

# **Krishnamurti Foundation India Bulletin**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Krishnamurti's question, why are you being educated? occurs over and over again throughout his interaction with students in his schools. In this issue of the *Bulletin*, we present two selections centred round the same question, the first of which is to students at Rishi Valley, the second is posed within a dialogue with Jean-Louis Dewez, an academic historian from Belgium. The two selections bring to notice ways in which Krishnamurti explores facets of the same question with two entirely different sets of interlocutors – students from India and a professor from Europe.

In the first dialogue Krishnamurti urges students to ask themselves the question why they are being educated and whether they intend to fit into the existing social order. Pointing to the poverty and violence between communities, he suggests that they find out what the existing social world around them is.

The real task of education, he says, is to inquire why the world is as it is: how human beings relate to each other, how they think, what they think, why they are violent, why they are brutal, ambitious, greedy, envious, competitive, why they seek power. Finally, he states an evident fact that human beings create their societies, and because human individuals are violent, competitive and greedy they collectively create a destructive culture. To transform the world you have to transform yourself, for you are the world.

Krishnamurti outlines for students the aim of education in this way, simply and with cogency.

The dialogue with a professor with a wide-ranging mind is more complex. It covers large and diverse themes including the role of knowledge in creating a better society; of conditioning as a constant in all schools, even those run in Krishnamurti's name; of the role of moral reasoning in educating students; of teachers relating to students without authority; the possibility of a form of communicating with students in the course of which 'we can both see, in the mirror of our relationship, actually what we are'; whether intelligence is multiple; whether a simultaneous 'study of oneself and the subject taught' is possible; and, most importantly, Krishnamurti's suggestion of how a teacher might begin a conversation: 'Look, sit down. Let's talk about this. Let's talk about whether you and I can free ourselves from the whole psychological structure, with our fears, dogmas, theories, anxieties, and loneliness'. Out of the many complex strands, Krishnamurti and Professor Jean-Louis Dewez weave together a unitary sense of right education.

– R. H.

## WHY ARE YOU BEING EDUCATED?

**J KRISHNAMURTI (JK):** I wonder if you have asked yourselves why you are being educated. Why are you going to schools, colleges and universities to have a degree, and so on? Have you ever asked yourselves why you are being educated? If you ask that question to yourself now, what would be your answer?

There is a school in California, a very rich school: lovely estate surrounded by wooded hills and a campus with beautiful trees and flowers. They asked me to talk there, and the first question I asked them was: Why are you being educated? What does it mean to you?

Most of them replied that they wanted to fit into the society, into the culture in which they were living. That is, they merely wanted to conform to the pattern of their particular culture, to the society in which they are born. To conform, to be molded into the social structure, into the civilization they were born in was the whole scope of education for them.

It seems, to me, that any civilized man must be discontented with his civilization, with his culture for otherwise he cannot possibly change that culture or that civilization. So, when you ask yourself what the meaning of education is, and why we are being educated, are you going to merely adjust yourself to the culture, to the society, to the business world? Is that what you are all going to do?

Have you understood my question? Are you interested in my question? Does it mean anything to you?

You have been here in this quiet, lovely valley removed from the noise and bustle of towns, where you are looked after and educated, in mathematics, geography, history. You will probably go to universities, get a degree, have a career, a job, and responsibility when you get married and have children and, then, you will be conforming, fitting into a culture that is already made, that has already been put together by other people. Are you being educated to merely conform to that pattern? So, it seems to me, one must ask what education means, what culture means, and what the whole structure and nature of the civilization in which we live is.

So, what do you think education is? Do apply your minds. Do think. Let us think it over together. Do you understand?

**STUDENT/S (S):** Yes, sir.

**JK:** So, we will talk together, we will think over together, we will share our thoughts together; we will inquire, look into things together. We are going to do that this morning. We are going to think, observe, watch, and see together.

So: What is education? That is one question. Second: What is civilization, what is culture? And, next: What is a human being to do in the culture in which he lives?... There are four questions: What is education?; What is culture?; What is the civilization in which we live?; and, What is your responsibility, your place in that structure?

Right. Is that clear? Right. Have you understood my questions?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** So, why are you being educated, and what does education mean? Does education mean merely to acquire knowledge, information through books, through mathematics, geography, history, biology, anthropology, so that you have a degree and get a job? Is that all that education is? I have talked in various schools in America, in England, and in Europe (I have just come back from Rome, Italy) and apparently, now, it – education – is just that. They – students – are all concerned with going to universities, getting jobs, having a career.

There is rebellion in universities. One of the great theoretical physicists said the other day that there are less and less students studying science; they say that science has developed technologies which are destroying the world, using up all the minerals, petrol, and polluting the air. So they are turning to the humanities.

So: Why are you here in this place? Are you just studying books and becoming secondhand human beings: conforming, imitating, fitting into a very, very carefully planned, disordered society? Is that all education is? Or, is education something much more? Is education to feel responsible? Is education to cultivate the great responsibility that each one of us has in living in this world – the responsibility towards nature, to trees, the mountains, the earth, the beauty of the land, the animals upon the earth, the minerals? Is it, also, to feel responsible for human beings' wasteful using up of the earth? Part of our education is to feel a responsibility for all this – that is, to feel totally responsible as a human being living in this world, not only to nature, to the world outside in which we live but, also, to feel a responsibility in our relationship to each other.

Look at what is happening in the Middle East. The Arabs and the Israelites are at war and have killed thousands of people. Thousands killed just as in other previous wars. And we are

responsible for it – you understand? We are responsible for all wars because we are being ‘educated’. And education, apparently, has not stopped wars; on the contrary. The Israelites are highly civilized people, just as in the last war the Germans were highly civilized, so were the other people. But when there was war, millions were killed.

Education is meant to cultivate the responsibility of a human being who is confronted with the horrors of wars. Are you going to fit into all that violence, brutality? Do you understand what I am asking you? Education is meant to bring about in you the sense of unity, the sense of life as a whole. Hindus and Muslims, Jews and Arabs, British and French – these divisions in the world are destroying people! You have had wars in this country between Muslims and the Hindus. For what?

