CHAPTER 5

Summary Of J. Krishnamurti's Teachings On Education!
(e) : Summary Of J. Krishnamurti’s Teachings On Education!

"TO UNDERSTAND LIFE IS TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AND THAT IS BOTH THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF EDUCATION"—J. Krishnamurti

Education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each of us that the whole of existence is gathered. J. Krishnamurti’s approach towards the educational philosophy is a holistic approach. A quest for true and holistic education being his prime concern in life, has found expression in the experimental discovery of J. Krishnamurti on Education.

According to the spirit of Krishnamurti’s outlook on the integration through education, the whole task is to awaken the individual. The aim of education should, therefore, be to encourage every pupil to find out for himself his peculiar individual talent and develop it as fully as possible.

Spiritual investigation has to be made individually and education, as conceived by J. Krishnamurti, must be tuned to spiritual life, as the cure of the individual by the individual himself. Here Krishnamurti stresses for self-education through awareness. He has given special emphasis on totality in his life-long talks and writings on education. The purpose of education, near to him, is neither to give more information to pupils, nor to make them more disciplined but to help the student to discover his own uniqueness, to understand his peculiar function in life.

Krishnamurti obviously condemns the present system of mass education and advocates individual teacher-pupil relationship.

But to be educated, as it is now, is merely cultivating a little corner of the vast field of existence disregarding totally the rest of the field. The education that sharpens the human intellect alone, is lop-sided and therefore, falls short of the harmonious development and deeper dimensions of man.

School must have to be temple of learning and not factories of knowledge. Love must be the basis of right education and not the intellect. A human mind bereft
of love is just like a robot or a computer—not human in true sense. The love is the measure of man.

Education is essentially a medium of manifesting in Man what is inherently hidden inside his being. Thus to draw out the best in man is within the object of education. The right education is that which makes the child to grow in maturity of understanding through self-knowing. In this spirit Krishnamurti sponsored five co-educational schools in India, two of them international, as well as an international co-educational school at Brockwood Park, England & Ojay School in America.

As true to the saying of Descartes: "The chief cause of human error is to be found in the prejudices picked up in childhood."

It is to be recalled that a man, if does not cultivate himself, becomes automatically much more worse than an animal. It is a great art of life to cultivate itself to its full flowering.

Thus, education has to discharge its function in preparing the pupils to fathom that plenitude of life at its consummation. An all-round development of a child of today, going to be a father of tomorrow, is the prime responsibility of the teacher instead of merely imparting information and knowledge.

Education is, precisely speaking, a churning process towards the journey of regeneration of man from animal to human and eventually from human to divine!
J. Krishnamurti, to whom Right Education was of great importance, during his lifetime produced a number of books on the subject besides the Letters to the schools in which he endeavoured to put forward what he really and clearly felt.

He regarded education as of prime significance in the communication of that which is central to the transformation of the human mind and the creating of a new culture by reorienting the whole system of education.

Krishnamurti, during decades of holistically examining and speaking about learning, often questioned the basic tenets of education in the relationship of the teacher & taught thus as:

"When you feel responsible, feel responsible for the education of your children—all children. Are you educating them to conform to society, to merely acquire a job? Are you educating them to the continuity of what has been? Are you educating them to live in abstractions, as we are doing now? So what is your responsibility for the education of a human being? That's one problem.

What is your responsibility, if you feel responsible, for human growth, human culture, human goodness? What's your responsibility to the Earth? It is a tremendous thing to feel responsible." [A wholly Different way of Living, copyright K F T]

In the new system of education as envisaged by J. Krishnamurti, teaching and learning are not a dual process. The teacher and pupil learn together. The quality of a teacher in how he teaches is more important than what he teaches.

"Self-knowledge is education. In education there is neither the teacher nor the taught, there is only learning: the educator is learning, as the student is." [Commentaries on Living (Third series)]

The school, as propounded by J. Krishnamurti, must be a place where the children's potentialities should develop naturally in an atmosphere of freedom and a sense of growing life. The school must be an instrument of education in this direction with a purpose to help the child to discover himself and to flower in goodness in an atmosphere of freedom and care where the emphasis is laid on
awakening the creative intelligence of the child and not on mere cultivation of academic excellence.

