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Discovery of Truth: Insight of J. Krishnamurti

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Abstract:

Man throughout the human history has been making painstaking attempts to get Reality or Truth. The great religious traditions of mankind have their scriptures, the temples and faithful priests, but they are unable to save the society from religious, social, economic and other exploitations; because, in the course of time they have not changed. In this state J. Krishnamurti shows a very practical way to realize Truth. To him the understanding of life with all its miracles of sorrows and sufferings, smiles and tears lead one to the discovery of Truth. So he travels with the message that 'Truth is a pathless land'. The originality and freshness of his approach lie in the fact that in transporting his messages he avoids the hazard of limitation, authority, idealism and shows his listeners a way to touch Reality which is free from all types of dogmatism and superstitions. The debate on the perplexing issue over the means of attaining truth or reality without a guru or method is the main focus of this paper. Choiceless awareness, stillness of mind, self knowledge, etc. are the topics presented in the following pages from Krishnamurti's perspective.

1. Introduction

The search for Truth is an unending journey. Scientists or religious thinkers and others are all committed unreservedly to the search for Truth. Dr. Radhakrishnan also opines that the story of man's pilgrimage is a perpetual quest for Truth, searching, finding and setting forth to search again. Religion tries to satisfy our instinct for Truth. God is 'Satya svarupa'. He is of the nature of Truth. Gandhi used to say that it is better to say that Truth is God than God is Truth. This statement is a commentary on the Upanisad text, 'tapo brahma'. The Buddha states that reason based on evidence is our only guide to Truth. J. Krishnamurti is also one of such thinkers who try to quench the thirst for Truth, through his different talks and discussions with the masses. Krishnamurti is a challenge to all thinking people, to all those who are seeking Truth, Happiness, God or Reality. He defines Truth as life and mentioned the futility of exploring it. As he considers Truth as life he negates the different approaches of man to find out what Truth is.

2. Truth Is Life

Krishnamurti describes Truth in a very practical way as he said that Truth is life. It is the very understanding of life. In his own words "everyone in the world seeks Truth and imagines that Truth is away from the ordinary current of life, whereas, 'TRUTH IS LIFE'. The understanding of life gives knowledge of Truth, and the moment you understand the working of life, you are beginning to understand the working of Truth."¹ From this statement of J. Krishnamurti, it is very clear that, this thinker shows a very practical way to realize Truth. In the realm of different religious faiths, it is only Krishnamurti, who reminds us that Truth lies in the fulfilment of life and not in the escape from life. The understanding of life, with its all miracles of sorrows and sufferings leads one to the discovery of Truth. We are always in the search of Truth. But we have to understand the meaning of seeking and the searching of Truth. Is Truth ever to be found by seeking or can it being recognized? If one can say that 'This is the truth', there will be no value of seeking at all. So Truth cannot be conceived, it can only be discovered through the action of understanding, which arises from the choiceless awareness of the psychological structure of the self. One can realize the Truth by experimenting, by oneself. So the discovery of Truth is personal experience where no external help or effort is needed. When one can fulfill the life with pure understanding he can be the master of Truth. In order to describe Truth Krishnamurti stated that like a dead thing Truth is not static. Truth is something living, moving, which has no resting place, which is in no temple, mosque or church, which no religion, no teacher, no philosopher can lead to. As Truth is a living thing as it is nothing but the understanding of anger, brutality, violence, despair, sorrow, agony etc. of one's life. The understanding of all is the Truth. A person can understand it only if he knows how to look at these things in his life. So he can never look the Truth through an ideology, through a screen of words or through hopes and fears.

Krishnamurti was brought up in the atmosphere of true search for Truth and also experimented various methods, and rejected them as ineffective with reference to the final goal. It is very essential to appreciate the value and significance of his approach to solve the problem, as he arrives at the right approach to Truth by critically examining and only after that rejecting the traditional and conventional methods. According to Krishnamurti, the solution of a problem lies in the understanding of the problem. To understand one should not worry about it. To listen the problem and not doing anything or just put question and live with it; is the