Isn't it your responsibility to see all this and not to accept divisions? You understand ‘division’? Economic divisions, social divisions, national divisions, state divisions between Tamils and the Telugus, and all that nonsense! And look what religions have done in the world, how they have divided the people: the Catholic, the Protestant, the Buddhist, the Muslim, the Hindu (and there is the division amongst the Hindus). Isn't it your responsibility, if you are educated, to deny all these, and not accept all the terrible things that are going on in the name of religion, in the name of science, in the name of economics?

Look around. Go around and look at all the terrible villages you have around you. Look at the poverty. Must not you look at all this, must not you understand all this? You can't understand this through mere books, by merely getting a great many degrees; you have to feel; you have to see, you have to observe. That means, we have to be educated totally, all round. You must have affection,

care, love, compassion – *that* is part of our education. Education is not just to play games and be happy and enjoy life, but to see the beauty of the flowers, the light on the leaf, and to see what is happening around us in the world: how man is becoming more and more materialistic! Do you know what that word ‘materialistic’ means? It means that to have a good time physically, materially, is all that matters. It means to not be concerned with the total human being: not concerned with what man’s relationship with another is; not concerned with how he thinks, what he thinks, why he is violent, why he is brutal, ambitious, greedy, envious, competitive, why he is seeking power.

To understand all that is to understand yourself; it is part of our education. And I hope here, in this valley, with the beauty of the valley and with those people who are looking after you, this is also gone into, so that when you leave here you are prepared to face the world as it is: the ugliness, the violence, the thoughtlessness, the selfishness. I hope that you are able to look at it and transform yourself to a different human being. To transform ourselves into a different kind of human being – *that* is the whole concern of education.

Now we will talk over these things, together. You ask questions. We will discuss them; we will go into them.

My first question was: Why are you being educated? Now you discuss that with me. Don’t be shy. It is good for you to talk over things, to question, to doubt, and to ask a thousand questions. Why are you being educated? No questions? I am sure you will ask when you get out of here. Screw up your courage (or whatever it is you do) and ask questions. Ask why you are being educated!

*(Silence)*

Oh là là! Won't somebody start?

**S:** Sir ...

**JK:** At last!

**S:** You have got to study to be 'someone' in the world.

**JK:** She says: You have got to study in order to be 'someone' in the world. Have you understood the question?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Have you looked at those people who are 'somebodies' in the world? Have you looked at them? Have you looked at the 'somebodies' who are politicians? How corrupt they are! And they are 'somebodies' – aren't they? Have you looked at the 'somebodies' in the business world? Have you looked at those professors, the philosophers who are 'somebodies': how they are petty, how they worry about their little money, their ambition, their greed? Have you watched them? Have you watched the 'somebodies' in the military world? – They are always competing with each other for a bigger star. Have you watched the scientists, the philosophers, the anthropologists, and all those people who are supposed to be highly intellectual and who are 'somebodies' in the world? They are fighting, competing with each other to have better positions; they are petty nationalists working for governments to create wars.

**S:** Sir, it is most natural to want to be 'somebody' in the world. To want money, position.

**JK:** She says: It's most natural to want to be 'somebody'.

Have you watched a lot of chickens in the poultry yard? There is always a pecking order. Do you understand what I am talking about? You have watched them – haven't you?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** There's one chicken which is a little above the one lower down in the social pecking order. And there is always somebody at the very head of it. So you consider it natural to seek to be 'somebody' in the world. Is it? I am questioning that. Why is it natural? And what do you call 'natural'?

**S:** You want to be 'somebody', but maybe you cannot.

**JK:** I understand. You say, it is natural. But is it natural?

**S:** You have an ideal and, so, you want to be 'somebody'. You want to be 'somebody' so that you can change the world.

**JK:** You want to change the world and, therefore, you want to be 'somebody'? Oh, my God!

**S:** No, sir. If you want to make a change but you are not somebody whom everyone knows, then ...

**JK:** Ah, I see! I'm sorry. I didn't understand you.

You are using the word 'somebody' in a different sense. It is generally understood that when you say, he is 'somebody', you mean that he is an important person. But you are using the word 'somebody' in the sense that he is someone who has a different quality of mind, a different way of looking at the world, who does

something entirely different. Is that what you call ‘somebody’? Please correct me if I have misunderstood you.

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Right. Then we must understand the meaning of these words! You mean by ‘somebody’ an exceptional person, an excellent person.

**S:** No, sir. I don’t mean that. I mean that everyone basically has an ideal, an ideal to make a better world.

**JK:** I understand, My Lady. Everyone, basically, has ideals.

**S:** Something like an ideal! An ideal to make a better world ...

**JK:** Now, why do you want an ideal? You are thinking like a million others; and I am questioning you: Why do you want ideals? Everyone has ideals apparently, so you must have them.

**S:** No, sir.

**JK:** Then why do you have an ideal? Come on, sir, discuss it.

**S:** Because you want to make something out of your life.

**JK:** You say, ‘My life is rather empty, stupid, unintelligent; so, I am going to create an ideal of what I think is a perfect human being and I am going to conform to that ideal’. Is that it?

**S:** You don’t have to create that. It is sometimes there.

**JK:** Sometimes it is there! Where?

*(Laughter)*

**JK:** I am glad! Come on, don't just stop with laughing! Discuss it.

**S:** It is established in your minds.

**JK:** Who establishes it: your mother, your father, your guru, your books, your professors, your teachers? Who establishes it in there?

**S:** You do it yourself.

**JK:** I? ... Come off it!

*(Laughter)*

I have no ideals, so I can't establish a new .... Please, listen to what I am saying. I have *no* ideal, and I really mean it. I have no ideals, because I face what-exactly-is and understand what-is. If you have ideals, you cannot understand what-is. So, I cannot give you ideals. This is an old story with me!

