

THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE

...human beings are outwardly educated, cultured, clever, but inwardly, they are violent, Unless that animal instinct is fundamentally changed, whatever the outward circumstances are, the inward always overcomes the outer.

Education is the change of the innerman. 65

- J. Krishnamurti

What is Violence :

Violence is a fact of life. It is neither a theory nor a myth. When it occurs, an individual is turbulent within and without. This within aspect of a man is far more stronger than without, because the former often dominates the latter. The outward exhibition is a mere explosion of the inward state.

Violence, individually speaking, is a movement in the mind in a search for order amidst the elements of disorder. However the ways it (mind) has so far taken have found to be limited and disturbing. The search for order in disorders through our known ways have further created disorder (violence), because it has brought more divisions in our perception of the fact of violence, and it adversely effect

the cause. Instead of pacifying violence, it escalated the fact in many more subtle forms. Now to approach violence we need to go through various screens of a theory and possibly loss in the wilderness. When violence itself is a fragmentation of our consciousness, the traditional ways further fragments the flow.

We are nearly all aware about the existence of violence in our individual life, at least in the surface level. It appears in the very many ways - expressively or in a very subtle manner wearing the masks of culture or so on. Whatever be its face - cultured or uncultured, "...any movement of the ~~'me'~~ 'me' in any direction, is the action of violence",⁵⁶ says Krishnamurti. So, as long as I (ME) remains the center of individual thinking and activity, violence will bound to remain. It (violence) is an existential issue, very deeper and complex, which cannot be resolved by considering it superficially alone. A radical transformation of mind, if it is possible at all, may be necessary.

However there can be two different kinds of violence, natural and psychological. Sometimes we do natural violence to live a normal and healthy life

but the psychological violence is the remembrances or the memory of violence that we accumulate in ourselves consciously or unconsciously, which brings lives' degeneration in most cases. The first one we do and forget, but the latter one we carry with us.

In Krishnamurti like in many others, 'me' is said to be the cause of many miseries. For "Self-centred activities; to be aggressive, opposing, resisting, asserting, all that makes for violence".⁶⁷ Yet the total orientation of our present living is ME. Now the important questions are, whether it is possible at all to abolish (dominate) ME altogether? and whether a right education can play a major role in this effect?

Violence is a problem, why :

"As we live now, life, living, is a form of violence".⁶⁸ Each one of us has a particular purpose, an aim, a drive in life towards some or any goal. But in the words of Krishnamurti, "The life of a man who has a purpose is breeding violence"⁶⁹. Although this interpretation seems quite unconventional because it has taken the whole process of life under its fold

and left very little space of understanding violence in any other way. Krishnamurti, as a policeman of the psychology, never supports any difference of degrees in violence. There can only two choices available - violence or no violence, and not many. The matter as he sees,

"You are either violent or your mind is devoid of violence ... you cannot be both violent and devoid of violence at the same time Either you are an honest man or a dishonest man. You can never say "I am slightly dishonest". If you are "slightly dishonest" it only means that you have a dishonest mind."

'The degree of violence is unimportant. The extent of violence does not alter the fact that you are already suffering from the fever of violence. Sir, an invisible microscopic virus can cause a vast epidemic that kills millions. Similarly, the tiniest bit of violence within you could precipitate a world war.' 70

So there is a connection, sees Krishnamurti, between violent living of an individual and a devastating war. As he is very fond of saying, "You are the world and the world is you" 71.

Violence in itself is always disorder and destruction, which goes contrary to mankind's eternal longing for peace and happiness, hence it is always a problem. Unfortunately "We are used to a society, a morality, that is based on violence"⁷². Our morality is based either on narrow nationalism or on welfare of the masses or on individualism, they are mostly rooted in the ME. So they serve as the elements to generate violence.

Here we suffer from a contradiction - we know that we are basically violent yet we take various vicarious ways to end violence, which in a way strengthens violence; To clear it further, we make non-violence or love our goal and pursue that goal to end our violent state, which becomes nonsensical. Because this approach never directly touches the actual state of violence within us. It merely adds more violence (of subtle kinds) in the flow, in the form of struggle and conflict involved in the process of attaining (becoming) love or non-violence etc. This approach is like feeding a monster and at the same time trying to free oneself from it.

