

FROM CONFLICT TO HARMONY: JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI'S PATHWAY TO PEACE

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ABSTRACT

The present research paper is an attempt to analyze Krishnamurti's concept of Conflict, Violence and peace. It's an attempt to analyse Krishnamurtis perspective on how conflict arises in the society due to improper understanding of relationship and how conflicts and societal violence are interrelated. According to Jiddu Krishnamurti, without knowing the actuality of conflict in daily existence we cannot establish peace. If we able to understand the conflict of everyday existence, then we can go further because therein lies the whole significance of life. Hence Self-Knowledge is needed to establish peace.

Our present society is fragmented into innumerable groups based on race, culture, ideology and religion. As a result there is a continuous urge of dominance over one another. So, conflict arises due to the urge of dominations. Every individual, every society and every nation tries to dominate other on different grounds. Conflict is in every form between individuals, societies and also between nations.

Krishnamurti holds that -from the very moment we born, a type of battle starts with our life and it lasts till death; it is a never ending process. So, life is a series of constant struggle and battle. Perceives the problem of existence primarily as that a conflict. By the term `problem` he means to say, a state in which there is conflict. And as the conflict prevails in us, we regard it as a problem, which is to be dissolved, to be understood or form which we wish to escape. Hence, to be aware of the problem means to be aware of the conflict. Dynamics of conflict moves from inner being of the individual towards the collectivity in terms of conflict among religious, ideologies, nationhood's etc. Conflicts are a total process and it is the psychological process. No theory, method or formula can be able to eradicate conflict from the society or to minimize conflict from the society.

KEYWORDS: *Conflict Violence Non- Violence Peace Self-Knowledge Relationship Psychological Revolution, Domination Human Beings Society Individual*

INTRODUCTION

It will be a touch on the surface, and not in the deeper post of it, so it will be just like a soldering effect to the society. So, for understanding the very nature and structure of conflict, one has to go in to psychologically and inwardly into one's mind, and not outwardly to the systems and institutions. Replacement of one system with another system is an external physical change. In fact it is not change. Change comes from within through a psychological mutation. Hence, for Krishnamurti, understanding of conflict and violence requires a 'begging from within', and thereafter a movement from individual psychologically revelation towards externalities for removal of conflict and violence from collectivity.

Krishnamurti observes, when one is conforming to a pattern, religious or psychological, or the pattern, which one has set for oneself, there is always a contradiction between what one actually is, and the pattern, there is always a conflict and this conflict is endless. But if the pattern creates conflict, is it possible for anyone to live a life without any pattern, without any idea of future, a life without conflict? Krishnamurti's answer to this question is 'yes', it is possible only when one lives completely with "what is", that which is actually taking place. To live with "what is" implies conflict whatsoever. Therefore, there is no future transforming it into something to else. And the very ending of it is the gathering of supreme energy which is a form of intelligence.

According to Jiddu Krishnamurti, the understanding of conflict in relationship is of primary importance, for in that conflict one can discover the whole process of the mind. Without knowing the actuality of the conflict in daily existence i.e. economic, social and ideological, it is impossible to go beyond it. Relationship is response to the movement of life and life is a constant challenge and when the response is inadequate conflict arises and when the response is appropriate and adequate there is the cessation of conflict. Hence it is of prime importance to know oneself i.e. what he/she is rather than what he/she thinks about or what his/her ideas are. If one can understand what one is, he/she can create a world and that world will be free of conflict. In everyday life we are facing crisis in the world and we are observing that today's world is full of misery and the rates of distribution and conflict war are increasing very rapidly. It is true that it is impossible for an individual to stop these things, but he or she can alter his/her relationship with the world i.e. the world of his wife, his work, his home etc, not necessary the world of any other continent. Through these alterations one can bring a great change, and this change moves in a wider circle through which one can build a peaceful society.

Hence, understanding of the concept and nature of violence is of utmost importance. As Malik points out, "Etymologically, violence means 'to carry force towards, something. This can have endless meanings; maybe all human action in the normal sense whether the ego is involved, implies violence. Even other wise, it is clear that violence is related to physical force, injury or human to another or even to one's self with same intensity. Its psychological complementarily is vigorous psychological abuse. This is meant to disempower the other, to exploit in many other, often subtle devastating ways, within the 'domination versus subordination' paradigm."¹³ Krishnamurti holds that once one observes and understands this violence within one's own self in a rather non-interfering way; it is possible to think of an alternative, i.e. non-violent order of existence. Here non—interference means a conscious suspension of interference of thought or traditionally and institutionally constructed self with the actual and real self, the mental process. Violence to other and violence to one's own self continues because each of us wants to retain, nature and sustain this constructed self and thus refuses to realize the conflict between "I" and "me", - the real actual self and the constructed self, idea and reality, image and actuality. As a result, relationship between human being gets based on image- forming. As Krishnamurti points out, "In all our relationship each one of us builds an image about the other and these two images have relationship, not the human beings themselves. The wife has an image about the husband--- perhaps not consciously but nevertheless it is there--- and the husband has an image about the wife. One has an image about one's country and about oneself, and we are always strengthening these images by adding more and more to them. And it is these images which have relationship. The actual relationship between two human being or between many human beings completely ends when there is the formation of images."¹⁴

For Krishnamurti, these images are fictitious. Hence, according to him, life becomes a battle among various images, - images of self in conflict with each other and self image versus other image. This conflict is like the one between

a schizophrenic patient, his image forming and the reality outside him. The psychological structure of society is thus essentially schizophrenic in nature. Krishnamurti says, "All our relationships, whether they be with property, ideas or people, are based essentially on this image-forming, and hence there is always conflict."