Look, people are violent – aren't they? Have you noticed that? Why can't people face the fact of violence – face it, and not have an ideal of non-violence? Suppose I am violent. That is a fact. Why should I have an ideal about it? If I am an intelligent, educated, civilized, cultured human being all my concern is to get rid of that violence, and to be free of that violence.

**S:** Does that not become an ideal?

**JK:** *You* translate it as an ideal; I don't.

**S:** It is your most urgent desire to get rid of the violence.

**JK:** Look, I will explain; will you listen? Listen. Don't have an opinion of how to listen to me, but just listen.

There is violence going on in the world – isn't there? There's violence outwardly and inwardly – isn't there?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Right. Now see the effect of violence in the world. Violence in the world is wars. Right? Good Lord, there are so many forms of violence! Competition is violence. Killing is violence. To be angry with another is violence. Imitating is violence.

Are you following all this?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** I see outside of me in the world this activity of violence and, also, I see this within me, inside me. I am angry; I am ambitious; I am envious. I hate people; I dislike people. All that is violence.

Right?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Then – *because I see* the effects of violence in the world outside and I see what is happening inside – what is my concern? Intelligence tells me there must be freedom from violence. It is not a desire to be free of violence, but Intelligence which says: Be free of it. Therefore, Intelligence is not an ideal. (My God!)

Do you understand what I am saying?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** So, why do you have ideals? That girl said: Ideals are ‘natural’; one must have ideals. Why? Are not ideals escapes from the fact?

Do you understand what I am saying?

Look here, you have ideals of non-violence. Haven’t you? That is one of India’s professions! Indians are full of ideals of non-violence and, yet, they are violent. Aren’t they?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Right. So, which is important: ideals or the fact that you are violent? Which is important? Go on; discuss it. Are your ideals more important than the fact?

**S:** No, sir; facts are more important.

**JK:** Therefore, why do you have ideals? If facts are more important, why have ideals? Oh, for God’s sake, see what you have done! You don’t face the fact, and you carry on with the ideals which are non-realities! The reality is violence. So, put away your ideals; they have no importance whatsoever. What is important is to see the fact and alter it. I am violent (if I am), and I have no ideals. I really mean it!

It is stupid to have ideals but, being violent, I want to understand violence – understand why it arises, whether the mind can be free of violence. That is my only concern and not ideals. So I begin to study violence – the violence outside of me and the violence inside

me. Is the violence outside of me and the violence in me different or are they both the same?

Do you understand what I am saying? Or is it becoming too difficult?

**S:** Sir, is not the ‘concern’ itself the ‘ideal’?

**JK:** *Je n’ai pas compris*. I have not understood.

**S:** Is not the ‘concern’ itself the ‘ideal’?

**JK:** Certainly not! Look, sir; see what is outside of you. Look round you; look at the world. You read papers – don’t you? You have studied history, haven’t you? You have seen what has happened in the world! You have heard the news, haven’t you? You see what violence in human beings has done. You see the violence inside you: your anger, your competition, your wanting to be ‘better’ – all that. Look at that violence and ask yourself whether that outside-violence is different from the inside-violence or whether they are both the same. The outside-violence is created by your inside-violence – right?

Do you understand what I am saying?

The world is created by human beings, by human beings who have divided themselves as the Arabs and the Jews, as the Hindus and the Muslims. That is the world which human beings have created externally. Because in themselves they are violent, in themselves they are separative, they externalize that. So, the world is you and you are the world, and you look at this violence in yourself. Look at it. Just look at it. Don’t say, ‘It must be different; it must be changed; it must not exist’ – all those are ideals – but face the fact

of your violence. Look at it. The looking is not an ideal. When you look at the sunlight on that leaf, you *look* at it. In the same way, look at your violence. In that there is no ideal at all. By looking at it, you have the energy to transform it.

Now, you have listened. Have you still got ideals about being the most marvellous human being? Why not face what you are? Why not say, ‘Look, I am shallow-minded; I am rather petty, imitative, and let us see if I can transform that pettiness, shallowness, that stupid way of looking at things. Let us change that’? Have you still got ideals? I am afraid you have, because that is the easiest way to be!

**S:** You want to change. What do you want to change into?

**JK:** That’s a good question. What is it that you want to change *into*? Have you heard her question?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** What is it you want to change into? *If* you know what you want to change into, will there be a change? Have you understood? Listen to what I am saying. If I know what I have to change into, will that be a change?

Are you stuck with it? Do you want me to explain?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Why? It is a very simple thing, what I have said.

If I have to change into ‘something’, is there a change? – Because if I change into something, it means I already know what it is.

Look: If I change from cowardliness to bravery, I already know what bravery is – don't I? So, is that a change? Or has change nothing to do with a concept?

Oh, Lord! This is a little bit too difficult.

Look sirs, ladies, I am violent. The transformation of violence is not non-violence; it is the ending of violence.

I wonder if you see that! Do you?

**S:** What do you mean by the 'ending of violence'?

**JK:** What do I mean by 'the ending of violence'?

**S:** Sir, you said: If you are violent, you want to stop being violent, that is, you want to end violence. Does that not mean that you become non-violent?

**JK:** No!

**S:** Why not?

**JK:** I will show it to you. Now will you listen, listen carefully?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Right.

I said: If you know to what to change into, you already know what it is and, therefore, there is no change.

**S:** Right, sir.

**JK:** Right? Do you see that?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** No, don't agree.

**S:** No, sir; I am not agreeing. In fact, I don't quite agree with you. If you change from cowardice to bravery, you have changed.

**JK:** (*Emphatic*) No! I know what bravery means. I also know what cowardice is. I know both. So, there is no change. Change means something, I don't know about.

**S:** O.K.

**JK:** Not 'O.K.!'!

Look, I'll explain to you. I am violent. I don't know what non-violence is because I have no idea. My only concern is to transform what-is – not transform into what-should-be.

Do you understand the difference?

