

PARENTS AND TEACHERS

The right kind of education begins with the educator, who must understand himself and be free from established patterns of thought; for what he is, that he imparts. 111 - J. Krishnamurti.

As charity begins at home, so does the education. A child starts learning from the lap of his mother. In other words, learning actually begins in the atmosphere of the house where child is born; this atmosphere takes into account not only the influence of the parents but also of the other family members and of the existing situation, economic or so. Over and above that, a child normally inherits (genetically) the psycho-physical tendencies of his parents; These tendencies include, among other things, various dreams and desires of the parents as well as their point of views.

After this crawling (initial) stage of education a child is sent to school to be effected mostly by their teachers and the school environment. They (teachers- etc.) open up a floodgate of imagination for the children and they start creating and moving on many a wonderland.

Gradually a child develops into a man (sometimes as a scientist, and engineer or an administrator) and start expressing his, so called, own-views. But at the back of his brain (thought) there is, in most cases, the silent presence of the influence of his family or his parents or of his teachers. Each of our minds - subconscious part and the, conscious part - is full of such influences. The parents and the teachers, who mostly influence the mind of the child, constitute the real educator-class. So, their activities and importance (in education) need to be very carefully understood before launching any study on the subject of education ; because "The responsibility for building a peaceful and enlightened society rests chiefly with the educator." 112

Parents and Teachers in Present Education :

In the present day world, commercialism has taken away any deeper attitude towards life. It gives value to superficiality. Education is not an exception to this process. As a matter of fact, parents and teachers, also become contaminated by this global menace. The menace of competition, comparison, ambition

and so on. Parents now feel free from responsibility just by sending their kids to a good school ; teachers in the school are similarly satisfied by teaching certain prescribed lessons to their students.

However it is clear that the bond between the parents and their children is natural and very deep. It can be called as psycho-biological relationship. But the nature of this bond (relationship) is found to be most ego-centric. Children now are mere tools of their parents' 'own fulfilment and enjoyment'.¹¹³ Parents' love to their children is a mere 'form of possessive self pity', which is not love without interest. "If parents love their children", observes Krishnamurti, 'they will not be nationalistic;...they will not belong to any organized religion ;...they will do away with envy and strife, and will set about altering fundamentally the structure of present day society.'¹¹⁴ However parents act on the contrary, they prefer that their child should become brilliant, most obedient, and a good careerist. A rebellious and an uncompromising child is always a headache for the parents. They (parents) express the goods and bads of the children only in terms of the known values . Parents

have no 'freedom from the known', no room for appreciating the uniqueness of a child.

Next to parents, teachers have a great influence in child's whole development. Sometimes it is greater than their parents, because their influence acts on the most formative period of a child, when their faculty of reasoning is growing. But when the teachers share the psychology of the society - of competition etc., they naturally produce the same fleece out of human child.

Parents and teachers therefore have enormous responsibility to produce a new-generation. But at present they must understand the danger of the present growth of the society and the absolute necessity of a different kind of education for a different kind of life. So "The problem ... is not the child, but the parent and the teacher; the problem is to educate the educator",¹¹⁵ 'because the educator is already set, fixed. He merely functions in a routine.'

Right Education & Right Educators :

"The word right", says Krishnamurti, 'is not a matter of opinion, evaluation or some concept invented by the intellect. The word right denotes total action

in which all self interested motive ceases." 116 So right education leads to self understanding and right educators are only those who understand their selves or at least have realized the absolute necessity of understanding the nature of the activities of the self. This demands very serious type of persons and they naturally are very 'rare'.

Nevertheless, right parents concern really for their child. They see their children as Ends and never as Means. Real love of parents implies that "They will employ legislation and other means to establish small schools staffed with the right kind of educators". 117 Right parents are concerned for the happiness of their children. They encourage their kids to do (pursue) in education what they actually love to do. Right parents thus help their child to flower in themselves - ~~mes~~ inwardly as well as outwardly. This does not of course mean that children are given freedom to destroy themselves. For one cannot destroy oneself, it is said, when one is in perfect freedom and love. Dismay and disintegration in a child (in a man) is only an outcome of the obstruction created on the natural flow of love and

interest out of him. Right parents therefore want that their children should be in their true selves ; and so they (parents) help this process through right-teachers and right education.