From time immemorial violence thus remains a problem, from we always tried to meet it from others.

(theoretical) angle, and never dared to face one's violence directly. The explosion of violence or escaping or understanding it from theoretical angles could not so far abolish it (violence) from oneself. Different ways merely help to suppress violence in different manners but it still remains ; It shows its ugly head whenever necessary.

Krishnamurti's approach to violence :

Violence is a fact of life. It varies remarkably from person to person in regard to its warmth, extension and feeling. In a sense each case of violence is unique. So violence need to be faced directly by the individual who is undergoing it; otherwise mind will create an image out of it and will haunt that image for ever.

Krishnamurti thinks that there should be flowering of violence within, without the interference of the mind in any way through criticizing or condemning. Only then it (violence) will automatically wither away as a flower withers after its natural flowering. In flowering, violence reveals its complexity. In his own words, "...in understanding the

complexity, in watching the complexity, it reveals some other factor, and let that blossom, so that everything is blossoming in you, nothing is denied, nothing is suppressed, nothing is controlled. It is a tremendous education"⁷³. In other words, this education lies in facing ~~the~~ one's inward facts of violence or so, with utmost care and choiceless awareness. This inward activity of natural flowering and withering away could not take place so long we remain tagged to our normal approaches, which lies in exhibition, repression, restriction, nipping the whole fact (of violence) in the bud and so on.

Krishnamurti took very little interest in the commonly held view that the element of violence is innate to man like every other animal. From the primitive time onwards, man lives with violence. So man genetically derived (if not innate) violence from its evolutionary growth, and with it the prevailing society with all sorts of competition, comparison and so on contributed enormously in the flow of violence. But whatever is genetically or environmentally derived cannot be called innate (which lives with the very physical existence), and the Buddha,

Mahavira, Jesus Christ are examples of such human beings who lived without violence. Nevertheless, to live a normal and healthy life natural violence (discussed above) which least disturbs individual psychological field as a memory image etc. may have a place.

The only way of facing inner-violence is directly and now, and that is neither through any theory nor by any analysis, nor by escaping from it in any way, this may be said to be the view of Krishnamurti. To him, violence is a movement of energy which gets spoiled in the process, which requires to move in a totally different direction or dimension in a life of happiness.

In Krishnamurti, violence cannot be a means to a happy or peaceful end. So far bloody revolutions as in France or in Russia or in China, they have undoubtedly brought reformations in their respective societies but could not revolutionize man basically. Without underestimating the value of those revolutions a little, they actually brought peripheral changes but the essential structure of man (self-orientation) which gives birth to disorder remains

unchanged. So today there are ample evidences to prove the validity of this contention when the recent dramatic political changes in the erstwhile Soviet bloc countries can be closely observed. Psychologically or morally the greater humanity has made a very little progress so far.

When violence is a means, Krishnamurti thinks, peace can only be a theoretical end; Real peace will bound to elude us. "Violence begets more violence; resistance only creates other forms of distortion".⁷⁴ For Krishnamurti, there is no difference between the Means and the End; end is merely an extension of means. The so-called peace out of murder and mayhem is a mere semblance of peace; it is a peace over deathfield.

In Krishnamurti, violence has no opposite. All opposites are intellectually made. Non-violence, the most holy word in the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi has no real basis as an opposite of violence or merely as an ideal. For non-violence is not a fact. It has a lasting value only when it means love or affection even then it becomes an inappropriate use. It (non-violence) is a theory, a

concept, an escape. "When the real thing is violence", argues Krishnamurti, "you are pretending there is non-violence. So the brain cells seek out of this incapacity to deal with violence, an ideal, and therefore division follows and there is contradiction and conflict."⁷⁵ Only facts, and not ideas have importance for Krishnamurti.

Education & Violence :

"We have been educated to be violent. Our animal nature and the activity of the human brain etc., are violent and dividing; we all know this,"⁷⁶ says Krishnamurti. Present education or education so far feeds and breeds violence, for it introduces and triggers ambition, competition and success. These affairs are by nature violent. Our education is thus a queer mixture of contradictory aspirations and activities : It may be out of a total ignorance or carelessness of the real nature of a man. Here preparation for as well as destruction of the happiness goes together, hand in hand.