Education in the modern world has been concerned with the cultivation not of intelligence, but intellect, of memory and its skill. In this process little occurs beyond passing on information from the teacher to the taught in which there is little human relationship. In the present rat race, one totally forgets the most important person of all-the child.

Real education is where one learns about the totally, the wholeness of life. Secure in the environment of affection and sensitivity, a child tasted the joy and taste of learning while growing in sensitivity of life around him.

It is the function of an education not merely to give to the child, information, knowledge but to bring about the intelligence in the child in order to serve the purpose of true education. If one has no intelligence, one is doomed to be slave to environment.

A concept of new education, in its holistic approach, must give an impetus to study further and probe deeper into the implications of J. Krishnamurti's educational philosophy.

So far education has not been concerned with this where it is expected to prepare a human being to meet life, the totality of life, not merely to pass examination and get some job or a place in the bureaucracy.

The school must be an instrument of education in this direction to help the child to discover himself and to flower in goodness by encouraging an intelligent way of learning in an atmosphere of freedom. To quote Krishnamurti here:

"If we are vitally interested, we shall not only try to find out what experiments are being made in education in different parts of the world, but we shall want to be very clear about our own approach to this whole question of why and to what purpose we are educating the children and ourselves; we shall inquire into the meaning of existence, into the relationship of the individual to society, and so on. Surely, educators must be aware of these problems and try to help the child to discover the truth concerning them, without projecting upon him their own idiosyncrasies and habits of thought."
A School after all,” to quote Krishnamurti, “is a place where a child is basically happy, not bullied, not frightened by examinations, not compelled to act according to a pattern or system. It is a place where the art of learning is being taught. If the student is not happy he is incapable of learning this art.

Surely, a school is a place where one learns about the totality of life, the wholeness of life. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore academic subjects as well as their own thinking and their own activities. They come to see how their conditioning distorts their thinking. The awareness of this brings freedom from conditioning and its misery. It is only in freedom that learning can take place. It is responsibility of the teacher through discussion to explore with the student the implications of conditioning and thus end it!”

What a teacher’s job is—creating a new generation, not just passing on some information, but creating a new generation of people.

Education being always one of Krishnamurti’s chief concerns which found expression in the establishment of education centers-schools for the young and study Centers & Retreats for adults.

Some of the schools are wholly residential and the others are day schools. The purpose of these schools is to create the right climate so that the child may develop fully as a complete human being and also to equip the child with the technological proficiency enabling him to function with clarity and efficiency in the modern world so that he is related to the whole of life with a developed aesthetic sense.

A school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. It is the integration of the physical, the mental, the intellectual and the spiritual into one harmonious whole.

With this vision Krishnamurti started schools where children could be educated rightly not only to learn the academic books and subjects, but to learn to read the book of one’s own everyday life.

This was to Krishnamurti the real learning that education should concern itself with.

Thus, a new approach of education is a break-through to an experimental discovery in education as envisaged by Krishnamurti who says thus:
......We must be very clear in ourselves what we want, clear what a human being must be—the total human being not just the technological human being. If we concentrate very much on examination, on technological information, on making the child clever, proficient, in acquiring the knowledge while we neglect the other side, then the child will grow up into a one-sided human being. So we must find a way, which will cover both.... If there is proper education, the student will be able to move in both: in making himself technologically perfect, he will also make himself a worth while human being.”

Krishnamuti Foundations have cropped up all over the world including India, USA and the UK., but they are of a purely administrative nature. There is nothing in the least esoteric about them or about his present teaching. These Foundation make arrangements for circulating his tapes of talks and for the publishing of his books, and help to run the schools he has inspired.