**S:** No, sir.

**JK:** I am violent. Generally, it is accepted that I must become non-violent. That is the ideal. Whereas I have no ideals; I have only the fact that I am violent. So, the transformation of violence is not into non-violence, but the ending of that violence; therefore, something totally new takes place. Have you understood it?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** (*Tapping his head*) No, not here; not [just] verbally. To understand something is to live it.

**S:** I didn't understand it exactly, sir.

**JK:** You didn't understand, right?

(*Another child*)

**S:** Sir, suppose you want to become an astronomer. You don't know what an astronomer is, because you are not an astronomer! But you want *to become* an astronomer, and you do. Is that a change?

**JK:** Of course!

You want to become an astronomer; now you are not [but when you do] – is that a change? That's what you are asking – isn't it? I am not an astronomer, and I study and become an astronomer. That's a change – isn't it?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Of course.

I am not an astronomer. I know what astronomy is. There are books about it; there are professors who will teach me. So I become an astronomer. That is different from being violent and transforming violence; in the transformation of violence there is something totally new which has nothing to do with non-violence.

(I don't know if you see this ... All right, sir; let's go on with something else.)

My question was: Why are you being educated? Come on. You are all washed, dressed up, [hair] combed. Why are you being educated?

*(Another child)*

**S:** To make us better human beings.

**JK:** To make you better human beings – right? Is that the reason you are being educated?

**S:** I think so.

**JK:** You think so! Are you becoming a better human being?

**S:** I think we are being educated to adjust ourselves to this world.

**JK:** To adjust yourself to the world about you – is that it?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Is that why you are being educated? He says that he is being educated because he wants to adjust himself to the world about him. ‘To adjust yourself to the world around you’, means that you accept the world as it is.

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Do you; do you? That means you accept violence, you accept wars, you accept the division between people as ‘Muslim’ and ‘Hindu’, you accept the world of brutality, corruption of the politicians, and all the rest of it! And you want to ‘adjust’ yourself to that! That means you will become a violent, corrupt politician!

*(JK laughs; audience laughs, too)*

Is that it?

**S:** No, sir.

**JK:** No! He says, ‘No’. Then, what are you being educated for?

*(Another child)*

**S:** Sir ... You are being educated because you want to know what life is.

**JK:** He says that he is being educated ‘to know what life is’ – right?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** That is a good answer, sir. Isn’t it?

You are being educated to know what life is. You want to know not just one particular part of life – the political life, the historical life – but the whole of life. And you say *that* is the reason for being educated. [That is, it is] to understand my relationship with another, why I am violent, why I must have knowledge about Science, History, and so on, and, also, I must know the nameless thing that human beings are seeking; I must know all that. Right? Now, are you being educated that way here?

**S:** Sir ...

**JK:** What? You agree; you say that you are being educated that way, here.

**S:** No, sir, I ...

**JK:** You seem rather uncertain.

**S:** I am doubtful, sir.

**JK:** You are hopeful!

**S:** No, sir; doubtful.

**JK:** That means you are not sure that Rishi Valley School is teaching you, helping you, to understand the whole of life. What love is, what compassion is, what the flower of goodness is, what the perfume of living a life in which there is no conflict is – all that, you see, is education. And you doubt if this place is teaching you, helping you to understand that. Right?

Don't look at your Principal! And if that is not being taught, insist on it; demand it; ask for it. Say: That is why I am here. I am here because I want to understand the whole of life: my relationship to another, whether I love somebody. And: what does that love mean? Does love mean pleasure, does it mean sex, does it mean domination, jealousy? I have to live in the world – does it mean I must be competitive, I must have security? You have to understand all that; it is part of our education.

Now, why are you being educated? That little boy has answered me; now you tell me. (*Pointing to the older students sitting further away, behind the junior children*) You are older up there; you are 19, 18, 17. Why are you being educated?

(*Silence*)

No answer?

(A senior student answers)

**S:** I think I want to be educated to have independence, freedom of thought.

**JK:** He says he wants to be educated in order to have freedom of thought. Right?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Listen to what he says very carefully. He says that he wants to be educated in order to have freedom in his thinking. Right?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Do you know what freedom is? – freedom in thinking. You must understand these two words: ‘freedom’ and ‘thinking’. Right?

Now: What does freedom mean? Can you have freedom in thinking? You can think what you like – can’t you? – now.

**S:** I mean, sir, by freedom: not being influenced by other people.

**JK:** Now, we’ll go into it slowly ...

Already you have the freedom to think what you like and the freedom to express what you think. You can tell the politicians, ‘You are corrupt’ – can’t you?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** That's freedom. You say, 'Freedom to think'. You can think what you like, you can say what you like – except in certain parts of the world. In the Communist World, like Russia and in China, and in Eastern Europe, like Czechoslovakia, Poland, you can't say what you like there; for, if you do, you are sent to an asylum and so on, and so on, and so on ... But here, in this country you can say what you like, you can write what you like – so there is freedom. Right?

**S:** That is external freedom. What I mean is: I must myself have freedom not to be influenced by somebody else.

**JK:** Right. You say that you must have freedom not to be influenced by somebody else. Listen to this carefully. *You* must have freedom not to be influenced – right? What are 'you'? Aren't you the result of a thousand influences? Your religion influences you; your family influences you; your books influence you; your country influences you. Everything is influencing you, and you are the result of all these impressions, influences – aren't you?

So, go slowly, go slowly; you will find out. You are saying: You must not be influenced by anybody when you yourself are the result of thousand influences! Right?

**S:** We can change from there.

**JK:** Therefore, what are you asking? Go on slowly. What are you asking?

**S:** Sir, I am asking that I want to be educated in such a manner so that I am capable of changing.

**JK:** Which means – what? You want to be educated so that you are capable of the complete transformation of yourself – not into somebody else, but transformation.

This is difficult; go slowly. If you don't understand it, say so.