Right parents also mean, they should not transmit their mind, their tensions to their children; including that they should not pressurize their children to conform to the social habits, customs and morality. This also means that parents will help right education by cooperating with the teachers as well as the school authority. There needs to be a close contact between the school (teachers etc.) and the parents. Parents and teachers must at least be in the same wavelength in regard to their children's education. Krishnamurti repeated this point more than once in his talks.

"The true teacher is inwardly rich", says Krishnamurti, "and therefore asks nothing for himself; he is not ambitious and seeks no power in any form; he does not use teaching as a means of acquiring position or authority, and therefore he is free from the compulsion of society and the control of governments." ¹¹⁸

A right teacher therefore teaches out of love and not out of any motive. This is different from teaching

with a dream (a motive) of changing the world or so. A deep discontent with the present-values, a sincere love to live with the children and to discover oneself with them, to help the children flower are certain wishes of a true teacher. This trait, however cannot be estimated in ~~term~~ terms of money and ambition.

A motive always limits the process of learning, for "Life is a constant process of teaching and learning: to teach and to learn is not possible if there is a motive, and when we have a motive the state of teachings and learning is not possible".¹¹⁹

A true teacher feels in himself an enormous responsibility, of bringing a new generation, of changing the world, of bringing a new culture. Teaching therefore 'is the greatest profession in the world',¹²⁰ maintains Krishnamurti. A true teacher is "Deeply involved with the flowering of human beings",¹²¹ of himself as well as his students.

More specifically, a true teacher lives in close contact with three things, - with himself, with his students, and with the parents of the students.

A true teacher must understand himself, his own traits and ill habits, otherwise his interest for teaching may come out as an artificiality, an escape or merely

a sentimental journey. A teacher who came to suppress himself or to escape from the reality or just to earn a livelihood can never be a right teacher in Krishna-murti's views.

Secondly, a true teacher always helps his students in the process of learning and never obstructs it. Learning is the essence of true teaching where the other differences between the teachers and the students are merely secondary. The differences of behaviour, e. g. obedience and the submission on the part of the students and the dictatorial tendency in teacher's part also have no deep value in learning. For "Learning brings about equality among human beings".¹²² In right teaching both teacher and the student learn together, discover together, because a true teacher always starts from 'I don't know'. This statement is out of a deep understanding on the limitation of knowledge, and in the nature of learning.

A true teacher's relationship with his students has some special qualities. They are related through living closely. In them living and learning go together. As one of the Krishnamurti (Foundation) school-teachers sees it, "Learning comes out of living. And not the other way round. Now, it appears that you learn first and live

later. It's a ridiculous thing".¹²³ In Krishnamurti-schools, a teacher helps his students "To live life now, so that the student is all the time living, and learning out of living". Teaching in close relationship with students (which is actually the case in Krishnamurti-schools) makes knowledge a matter of enjoyment and never a hard burden. In the weather of learning and close relationship students and teachers both can live in constant enquiry and mutual cooperation. This can only bring about the real "Significance of life".

Although it is sometimes felt that students who like to live a life of freedom and enquiry in schools may not perform well in examinations, because - "Free enquiry and preparation for exams" may not go together. But the actual situation is quite different, as a teacher (of one of the K-schools) experienced it in his own case. He finds that, children can very easily grasp their lessons for exams because "Free enquiry" has kept their brains quite alive, they are not bored and so every other thing becomes very simple. The teacher therefore proposes, "Let the child have as much experience as

possible. Let him come in contact with things. And then, when you present the whole picture, like threading beads together to form a necklace, it falls into place very easily." 124

