

EDUCATION AND LIFE

Education is not only acquiring knowledge, gathering and correlating facts; it is to see the significance of life as a whole.⁴

-- J. Krishnamurti

Education, according to Krishnamurti, is concerned with the task of understanding the significance of whole life. What is life? Krishnamurti feels, "Life is study, play, sex, work, quarrels, envy, ambition, love, beauty, truth - life is everything."⁵ As the above typical saying suggests, life consists of its contents, its variegated facets. It is made up of these things. There is no life in the abstract. Normally one does not have a whole or integrated approach to life, but lives successively under the spell or domination of one or another of its aspects. Thus sometimes sorrow engulfs us, sometimes ambition, sometimes sex and so on. Thus one carries on fragmentarily. As a result the wholeness of life is lost.

Krishnamurti's philosophy :

Like others of his type, Krishnamurti has a philosophy of life (as well as of education), which though never elaborated specifically, is yet suggested by his sayings. The salient points of his philosophy can be stated e.g. in the following way :

Man lives in constant inner contradictions and conflicts, and society is a mere extension of these conflicts;

Understanding the nature of these facts of life i.e. contradictions, in one's own way implies the dawning of truth to oneself (self-understanding);

A contradiction-free man is psychologically whole, he is most integrated and harmoniously related with the world;

Only such a man lives a life of Intelligence, a life of constant enquiry and change, a life of truth - beauty and goodness etc.

This expresses, in brief, Krishnamurti's philosophy of life, and he himself stands as an embodiment of this kind of living. Krishnamurti starts from human contradiction because it is a fact of life and then goes deeper into the essence of life. In this process he decries any metaphysical theory formation. The place of education lies in making man aware of his inner and outer contradiction, and to help him to live a life

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of intelligence. To Krishnamurti, intelligence is neither an ideal which can be attained by strenuous effort, nor is it a method of analytical pursuit, nor is there any guarantee of a gradual emergence of it in the evolutionary process. Intelligence bursts suddenly and uninvitedly; but only the ground should be prepared with individual's choiceless (motiveless) awareness of the everyday facts of sorrow, pain etc. Krishnamurti speaks of the emergence of Intelligence and Wisdom .

Present education & its implications :

But, how far does conventional education agree with Krishnamurti's philosophy of life and education ? Doesn't it go to establish a life quite contrary to the life of intelligence ? Doesn't the present educational system foster and strengthen an attitude of seeing life fragmentarily ? Doesn't it sponsor training or expertise in specialized fields, to the neglect of basic virtues ? Krishnamurti feels, "...the present system of education is making us subservient, mechanical and deeply thoughtless; though it awakens us intellectually; inwardly it leaves us incomplete, stultified and uncreative."6 Modern education produces doctors, engineers, scientists, lawyers or it turns a child into another 'clever, cunning, clerks', but does not make men.

There is a madrush for job-oriented, prestize-conscious education based on fierce competition for better result and higher security. Clearly the orientation is for material gain. This makes the participants in education frighteningly ruthless and jealous of others. The tensions and frustrations of the world, of the parents and teachers, of society in general, are transferred to the younger generation. As a consequence children live alienated life, and they are dead to their natural state. Innocence and inquisitiveness of childhood thus dries up. A lopsided, shabby and heartless life the child receives as an inheritance from their elders. Competition and corruption are invariably present among parents and teachers today, who care very little for the nobler aspects of life. It's a fact, however cruel, that many renowned scientists now have an appalling ignorance in regard to social awareness. Again, there is the poison of partial learning: the excessive exercise of the brain and minimum of the heart. As a result erudition leads to a most narrow and unbalanced life for many in the society. This is an inevitable outcome of our long nourished educational system. However, while the partial-learning is a tragedy, total-learning (intelligence) remains a mystery.

Also that, the wars and oppressions, individual and collective agony and distress etc. - these all can be traced back to the follies of our educational system, where it seems, an emphasis has been made on some utterly wrong ideas. The present generation is merely a mechanical product of those wrong deeds.

Life & Right education :

"Life is like a river," Krishnamurti observes, "it is always in movement, never still. It is alive. If one holds to a part of the river and thinks one understands, then it is like holding dead water. For the river goes by and if we cannot flow with it, one is left behind." Education is essentially for life and so it should reflect the basic nature of life, which is movement. Therefore according to Krishnamurti, "Education is not till you are twenty one, but till you die." It knows no stagnation. It has a ceaseless flow like life itself.

Life is significant because of its inherent richness and diversity, where a good job or intellectual superiority plays a very small role. Life is an extraordinary complex thing; "To understand this ... life, which is both in time and beyond time, you must have a very young, innocent mind." - says Krishnamurti.

Education has to see that a student should develop a very young, fresh, innocent mind, which means sensitivity. So far education has stressed life within-time . which covers every movement of thought and intellectual development, every piece of knowledge under the sun. It is thus the mechanical aspect of mind. But beyond-time aspect of life is another dimension in education; It is absolutely free from thought and knowledge. Here 'Life is sacred'. It involves intelligence, psychological freedom, love. It is out and out a non-mechanical living. This when developed in men and women, Krishnamurti thinks, the world will change radically. However there is no absolute difference between the two-aspects of life. "Life is a unitary global movement",⁹ says Krishnamurti. Right education helps to understand one's life in both these aspects, - in its wholeness and totality. Intelligence only implies this wholeness. Krishnamurti makes a distinction between intellect and intelligence, to show the superiority of the latter. He says, - "Intellect is thought functioning independently of emotion, whereas, intelligence is the capacity to feel as well as to reason ; and until we approach life with intelligence, instead of intellect alone, or with emotion alone, no political or educational

system in the world can save us from the toils of chaos and destruction."¹⁰(my underline)

Education, for Krishnamurti, is entrusted with the task of changing oneself from daily mechanical (intellectual) living, to non-mechanical (intelligent) living, which also implies a change of attitude, from me-orientation to cosmic-orientation. It is the ME which vitiates the atmosphere by creating different and conflicting centres of thought, where cosmos being the no-centre brings peace. Further, any movement of ME (mine) involves time, when intelligence or love etc. is beyond time and therefore cosmo-centric (neutral of any centre).

