

## Interview with Prof. P. Krishna: Education, Science and Spirituality



**Javier Collado Ruano:** Dear Prof. Padmanabhan Krishna, thank you very much for all the conferences that you are doing these months around Brazil, and thank you to give us also the opportunity to know a little bit more about your theosophical approach to Education, Science and Spirituality.

**Prof. P. Krishna:** It is a joy to be in Brazil again and I am thankful to the Theosophical society “[União Planetaria](#)” of Brazil for inviting me.

**JCR:** Well, after reading a lot of your papers on your website [www.pkrishna.org](http://www.pkrishna.org), such as “The Holistic Perception of Reality”, “Global Violence and Individual Responsibility”, and many others such as “Our Relationship with the World”, I have few questions. If we human begins, are making mistakes after mistakes with wars... what will be necessary for the world-society to build a real democracy? And what is the role of Education in this process?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** *What we have to learn in the name of democracy?* What we have at present in the democracies of the world is the basic structure of political parties, periodic elections to the parliament, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, the freedom of press and other media etc. But we lack the spirit of democracy which is a spirit of friendship, of mutual respect, humility, honesty, and co-operation despite the differences of views between us. It is a spirit which says no one of us knows what is the right thing to do, so we will confer, listen to each other with respect and thereby educate ourselves into different aspects of the problems we are facing. Having done that, we shall propose laws / actions that need to be enacted. If there is more than one proposal we will vote and decide by majority which path to adopt. Having decided that, we shall all help to make that a success irrespective of our personal views and if there are difficulties we shall confer again in the same spirit and decide the changes to be made without any mud-slinging or blame game. We are friends with the common interest of our country as the uppermost objective irrespective of who is in power.

Without such a spirit what we have is not a true democracy, but a power game played with selfish interest to outdo

our rivals and cheat or tell lies if needed to gather votes and win power. The national objective is forgotten and personal agendas operate. Without the true spirit the structure becomes a sham and we do not really mean what we say. Or say what we mean. Unless the motives are right it turns into a hypocrisy and a pretense.

**JCR:** Translating all this into an academic curriculum which can be taught in all the countries is very difficult to achieve as a global ideal..

**Prof. P. Krishna:** You cannot teach this like an academic course. Children are educated not by what we speak but by what they see going on around them. The world is the way it is because we are the way we are and we do not change just because our knowledge or opinions change. There is real change only when we live with a different spirit which requires a transformation of consciousness and not merely the transformation of ideas. Ideas can change the structure of society but the new structure will also fail if the spirit is not changed, for the same reasons for which the previous structure did not work. You can make some better roads or bring about outward changes but the real deeper problems lie not at that level. For instance, neither capitalism, nor communism or socialism has created a non-violent society where there is peace, love, friendship, happiness and real welfare. So what is needed is an inner change which comes from self-knowledge and not from book knowledge alone. Unfortunately we have neglected self knowledge, which is the key to wisdom, in almost all our systems of education globally. So education becomes just a means of cultivating skills and power; and power without wisdom is dangerous as it is used destructively towards selfish aims..

**JCR:** So, what is your advice about global education, in order to free human beings from the divisions of nationality, religion and so on..?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** All these evils spring from the ego process in our consciousness. This process begins with identifying oneself with a fragment ( such as a caste, a religion, a nation, a race) and feeling separate from the whole, then working only for the fragment without caring for the whole. So it is important in education not to promote the ego process in the child. This means not to use methods which promote the ego in the child. Fear and punishment promote the ego, so does a feeling of competition or working for rewards. The school must be a place which enables each child to grow naturally and holistically in all directions: physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. We must respect each child as he or she is and not only the talented ones. We are all different from each other, but no one is superior or inferior. Intelligence manifests differently in different human beings and there is no such thing as an unintelligent child. Every child can be helped to flower in goodness, naturally without being pushed into some pre-conceived ideological framework. This is totally different from the way we are 'educating' these days, promoting the ego in each child, rewarding the bright ones and punishing the weak, teaching them that their classmates are not their brothers but rivals to be outdone. No wonder they all grow up to make self-interest the first aim of their life.

**JCR:** Dear professor, I have another question. But I really would like to know your physical and spiritual approach, because I deeply believe that sometimes the history have a spiral repetition, with different conjunctions, but with a lot of parallelisms. In this sense, I feel the world is changing the paradigm again. Could it be possible that internet can bring about a structural change? Could internet connect people to "global" problems, in order to open their eyes?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** Internet is a fantastic way of fast communication and easy access to a wide range of knowledge but more important than the speed of communication is what people communicate through the internet? One can communicate philosophic questions but one can also communicate pornography and escapist fare. It is a powerful tool but it can be used both constructively and destructively. So internet by itself cannot bring about wisdom and the right spirit in human beings. Wisdom is not so easily come by and without wisdom things will always go wrong.