"Truth is far more important than the teacher", 125
 a true teacher knows it. He has a passion for the truth so he is related with his students directly and wholly. Direct relationship means no comparison among students in the line of good and bad. A contact of wholeness implies a teacher's concern for the total (intellectual, emotional and physical) development of a student. It also involves the Academic, the Behavioural and Spiritual (Flowering of goodness) aspects of life of students. This total relationship is founded on a very different and deeper ground, 'through understanding the total process of life'. 126

When both teachers and parents understand the pettiness of our present living, and want to bring a "New generation" of human beings, that is the perfect situation for a right education. A child is more dependent on his (her) parents (particularly for subsistence and security) than on his teachers. Children's dependence on their teachers are for

information and wisdom. In education both teachers and parents must have a very good relationship - through communication and transfer of ideas and urgencies. But when the two (parents & the teachers) go in different directions - one for 'radical change' and the other for 'career', then education inevitably leads to frustration. Krishnamurti says, "...the schools and the home should be joint centres of right education, and should in no way be opposed to each other, with parents designing one thing and the educator doing something entirely different."¹²⁷ To meet this situation Krishnamurti-Foundation occasionally arrange meetings of parents and teachers. The KFI - 'VASANTA VIHAR' (Madras) has already started a new initiative with a much wider perspective in the Forum for New Education, where they occasionally arrange discussions of parents and teachers along with many other things.

However it is always true that "A total development of the child', which is the basic of right education, 'can be brought about only when there is the right relationship between the teacher, the student and the parents."¹²⁸

Observations :

Once Krishnamurti has drawn a picture of a right teacher(educator) in the following manner :

"The educator is concerned only with right living, right education, and right means of livelihood".¹²⁹ This is, it seems, asking too much out of a man, which at a point losses all sense of reality(actuality).

Furthermore, 'right' means no-motive, but any institution whether of Krishnamurti or of anyother, only exists with a certain motive. The "Flowering of goodness" in Krishnamurti-schools may also be called as a motive.

In Krishnamurti, there is an outright denial of 'Guru-sisya parampara' of Indian religio-cultural trend in education. This seems to be an under estimation of that long and sometimes very rich tradition. However the real sense of denial is, a man(Guru) cannot be a liberator of another(sisya). A Guru or a teacher can only be a good guide, a good helper like a sign-board which shows a right direction. As Krishnamurti sees it, "A true teacher never gives; he explains, he points the way. If a person of little understanding stops and worships at the shrine or a signpost, he will remain there for many lives until suffering urges

him onward." 130 Particularly in regard to the existential issues of life a man (or a child) himself is both a guru and a sisya - a light unto himself. For he alone can rightly answer for himself; others' answers are in no way enlighten him. Furthermore, in case of teaching, the subject matter is always important rather than the teacher; a teacher has got only a secondary value and not the fundamental value in right education.

There may be a point in criticising Krishnamurti in regard to his ignoring of the importance of comparison, competition or ambition etc., in our daily life. For comparison or so, is important in our daily behaviours which comprise the world of technology, of commerce etc; again ambition is a driving force that leads one to a very great height of achievement. It (ambition) supplies the basic energy for all that tough journey. A human becomes a superman (of strength and courage) in this process. However the sense of Krishnamurti (criticising comparison etc.) will be better understood when their effects are seen on a global perspective. Comparison & competition established in human psychology have so far made mankind narrow and fragmented. So when total-living is concerned, comparison etc. have very little meaning, they seem to have only

secondary and partial importance. The possibility of misunderstanding Krishnamurti's views thus is always there, unless a different outlook is developed.

The equation of relationship among the parents, teachers and the students is a complex phenomena. It involves many things which cannot be solved only by words - through discussions or dialogues. Learning which involves 'the great importance of facing a fact, the actual, the now', is the essence of right education; if that is understood by the parents and teachers, then other differences of opinions and aspirations will gradually subside. Then they can really feel responsible for their children. But when one starts considering education from the standpoint of parents only or of a teacher with their respective idiosyncracies, then perhaps one can never reach the other. The passion for right education actually starts out of an insight. The insight that: we become second hand human beings in the process! This (insight) is followed by a resolve on our part to help children to live their lives totally and completely.

To work together, parents and teachers must have that insight.
