

Jiddu Krishnamurti

(1895 - 1986)

"Today's education prepares us for various professions and vocations that can only contribute to our miseries and illusions. True education not only trains the mind to take up various vocations but also educates the mind. Education develops love and understanding among people and does not promote only industrialization that has the potential to annihilate others. Education should help us learn the permanent values of life and develop creativity."

Born in a Brahmin family in Madanapalli, Andhra Pradesh, Jiddu Krishnamurti acquired a theosophical background, since his father had been a theosophist and had migrated to Madras on being invited by the President of the Theosophical Society, Annie Besant. After being educated privately, he wanted to prepare himself for some examinations of the London University. He left for California in 1922 with his younger sibling Nityanand who suffered from a respiratory disease. In 1924, while he was traveling to India, he received the news of the death of his brother and this transformed his entire psyche. He began to think about the very basis of all existence on earth.

Krishnamurti's pronouncements appear to be heavily loaded with mysticism. Though he did not write any treatise on education, nor did he present any scheme of education to be followed, his views on education are found in a scattered form in the different conversations that he had with his admirers and associates.

Krishnamurti said:

On Life and Education: We are all endowed with emotions, moods, feelings and sentiments, searching for a place where there is no fear or mutual distrust. We are compelled to toe the line of the societal order and respect the traditions. To avoid confrontation with the authorities and the forces that bind the society, we hesitate to revolt and prefer the status quo. There can be no two opinions on the need for reforms. What is the purpose of living and what is the importance of life? The purpose of life will be narrow and zero if we live to get more and more out of the mundane affairs of life. Is it to get educated in the sense that is understood to day i.e. become an expert in a subject or a scientist? If so, then we would be responsible for the destruction of the world bringing in only misery and ills. True, there is a need for education. But this education should enable us to understand the importance of life. We should understand the difference between individual and personal spheres. The individual is accidental i.e. he is shaped by the circumstances and the environment in which he is brought up. Modern education is, in fact, based on such accidental factors encouraging corruption and self-centeredness. Today's education prepares ... and vocations

but also educates the mind. Education develops love and understanding among people and does not promote only industrialization that has the potential to annihilate others. Education should help us learn the permanent values of life and develop creativity.

True Education: The current education is making life dependent upon machines. Engineers all over the world are busy making devices that reduce the human involvement. If the human element is gradually eliminated with the progress of technology, what will happen to the people? We will have a lot of idle time at our disposal. Education should promote inner experiences and enable one to avoid self-deception. It should enable us to help our fellow-beings and unshackle them from worldly affairs. As long as we stick to our ideals and principles this will not be possible, as ideals are an obstruction in understanding the present shape of things. Man is not a machine and cannot be adjusted to predetermined structure of things. There is a vast distance between the present and the potential future shape of things. True education cannot be based on any established system of things and should not be regarded as an instrument of molding individuals into a particular shape. True education should enable people to feel free from mundane bondage facilitating people to love one another and feeling pride in helping others, making people realize their real selves in their individual capacities. Love makes us understand others. When there is love it is articulated at once and there is no need for delivering long lectures to convince others. Religious bodies and the government should not be allowed to control education. Human life cannot reach its peak if we are educated on the basis of fragments of knowledge. An individual should be given full freedom to reach

his maximum potential without being compelled to conform to the existing patterns. Education should enable the child to become a complete person and perceive life in its entirety. In other words, the child should not be compelled to follow the traditional ideals. Instead it should be allowed to create new values and help others to realize themselves. The world is facing a crisis today and this is the consequence of the current system of education. If we have to overcome this crisis, we have to give up our principles and ideals and squarely face the realities of the situation. We accept the things as they are and build the character of our children in the traditional ways. These traditional values can never bring about the desired results. We, to control our children, sometimes use reward and punishment. This is like applying an undesirable force. A teacher who understands the complexities of a child's life will help them develop their personalities in the desired fashion. We should not impose our views on our children and stunt their growth. By doing so we are preventing the child from evolving into a healthy personality. If the child is to be freed from tensions that hamper growth, the atmosphere at the school should be similar to that of home.

The School: The right type of education should remove all those barriers that impede excellence in life. Big schools should be discouraged if the real purpose of education is to be achieved. Real education can be imparted only through small schools where the strength of the students in each class is limited to manageable proportions and individual attention is given to each child. In a class with limited strength, the teacher will be more concerned with his students interacting with them on an individual basis and helping them to reach their maximum potential. Work should be distributed to teachers

according to their interests, aptitudes and abilities. Every teacher should make sincere efforts to understand the background of each child as that helps a lot in providing the desirable direction to the child. A big load of books should be avoided in school. The co-curricular activities should be conducted in a democratic manner where participation of all the children and teachers is made obligatory. Each student in the school should be provided with the necessary guidance, as this guidance will enable the child not to acquire a capacity for self-direction. If the education is to serve its intended purpose, the teacher should lead the student to understand the truth and purpose of life, and help the student in his search for truth.

