

The Essence of Jiddu Krishnamurti's Talks with Teachers and Students: an Analysis

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Abstract

Jiddu Krishnamurti is acknowledged as a foremost spiritual educator in India as well as in other parts of the world including Britain and the USA. His public talks inspired numerous people and many of his books on education have been published. Krishnamurti can be viewed as an outstanding exponent of the Indian religious tradition from a variety of standpoints. Krishnamurti founded seven schools, with all of which he maintained close contact. The talks to teachers discussed the meaning of right education; the long vision; action; the true denial; competition; fear; teaching; and learning; the good mind; the negative approach; inward flowering, etc.

Keywords: Jiddu Krishnamurti's Talks on education, The Essence of Teaching

Introduction

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) is recognized in India as a major religious teacher. He is also widely known in other parts of the world including Britain and the USA. He gave thousands of public talks, published many books, and in addition was actively involved with education. He founded his first school in India in 1928 and six others in India, England and the USA during the course of his life. He also published several books concerned with education. The essence of his teaching was that there is a sacred or transcendent dimension to life, and only way to come upon this is by deep inward reflection and sceptical inquiry which may lead to a transformation in consciousness. Krishnamurti warned against turning to scriptures or teachers for guidance but insisted on the obsolete importance of independent and unprejudiced thinking. He rejected all religious traditions and maintained that adherence to any of them would limit a person's ability to explore fundamental questions. In the context of religious studies, Krishnamurti can be viewed from a variety of standpoints. First, he was influenced by the Theosophical Society. The society attracted and encouraged a number of talented people who played an important role in the spread of orientalism in the West, and others who became important figures in art, music and cultural life. Secondly, Krishnamurti can be viewed as an outstanding exponent of the Indian religious tradition. And thirdly he came into contact with the currents of educational and psychological thought in Europe during and after the First World War.

Krishnamurti founded seven schools, with all of which he maintained close contact. Apart from the schools at Rishi Valley and Varanasi, there are three other Krishnamurti schools in India, in Madras, Bangalore and Bombay. Many of his friends and associates became teachers. However some of his friends and associates regarded him as an Indian, despite his European refinement. His talks, and more particularly his dialogues with his close friends, contained occasional references to Hindu philosophy. Krishnamurti's teachings were actually original, in the sense that they arose from his own experiences and observations, not from study of other teachers. Krishnamurti presented his teaching to the public in the form of discourses. His talks were open to anyone and usually free of charge. In the West audiences were a mixture of all ages and nationalities. The talks in Switzerland were usually translated into four languages. Krishnamurti's talks in Europe were usually attended by two or three thousand people. In India even larger numbers crowded to hear him. His teaching demands a sceptical attitude towards religious or spiritual organizations and a high degree of independence on the part of the seeker. Krishnamurti was a teacher not a leader, his talks were public and free. He held hundreds of dialogues and discussions with students, teachers, scientists, philosophers, religious figures and others.

Krishnamurti's Views on Education

Krishnamurti on Education was edited by members of the Krishnamurti Foundation of India, and comprises talks to students and teachers at the Indian Krishnamurti schools. In the talks to students Krishnamurti discussed education; the religious mind and the scientific mind; knowledge and intelligence; freedom and other sensitivity; fear; violence; image-making and behaviour. The talks to teachers discussed the meaning of right education; the long vision; action; the true denial; competition; fear; teaching; and learning; the good mind; the negative approach; inward flowering, etc. The powerful impact of his talks was not a matter of chance. He spent many years evolving his technique as a speaker. The greater part of the talks was concerned with an exploration and discussion of the state of the world and the human psyche. He warned against the dangers decadence and corruption of the world.

Krishnamurti explained many of the divisions and conflicts in contemporary society by referring to this kind of blind allegiance to groups and ideologies. His talks in India mentioned superstitious practices, corruption and caste prejudice; in the USA the demand for material possessions and sensory stimulation. He clearly and forcefully demanded that his listeners may be teachers or students to be examined their own attitudes and behaviour to discover something new for the society.

Conclusion

Thus, Jiddu Krishnamurti's talks centered topics that were of immediate interest in daily life, for example psychological problems such as fear or jealousy. He insisted on numerous occasions that unless all such problems are faced and resolved; there is no possibility of understanding the divine; conversely, energy spent in metaphysical doctrines and encouraged to absorb it; hence, Krishnamurti stressed both the teachers as well as students to understand the complexities of his/her own life and behavior, and only then would he/she be in a position to explore more profound questions for relevant answers.

References

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