

Create a New Song

Date: 22-23 December 2017

Location: Study Centre of The Krishnamurti Foundation India in Bangalore

Participants: Kabir Jaithirtha (Trustee Krishnamurti Foundation India, Co-Founder Shibumi School), Lakshmi Saripalli (Raman Research Institute), Gurvinder Singh (Study Centre, Krishnamurti Foundation India), Ranjit Dash (Teacher at Rishi Valley School), Tanya Creedon (Study Centre Guest from Russia), Sanat Kumar (Loka Foundation School) and Charlotte Leech (Loka Foundation School).

Part 1: Education, Knowledge and Relationship

Education and knowledge

Lakshmi: We generate a lot of knowledge that gets put out into the world and gets used in creating systems and things with which we can engage. To me it appears that this is going to be something that you can never stop. With knowledge coming in such torrents, how could education be shaped to cope with this knowledge, to deal with it with some responsibility?

Kabir: I feel that mankind has not understood deeply the nature, limitations and implications of knowledge. For us, knowing has a certain kind of deep appeal. I feel a little uneasy when I don't know and I feel that by knowing I will have more control over everything. **So psychologically, knowing has become a very strong compulsive need and our whole existence is focused on knowing in one way or the other.** So for us knowing has replaced relating. I feel when I know I comprehend but the act of 'comprehension relationship' or the act of 'relating comprehending' maybe completely different from knowing. In the very act of relating, I would suggest, that there is a certain capacity which I am calling comprehending, which for me is not the same as knowing.

Ranjit: In this context what does it mean to be able to relate to a thing apart from the knowledge of the thing?

Kabir: To relate to anything there must be freedom from knowledge because when I come to relating with you based on my knowledge, that very knowledge can be a barrier to relating. It affects the way I listen and even speak to you. It affects everything. Then it can be divided into

positive or negative but the very act of knowing affects the way I relate to you, listen to you, and look at you. But I don't know if we are aware of that because for us, knowing has become so habitual that we don't realise that I can look at you independent of knowing you. And yet it seems to me the most obvious thing that I can look at her completely without knowing her in any sense, not even knowing that she is a woman, not even knowing that she is from Bihar, or a human being. So the act of looking and listening is really capable of being completely independent of knowing. But our conditioning has become so deep that we feel that every act of looking and listening can be and has to be shaped by knowing. When a small child is looking at a dog he or she is looking at the dog without knowing, just mesmerised by the wagging tail and the jumping vitality of the dog but she didn't have to be describing all that to herself. The adult comes in and says 'dog'. In the beginning for the child that word dog is just a piece of information. The act of looking is not deeply limited by knowing but as we grow older (and that happens quite quickly by the time we are 4, 5, 6 or 7), knowing replaces looking or knowing begins to shape every looking and hence, we begin to create likes and dislikes. So the brain begins to feed on its own feedback and make that the most important thing in life. The basic essential capacity of looking, observing, knowing gets completely destroyed. **Suppose if we were to say that intelligence is in essence the act of looking, observing and knowing finds its place in that intelligence, then the whole concern in education will shift from knowing to nurturing and keeping alive this quality of looking and observing.** And it is not a difficult task except for the fact that the adult is so consumed by the knowing that he has to catch himself every moment and ask himself why he is doing what he is doing (emphasizing knowing over observing). It covers the whole gamut of what we call morality. For example, if two kids are fighting with each other, my immediate feeling is that I must intervene to stop the fight. I feel it is a short cut to tell them or give the information that fighting is bad. So they absorb the information that fighting is bad but they also have the movement of knowledge which says that 'I really want to hit him' and these two come in conflict with each other. Whereas if the child could be sensitized to the arising of that movement then there is a totally different kind of relating that takes place. Right now when I say I want to hit you, there is no sensitivity to the arising of the whole movement of aggression and I go and hit you.

Ranjit: So there is no relationship to our feelings and the way they arise?

Kabir: So we are using the word relating, relating happens only in the field of looking, listening and observing. If there is not the act of looking, listening and observing there is no relating. You can't relate through knowing, knowing always creates a distance.