There are five Krishnamurti schools, four in India and one in Brockwoxd Park, in Hampshire, England. Ten percent of the places in all the schools are reserved for non-paying pupils. J. Krishnamurti, in his lifeline visited them all every year for discussions with students and teachers. Although the ordinary academic curriculum is followed in these schools, his main object in starting them, says Mary Lutyens, J. Krishnamurti’s biographer, is to give children a chance to grow-up without any of the national, racial, religious, class and cultural prejudices that build barriers between one human being and another and give rise to so much violence.

The chief difficulty about these Krishnamurti schools has remained to find teachers who are themselves free from all prejudice and yet possess the necessary scholastic qualifications. Still Krishnamurti, who himself felt that he belongs everywhere and nowhere in particular, never lost heart and had plans for more schools in India where education was so desperately needed.

J. Krishnamurti, who launched a string of great educational institutions because of their unique character-building techniques. He did away with conventional examinations “Cruelty has many forms and its ultimate expression is the ultimate examination”, Krishnamurti once told an audience of parents and teachers. To the children, his message was that they were sure to become insensitive to the true values around them if they merely prepare for competitions and cultivate the
desire for success. Based on this perception, the Krishnamurti Foundations in India, U. K. and the U. S. A. started schools that have no examinations but simply an environment, where the child is encouraged to develop its own individuality without fear of outside pressures, in the process of learning to love others and share life with others.

Describing the objectives of the schools, Krishnamurti has said: "The purpose, the aim and drive of these schools is to equip the child with the most excellent technological proficiency so that he may function with clarity and efficiency in the modern world, and far more important, to create the right climate so that the child may develop fully as a complete human being. This means giving him the opportunity to flower in goodness so that he is rightly related to people, things and ideas, to the whole of life."

On another occasions he said: "They must be centers for learning a way of life which is not based on pleasure, on self-centred activities, but on the understanding of correct action, the depth and beauty of relationship and the sacredness of religious life. When the world around us is so utterly destructive and without meaning, these schools must become places of life and wisdom."

At these schools there are no set goals and targets to be achieved for the child. The teacher recognizes the fact that no two children are alike and hence they must be given their own time to develop themselves rather than work to a set pattern or time-table. There are no rewards for good work and no punishment when one student is slow compared to another. There is simply no comparison. There are no set goals and targets to be achieved for the child. The students are encouraged to inquire into those psychological factors that fragment life. The annual visits of J. Krishnamurti and the discussions he used to have with teachers and students, as long as he lived, played a major role in keeping this spirit of inquiry alive.

Here are required the persons who are committed to his perceptions of education rather than professional teachers who work for salaries.

J. Krishnamurti once asked, "What is the function of a teacher? Is he merely a giver of information, a transmitter of knowledge? It is part of the function of a teacher to impart knowledge to the student so that he may have a job when the time comes, and may also, perhaps, help to bring about a better social structure. The student must be prepared to face
life. By the way of his life, by his conduct, attitude and outlook, the teacher can influence and inspire the student and must guide the student towards a better and nobler life. It is the function of a teacher to help the student to understand what he is. And to free himself intelligently from all the conditioning influences so that he will be able to meet life deeply and fully, without fear, without aggressive discontent. Then at least the teacher can inspire the student to greater things.

Surely, when the teacher regards each student as a unique individual and therefore not to be compared with any other, he is then not concerned with system or method. His sole concern is with helping the student to understand the conditioning influences about him and within himself, so that he can face intelligently the complex process of living and not add more problems to the already existing mess. According to Krishnamurti, teaching is not a mere career for the true educator, not a job like any other.

Are we prepared, as parents and teachers, to bring about a new generation of people, a totally different generation of people with totally different minds and hearts? Are we prepared to bring about, through education, a good human being? Can we be factual and so bring about a good human being through education, with a mind that is not confused, that has no fear that has the quality of integrity? The word integrity also means to be whole and to say what one means and not say one thing and do something else. Integrity implies honesty. Normally, the politicians, educators and parents in reality do not want a child to be a new, different kind of human being, they want him to be mechanical, to fit in with tradition, to conform, to believe, to accept authority. Inspite of this, if one can actually free oneself from fear, actually, inwardly, deeply, then one can be a different human being, then one can become the coming generation. If one may watch the older generation and one will see how fearful it is of everything, of death, of disease, of going against the current of tradition, of being different, to being new.
It is going to be very difficult for a generation, brought up in religious faiths, to free themselves in order to embrace a new perception of life. That is why J. Krishnamurti was so anxious to establish schools where a new generation may be educated without any of the old beliefs, traditions and superstitious. It is a great experiment in itself. While acknowledging the necessity of being able to teach knowledge, he wanted the teachers at the schools, he founded, to bring another kind of learning into the classroom, a learning that is not based on memory and that the students and the teacher engage in together.

