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ONE OF THE many problems confronting all of us, and especially those who are now being educated and must soon go out and face the world, is this question of reform. Various groups of people—the socialists, the communists, and reformers of every kind—are concerned with trying to bring about certain changes in the world, changes which are obviously necessary. Although in some countries there is a fair degree of prosperity, throughout the world there is still hunger, starvation, and millions of human beings have insufficient clothing and no proper place to sleep. And how is a fundamental reformation to take place without creating more chaos, more misery and strife? That is the real problem, is it not? If one reads a little history and observes present-day political trends, it becomes obvious that what we call reformation, however desirable and necessary, always brings in its wake still other forms of confusion and conflict; and to counteract this further misery, more legislation, more checks and counterchecks become necessary. Reformation creates new disorders; in putting these right, still further disorders are produced, and so the vicious circle continues. This is what we are faced with, and it is a process which seems to have no end.

Now, how is one to break through this vicious circle? Mind you, it is obvious that reformation is necessary; but is reformation possible without bringing about still further confusion? This seems to me to be one of the fundamental issues with which any thoughtful person must be concerned. The question is not what kind of reformation is necessary, or at what level, but whether any reformation is possible at all without bringing with it other problems which again create the need of reform. And what is one to do in order to break up this endless process? Surely, it is the function of education, whether in the small school or in the large university, to tackle this problem, not abstractly, theoretically, not by merely philosophizing or writing books about it, but by actually facing it in order to find out how to solve it. Man is caught in this vicious circle of reformation which always needs further reform and, if it is not broken up, our problems can have no solution.

So, what kind of education, what kind of thinking is necessary to break up this vicious circle? What action will put an end to the increase of problems in all our activities? Is there any movement of thought, in any direction, that can free man from this manner of living, the reformation of which always needs further reform? In other words, is there an action which is not born of reaction?

I think there is a way of life in which there is not this process of reformation breeding further misery, and that way may be called religious. The truly religious person is not concerned with reform, he is not concerned with merely producing a change in the social order; on the contrary, he is seeking what is true, and that very search has a transforming effect on society. That is why education must be principally concerned with helping the student to seek out truth or God, and not merely preparing him to fit into the pattern of a given society.

I think it is very important to understand this while we are young; because, as we grow older and begin to set aside our little amusements and distractions, our sexual appetites and petty ambitions, we become more keenly aware of the immense problems confronting the world, and then we want to do something about them, we want to bring about some kind of amelioration. But unless we are deeply religious we shall only create more confusion, further misery; and religion has nothing to do with priests, churches, dogmas, or organized beliefs. These things are not religion at all, they are merely social conveniences to hold us within a particular pattern of thought and action; they are the means of exploiting our credulity, hope and fear. Religion is the seeking out of what is truth, what is God, and this search requires enormous energy, wide intelligence, subtle thinking. It is in this very seeking of the immeasurable that there is right social action, not in the so-called reformation of a particular society.

To find out what is truth there must be great love and a deep awareness of man's relationship to all things--which means that one is not concerned with one's own progress and achievements. The search for truth is true religion, and the man who is seeking truth is the only religious man. Such a man, because of his love, is outside of society, and his action upon society is therefore entirely different from that of the man who is in society and concerned with its reformation. The reformer can never create a new culture. What is necessary is the search of the truly religious man, for this very search brings about its own culture and it is our only hope. You see, the search for truth gives an explosive creativeness to the mind, which is true revolution, because in this search the mind is uncontaminated by the edicts and sanctions of society. Being free of all that, the religious man is able to find out what is true; and it is the discovery of what is true from moment to moment that creates a new culture.

That is why it is very important for you to have the right kind of education. For this the educator himself must be rightly educated so that he will not regard teaching merely as a means of earning a livelihood, but will be capable of helping the student to put aside all dogmas and not be held by any religion or belief. The people who come together on the basis of religious authority, or to practice certain ideals, are all concerned with social reform, which is merely the decorating of the prison walls. Only the truly religious man is truly revolutionary; and it is the function of education to help each one of us to be religious in the true sense of the word, for in that direction alone lies our salvation.

Questioner: I want to do social work, but I don't know how to start.

Krishnamurti: I think it is very important to find out not how to start, but why you want to do social work at all. Why do you want to do social work? Is it because you see misery in the world--starvation, disease, exploitation, the brutal indifference of great wealth side by side with appalling poverty, the enmity between man and man? Is that the reason? Do you want to do social work because in your heart there is love and therefore you are not concerned with your own fulfillment? Or is social work a means of escape from yourself? Do you understand? You see, for example, all the ugliness involved in orthodox

marriage, so you say, "I shall never get married," and you throw yourself into social work instead; or perhaps your parents have urged you into it, or you have an ideal. If it is a means of escape, or if you are merely pursuing an ideal established by society, by a leader or a priest, or by yourself, then any social work you may do will only create further misery. But if you have love in your heart, if you are seeking truth and are therefore a truly religious person, if you are no longer ambitious, no longer pursuing success, and your virtue is not leading to respectability-then your very life will help to bring about a total transformation of society.

I think it is very important to understand this. When we are young, as most of you are, we want to do something, and social work is in the air; books tell about it, the newspapers do propaganda for it, there are schools to train social workers, and so on. But you see, without self-knowledge, without understanding yourself and your relationships, any social work you do will turn to ashes in your mouth.

It is the happy man, not the idealist or the miserable escapee, who is revolutionary; and the happy man is not he who has many possessions. The happy man is the truly religious man, and his very living is social work. But if you become merely one of the innumerable social workers, your heart will be empty. You may give away your money, or persuade other people to contribute theirs, and you may bring about marvellous reforms; but as long as your heart is empty and your mind full of theories, your life will be dull, weary, without joy. So, first understand yourself, and out of that self-knowledge will come action of the right kind.

(Excerpted from, "**This Matter of Culture**", by J Krishnamurti, KFI 2004)