Look: I am a poor man and I want to change in order to become a rich man. That's what's going on with the average person in the world. Now, you are saying, 'It's not quite that. I want to be free from all the conditioning which has made me what I am'. Is that it? Check.

You say: I am the result of my parents, I am the result of the society I live in, I am the result of the world, the culture, the religion, the scriptures, and so on. I am the result of all that. You say: That has conditioned me. That is the conditioning of life and as long as I am so conditioned, there is no freedom. Is that what you are saying, asking? Just think about it and see.

I am asking you: Why are you being educated?

*(Another Student)*

**S:** You want to be educated because you want to rid the world of violence.

**JK:** You have to be educated because you want to free the world from violence. Now: To free the world from violence, you must be free of violence yourself – mustn't you?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Do you understand what I am saying?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** In order to free the world from violence, you must be free of violence. *That* is the meaning of education – and not you are violent and want the rest of the world to be free of violence. You are part of the world and, therefore, you have to be free from violence; only then you can help the world to be free of violence.

Do you understand?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Now, we've talked for an hour and a quarter. I think that's enough for this morning; we'll go on tomorrow morning. Now I'd like to do something else.

First of all: Do you know what meditation is?

*(Students stop slouching and sit up)*

Meditation isn't that. Sitting cross-legged isn't meditation! Meditation is something else. It's to have a very quiet mind, an absolutely silent mind, where no thought enters. So, sit quietly. Look; if you want to sit cross-legged, sit that way, but sit very quietly, and see if your mind can also be absolutely quiet. Don't make it quiet. See if it can be quiet.

Do you hear those crows crowing? You hear it, don't you?

**S:** Yes, sir.

**JK:** Listen to them. Listen to the noise of the crows from a mind that is completely quiet. Listen to that parrot that went by; listen to

it without a single movement of thought. Listen with complete silence to the noise of the parrot that went by.

Right, sirs; see you tomorrow morning.

*November 9, 1973*  
*Talk to the Students of Rishi Valley School*

## SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

**JEAN-LOUIS DEWEZ (J-LD):** May I ask the question whether it would be possible during a good part of this discussion to speak about the problem of education? Education, and schools such as this one, seem to be something so terribly fragile compared to ...

**J. KRISHNAMURTI (JK):** Something enormous, yes.

**J-LD:** There is this opposition between self-knowledge (which is what we talked about this morning and which seems to be a process which everyone has to do for himself) and, on the other side, for instance, scientific knowledge (which accumulates). And now human beings find themselves with enormous power. From generation to generation, humanity accumulates power but, for all that, man is no wiser than he was ten thousand years ago. But humanity has never had so much power and knowledge about nature. This power of destruction is so huge that one doesn't see very clearly the fragile problem of education. Because the world is imperiled, one is tempted to join political movements in order to try to act. Could we place the problem of education and self-knowledge in the context of the situation as it is today and, also, that of action?

**JK:** Sir, why do we get educated? Throughout the world, practically everybody goes through school, college, university, has a job, works, gets married, has children, and all that. Now, why do we get educated at all? Is it just to follow the pattern, the pattern the past generation – one's grandfather or grandmother – has set? Do we just follow them? Class division, national division, family division, and this constant struggle, conflict – battle outside, battle inside – is the pattern. And education – technological and

otherwise – is perhaps something outside, and the other thing goes on. Do you understand what I mean?

**J-LD:** Yes, I understand.

**JK:** As you just now said, psychologically, man has been what he has been for ten thousand or a million years. We're acquiring more and more and more knowledge about the outside world and nothing about what is happening to us, which is destroying the world outside of us. Conflict, misery, unhappiness – we never touch that side at all.

As you know, we've got schools in different parts of the world, and I have always asked why we get educated. Is it to be scientists, to be doctors, to be carpenters, businessmen? They are not going to change the world. They will modify the environment but, psychologically, they are like other human beings who have existed for a million years – but slightly modified. Right? That's so obvious. So, is education merely the acquiring of knowledge so that we can act skillfully in the world that has been set before us?

If you had a child, what is the future for him?

**J-LD:** I have a child who is sixteen months old.

**JK:** It is a tremendously competitive world – in school, in colleges, at university the whole pattern is to compete. If you're not capable of competing and of reaching a certain level, you are just thrown out. You become a labourer or a carpenter, a plumber, a mechanic, this or that and nothing else. So education, as it is now, prepares the few who are very clever to reach the top – politically, religiously, economically. The rest drag on. Is that why we send our children to school? You see them here. What for?

**J-LD:** We say to ourselves that if they learn a lot of things they will have a better position, a bit more power to protect themselves against the world.

**JK:** That is, either keep things as they are – totalitarianism or capitalism – maintain *status quo* or modify them, change them a little bit here and a little bit there. Is that all education is?

**J-LD:** One who studies, let's say, economics, sincerely hopes that with the knowledge of economics he is going to change something, create a fairer society. At least, he hopes so.

**JK:** Sir, you know the history of the Russian Revolution. Look how it has ended up in bureaucracy and tyranny. When one looks at the world, objectively, not from your scientific or business point of view, but as it is, there is uncertainty, fear, lack of jobs, overpopulation, national divisions, wars and all the terror that's going on. What, then, is the future of one's children? Do you understand? What do we educate them for? So, we have to question: what kind of world do you want them to grow into? They are growing into this. I don't know if you have talked to children, students, as I have, they're really frightened of this. You understand? They are frightened; they don't know what to do, so they escape into some nonsense: drugs, and all the rest of it.

So, when you take the whole world as a unit and look at it, what should we do? If you are the elder statesman, a man who is capable of changing certain things, what would you do? Because the men in position, in power, don't want anything else. They won't change. So, what will your children want? – a good society, in which they can live happily, peacefully, without all this terrible conflict, and a certain sense of physical, moral security. Right? Can schools prepare them to bring about a good society?

**J-LD:** At the moment, schools prepare them for exams and a good position.

**JK:** It prepares them to maintain this corrupt world. That's our education. If you look in the totalitarian world and at the world over, it is to maintain this terrible, disorderly, disoriented, disintegrating society.