J. Krishnamurti talked about bringing non-verbal learning into the classroom and about the necessary condition for this other learning based on non-verbal communication. He advocated the absence of comparison and competition. What emerges out of this is the possibility of a wider, non-verbal understanding out of which comes a care for the whole individual and the urgency to understand and free ourselves from our conditioning. Within this, knowledge operates, and this knowledge is kept in this right place, is permeated by this other understanding.

Once Krishnamurti said:

"People need not be taught, they need be woken up."

Is it possible to help the student not only to learn academic things but also to learn about himself?

The real or right education must have the intention and the energy to see that the students become good human beings—human beings who are whole and not divided, fragmented, broken up in themselves. And in that there is the awakening of intelligence. That is the function of all education, to bring about a new generation of people.

The purpose of education is not only to acquire knowledge, but also to go beyond knowledge to a transformation of consciousness. When all this takes place, a new human being will emerge.

J. Krishnamurti regarded education as of prime significance in the communication of that which is central to the transformation of the human mind and
the creation of a new culture. He considered education as an instrument, of social change.

Modern education with its emphasis on nationalism, ambition, competition, etc. can hardly contribute to world peace. In fact, the thousand of wars fought by men during the last five thousand years merely demonstrate the utter uselessness of the prevailing educational system and institutions. But of the drawbacks of modern education which deprives man of his inner peace & unity, no one has spoken with more eloquent lucidity than J. Krishnamurti saying categorically through many of his talks & writings on right kind of education that our pupils grow best when they are allowed to realize what they are and to reject all spiritual authority, all tradition all belief. They must be discontented, in revolt against all established truths & thought-patterns.

Here lies the crux of what this original thinker stood for as if profound exponent of the ancient teaching of the 'Upanishads' which speaks thus:

"Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaya"

(i. e. 'Education is that which liberates')

J. Krishnamurti distinguishes between two modes of the human mind: the totally conditioned and the absolutely free. He refers to the former as consciousness, to the latter as intelligence. According to him, consciousness is determined by thought, which is divisive, and hence cannot touch truth. Consciousness is further determined by time; it is a movement from past to future which derogates the present, treating it merely as complementary to these two notions. Consciousness is further determined by desire — also depicted by Krishnamurti as equivalent to the known. Consciousness is knowledge, since knowledge is also a product of the past. Consciousness is a movement from the known to the known. Knowledge or the known is ever limited, never complete, therefore, so is consciousness. Like a computer, consciousness has been and still is programmed according to religious, nationalistic and other culture agendas.

Totally different from consciousness is intelligence, synonymous in Krishnamurti’s terminology, with ‘the Unknown,’ ‘the immeasurable,’ ‘nothingness,’
'what is' and 'truth'. The unknown cannot be grasped by consciousness. Only when the known comes to an end, to rest, to suspension, might the Unknown be revealed.

In view of the above, the purpose of education for Krishnamurti is to clear away the smoke of self-centricity, fragmentation, fear, confusion, loneliness, possessiveness, envy, violence etc.,—all belonging to consciousness, to the past, to enable the revelation of the flame, of the immeasurable. Now, the question is how to be free from the known? How to find truth? Here, Krishnamurti replies: "One cannot find it. The effort to find truth brings about a self-centered end; and that end is not truth. A result is not truth, result is the continuation of thought extended or projected. Only when thought ends, there is truth. There is no ending of thought through discipline, through any form of resistance. Listening to the story of 'what is' brings its own liberation. It is truth that liberates, not effort."