Today we occasionally come across with such appalling incidents when unsuccessful students

commit suicide out of the fear of facing their ambitious parents. Ambition has thus taken away the place of education. We can take another example, Britishers are often said as educated and disciplined lots, but the several spate of football-hooliganism and associated crimes in recent years particularly in England took many lives and made mockery of all education and discipline.

It is therefore a fact that education so far could not abolish or remarkably decrease the numbers of violence in any way. Rather it has helped to diversify violence in very many ways in our daily lives. Its appearances have merely changed but the essence (conflict & disorder) remains the same. Krishnamurti observed, "... human beings are outwardly educated, cultured, clever, but inwardly, they are violent. Unless that animal instinct is fundamentally changed, whatever the outward circumstances are, the inward always overcomes the outer"; And for him, 'Education is the change of the innerman'⁶⁵.

This innerman implies the conflict ridden mind of the present human kind. To overcome this conflict, which is necessary for a happy living,

there should be no suppression, limitation or restriction within. His education will make children realize that, and also brought them under a harmonious development of mind-heart and body. Life is a total process, thinks Krishnamurti, and that should be understood totally. Education is a way to that total understanding.

Self understanding is the only way of abolishing violence ; self is expressed only in various relationships. So Krishnamurti advised children to be attentive in their various relationships which leads to the understanding of the complex functionings of the self(ego). Attention, as he thinks, is an enormous learning by which many of our drosses(superficialities) in relationship drop and a radical change of behaviour takes place. For example, when a child(man) understands out of close attention the utter irrationality (in respect of truth) of many of our daily behaviours e.g. worshipping idols, going to temples, mosques etc., his relationship with all these will bound to undergo a deep change.

Apparent flaws in Krishnamurti's Approach :

It can be asked that the affair of facing violence directly as a fact of life and helping it to flower within (according to Krishnamurti), is something which is not very easy to conceive of. Because during violence there is no difference between the observer and the observed i.e. the observer himself becomes totally identified with violence. Then he is violence himself. At that hour, who will observe whom? Observation of violence can only be possible after the subsidence of the mainflow i.e. a few moments after the peak period, and then observing (looking) to that (fact of violence) will become a sheer intellectual affair - attending only the memories of violence. As if one becomes aware of the thief when he has left the house.

However each and every case of violence cannot be said to be equally explosive; some of them are of much smaller intensity and that can be easily observed. An inner flow of violence which is gradually ebbing out can also be looked into because essentially violence are of the same quality, they differ only in intensity. In Krishnamurti there is nothing over and above the observer (thinker), as

something permanent. "Thought creates the thinker, thought is always seeking a permanent state ;seeing its own state of transition, of flux, of impermanence thought creates an entity which it calls the thinker, the Atman, the Paramatman, the soul - a higher and higher security." 77 This very understanding leads one beyond self, division and violence.

Secondly, facing violence inwardly in oneself is one thing and facing outward violence is quite another, which has got its own independent existence. Any killing and arson outside does not care for my individual opinion. So how to cope with the external violence ?

For Krishnamurti, "You are the world and the world is You", the total world-affair goes parallelly with one's psychological state. It is through relationship one is related to as well as effecting the activity of the world every now and then. A man of love who has no violence within, creates a different pattern of relationship. For "love is a state of being in which all man's problems are resolved" 78.

Thirdly, Krishnamurti in his long years of teachings gave importance to the fundamental transformation of man ; But the changes that have been

occurred to man - in the demands as well as in the patterns of life, through great revolutions should not be undervalued in anyway. Those changes (revolutions) have actually made men aware of themselves - their individual uniqueness, potentialities and dignity. Furthermore, Krishnamurti himself in his life time visited and talked mostly in the democratic countries. However, he never decried any peripheral change in human behaviour, e.g. where violence and tyranny has decreased sufficiently, as something nonsense. To him they are only reformatations and ~~are~~ not revolutions. There can be only revolution when the mankind is radically transformed, then that will also serve as a halt to all kinds of violent behaviours.

Education to cope with individual violence altogether is indeed a most difficult task, which needs the cooperation of parents, teachers and the children. It requires entirely a different environment and a deeper understanding of the utter hapless state of our existence, particularly among the educators of the children; it also requires one's longing for truth, otherwise there is every possibility of it becoming a failure. Krishnamurti's teachings on education is a pointer towards that individual and collective challenge.