**J-LD:** There is also the idea that one will be able to bring about something only after having understood all the sciences and all that.

**JK:** How? Your children live in theories. What is actually going on in our daily life is this: conflict between man and woman, conflict between positions, conflict between nations. And we educate them to fit into that!

**J-LD:** Education, then, is just a race to get the good position over there, in front of the line.

**JK:** In front of the others.

**J-LD:** One then tries to put his child in a good school so that he arrives ahead.

**JK:** Polytechnics, you know, like in France ...

So, the problem is, can we educate, bring about a right kind of education so that the educator and the educated bring about a good society? *That* is really the problem. The Greeks talked about a 'good society'. The ancient Hindus talked about a 'good society', and certain groups of them lived that way, for a certain time. Of course, it's all gone. A good society is meant to be somewhere in

the future. Do you understand what I'm saying? We are going to create it 'sometime', which means it never comes into being!

**J-LD:** Like a paradise.

**JK:** So, can education bring about a good society, in the sense, a society where human beings are happy, not everlastingly battling each other?

**J-LD:** Before we go into the question, can education bring this about, aren't we first tempted to say, 'Let's act more effectively'? Having seen all this, isn't one tempted to join reformers? This is the problem. If one really wants to go into how important the problem of education is, one should first go into the problem of action, reform and revolution.

**JK:** Yes, sir. Reform and bring about an action which will reform this. Right? Reform – what does it mean? It is to re-form.

**J-LD:** Remake the form.

**JK:** Re-form; the same thing. That's why, sir, we talked about self-knowledge, knowing oneself. The real source of radical revolution and not in physical revolution, is there. Physical revolution has never produced anything.

**J-LD:** There have been many examples of small revolutions. I have seen some operate in communities, people who say, 'Enough of this society'. Then they get together – I know; I've seen it, even participated in it – and they establish a pattern of how one should live. They say, 'We're going to live together, but we won't have this, and we won't have that', and they begin. I don't know if you

have seen any, but the result is that everything begins all over again; someone becomes the leader, a paternalist.

**JK:** There it is. Organization begins!

**J-LD:** Though they started with a pattern, a good idea of how society should be, it becomes a sort of revolution. ‘I am here, and I want to be there; I want to live entirely differently’. And the result is the same. I don’t know of any community managing to live differently.

**JK:** I’ve known such communities. I have tried once. It never succeeds.

**J-LD:** That may be a good image of revolution on a country’s scale. In the end, what makes society is not the constitution or the pattern. However, that’s what the Marxists were hoping for.

**JK:** It means that organization does not change man.

**J-LD:** Does society make man? The hypothesis is that if we change society, in several generations, man will be changed.

**JK:** I have had dialogues with communists all over the world. They come to a certain point and say that you are perfectly right, but they won’t go beyond it.

**J-LD:** Probably sincerely; there’s a blockage.

**JK:** It’s like talking with a Catholic. Catholics and communists are both the same, with different clothes.

**J-LD:** So, one can actually see, through these examples, like communities or revolutions throughout history (and, lately, in Cambodia) that even the largest attempts to change the world, to rebuild a different pattern of society ...

**JK:** It never works.

**J-LD:** And, yet, apart from that, self-knowledge seems ...

**JK:** Sir, when once we recognize, intelligently, that the world is me, that we, that I, have created the world, the mess, the confusion, the violence, once we recognize that as a fact and not as an idea, then the study of oneself is the real education. Because *that* will change society. It seems we have made organizations into kind of godheads, something divine. To be organized ...

**J-LD:** One wants to organize the exterior; yes, it's the same thing ...

**JK:** So, come back to the question. Can we educate our children to be good citizens – not good in the sense that they conform but good in the sense that their lives are good; they're not violent, and all the rest of it? For, otherwise, you can't produce a good society; you will never produce it, however well-organized everything is.

Sir, look at the totalitarian world. They started out wanting to create a new society without class, without armies.

**J-LD:** With good ideas.

**JK:** They said that government must disappear. And look!

**J-LD:** They find outward reasons, like others might attack them. It's the same with us finding outward reasons to accumulate barriers.

**JK:** So, you see, we have got a tremendous problem. Children are conditioned by their parents; they are conditioned by the society in which they live, by their friends, by their grandmother ... They come to the school conditioned, and that conditioning remains. You then pile up knowledge on them. 'He must be a scientist, a doctor, an engineer', and so on, but his consciousness remains conditioned.

**J-LD:** Yes, but here I think there is a delicate point because, take for instance, the Marxists. They accept the idea that we are conditioned by the world, our parents, our culture, but their conclusion is that *if* children were taken very young and put in a good environment, then ...

Let's take an example. My son is a year and a half old. Suppose I bring him here and he lives here. He'll nevertheless come upon problems of conditioning, wherever he lives. Even if he lives with you, he'll come upon problems of conditioning.

**JK:** That's the problem, sir. Can the educator's consciousness and the consciousness of the student be changed? The change is right education, not merely learning mathematics.

**J-LD:** Mathematics and all that – these are mechanisms. It's a bit like chess game: there are rules, and you must apply them. In mathematics there are a set of rules; you know how to use them or you don't, but this is not going to help you in your life, psychologically, and in your relationships with others. That's obvious.

**JK:** So, if you are an educator, this would be your problem: You want to create a good society. ‘Good’, in the sense, a society without conflict, where we would live in peace, where man can be totally secure. Which doesn’t mean you become a vegetable, an automaton.

**J-LD:** Psychologically.

**JK:** Psychologically, yes. All of them. I’ve listened to the Conservatives, Liberals, Labour, Communist; they’re all concerned with giving outward security.

**J-LD:** Providing security is important.

**JK:** Yes, but that very security which they want outside is causing the lack of security in oneself.

**J-LD:** There is a danger, because the educator who wants a good society, for himself and for the children with him, might have a preconceived idea of what a good society is.