very understanding. Krishnamurti says that it is just as a woman bears the seed in her womb. Our mind has the general tendency to ask 'how'. We want to know how to read a book. A child wants to know how to read alphabets. So he goes through carefully, slowly, how to read a, b, c and so on. The moment when one asks 'how'; he asks for a system, a method, so that he can practice the system, the method in order to understand himself. Krishnamurti asserts the fruitlessness of systems or methods in so far as the question of the achievement of Truth is concerned. Because Truth cannot be approached or held by such a mind, which is conditioned by any pattern of thought. That is why he declared, - "to me there is no such thing as a technique for living, a technique for the realization of Truth. If there were such technique for you to learn, you would merely be enslaved by another system."² Practicing a system or method the mind become mechanical. But as the mind is a living thing it cannot be understood through a system. One has to watch it, move with it, understand it and that is very difficult to do for many people and therefore we say - 'tell me how to do it quickly.' No way can help to touch the goal but the patient observation of the self and it needs a great deal of attention. For Krishnamurti there is no method for self-knowledge.

3. Refusal of Guru-Disciple Relationship

Unlike the popular notion, Krishnamurti says that no guru, no book or scriptures can lead us to self-knowledge and then to Reality. All dependence on another is an obstacle and hindrance to the experience of the real. We say we need a guru because we are confused and the guru is helpful to point out what truth is, and he knows much more about life than we do. We choose a guru according to the gratification that he will give us and our choice is dependent on our gratification. But can anyone clear up our confusion? Being confused in our relationship with people, with property, with ideas we seek a guru. But this confusion can be resolved only when we understand our self in relationship. If we look in to our self we discover our self as a second hand human being. It may be rather unpleasant to consider one self a second hand human being. But we are full of other people's knowledge- what some body or some teacher or some guru said, what the Buddha said, what Christ said and so on. We are full of that. Again if we have been to a school, college, university, there also we have been told what to do, what to think. We don't like to choose a guru who says- 'depend on yourself'; but he is only a real guru who will tell us to understand our self. Krishnamurti felt in true sense that 'to follow another is to deny the understanding of yourself'. Maurice Frydman stated in one place- "the first thing to remember is that every great teacher was a rebel and an iconoclast. Invariably he refused to abide blindly by the traditions and the dogmas of the past. And the greatest and the most pernicious of these traditions was the belief that truth can be had from another, that one can discover and experience for another.The first act of every great teacher was to break the yoke of dependence and proclaim the simple truth that man can build only on what he is and not on what he can be made into."³ However, for the perception of Truth if no guide is needed, one may raise question that what the function of a religious or a spiritual teacher is? It is here to be noted that in absolute sense Krishnamurti does not deny the necessity of a guru. As he himself is a teacher of humanity, he points out that in the case of a prisoner who is in search of Truth, the function of a guru or mediator is to describe what freedom is. A guru can show what creates the prison and the prisoner himself is to break it down. The kernel of Krishnamurti's teaching lies in the following sentences- "the 'teachings' are not something out there in a book. What the teaching is or say, 'look at your self, go in to yourself, inquire in to what there is, understand it, go beyond it', and so on. You are not to understand the teachings; you are to understand yourself. The teachings are only a means of pointing, of explaining, not the teaching but the necessity of understanding your selves. Do not try to understand what the speaker says, but understand that what he says act as a mirror in which you look at your self."⁴

