

## Chapter 3

### FREEDOM & DISCIPLINE

Freedom can never come through discipline, through resistance; freedom is not a goal, an end to be achieved. Freedom is at the beginning, not at the end, it is not to be found in some distant ideal. 34

- J. Krishnamurti

Education is freedom in discipline; it is not slavery. However the meaning of freedom and discipline need to be understood in its different senses and perspectives.

In the common parlance freedom implies two things, freedom from something and to something, as we generally want freedom from oppression to democracy etc. Thus, freedom to us is a goal, an ideal to be sought and achieved by some means. The concept therefore commonly indicates a dynamism, a relentless tension and no stability.

Although Krishnamurti has a different meaning for freedom. Freedom, for him, is not a reaction; so he says, "...when you say you are free from something, it is merely a reaction, which, because it is a reaction, is going to be the cause of another reaction. One can have a chain reaction, accepting each reaction as a

freedom, but that is not freedom, it is a continuity of the modified past to which the mind clings".<sup>35</sup> True freedom neither involves the process of freeing from something to something else. It is not an ideal that needs to be followed or strived at continuously. "Freedom means : freedom in itself, and not from something."<sup>35</sup> It 'implies complete solitude, an inward state of mind, that is not dependent on any stimulus, on any knowledge.'<sup>37</sup>

In education Krishnamurti emphasizes the psychological-freedom of the students, which in other words, means the unconditioning of their minds from the acquired values of the society. So he once said, "My only concern is to set man absolutely, unconditionally free."<sup>38</sup> This freedom out of the unconditioning of the mind is much more deeper-wider and basic than political, economic or any other freedom. Today, by tradition or culture or through education individual mind is totally committed to this ideal or to that theory. Thus, it is felt that our civilization is an idealizing process; it rationally creates ideals (ideologies) to fill up the present gaps in the society, and then pursues those ideals strenuously.

But, for Krishnamurti, "Ideals are brutal things",<sup>39</sup> for gradually ideals become mutually hostile forces and eventually create disunity, dissension and destruction among their followers. Only psychological freedom helps man to go beyond this life of unintelligent total surrender or total commitment.

Freedom in the present education has different connotation and characteristic deficiencies. Education burdens the mind with miscellaneous information rather than clears it; it dulls sensitivity in the process of competition rather than sharpens it; it creates a perpetual craze for freedom - as if freedom is a distant goal to be achieved - and takes away the genuine availability of it in any particular time. Thus to a common man freedom itself becomes a slavery. A slavery to a superior theory or a noble ideology which has no reality but acts as a goal and in the process generates conflict. The recent upheavals in the communist world may be supposed to provide some of the pertinent examples.

However there is a hope of overcoming it (slavery) when there is no running after freedom. The gradual process involved in the pursuit of political or economic freedom cannot make man really free

(freedom in the psychological sense). It only help man to be relatively free, which means more access to the enjoyment of life. But freedom according to Krishnamurti has quite a different dimension, it is neither gradual nor relative nor external.

Freedom for Krishnamurti "is a state of mind - not freedom from something but a sense of freedom, a freedom to doubt and question everything and therefore so intense, active and vigorous that it throws away every form of dependence, slavery, conformity and acceptance".<sup>40</sup> This freedom 'is not a reaction ; freedom is not choice. It is man's pretence that because he has choice he is free. Freedom is pure observation without direction, without fear of punishment and reward. Freedom is without motive; freedom is not at the end of evolution of man but lies in the first step of his existence. In observation one begins to discover the lack of freedom. Freedom is found in the choiceless-awareness of our daily existence and activity'.<sup>41</sup>

This radical kind of freedom (real freedom) which goes quite contrary to the commonsense view of freedom is the forte of Krishnamurti. Its nature is

purely psychological and its status is absolute and unconditional, which is beyond thought and knowledge.

Education, for Krishnamurti, is a psychological and liberating process. In a way, it is both an unburdening and enriching exercise of the mind. It is unburdening in regard to our psychological conditionings which are in most cases fictional (not-factual) in character. This is a way to keep one's mind always fresh, alive and alert. Education is also a filling process in the context of the accumulation of knowledge and information, which is essential in order to live in the world of sophistications. However the unburdening process constitutes the deeper aspect in the layer in man's education, because it gives shape to one's total approach to life, formulates one's perspective to a specific situations. And Krishnamurti's invocation of freedom in education as well as in other spheres of life, should be understood in this psychological sense. To facilitate this kind of freedom the Krishnamurti schools try to provide the essential environment through location in natural surroundings

of plants and trees etc., through near absence of any psychological pressure.

Freedom & Discipline :

Freedom should be combined with Discipline; otherwise freedom has no meaning at all. This is true nearly always and everywhere, because my freedom is associated with others and when I am not disciplined in exercising my (social) freedom, that obstructs my freedom as well as others' freedom, and eventually I am left with no freedom at all. Briefly, greater freedom of life can only be available when men are disciplined. Freedom thus involves discipline. But discipline in the sense of rigorousness and restrictions put by any outside authority causes more harm to individual freedom than help to it, thinks Krishnamurti. Unlike any traditional meaning discipline, to him, actually means order. Order is to be understood in the sense where activities are done from one's own inner command. In other words, it is a self-regulated life. The word order seems to give more meaning and dignity to individual than discipline. Animals need to be disciplined, to be forced for utilitarian purposes;

but a human being, having developed heart and mind, needs to be his own commander. So when Krishnamurti uses the word discipline, he means order. This is so in his educational philosophy also.