**JCR:** Yes, some governments are already using the internet to spy on people and institutions. Should it be a reflection point to think about the possibility to introduce internet in the "International Human Rights" framework?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** Human rights will become a reality only when we imbibe the right human values through education. They cannot become a reality merely by making laws or statements. Laws only control the manifestation of the disorder which is there in our consciousness, they do not eliminate the disorder. So if you hate other human beings the laws may prevent you from killing them but the hatred continues and so the causes of division are not eliminated; they manifest in other ways.

**JCR:** On the other hand, after reading your book "Education, Science and Spirituality", I have to confess that I learned a lot from your ideas. I loved the way in which you talk about "universal fraternity", "understanding of human consciousness" and "common heritage of humanity". How can we arrive at Self-knowledge for a real inner transformation?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** There is no short cut or quick recipe. One has to ask the following question: We know how human beings grow in knowledge and we have evolved good means for that; but how does a human being grow in wisdom? If we impart knowledge and empower a human being must we not also accept the responsibility to help him grow in wisdom? That requires a different kind of learning, not just accumulation of knowledge, skills and ideas. It requires an inquiring mind which discerns what is true and what is false. As we grow up in whichever family or culture, one acquires a lot of notions which are false or simply constructs of the human mind which become truths for us because we accept them. A lot of the disorder in our consciousness and therefore in society arises out of such 'illusions'. An illusion is something we take to be true when it is not true or something to which we give a lot of importance when it is really not important. Education must therefore create an inquiring, learning mind which is not blindly conforming or accepting what its culture and society is saying. Such a learning mind lives with questions and not with answers. The questions make its observations keen and sensitive and it learns by watching itself in relationship and discovering how disorder arises in our consciousness. The perception of what is true and what is false or destructive ends the false and brings wisdom into consciousness. This is not something one can get from a book. One has to learn through one's own perceptions, that is why it is called self-knowledge. The Buddha in the east and Socrates in the west spoke about the importance of self-knowledge as a means of growing in wisdom more than 2000 years ago. We admire them but we have not paid heed to what they said.

So, the question is can we, through right education, create a learning mind which is growing both in knowledge and in wisdom. It seems to me that that is the only hope of saving humanity from itself!

**JCR:** In the last years, there were some intellectual movements which do interconnections between science and spirituality. What is your opinion about it?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** Science is humanity's quest for discovering the order which manifests itself in the external world around us and spirituality is humanity's quest for discovering order in the inner world of our consciousness. Both the external and internal worlds exist, so these are two complementary quests for truth in two aspects of a single reality and any antagonism between them is the product of a narrow vision, a misunderstanding of the true meaning of both these quests. I see no contradiction between the two and a truly learning mind can inquire into truth across both worlds.

**JCR:** What are the lessons the world-society should learn from Jiddu Krishnamurti? And how could we introduce our readers to him?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** He pointed out that the learning mind is the true religious mind, not just a believing mind. If I may quote him, "The religious mind has no beliefs. It moves from fact to fact. Therefore it is also the scientific mind; but the mind that is trained in the knowledge of science is not a religious mind. The religious mind includes the scientific mind". He was to my mind the Socrates of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who raised a lot of questions and dissuaded people from accepting his answers as the truth without verifying that through their own perceptions. The direct perception of a truth

acts on consciousness but the acceptance of the ideas of another does not. So he asked his listeners not to accept what he was pointing out but to investigate it and see for themselves if it was true. That is the essence of the religious mind and not belief or faith which the world considers to be synonymous with religion. He taught how one can grow in self-knowledge with a learning, observing and listening mind and thereby come upon a transformation of consciousness which is a real change and not just a change of concepts in the head.

**JCR:** What would you like to say to all our readers around the world on this special day: "The International Day of Democracy"?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** Inculcate the true spirit of democracy within yourself; without it democracy has very little meaning.

**JCR:** Personally, I would like to know your opinion about what is going on with us after our death. What do you think it happens to all our energy? How is it transformed?

**Prof. P. Krishna:** No one really knows. Those who have experienced it cannot tell and those who haven't are only speculating. There are lots of speculations but they are not the truth. Like life, death is also a great mystery. I like the saying, "Life is not a problem to be solved; it is a mystery to be lived!" Maybe we should end with a joke: "Don't take life too seriously; you will never get out of it alive!"

**JCR:** Thank you very much for your time, patience and interesting reflections. I hope to see you soon, but in coming occasion in India.

To read more reflections from Prof. P. Krishna, visit: [www.pkrishna.org](http://www.pkrishna.org)

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