Lakshmi: When we talk about this new knowledge pouring in, are you saying that there is a way that we can nurture in a child the space to just look?

Kabir: Yes. So that knowledge finds its right place. Knowledge is not just information that scientists point to but it is also a hugely psychological movement. Right? For instance for me to say that I am separate from you, is rooted in knowledge. The interesting thing about this knowledge is that the knowledge that I am separate from you creates the separation and sustains it. The knowledge that I am superior to you creates the feeling of superiority and sustains it. So it is not knowledge as mere information in the sense that I already see that I am superior to you and then knowledge just creates a description of that superiority. In this case the knowledge creates and sustains that superiority.

Lakshmi: So it is building structures?

Kabir: Yes, that's very interesting to see. So hatred and fear are all knowledge which are created and sustained by knowledge itself.

Ranjit: So those feelings are no more a dead entity but a result of knowledge?

Kabir: Shall we say it is still mechanical but it is active and mechanical - much like a car that is not being driven but still has been started and is rolling across. It is still a mechanical movement but its active - it can hurt people and crash into buildings. Similarly this active mechanical movement of knowledge creates disorder. It is the source of all disorder. So to be deeply perceptive of this fact is to put knowledge in its right place.

Charlotte: How can education play a role in doing so?

Kabir: After all the whole purpose of education has been to give knowledge. The whole purpose of education has been to give values also as knowledge. We say that we must teach the child to be kind, good and tolerant. So what I am saying is that if this active mechanical movement of psychological knowledge is not there then goodness, virtue, and love are the natural states of being. **So I don't have to teach anything in a**

positive sense but have to bring about the capacity to negate the false.

So, love is a natural state of the brain - that is an amazing thing to understand. It is not something given from outside and therefore struggle against all the hatred.

Ranjit: Then how did it come to this state of existence?

Kabir: You don't have to ask this question as we cannot answer this question satisfactorily. It could have been agriculture or some virus for all I know. Right? But I think the more important question is can it end? It is all the more important to ask this rather than asking how it became. Or I can ask a very interesting question which is similar to that. Asking how it all began takes it back into time, such as when man came out of Africa and other theories. But I can actually watch in myself how it begins over and over again. Therefore perceive the whole movement and ask whether it can end.

Lakshmi: So this exercise helps. To trace back and see how it began within us or the world more so within us. It helps.

Kabir: See I can never tell with any certainty as to how it began, I can only have theories. But I can actually watch within myself how this psychological movement is created and sustained and whether it can end. It's wonderful news to realise that it can end so that the brain is not captive to this terrible burden of feeling isolation, separation or loneliness. I would say if that is the central concern of education then you will have children who will be makers, you will have children who will be mathematicians, you will have children who will be musicians, you will have children who have no particular talent but who have this extraordinary calmness. That extraordinary harmony is the greatest gift of life which I may not express through music or mathematics or science - what does it matter? I'll always pick up a few skills if necessary to earn a livelihood in the present way society is structured.

Charlotte: Is it important to relate everything we do in life to the whole existence?

Kabir: You are already related to the whole of existence. You don't have to do it through any positive action of yours. By the virtue of your being you are related to the whole of existence but you deliberately hypnotise yourself into thinking that you are separate. If you stop hypnotising yourself you are already there. Stop creating superficial turbulence.

Functioning in Relationship

Kabir: Through their education humans have found out ways of capturing and organising others and even using and manipulating them. If two people fight on the road, they might just fight for ten minutes and walk away from each other but it requires a certain kind of mind which organises and uses and manipulates the fears and anxieties and then converts it to something much more destructive. So it is natural to ask if it is the educated people who are creating such havoc in the world. What's gone wrong with it? People might say we should bring values and a sense of tolerance. That has been the constant idea. Then there is this whole psychological structure of mankind which is also knowledge. **I don't think we realize that the whole psychological structure of mankind is not a biological phenomenon, it is knowledge.** Knowledge which says I am an Indian, knowledge which says I am a Hindu, knowledge which says I am superior to you, knowledge which says I speak a different language and therefore we are separate from each other. All that is knowledge.

Ranjit: Of course. Because if it were biological then we would expect everyone to behave in the same way but it doesn't happen like that because I think I am an Indian and he thinks he is different.

