freedom from images become merely a theoretical adventure and a futile effort ? or whether there are different kinds of images, some are necessary and others are not-so-necessary or unnecessary ? or beyond images what ? and so on.

It seems very obvious to accept that image-making is inherent in the human brain mechanism. Our recognition, experience, memory, calculation, nay our very survival is image-based. Further more, the Western philosophical schools like Rationalism or Empiricism too never contradicted of having images in life.

But there are images of a ~~diff~~ different kind which are not of things but of our likes and dislikes of those things, briefly, our evaluative-images. In fact our total living is made according to those images. We exist through our innumerable relationships, because "To be, is to be related", says Krishnamurti. We relate ourselves with the outside world as well as with the inside, and that through images. The study of esthetics, ethics, religion etc. are in a way studies of various value concepts in different arrangement. These images have no shape,

size, extension, durability in space and so on. They (images) born and brought up, replaced and recreated totally in the mind. Thus human mind is the sole creator and the reservoir of the value images. As a tree or an envy has a corresponding reality, though entirely of different kinds, but honesty or humility has no such corresponding reality. Yet we have an image of honesty (of an honest man), sometimes we make it an ideal and follow it, making ourselves open to more trouble and tension.

Krishnamurti once showed distinctions of Memory (which in other words support a distinction between necessary and not-so-necessary images). As he says in regard to memory,

"...we should distinguish between two types of memory. There is 'factual memory' and 'psychological memory'....

'Factual memory consists of information of all sorts ...' 'psychological memory' is non-factual. It is very factual'....

'I remember what your face looks like. We have already called that 'factual memory'. Now, if I were to like the look of your face or hate it, that like or dislike will naturally influence my attitude to you. Our likes and

dislikes constitute 'psychological memory'  
 ....sir, all your fears, hates, anxieties, hopes,  
 hurts, ambitions - all that is 'psychological  
 memory'." <sup>58</sup> (my underline).

To make the point more relevant, we can only replace  
 Factual & Psychological memories into Factual and  
Psychological images (for memories come through  
 images), when others remain the same and similarly  
 significant.

And now, a more fundamental question is  
 asked, is it possible to have a mind that is all  
 the time operating at the level of factual images  
 and not at the level of psychological images? Or  
 in other words, is it possible to live through  
 both the images - factual and psychological but  
 keeping the latter always under question and  
 enquiry? However, an absolute denial of the psych-  
 ological memory is a theory so long it (reactive -  
 mind) is not filled up by some other kind of  
 energy (silence). Yet that denial actually drives us  
 to the dissolution of the self-centredness of our  
 life or a life based on thought only. So long we  
 are in the consciousness of thought and self, the

images are bound to come and the world would be nothing better than the present one in its essential character.

There are certain occasions in each of our life, Krishnamurti reminded us, when we do not create any image of our likes and dislikes. We do so only in total attention. Attention takes place when we are in love and tremendous interest. Images, for Krishnamurti, result out of the indigestion of the mind, in the moments of our inattention or half-attention or motivated attention. But in the occasions of our great attention (total) the observer and the thing observed are not separate, they are one and in the same wave length. In that situation there can only be the beauty of cloudy sky or the white winged cranes and nothing else, the observer thus becomes the observed. ("Observer is the observed", - Krishnamurti).

#### What is Sensitivity ?

"A human being who is aware of his environment, as well as aware of every moment of thought and feeling, who is a harmonious whole, is sensitive", 59

says Krishnamurti. It (sensitivity) is a quality of mind, it is perfect attention and awareness, where there is no image.

Whether it is possible for an individual to be sensitive round the clock? Krishnamurti affirms that there is a state of mind which can be permanently sensitive. Though there is no particular object of its sensitivity, but the mind is choicelessly aware of each and everything before it. This is quite unlike to our normal living where the mind always fluctuates between two poles - of sensitivity and stupor.