**JK:** That’s why a ‘good society’ can’t be described, planned out in principle. That it should be this or that is an idea. It means you are making the student conform to the idea which you have established, which is the same thing but in another direction. You understand?

**J-LD:** Meaning that a ‘good society’ set in stone can never exist. It’s only in the relationship between you and me that I learn through feeling whether the relationship is right or not. But how can educators tackle such a problem, because there’s a risk that they might seek security in that, or seek power for themselves?

**JK:** That's right. That means, the educator needs education, not in acquiring more BAs, MAs and Ph.Ds and all that, but that he has to be educated psychologically. And that education can only take place when both student and teacher see their responsibility. You see, nobody wants to go into all this. They don't care what happens to their children as long as they've got a little money, a little position. That's all.

**J-LD:** But to go into all that you need time. But the parents say, 'But if one takes time, one doesn't study enough, so one won't be among the top in society'. So, they say, 'I'll choose a school where you study all day and where no time is wasted in reflecting, because my child must come to the top for his own good'. And it is for the child's 'good' that schools become a sort of prison.

**JK:** Places of conditioning.

**J-LD:** That's it, to educate is often considered the same as to condition. To condition them to allow them to react suitably whenever required.

**JK:** So, sir, this is a very serious matter and there are very few people who want to be serious. So, what shall we do? What should a serious man do, a man who has children and feels responsible for those children, a man who does not just send them off to school, but feels the responsibility to see that the children themselves become responsible to create a good society? First, the parents have their problems; both are occupied because they want more money – more, more, more. They are slaves to commercialism. Children are petted and looked after when they are little but thrown out afterwards.

**J-LD:** School becomes a nursery.

**JK:** Yes.

**J-LD:** You are even obliged to bring the child very early and pick him up late in the evening because one lives so far away.

**JK:** If you look at it, all that indicates the lack of love and lack of responsibility. You understand? You send your children to a good school and then they are trained to join the military for two years of service. So, they are conditioned to kill, and the other side is also conditioned. And this is called 'loving my children'. You understand?

**J-LD:** But the problem is, if I have a child and I want him to have a good position, I have to get him do his homework in the evening, so he'll be first to enter college, and later become a leader. And I tell myself, I've done my job as a father, because I helped him get to a position where he will be secure, because he'll have power.

**JK:** You want him to have outward security, but he has no security inwardly. He is attached to something – to his wife, his furniture, to somebody. And that attachment indicates insecurity.

**J-LD:** Of course: 'I could lose it all ...'

**JK:** He wants outward security, but inwardly he has no security; therefore, the inward action is much more real than the other. So, he destroys the outward security. That's what's happening in the world.

Look, sir, each nation wants security. But look what they are producing. They are so stupid in all this! Which probably means they're only concerned with their own lives, and for a short period

of time. I live for 50, 60 or 80 years – that’s all. The rest ... After me, comes the flood!

**J-LD:** The flood is about to wash away the biggest part of humanity. The West appears to be a fairly comfortable place, for the time being but, actually, the world is completely ablaze.

**JK:** Sir, do you know how much the world is spending on armaments? Four hundred thousand million dollars a year. You understand?

**J-LD:** Yes. And each one does it for security.

**JK:** And that is going to destroy him! Therefore, sir, self-knowledge, knowing oneself very deeply, brings an extraordinary security – not the security of attachment.

**J-LD:** Nor that of power.

**JK:** The security of intelligence.

**J-LD:** Right action.

**JK:** And that is going to change the relationship between human beings.

Now, we have talked about this, but who is going to listen? Who’s going to say, ‘My God, this is so true, I will give my life to this’? Or, will he say, ‘It is a marvellous idea; it will never happen. I’ll carry on with my job and my attachments’. The people at the top won’t listen. The religious people won’t listen. The scientist won’t listen. So, the ordinary man who says, ‘Perhaps, there may be truth in this. For God’s sake, let’s do something about it’, may listen.

**J-LD:** Somebody sees that. So, now, let's relate this to the problem of a school and the problem of working on oneself or letting this work occur, while relating with the student, etc.

**JK:** No, sir. The teacher, the educator, and the student must be in right relationship. There is no teacher on a platform, with the student down below, because they're both conditioned. If a teacher wants all the rest of it, *he* says, 'I am conditioned, you are conditioned; let's both talk about it and free ourselves from it. Apart from the subject you're learning, *this* is our chief concern'. No government school will support this. No religious college or school is going to support this. They want their own thing perpetuated.

**J-LD:** Perpetuated or change direction.

**JK:** It's always the same direction, sir. Why are we all so frightened? Because we say: '*If* I do this, what will happen? I'll lose my job. I may lose my house. So forget about it.' They don't see the danger of what they are doing.

**J-LD:** So what can the educator do? Or, rather, what can man do for man? Of course, there's the educator and student but, in the end, that's not what matters most. What matters is the problem of conditioning, and two human beings trying to face that in relationship. How is that possible? What can someone do for someone else?

**JK:** Sir, no ....

**J-LD:** Nothing.

**JK:** No, wait, wait. Suppose you are conditioned and suppose I am conditioned. The conditioning is the same.

**J-LD:** The source is the same.

**JK:** That's right. You may be conditioned as a Frenchman and have all your nonsense, and another may be conditioned as a Hindu with all his nonsense. So, the conditioning, the source, the basic thing is common to each. Right? You agree? Of course; you have to! The Frenchman is an integral part of the other, psychologically. He may be more affluent, cleverer, more this or that; he may have better food, and so on but, intrinsically, he is. If he sees that, then the one who investigates into self-knowledge, knowing himself, is affecting the other, too. You understand?

**J-LD:** But this research, which runs parallel with education, with the teaching of academics ... When one teaches a particular subject there is a gradual approach. You start with simple exercises, then with problems, then with other things. But this is completely different.