4. Denial of the Popular Notion of Meditation

Man throughout history has been thinking that to achieve the unknown Reality we must prepare, we must do certain things, discipline ourselves, resist every form of temptation, control sex, conform to a pattern established by religious authority; or we must deny the world, withdraw in to an abbey, to some cave where we can meditate. But what is meditation at all? Meditation is a kind of thinking. It is pointed reflection. So many Indian terms are there to indicate meditation, such as- Manana, Nididhyasana, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi etc. Manana and Dharana are better translated as concentration. Samadhi is the final absorption or transcendental experiences. The term meditation can possibly be stand for Nididhyasana and Dhyana. But is it possible to discipline oneself without suppression, control, escape? A mind that is tortured, frustrated, shaped by environment or conforming to the social morality must in itself be confused; and such a confused mind can never discover the Truth. Both in east and west there are many schools, systems, and methods of meditation- including Zen and Yoga. There are systems which say, 'watch the movement of your big toe, watch it, watch that etc.' there are some other systems which advocate sitting in a certain posture, breathing regularly or practicing awareness. Again some other system gives certain words, by repeating one will have some extraordinary transcendental experience. Krishnamurti shows the absurdity of the thing. With most of us concentration is a process of exclusion. One may be interested in so called meditation but his thoughts are distracted, so he fixes his mind on a picture, an image, or an idea or exclude all other thoughts. This process of concentration is exclusion and we consider it as a means of meditation. At the moment of meditation we fix our mind on a word whether it is Amen or Aum or Coca Cola but the mind wanders all over the worlds. There is a constant interruption of other ideas, thoughts or other emotions and we try to push them away and spend the time battling with our thoughts. By repeating such a word what it is no matter, indefinitely one will obviously have a certain experience because by repetition the mind becomes quite. This well known phenomenon, which has been practiced thousands of years in India, is called as Mantra Yoga. Krishnamurti is of the opinion that by repeating it one can induce the mind to be gentle, quite and soft but it is still a contemptible or little mind. Because, in this quietness there are certain hidden responses arising from the unconscious, and from outside the consciousness. But it is still a state in which there is no understanding. Krishnamurti defines this state of mind with an example. One may pick up a piece of stick from street and start worshipping it by putting flowers in front of it. Worshipping it every day, if one day he stops to put flowers in front of it, then it will

become a sin. Meditation is not something conforming to a pattern as tradition says. Tradition asks for a teacher to help to meditate. Both East and West have their own form of tradition of prayer, contemplation and confession. The teacher or the guru whom we may regard as the master, he savior or the son of God knows and we don't know. They ask us to practice a method day after day that we can eventually get. Trying to practice it by suppressing our own thought and desires we make a conflict between what we are and what we should be according to the system. It is nothing but an effort and for a mind that is making an effort is difficult to understand Truth.

5. A New Step toward Meditation

Pointing the inadequacy of the traditional approach of meditation, Krishnamurti suggested another type of concentration, which is attention. Meditation demands an astonishingly alert mind. It is the understanding of the totality of life in which every form of fragmentation has ceased. Meditation is not control of thought, because control of thought creates conflict in the mind. The very understanding of the structure and the origin of thinking and its own discipline lead to a state where thought will not interfere. Meditation is the awareness of every thought and feelings without justification. Watching the whole movement of thought and feeling one can have the proper understanding. Out of this awareness of thought without justification comes silence. Silence comes when thought has understood its beginning, and also understood how all thought is never free but always old. This silence is nothing but meditation in which the person who meditates is entirely absent. In this way Krishnamurti describes such a type of meditation where insight and revelation come to men of their own accord as opposed to meditation, which rigidly follows a path, a discipline or a method set down by others. So, self-knowledge of the person who meditates is the beginning of meditation, not the knowledge picked up from books or scriptures or from authority. Self-knowledge implies being aware of every moment of thought and feeling and knowing all the layers of consciousness, whether it is superficial or hidden. Krishnamurti expresses how meditation is the expression of the daily activities in one's life, - "...when you are so aware, then there is attention; to attend not only to see the speaker but also to what your wife is telling you or your husband is telling you or your children are telling you, what the politicians are telling you- their trickery, their search for power, position. When you so profoundly attend. That is also meditation."⁵

In his different writings he pleads and begs the reader not to accept anything on its authority, but instead to undertake a profound inward search to verify the Truth or untruth. His voice is fully reflected in Buddha's teachings when Buddha declared 'know thyself'. Krishnamurti rejects the approach of the organization in the spiritual field. Organizations, whether social or religious wield authority and guide man to the discovery of Truth. But Krishnamurti opines that Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or to coerce people along any particular path. As belief is a purely individual matter so it cannot and must not be organized. If someone organizes it, then it becomes dead and it's become a creed or religion, to be imposed on others. Everyone throughout the world is attempting to do it. If an organization is created for the purpose it become bondage and must cripple the individual and prevent him from self realization, by establishing his uniqueness, Krishnamurti in his life himself decided to dissolve the organization, 'The Order of the Star in the East'; as he happened to be the head of the Order. In many talks and discussions questions were put to Krishnamurti why he has dissolved it or what about the reaction of Mrs. Annie Besant who on the one hand gives birth to 'The Order of the Star of the East'; and on the other hand treated Krishnamurti like a son. Krishnamurti however in these hair-splitting analyses emphatically asserts that it was not the change of 'attitudes' because of which he moved away from his position. Rather it was a total change, which he experienced; he felt that the Truth in life had to be discovered by each individual for himself. The whole concept of Guru and Followers became unreal to him and he had to step aside from a position, which he realized was a false one.