The way to sensitivity (imageless state), if there is any way at all, is possible only negatively, because it is beyond thought and there cannot be any image (idea) of it. In other way, to be aware of our daily acts of insensitivity is the way to sensitivity. Krishnamurti has described sensitivity in other names as well e.g. intelligence, love, freedom and so on.

Sensitivity has no subjectivity, it is impersonal. As Krishnamurti says, "...Not your sensitivity,

...which is absurd".<sup>60</sup> When 'I' (motive) is entered into the process of living the sensitivity loses much of its quality and it resulted in mere fragmentations of individual life and the world. Although to maintain a happy living there should be sensitivity of the mind, heart and body ~~eye~~. they all should be very much alert and alive. An individual body has got an inherent sensitivity in its very mechanism which becomes dull and insensitive without proper maintenance which implies proper diet, physical exercises and so on. A flexible and pliable body with a sympathetic heart and alert - alive mind in harmony can only bring a total sensitivity of a person.

Sensitivity has many more implications. It implies true freedom from every kind of suggestion and tradition. It implies love, it implies intelligence. In the language of Krishnamurti, "To be sensitive is to ~~feel~~ feel for people, for birds, for flowers, for trees... just because you are awake to the extraordinary beauty of things".<sup>61</sup>

Sensitivity means no images, because mind is always in the present and there is no haunting of the past. "When the mind is fully aware at that

actual moment, not distracted, not frightened, not rejecting what is being said, then there is no possibility of building an image"; <sup>62</sup> An imageless mind is a mind with limitless space or silence; that silence or space then gives rise to all our thoughts. The nature of that space, for Krishnamurti, is nothing (no-thing) or the total absence of any idea or image of an entity. True sensitivity thus leads one to that state of silence or no-thingness, or better to say that it is the inward silence that leads to true sensitivity.

Sensitivity necessary for the world :

Such a sensitive mind who has an equal concern for everything, revolutionizes the world by means of his relationships in the society. Because out of silence (imageless state) his relationship is born and it maintains a different kind of network, which means an enormous change in the surface level of daily-activities.

Furthermore, there must be a tremendous dynamism in the psychology of a sensitive man, because he is never bogged down or stagnated to any novel-idea and so each and every moment of his living is

new and therefore a challenge to him.

To be free and always alive, sensitivity is an indispensibility. Right education of the children is only possible, says Krishnamurti, 'through the cultivation of sensitivity ; and sensitivity must be cultivated .... through out one's life'.<sup>63</sup> It is the very foundation of freedom in living and acting.

Imparting sensitivity :

Education is sensitivity. But when Krishnamurti maintains, "Sensitivity is not a thing to be cultivated", he seems to be in contradiction with his earlier statement ("Sensitivity must be cultivated..." etc). However the contradiction actually lies at the level of language. It is more a problem with the vocabulary than with himself, because he occasionally suffers from this syndrome for not having a right word for a right occasion. The only way to impart sensitivity to the young children is through love and affection of the teachers. As Krishnamurti says, "...if you yourself are sensitive to the beautiful and to the ugly, if in you there is a sense of gentleness, of love, don't you think you will be able to help your students to have affection, to be considerate, ...?"<sup>64</sup> Surely



this educating is not a mechanical process. For krishnamurti, Right education is always beyond sheer mechanicalness. To make a child sensitive much of the responsibility goes to the teachers of the school as well as to the parents of the children. Responsibility is an implication of sensitivity. If parents and teachers themselves are not sensitive there is but very little chance of the children being sensitive in their lives.

A child is normally born with great sensitivity, he has both awareness and innocence, which in the process of time get disturbed and curbed. Educators are greatly responsible to keep that spirit of enquiry and sensitivity awake in the children, so that it may not go stagnate in the struggle for existence.

A child who has awakened in sensitivity, surely has a broader view of life, would be responsible of all his activities, would become dynamic in his living and would obviously maintain a different order of relationship, which in other way indicates a radical transformation of himself.

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