So, if we are able to understand the conflict of every day existence, then we can go further because therein lies the whole significance of life. A mind that is in conflict is a destructive mind, and who is in conflict can never understand. Understanding of conflict is possible only when one steps out of its dynamics and perceives it with a free and alert mind. This is also to understand the flawed perspective in the name of human relationship. For a man who understands the relationship there is no outsider or insider. So, relationship is the process of understanding oneself and to understand oneself moment to moment in daily life is self knowledge. Self knowledge in this sense is the beginning of wisdom. Krishnamurti holds that the urge of domination whether it is by individual, society or nation is the root cause conflict. He points out, "every body is fighting some body, one man feels less than another, and struggles to get to the top. Our society is a constant battle of man against man."

Conflict among nations is not only due to ideological difference. It is seen that nations have gone to wars even within the same spectrum of social system; large nations have dominated small nations. No matter what the ideological differences are, big nations have tried again and again with new strategies to colonize, suppress and keep small and poor nations backward.

In the social field, conflict arises due to relationship, the relationship with things or with individual or with ideological relationship. It is the challenge of everyday life. If we do not know how to meet with other, how to behave with other, this very ignorance creates conflicts in society. Because, society is the projection of individual, the problem persists with individual only. In his famous philosophical work *You are the World*, Krishnamurti holds that the problem is related with the individual only, not the society or the world. Without the psychological transformation, the conflict situation cannot be eradicated from the society. This psychological revolution comes into being when need for using the other ceases. And this revolution is possible through the positive aspect i.e. love and non violence.

Krishnamurti does not think that any partial revolution in the economic, social or political organization of society can provide a lasting solution to the crisis in human consciousness and world. The only revolution that is essential for bringing peace and order to the suffering humanity has to be psychological. And the psychological revolution can come into being by the participation of every individual. Psychological revolution, for Krishnamurti, is total revolution.

For understanding the nature of conflict and conflict leading to violence Krishnamurti, unlike many other contemporary Indian thinkers, hits on the negative and subversive force in every individual psyche, - the very nature of man that is carefully concealed for the sake of security at individual and collective levels and for the sustenance of each one's hierarchically glorified and respectable position. He says, "We human beings are what we have been for millions of years- colossally greedy, envious, aggressive, jealous, anxious and despairing, with occasional flashes of joy and affection. We are a strange mixture of hate, fear and gentleness; we are both violence and peace. There has been outward progress from the bullock cart to the jet plane but psychologically the individual has not changed at all, and the structure of society throughout the world has been created by individuals. The outward societal structure is the result of the inward psychological structure of our human relationship... . The violence that is embedded in the structure of society is thus nothing but an extension and reflection of this deep structure of individual psyche. Structural violence has thus two

dimensions for Krishnamurti of which the individual dimension is primary and understanding of it is more important. For him, all violence flows from the deep-rooted structure of individual psyche and we individuals only are the creators of structural violence within society.

To Krishnamurti, a man who is seeking to understand violence does not belong to any country, any religion, to any political party, he is choicelessly concerned with total understanding of mankind. He perceives that when we isolate ourselves in term of or on the basis of a class or nation, it is violent activity. When we call ourselves as Indian, Pakistani, Muslim, or Christian and so on, we are being violent because at that particular moment we are isolating ourselves from the rest of mankind.

When we examine the phenomenon of violence, we find violence first in ourselves and then violent outwardly. What we are inwardly, we project outwardly. There are thousands of explanations of violence. What is violence? Why are we violent? What are the causes of violence? But if we analyze the question repeatedly, character and primary means of violence will remain the same. In India, from time immemorial ideologists and intelligentsia have been talking about the problem of non-violence, that they are practicing non-violence. But non-violence as a sheer- ideal gives them a certain sense of hypocritical escape from the fact, the fact they continue inwardly violent.

Krishnamurti perceives violence as a fact, not as an idea. He perceives violence as fact which exists in the human being. According to him, if we know how to look at violence, not only outwardly in society – in the wars, the riots and the class conflicts- but also in ourselves then we may avert violence from the society. He holds that, the most common expression of violence is anger. When our sister, wife or beloved is attacked by any person and if I rebuke that person, I may say that I am righteously angry is justified. He observes, to investigate into the fact of our own anger, we must pass no judgment on it, for the moment we see in an opposite situation we condemn it and therefore we cannot see it as it is. To see the face of violence clearly is to be in a very deep meditation; it is not possible to understand violence through verbal agreement or disagreement.

The above analysis of the phenomenon of violence reveals that peace in its true sense is never achievable by changing or modifying the external system or social dynamics. Nor it is possible by blindly subscribing to some institutional religious measure. To be non-violent by following the ideal or value of non-violence cannot make us really non-violent. To be really and truly non-violent one needs to understand violence within oneself and then to practice non-violence experimentally. It is not the ideal of non-violence which can bring peace in life and society. On the contrary it is by exposing oneself to oneself and a clear self-perception that can help us in going beyond it and trading the path of peace.

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