Kabir: I think it is very easy to see that it is psychological. Two children born in two different families do not feel any particular identity with anything when they are born. As they grow up they are taught to feel identity with something or the other. There is a very nice novel by Tagore called 'Gora', it is about this man who is extremely Hindu in all the beliefs he had, against the British, against western civilisation. Suddenly it is revealed to him that he is part European so his whole understanding comes crumbling down as he identified with certain set of values because he identified with them. So, it is not very difficult to see how this whole conditioning begins as knowledge separating human beings and hence the disorder is created. Therefore it seems to me it is central to education to perceive, to comprehend (using those words deliberately as it just not a matter of information), see the fact of it. So it seems to me that education should be concerned with the fact that knowledge is limited and therefore it has a particular place. That knowledge does not bring out goodness, love and beauty. That knowledge has the potential for creating a sense of separation. So it is like a knife - you use the knife but with care and not indiscriminately.

Ranjit: But have I related to the knife?

Kabir: The problem is the 'I' itself is a piece of knowledge. Do I relate to you? Unless there is great comprehension that the 'I' and the 'you' are also an activity of knowledge the 'I' will go on creating separation to sustain itself and then try to relate to you (and that won't work). I don't have to do something actively to relate – I have to stop separating.

Lakshmi: In all this I keep hearing, relate to you and relate to me, where does the rest of nature come in?

Kabir: This is because we start with the notion that I relate to you or I relate to nature. When there is the perception of what knowledge can do and cannot do, where it is in its right place and where it creates disorder, the very perception of that reveals the relationship.

Lakshmi: With anything?

Kabir: With everything ...there is a sense of functioning in relationship there. Then it is not just relating to you or to him – it's to the wind, it's to the bird, it's to the sky, it's to the flower. So in that act of relating which is not a function of thought (it is a natural state of being) there is deep respect. You can see vestiges of that - the hunter would have deep respect for animal he was killing. There was a sense of relatedness there. We don't have that sense of relatedness, so we can cut all the trees on Kanakapura road and we don't see it as murder, we see it as progress or a necessity. We don't look at that huge tree that has been hacked down with the same sense of sorrow as we would have if a human being had been hacked down. So there is extraordinarily insensitivity because of this constant activity of knowledge psychologically.

Charlotte: How can education bring this in?

Kabir: When you say how can education bring this in, it is not some method or series of steps or lessons you give to children. **There are many things we are doing in the name of education which is suppressing and ultimately perhaps eliminating the sense of connectedness.**

Ranjit: Are you suggesting that the type of education we are talking about is to nurture the relationship while not negating knowledge?

Kabir: If you ask how to make this into a national policy then I don't know because no one is interested in doing so. And even if you tell them this should be the national policy they won't listen to you because as it has nothing to do with GDP or making India a superpower.

Lakshmi: So it is not something that we need to do as to 'not do' of a certain existing way of relating and 'doing' education. Just examine it and not do those things.

Kabir: If I am in conflict with you, I don't have to do anything to eliminate the conflict. I have to not do certain things. The brain should not get caught in activity of thought which says this person is dangerous, this person is my enemy, and this person should be eliminated. Right? If the brain is not doing that there is relationship.

Lakshmi: To add to that is it also that I should not tell myself that, I should not think like that?

Kabir: If I say 'I should not be angry' there has been no comprehension of the whole movement which we label as anger. It is just trying to control – sometimes you will be able to control, sometimes you will not be able to control. **And even if you learn to control completely you are a dead human being. Ultimately my control prevents any movement, so I am a dead human being.**

Lakshmi: What is the action? What should I do or not do?

Kabir: What is action? For us action primarily springs from thought.

Ranjit: Is there any action that comes out of relationships?

Kabir: There is an action which comes out of perception. The action that comes out of perception is not the same as action that comes out of thought. The very word perception has got contaminated with the idea of thought because we say things like 'it's your perception, it's my perception'. The use of the word perception is wrong in this context - instead we should say 'that's your opinion or this is my opinion'. Perception is independent of knowledge. **So when the brain is in the state of perception, in that state there is a negation of that which is false and that is not control.** You can go around saying I should not get angry; it is still a movement of control and conflict. But when there is a total perception that this whole thing called anger has its root in the past, has its roots in identity, has its roots in becoming and this whole thing has its roots in this strange thing called psychological security, it ends.