6. Stillness of Mind and Discovery of Truth

Krishnamurti was never tired to repeat it that Truth cannot be conceived, it can only be discovered through the action of understanding which arises from the choiceless awareness. It can be understood that in his philosophy refuting the discipline, methods and different traditional approach, Krishnamurti does not consider them to be absolutely irrelevant. Criticizing all these he only points out the inadequacy of these in order to discover the Truth. He explores the fruitlessness of action that is based on idea and also pleads for the action based on intelligence, which is contrasted with the action of will of the mind. Action of will involves choice, resistance and effort. Choice implies confusion and conflict. It implies dissipation of energy, division of the consciousness and distraction in attention. Silence of mind, which is required for the discovery of Truth, cannot be brought about by the action of will, as it implies effort, duality, fragmentation of consciousness and self perpetuation.

Krishnamurti asserts that the discovery of Truth lies in the very understanding of life, which comes through the observation of what is true as true and false as false without justification. As already mentioned; to Krishnamurti, understanding of Truth as life comes only when the mind is very quiet. Our mind is agitated by various social, moral, economic problems. Then how can such an agitated mind be quiet? Can a formula, a discipline, a system make the mind quite or still? Or when the mind is made quiet by such an external effort, is that quietness, is that stillness? Krishnamurti asserts that such a mind that is enclosed within an idea, within a formula is a dead mind. Most people who try to be so-called spiritual are dead because they have trained their mind to be quiet. Quietness of mind or the tranquility of mind is not a thing to be produced by will power, by any action of desire. If someone try to do it then the mind is isolated, enclosed and such stillness of mind, based on external power is very temporary.

Most of us seek quietness of mind by withdrawing from active life to village, to a monastery, to the mountain or avoid people who give them trouble. But such isolation is not stillness of mind. Stillness of mind comes only when there is no process of isolation through accumulation but complete understanding of the whole process of relationship. Only the total understanding brings the possibility of having tranquility of mind. This mind is creative, active and it is not a dead mind. In stillness there is no projection of thought. Thought is the reaction of memory, thought may express creativeness but thought in itself can never be creative.

Krishnamurti explores that the mind, which is free from thought and conditioning, is silent mind. This silence is neither brought about by thought nor by a reward or punishment. That silence has no motive. The capacity to be free from sorrow and to be constantly aware of the ways of the mind is essential for the silence of mind. In one place explaining the necessity of the silence of mind Krishnamurti states, "silence is necessary for such seeing, as night is necessary for the day; also that silence is neither the product of noise nor of the cessation of noise. That silence comes naturally when all other qualities have come in to being."⁶

The discovery of Truth is completely an individual process. It lies in the total understanding of one's own life. Understanding of the whole structure of consciousness and the meaning of pleasure, sorrow and despair brings the quietness of the brain cell. Then perhaps one may come upon that mystery which nobody can reveal to him and nothing can destroy. That is truth.

7. Conclusion

To see without distortion the fact of what one is, not what he thinks he should be is the beginning of self knowledge which leads to the discovery of Truth. Krishnamurti refuses the guru disciple relationship, the so-called notion of meditation or any external attempt for such spiritual discovery. Denying any guru-like authority, he urges us not to take his word for anything he says, and urges us to find out for ourselves. It seems that all the prophets remind us the same truth. S.Radhakrishnan stated in a hair splitting analyses- " when the Upanishads proclaim the great truth 'That art thou', when the Buddha teaches that each human individual has in him the power to grow in to a Buddha or a Bodhisattva, when the Jew say that the "spirit of man is the candle of the Lord", when Jesus tells his hearers that the kingdom of Heaven is within them and when Muhammad affirms that God is nearer to us than the very artery of our neck, they all mean that the most important thing in life is not to be found in anything external to man but is to be found in the hidden strata of his thought and feeling."⁷ However, the Truth that Krishnamurti wants to take us to is as ancient the heart of being, but the way he shows is supremely adapted to the present state of the human mind.

8. References

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