Life, right education and truth fundamentally go together in Krishnamurti. "You know, there is only one truth", Krishnamurti says, "and therefore there is only one way which is not distant from that truth; there is only one method to that truth, because the means are not distinct from the end."¹¹(my underline) Here the only one s way essentially refers to going beyond our self-oriented life. Right education is the way to truth; it (the education) is named right because it aims at freeing oneself from one's sentiments.

emotions and conditionsings (psychological moorings). Thus it is a way to self-discovery and integration. To understand truth, which is unfragmented and whole, a man must be so, because wholeness demands a whole approach. A rightly educated man, because he is integrated and whole, can only understand and establish truth in his life. However, at this point, Krishnamurti may be highly debatable but the fact is - the so-called different ways to truth, as conceived by our daily world, are mainly due to the involvement of our interest (motive or so) - individual or collective, in each case.

Psychological freedom :

To understand the significance of life as a whole, individual as well as collective, needs an integrated outlook, which invariably linked up with the complete order in the individual psychological field. Unless and until this psychological order is realized any effort of peace and harmony in the outward life is bound to be a failure. For psychological walls are far more difficult to break than the Berlin wall. Krishnamurti's philosophy of education emphasises this single basic point of having

psychological indivisibility, because this will generate love, intelligence, sensitivity etc. This psychological wholeness may also imply the absolute and unconditional freedom which Krishnamurti so earnestly desires for every human being. ("I have only one purpose, to make man free; to urge him towards freedom; to help him to break away from all limitations; for that alone will give him eternal happiness;"¹² - Krishnamurti.)

It is far more important, thinks Krishnamurti, to have psychological freedom rather than outward economic or political freedom. For it is individual minds which rule the world, and the disorder and conflict in that field has a natural outcome in our external behaviour. Psychological freedom implies a positive state of mind, which is not a reaction to any particular situation. It is a state of consciousness only negatively aware of itself, for the complete negation (absence) of contradiction in individual mind indirectly affirms the actuality of the state of psychological freedom. This freedom implies wholeness of the mind, which lives above the dual characters of the intellectual world. Duality is an obvious outcome of

our activities from intellect and knowledge. Only a psychologically free being has perfect approach towards life because he alone is beyond selfishness and sentimentalism. Only his approach is holistic, not fragmented by any particular interest or culture; only he can have a real taste of living without fear or despair. Krishnamurti stands, as it were, as a policeman of the psychological field. His education aims at the greening of our inner field or at the psychological transformation.

Aims & Importance of K's education :

Krishnamurti's whole philosophy of education is based on certain fundamental observations in regard to the wholeness of life, an integrated outlook, psychological freedom etc., from where he has not shifted or compromised during his long years of teachings. Further, a basic truth in Krishnamurti is that each individual life needs to blossom fully. Education is for the flowering of life with freedom and without any restriction : restrictions that come on the way by discipline and impositions of ideas and theories in school curriculum. To him, "Freedom is at the beginning, not at the end" ¹³ of education.

Further, Nature in its various appearances - with trees and birds, rivers and flowers etc. has always an important place in Krishnamurti's education; Krishnamurti found that, not only ecologically and economically man is dependent on nature, but also psychologically man is very close to nature. "If you establish a relationship with it (a tree)", says Krishnamurti, "then you have relationship with mankind. You are responsible then for that tree and for the trees of the world. But if you have no relationship with the living things on this earth you may lose whatever relationship you have with humanity, ~~with~~ with human beings..."¹⁴ So it can be seen that most Krishnamurti schools give stress on location in natural environment.

Krishnamurti in his long years of teaching encouraged people to attend to 'What is'. What-is is in the present, is existing and indicates only Facts. These words have tremendous significance. It implies an art of living which is based on facts (non-evaluated what-is) and not on the evaluated past or on the dreamy future. Information of the past and the calculation for the future is after all important when the world of knowledge which is within time e.g. technology, planning, construction etc., are concerned; but the art of living considers life in its totality - within time

and beyond time, which demands total attention in the present.

The aims of education, as conceived by Krishnamurti are as follows:- It is for integration; integration, of body-mind and heart, also integration in respect of outlook on life. Education also aims at flowering of goodness and love. It emphasizes intelligence and wisdom. It draws continuous attention on the enduring values of life such as freedom, fearlessness, humility, goodness, self-knowledge etc.

Krishnamurti's philosophy of life, is in a way, a philosophy of education too, because both aim at a common goal, of establishing life of goodness. The ~~importance~~ importance of his education lies in the fact that it is an education for the whole life, never designed to give man knowledge only which leads eventually to increasing confusion and misery. Krishnamurti's education is for an art of living, which is holistic. It is for integrated and intelligent living.