Ranjit: If one has to approach education in this way one has to be interested in anger or greed without suppressing it.

Kabir: We don't have that interest and we can't create that by saying 'look if you do this I will give you a certificate'. What you will get at the

end of it is a whole lot of words. But if you are really interested in your own greed, in your own anger or loneliness, then there is learning. But very few people do that - they just want to control, they want to suppress or move away from it.

Lakshmi: So in school one can keep a space and time to ...

Kabir: It's like saying I will have one class for breathing and when we are done with breathing we will do other things. You have to be breathing all the time!

If the adults are concerned with this they will find ten different opportunities and situations to bring about this sensitivity. You may create a space and time also but you will not restrict it to that. Everything that you do will have this quality. So if two children are quarrelling you will approach it differently.

The right thing to do

Lakshmi: But somewhere it's been sold to people that education is meant for the purpose of getting a job and adding to the economy. So they need to know that there is ...

Kabir: They will come to know. Take the Krishnamurthy schools. They have explicitly said that they are not interested in education for jobs and so on. People get to know. They say 'oh yes, this is very different. Let's look at it and see what is happening here. Why are you doing this? How do you go about doing this?' People from Doon School and other places come and say that 'oh, you don't have head boys or head girls .How is it you bring about order?' So I think we should forget about wanting to convince people for their own good. **We should just do something so remarkable not for the sake of self-expression but because it is the right thing to do.** Not for the sake of convincing others. It is the right thing to do, so you do it. And because it is the right thing to do it has its own vitality. I don't have to go around convincing anybody. People will come.

-----*End of Part 1*-----

Part 2: Creativity and Talent

Exploiting Talent

Ranjit: Current way of looking at education is you finish school, college and look for a job. Is there an education beyond this and relates to an entire way of life?

Kabir: See, if you don't mind I will say the right education is interested in the totality of life. That is why Krishnamurthi says that the whole movement of life is learning. So right education is concerned with the totality of life - including that which is measurable and that which is not measurable. The totality of life has that which can be measured and that which is beyond all measure. **Thought can only be concerned with what can be measured because it is the activity of thought to measure and that may have a place but there is a whole dimension of life which has nothing to do with measure. That does not make it meaningless. In fact maybe the meaning is there and it puts this measure in its right place.** That's part of this whole psychological movement of thought seeking certainty, seeking to control etc. If that is not there, measure finds its right place, then you are already related to the whole of life. In that you will discover how to earn a livelihood. What is right for this particular individual in order to earn a livelihood. What is right for this particular individual may not be right for that individual. But that does not mean they are in contradiction with each other. So as you and I as educators are exploring all this and are not getting stuck, we keep asking questions. For example is it possible to create a portfolio where a person can show his skills. Is it possible to create mentors who will give skills so this person can go and earn a livelihood? We ask all kinds of questions since we don't get limited by the idea of what education is or what it should be.

Lakshmi: It appears that the word education itself now means something else to most people. So what is this education you are talking about as it sounds quite different than what is generally known or practiced?

Kabir: Yes. If in the act of learning, I don't feel a profound relationship to the whole movement of life then what is the point?

Lakshmi: When you raise this, people call it impractical or imaginative or it is just philosophy. So it is understood differently. Right?

Kabir: The so called educated people are so ambitious. I remember a space scientist who had put his child here. Within one year he took him out because he was ambitious that his child should be pressurised with

getting more and more knowledge. That man maybe is revered by the whole of this country and given all kinds of awards but does he really understand the way of life. I have a right to ask that question. That man might say look at where you are and look at where I am because he measures life through success and status and so on. Who cares?

Charlotte: How do you see the relationship between education and talent?

Kabir: I think it is very simple. **Where there is no sense of self, everything finds its right place. Nothing becomes a matter of exploitation.** Now, do you want to exploit talent? That child can kick a football a little more skilfully you feel that by exploiting.... the four year old boy from Orissa who was running, exploit that talent.