For Krishnamurti, intelligence cannot be a result or an outcome of any action. Furthermore, education is depicted by him as an invitation to listen to the story of 'what is.' Thought is constantly telling us another story, namely the story of 'what should be.' The story of 'what is' can only be listened to when thought is not. Explains J. Krishnamurti: "Thought has created all the things in the world—great paintings, poetry, music and so on. Thought has created everything except nature. The tiger has not been created by thought, nor that lake which you see." Thought is limited, nature is not. This is the reason why nature is given such an important role in Krishnamurti's life and teaching. He himself has lived in nature; the schools are in nature; every page of his diaries/notebooks starts and ends with nature-experience. For him, the tiger and the river, the tamarind tree and the moon, are the only authentic reflections of our human nature, not as depicted by thought but as it is.

Furthermore, the story of 'what is' cannot be found in books. For him, books are the past—'warehouses' of accumulated knowledge, of old values. Intelligence has nothing to do with information; therefore it does not belong to, nor is it found in or derived from books.

Nature is seen a supportive environment as the nature-experience is direct communication between teacher and student taking place at the present moment.
In his remarkable book on education entitled "Education & the significance of Life", J. Krishnamurti says with emphasis as a core of his views on right kind of education thus: "To understand life is to understand ourselves, and that is both the beginning and the end of education." He further maintains that: "the ignorant is not the unlearned but he who does not know himself."

The learned man, for him, is stupid when he relies on books, on knowledge and on authority to give him understanding. "Real understanding" he points out, "comes only through self-knowledge, which is awareness of one's total psychological process."

For Krishnamurti, as we have already seen, intelligence is not to be achieved or gained, but rather to be revealed, as it is always here and now. The teacher-student communication is undertaken to awaken that which is already there, which is the very essence of each of them. Both start from a conditioned mind and have the capacity to transcend it, to find in themselves a 'place', which is free. The seeds of freedom are already there, to be nourished by the immediate communication of the participants in the process of education.

Thus, owing to a comprehensive view on education, J. Krishnamurti holds that "a school is a place where one learns about the totality of life, the wholeness of life. It is a place where both the teacher and the taught explore academic subjects as well as their own thinking and their own activities. They both function at the same level in the active process of learning, and come to see how their conditioning—which is the self, distorts their thinking. The awareness of this brings freedom from conditioning. It is only in freedom that learning can take place."

Therefore, education being a pathless-path, it is created spontaneously, at every step, by teacher and student alike. It is created every moment anew, thus leading from the present to the present. It is nothing less than an experimental way, not at all theoretical way of learning.

J. Krishnamurti laid great stress in the quality of education to one of excellence in every aspect of it.

He was himself deeply involved with the founding of many schools, (with an intent of a different kind of education) six in India, one in Britain and one in
He was himself deeply involved with the founding of many schools, (with an intent of a different kind of education) six in India, one in Britain and one in America: (Appended herewith is the detailed list of Krishnamurti Schools in India and abroad, denoted as Annexure----I)

ANNEXTURE----I

Krishnamurti Education Centres

"...to find out what is right education, we will have to inquire into the whole significance of living.

RAJGHAT EDUCATIONAL CENTRE
Rajghat Fort
Varanasi-221001
Utter Pradesh
E.mail: kfivns@satyam.net.in

Fax (0542) 2430717

VASANTA COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
Rajghat Fort
Varanasi-221001
Utter Pradesh
Telephone: (0542) 2430587

B.A. & B.E.D.
(humanities only)

NACHIKET
Village Devidhar
P. O. Raadi (Via Dunda)
Utter Kashi-249151
Utter Pradesh
E.mail: sraonachilket@rediffmail.com
Telephone: (013712) 25417/25474/22411

Elementary School
for local student

RISHI VALLEY SCHOOL
Rishi Valley-517352
Chittoor District
Andhra Pradesh
E.mail: office@rishivalley.org

Boarding school
Ages 7 to 19

Boarding School
Ages 8 to 17
THE SCHOOL
‘Damodar Gardens’
Besant Avenue
Madras-600 020
E-mail: alcyone@sify.com
Telephone: (044) 2491 5854