**JK:** Sir, can't both be done?

**J-LD:** That's the question.

**JK:** In a school, both should be done: The study of oneself and of subjects. Of course, that can be done.

**J-LD:** But won't the two processes be treated in the same way?

**JK:** No! We must be very clear about it. I'm not going to teach you how to look at yourself in the way I teach you mathematics!

But we can both see, in the mirror of our relationship, actually what we are.

**J-LD:** There's still a danger. The child may say, 'He knows about mathematics, so he can teach me self-knowledge in the same way', for instance.

**JK:** It'll be my knowledge, not yours. Sir, that's why we said: *Psychologically*, we must put aside all authority. Right? I don't know if you see that.

**J-LD:** Yes, very clearly.

**JK:** All authority.

**J-LD:** Which means I am alone.

**JK:** No, you are not alone, you are the rest of the world. You're an integral part of the rest of humanity; therefore, you're not alone.

**J-LD:** Yes, but I am alone to do something, to understand.

**JK:** No, sir. If once you understand the truth that you are an integral part, you are the world, in essence, then how can you be alone? You're alone when you are seeking security in a job. That is your isolation.

**J-LD:** Alone in the battle.

**JK:** Yes, alone in the battle. But, you see, this is a tremendous problem, sir. We have lost all respect. Respect – not because you're a governor, a prime minister, a president, or have big money. The quality of respect which comes with love – we have

lost that. Our love is sensation, now. Pleasure, sex – that’s what we call love.

**J-LD:** This is a subject which has at all times been connected with education, namely, the problem of morality. People have said, ‘If I want a good society, I must learn moral principles: do this, don’t do that; have respect ...’ This is not what you mean by ‘respect’, but this was used in the past, in good schools. In so-called good schools, one would learn about morality and, then, people were expected to exercise their will to go through that kind of relationship.

**JK:** Love has no morality; it is love. People who try to be moral have no love in their heart. ‘This is right behaviour, this is wrong behavior. You must control yourself, restrain yourself, sacrifice yourself’ – *that’s* what they call ‘morality’. Love isn’t that. That’s too cheap! You see, sir, that’s what I’m saying.

Look, sir. They go to church, they attend mass, and they worship some image they have created. They have created that image.

**J-LD:** They don’t think so, but ...

**JK:** In India, it is the same. In the Asiatic world they have created the image out of their own confusion and misery. They have created something different from themselves, and they love that. But it’s their own projection. The church organizations say, ‘That is love. Love God’. And the others, Existentialists and Humanists, whatever you call them, say, ‘Man is conditioned. You can’t change him; you can modify him, you can change him slightly, but not radically’. So, they go on. You follow, sir?

**J-LD:** The problem of the children coming to this school or any other school isn't that they are going to be taught this ... They are going to be taught scientific disciplines, but that – knowledge of oneself – is not the main subject.

**JK:** We are going to do both. Scientific disciplines *and* help them to understand themselves – not according to somebody. To understand themselves – [themselves] which is me.

**J-LD:** Helping them to understand themselves ... Aren't they going to expect exercises, as is the case for any other discipline?

**JK:** Look, sir, you are the educator and I am your student. You are aware that you are conditioned, and you help me to be aware of my conditioning. Right? You talk about it. Before you teach the sciences, physics or mathematics, you give 10 or 15 minutes to this. You say, 'Look, sit down. Let's talk about this. Let's talk about whether you and I can free ourselves from our fears, free ourselves from the whole psychological structure, with our fears, dogmas, theories and anxieties, loneliness'. I'd say, 'Let's talk about it', then carry on with mathematics. But in teaching mathematics, I'm aware that I'm also helping him, psychologically.

**J-LD:** When one teaches and one happens to make a mistake, the student is aware of it. It might, perhaps, be just a spelling mistake, but one is able to see one's reactions in facing mistakes. For instance, one has assumed the position of the one who knows, one who doesn't make mistakes, but here, at this point, the teacher is just like anyone else: mistaken in his own subject. Then he himself learns by seeing how he reacts to his mistake.

**JK:** That's right.

**J-LD:** Is he going to explain, justify, rationalize his mistake or ..?

**JK:** Sir, the world outside is created by each one of us. Right? And to change that and to bring about a good society, each one must change, psychologically. Which doesn't mean I stand alone, because I am the world, basically.

**J-LD:** You are concerned, you are the world.

**JK:** It's my responsibility. My intelligence says, 'I have created this. To change it, I must change myself' – not according to experts or specialists but I must educate myself to observe myself. That's the discipline I have.

**J-LD:** We're back to the discussion we had this morning: Thought cannot observe itself.

**JK:** That's it. But it can become aware of the arising of thought. Of course, that's simple enough.

**J-LD:** So, then, education includes, on the one hand, learning the mechanisms of each subject, which is important in daily life and, also, what we see operating in the teacher-student relationship, which is called intelligence. But it seems there are different forms of intelligence.

**JK:** No. There's only one intelligence. It's not my intelligence and your intelligence; there is intelligence.

**J-LD:** All educators believe they transmit intelligence. They try to convey intelligence.

**JK:** It's the intelligence of thought! Which is to be very clever, competitive, achieve a result.

**J-LD:** Speed, agility ...

**JK:** Yes, all that. So, we come down to a very simple thing, sir. We human beings are responsible for this mess, this madness that's going on in the world. We are responsible – not the politicians; they are like us. No organization is going to change that. I have to change the human quality of the mind. The human quality of the mind is the mind I have. My mind is the mind of the world. Because this mind suffers, is anxious, the world goes through that. And nobody is concerned with the whole world; each one is concerned with himself; each thinks there is security in isolation. There isn't.

**J-LD:** Oneself and a small group around oneself.

**JK:** In isolation there is no security. Each nation is isolating itself, like each person is isolating himself. To see this and say, 'Right, I'm going to do something in myself'. That's simple, but they won't see it as simple. They will, if it is put clearly and definitely in front of them.

*Brockwood Park, September 28, 1979  
J. Krishnamurti in Conversation with Jean-Louis Dewez*

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