Ranjit: Not only that, we do see that in reality shows. There is so much of pleasure. It is painful to see.

Kabir: Yes. You feel sick. But this whole thing is exploiting talent and all that is the movement of the self.

Charlotte: Can talent also be seen in another light?

Ranjit: What is the nature of right talent which actually does integrate people? Do we need talent?

Kabir: Suppose you have talent and I don't have talent, does my life become less worthy? Is it that by my very nature I cannot connect to the stars, the moon, the trees and the sky?

Lakshmi: So it seems to me that the name talent is given to something that can be exploited.

Charlotte: But what is talent?

Kabir: It maybe just that a particular child has a particular capacity to do a particular thing effortlessly. There is a girl in our school who cooks effortlessly and there is a boy in our school who does mathematics effortlessly. Fine, if both of them see that exploiting the talent is destructive, then the talent will find its right place. It won't become a means of exploitation, domination and control and so on. If he has to do a lot of mathematics, he will do it but he won't get caught in the idea that it is through doing mathematics that he discovers the meaning of life. He has already got the meaning of life and he does mathematics through that.

Ranjit: This partly answers what we were discussing. Educated people know how to organise anger and hatred. This will not probably happen if talent finds its right place

Kabir: It is not a matter of suppressing talent. But it is certainly not a matter of exploiting talent.

Lakshmi: What is hidden talent? Is it that we need others to discover it?

Kabir: It may be that in our tendency to exploit talent, we give certain talents tremendous importance and other talents get suppressed or ignored. Because it has no market value and therefore when you free that field of exploitation, then each child begins to show his capacity. It is there, it is natural.

Ranjit: On a practical level, at the school level how to bring in an ambience where this extra importance to certain talents is not there?

Kabir: Those are the basics that Krishnamurti talks about. No comparison, no rewards and no punishment. These are the fundamental things. **Reward, punishment and comparison sustain separation.** The feeling of being separate is sustained by reward, punishment and comparison. That is why he kept talking about it over and over again.

Lakshmi: Reward and punishment are to me the structures that knowledge itself has created to perpetuate it?

Kabir: That's right, you train young people to kill other young people and reward them with a medal. It's obscene.

Charlotte: We can observe a world which is divided, with war and conflict going on. How do you see the relation between the world we observe and the way we educate our children?

Kabir: It is obvious. Seeing the disorder in the world, my education is concerned to find out if it is possible for the brain to function with total order. I see that total order is not the product of thought or knowledge. In the very act of looking and observing, order is coming into being. Order is an ever renewing thing, it is not something static that is made and then protected. **Order comes into being every moment when mind is not holding on to anything. Order bubbles up every moment. It's the very nature of the universe.**

Lakshmi: This observing, is it possible for everybody to do?

Kabir: Unless the brain is deeply damaged or it can be superficially damaged by its own conditioning. Or it can be organically damaged and its okay, but then you take care of that child.

Charlotte: Sometimes it also seems that when the brain is damaged the child sees more clearly

Kabir: More innocent, less capable of destruction and less aggressive.

Absolutely. They say children with Down syndrome are very loveable.

Creativity

Kabir: They have a totally different quality which we can call creativity. For example, I read in 'The Perennial Philosophy' by Aldous Huxley where he has taken from all cultures this whole thing of non-dualistic perception and shown that there is so much similarity. He talks about this Chinese sculptor who is asked, 'how do you create such wonderful things?' He says that, 'I make my mind completely quiet.' So the first step is not the state of conflict but the one of being completely quiet. Then going with that state of quietness to the forest and therefore finding the right wood and from that state of quietness, creating something. In fact, my music teacher used to say especially when he used to sing really well that, 'I didn't feel that I was singing but rather something else was happening there.'

Ranjit: I have heard this from writers also when they say, 'oh! Did I write this?'

Kabir: Nowadays they call this, the zone or being in the flow - when the mind is in such a tremendous state of total alertness that everything is flowing harmoniously. But then you think that an outer state has created it and you keep craving for that.

Tania: This image of a writer or a poet writing something who just tears everything apart and throws it in the basket considering it rubbish. We associate this with the creative process.