THE VALLEY SCHOOL
‘Haridvanam’
17th K. M. Kanakapura Road
Thatguni Post
Banglore-560 062
E-mail: kfiblr@blr.vsnl.net.in
Fax: (080) 2843 5240/2843 5241

BAL-ANAND
‘Akash Deep’
28, Dongersy Road
Malabar Hill
Bombay-400 006
Telephone: (022) 2367 2760 (9.30am-1.00pm)/2363 6244
E-mail: kfinmumbai@vsnl.net

SAHYADRI SCHOOL
Tiwai Hills, Rahgurunagar Taluk
Pune District-410 513
E-mail: sahyadrischool@vsnl.net
Fax: (02135) 284348
Telephone: (02153) 284270/71/72

THE OAK GROVE SCHOOL
220 West Lomita Avenue
Ojai, CA 93023, U. S. of A.
E-mail: office@oakgroveschool.com
Fax: (001-805) 646 6509
Telephone: (001-805) 646 8236

BROCKWOOD PARK SCHOOL
Bramdean,
Krishnamurti’s dialogues with young boys and girls in the K. F. I. schools were a rare feast to the eyes & ears. He enabled the flowering of intelligence in them.

The awakening of true perceptions is like a flowering. If that has taken place, then the other things are very simple to communicate to the child.

The flowering implies freedom, as in the case of any plant that requires freedom to grow. It is the total unfolding and cultivation of our minds, our hearts and our physical well-being. It can take place only when there is clear and objective perception. It is not merely what to think, but how to think clearly. With the awakening of the heart goodness is born out of affection and love. When the mind, the heart and body are in harmony, then the following takes place naturally and in excellence. This is the responsibility of the educator, and teaching is the greatest profession on earth.

The function of the teacher is not to teach but to help to put the learner in possession of himself. Each individual should enquire within himself. He is his own center and possesses the truth in himself. Its discovery is the process and purpose of education and therefore of life. The aim of education is to learn about oneself and thereby come upon self-discovery.

In this sense Krishnamurti schools are centers of a new generation with a new outlook where both the educator and the educated are learning in the deeper sense of the word. The sole purpose of such schools as well as the whole task of education is to awaken the individual;— to creates human beings who are integrated and therefore intelligent. It is a matter of perception and, understanding for one to give one’s whole life and interest to it, So that there can be peace & happiness for man only through right education. A teacher who really loves to teach can help the students to grow up as quite different human being. What a teacher’s job is—
creating a new generation, not just passing on some information, preoccupied with programming the young brain with massive doses of information and skills.

Speaking on education, J. Krishnamurti says, “What I am interested is to waken the mind... we pour in knowledge in the child which only dulls the mind. A mind that functions in knowledge is a limited mind. But a mind that is extra-ordinary alert, tremendously alive, not only learning from books, memorizing some facts, but also learning how to look, how to listen, such a mind will impart its aliveness to a mind which is still seeking, enquiring, innocent. Therefore knowledge will not destroy.”

Education, as always advocated by J. Krishnamurti, is not only learning about academic subjects but to educate oneself, and as long as education does not cultivate an integrated outlook on life, it has very little significance.

For J. Krishnamurti, no ideal or system can provide the right kind of education as education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each of us that the whole of existence is gathered.

“Self-knowledge is education. In education there is neither the teacher nor the taught, there is only learning. Thus, the whole task of Education is to awaken the individual!”

[Questions and references are from “Commentaries on Living,” The “First and Last Freedom”, Tradition & Revolution Series I&II “Why are you being educated?” “Education & the significance of Life”, “the flame of Attention”, “on Education”.]

Chronological Bibliography of Books on Education by J.Krishnamurti is Appended hereinafter! denoted as Annexure—II

ANNEXURE- II

Chronological Bibliography of Books on Education by Krishnamurti

Education as Service. Adyar (Madras) : Theosophist Office (1912).
The Purpose of Education. Adyar (Madras) : Star Office (1930).