Imposing discipline on children in schools through various regulations, or through certain ideologies etc. narrows the mind and make children see their lives through certain specific images or ideas. Thus it ultimately blocks freedom of the mind (psychological field); Children (like adults) then always carry on with only the known, and never get freedom from it (known). This, according to Krishnamurti, is a process of stagnation, of closing down the mind and of living in the past. This occurs to children in the present education, when any ideal (or a goal) is put before them and they are constantly inspired towards that ideal. It is also in a way worshipping the past, for ideals (goals) are made by the past, structured in the old values and situations. Discipline in schools thus is a kind of denial of the Present, which means the denial of the very essence (flow) of life. In other words, it amounts to making each and every child a second-hand human

being, growing up with another's theory and ideas. So to Krishnamurti, "A well disciplined mind is not a free mind."<sup>42</sup> In another context, Krishnamurti says, "Discipline means order";<sup>43</sup> where "order implies functioning clearly, seeing wholly, without any distortion."<sup>44</sup> This order is inwardly developed which keeps mind choicelessly aware of everything - beauty or ugliness, nobility or degradation etc. This is the process of objective learning which gives enormous value to the facts of life. 'Order' therefore gives a comprehensive and total perspective; whereas discipline in the ordinary sense is something partial, distorted, reactionary and ultimately destructive. At times the so-called disciplined situation explodes in a totally diabolical manner when the rope of discipline is loosened, because discipline, in most cases, is an imposition.

The right education considers discipline only in the sense of order, for it (right education) begins with freedom and culminates into making man unconditionally free, non-mechanical and unperturbed mind. As there is order inherent in everything in the nature, in the stars, planets, and so on,



Krishnamurti likes, that man should be so ordered in the right education.

The ushering of freedom in Krishnamurti's education means a lot e.g. it means a state of mind, where one is not anchored to any idea etc; it means absence of the spirit of competition and comparison; it further means to get freedom from the known (knowledge) and to add an extra or deeper dimension to life, which is the flowering of goodness in individual spirit. It also means 'total responsibility and infinite care'.<sup>45</sup>

However there is also the issue of imparting freedom and order to children, this can possibly be done by making them aware of the facts of their own life and of the actual world. It is hoped that the children will become aware of different facts in a spirit of total non-commitment. Indeed it is one of the most difficult tasks, because each and every child is born with certain inclinations (propensities), reared up with certain value-structure, and faced a society of tremendous dynamism towards becoming something or other. To be free, a child should be given freedom right from the beginning

of education, so that it (freedom) can be dawned to him in the process. For Krishnamurti, "If the end is freedom, the beginning must be free, for the end and the beginning are one".<sup>46</sup> Means and end must be on the same level, unlike the much acclaimed procedure of attaining freedom through an arduous, disciplined process, sometimes through persecution and ~~via~~ bloody revolution.

Krishnamurti's sense of freedom has a deeper dimension, it implies freedom from images especially of images that we built through value judgments, conclusions etc. Of course, not all our images can be avoided or need to be avoided, then there would be questions (challenges) like, whether life without any image (e.g. of a chair etc.) can be possible at all? In Krishnamurti, the images of facts are indeed indispensable, but there can also be a life without images of reactions (e.g. image of goodness etc.). Here is a subtle difference between a normal reaction and an image of a reaction; the first one is obvious the second one i.e. the images of our reactions we create in most cases unconsciously (due to lack of attention). And it is said

occasionally that the society, which is a value-structure, is an outcome of our images of reactions. (Details about image-making in the next chapter.)

In the philosophy of Krishnamurti, freedom is not only connected with order, it also implies death. To understand his sense of freedom, is also to understand death in its most subtle psychological form. For without the death of our memory images, there cannot be any free enquiry. Freedom is the very basis of attention and flowering. "Death is the flowering of the new".<sup>47</sup> Krishnamurti's teaching, to live from moment to moment, is the other way of saying, 'to die from moment to moment'. This is freedom from each and every moment of the past.

Observations :

Nevertheless, it is not easy to grasp only intellectually to what Krishnamurti says on freedom. For example Krishnamurti says, "Freedom lies beyond consciousness".<sup>48</sup> this surely refers to a nebulous state, not experienced before. This obviously denies any kind of freedom derived out of intellectual perspective how much comprehensive it may be. This latter

kind, which we most follow, inheres in it a state of continuous tension of compromise and acceptance, that I am totally aware of my enjoyment of freedom (as a goal) through certain process; whereas in Krishnamurti's way(?), there is no awareness of freedom, only that a free state of mind works orderly in every situation. It is a positive state, negatively arrived at, and indicates a total absence of contradiction within. But the possibility of such a freedom through any education whatsoever seems to be questionable. No education can guarantee freedom; when it guarantees, it merely denies freedom. Only, education can help freedom to emerge.

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