Kabir: Let's explore that. See, it may be possible for a person who is really discontent and throwing away something and feeling that it does not communicate what I am trying to communicate. There is no conflict in that but just appears to be a conflict for the outer world. It can happen in

music too. I might sing a phrase and it does not communicate anything. It happens quite often when you sing a phrase consciously to create a particulate affect, there is usually a certain amount of dishonesty about it. Whereas if you are allowing the phrases to come out of the act of listening where your mind even while singing is in a process of listening then the phrases flow out of each other. Then this phrase gives rise to that phrase, just because the way you ended this phrase, the mind perceives a different possibility and another phrase comes out.

-----*End of Part 2*-----

Part 3: Psychological security and the root of disorder

Psychological security and the root of disorder

Lakshmi : So Kabir, we are in a society where the meaning of education seems to be you get educated and get specialised, all towards getting a job, looking after your family and so on and self expression but dominated with security and looking after your community and family. So in that setting, school like this where the thrust is to explore the issue of self and no self, connectedness, how do you see that as relating to people's needs?

Kabir : See, there's a difference between what is needed and what people want, I might want psychological security but maybe it is not needed at all to lead a happy life. It could be like a drug and viewing it as absolutely essential. Suddenly I wake up and realise that in fact it is very destructive and is bringing about tremendous amount of disorder in my life. So I don't actually need that security. For actual security there is no need for psychological society. Psychological security is just a construction of thought.

Lakshmi : I am not talking only about psychological security but material security like food and comfort.

Kabir : Yes, absolutely. But you know Kahn had said in 1930s that by 2025 the world would be so rich that people will have to work only fifteen hours a week. And now, the world is richer than what Kahn predicted but we don't know how to share. So people work much harder like forty hours a week and at times have to do two jobs to make their ends meet. So the real problem is not that we don't know how to create the material necessities of life but we don't know how to share it. We don't share it because there is this deep sense of division with which we live. So the need for material security is absolutely right but in our search for material security I think we have become so obsessed that it has become psychological. Something at the right level is a necessity but then we become obsessed with it and convert it to a psychological problem. That's what is happening. So we need to come back and say - how the mind can live with sanity so that everything is in right place. **The right place for psychological security is no psychological security. There is a right place for material security, there is a right place for knowledge, there is a right place for skill, there is a right place for structure but there is no right place for psychological security.** It is like an all-consuming monster because the minute it is given a certain space it tries to devour

everything. But we are very conditioned to think in terms of psychological security and that we cannot function without it. But we can see animals, birds, children functioning without this constant craving for psychological security.

Ranjit : Part of that is seeking certainty in every step.

Kabir : Yes. Part of that is seeking certainty, part of that is creating a sense of identity, part of that is projecting the existence of identity from the past into the future. All that is the movement of psychological security.

Ranjit : I can see that. That is probably one of the reasons why we have given much more importance to knowledge.

Kabir: **We don't give importance to knowledge; we give far more importance to the status that knowledge brings. That is why certain forms of knowledge become more important than other kinds of knowledge.**

Ranjit: Yes, that is true. Also knowledge means know-how and know-how brings in certain outcomes that are predictable.

Kabir: Yes but know-how is very simple. If you are working with something and if you are working with care you realise that it this is not the way to do it, that's the right way to do it, this is obstructive etc. Andhra government invited a group of Australian boat designers some years ago with complete up-to-date knowledge to come and see if they could improve the fishing boats, but they said that they did not need improvement. So there is way of craftsmanship which is not necessarily so-called scientifically driven. This is not to say that there is no place for science but craftsmanship could in itself bring about a certain efficiency and perfection and so on suited to the conditions and the needs.

Charlotte: So what is the purpose of science as separate entity?

Kabir: There is that too. I am saying that human beings do not relate to knowledge in a completely functional and sane way. They relate to it through psychological compulsion because it gives power, prestige and status.

Lakshmi: Has psychological security become much more enhanced in the last 300-400 years by the industrial revolution or has it always been there?

Kabir: I think psychological insecurity has got enhanced a great deal and therefore the compulsive need for psychological security has gotten enhanced. People feel much more anxious and lonely now because they really feel that they are separate and that every relationship is transient and every relationship is easily broken. So there is a tremendous need to constantly reassure yourself that you have a place in the world. So out of it has come loneliness and depression which have become a huge problem. All this is part of psychological insecurity but the pharmaceutical industry is willing to medicalise it and say that take this pill and everything will be alright.

Lakshmi: Having removed all those structures that were natural like communities, festivities....

Kabir: There might have been a culture which had a certain quality of harmony in a particular set of circumstances. Something else comes along and disturbs that set of circumstances completely and this culture vanishes or breaks down. So you are asking yourself really, if there is an order which can never be destroyed. Having seen that certain kinds of order can be destroyed, it is a good question to ask if there is an order which can never be destroyed, which does not have its roots in a particular structure or pattern. There may be and there maybe not be but you can ask the question and explore. And to explore that question you have to do it the negative way. The intent cannot be 'I will find an order which can never be destroyed'. You have to become very very attentive to what creates disorder. What happens in us is - disorder comes into being and in our attempt to suppress or control it we create structures which we hope will bring order.

Ranjit: In common day to day living, how does disorder manifest itself in me?

Kabir: There are two different questions here. One is, how does disorder manifest itself and what is the source of disorder. These are two different questions. I quarrel with you, I fight with you, I can't get along with you, I go my way you go your way, we cannot cooperate, and that is how it manifests. But what is the root of disorder? Very quickly from seeing the manifestation, the mind should become interested in seeing where it comes from

Ranjit: So this is the root of disorder?

Kabir: But we haven't talked about the root of disorder. We have only talked about the manifestation. **The root of a disorder is a sense of**

division. This sense of division is not only between one society and another society, not only between one individual and another individual but the sense of division is manifested in the brain as the experiencer and experienced, the thinker and the thought. That very beginning when there is an assumption that the thinker is separate from thought; when that assumption is there it becomes terribly important to sustain the thinker. And that is the seeking of psychological security. A country called India can only come into being through thought. It's not that there is already a country called India and thought describes it. Thought creates a country called India. **Thought creates the thinker.**

Tania: But the thinker being different from thought is not an assumption, it is how I experience it.

Kabir: No. You say you experience it that way because you haven't really carefully examined it. But if you really begin to examine that and not just walk away from it by saying I am satisfied with what my feelings tell me and they are absolutely correct. Then you won't examine it. But if you say feelings can go wrong, feelings can create illusion, feelings can come out of illusion, then you begin to observe. And then you see that the whole demand for psychological security is to sustain the thinker.

Ranjit: How does it relate to school education? It seems to be very fundamental to our existence.

Kabir: What is the point in educating the child if I'm not helping him to perceive this fundamental fact of life? I ignore this fundamental fact of life and I put everything else in place. This fundamental source of instability I completely ignore and then I try to create stability through all kinds of things. It won't work

Lakshmi: Can we also create structures to go deeply into examining oneself?

Kabir: What does structure mean? When I'm sitting with a child and he is feeling sad, either I say please don't feel sad or I'll give you a chocolate or I can say let's explore this feeling together. This is very simple. Or if a child does not know how to do a quadratic equation, I can tell him to just memorize it or say let's discover how it works. I feel confident doing it one way I don't touch the other way because within myself I have a feeling that it cannot be done. So, I perpetuate this falseness generation after generation.

Lakshmi: A school like this where this is the crux

Kabir: My question to you Lakshmi is - Why is it people who are so highly trained, who are the finest scientists in the world in their field, why are they not interested in this question? How do they ignore this fundamental question of life itself and give all their energy to discovering other things. I am really interested in finding an answer to this. Why is it that these people who are so intelligent with such rigorous training, when you talk of this they roll their eyes and walk away. I find it strange. Earlier I would get intimidated and think that it's not the right question. Now I would say it is obviously the right question. There is something wrong with you, if you don't see it.

Lakshmi: Maybe continuing what one is doing here is a way to make that happen at some point.

Kabir: Do you see how these extremely skilled clever humans if they gave their energy to this question as well, the world would begin to change. They are used to not asking this question because funding does not depend on this.

Ranjit: But there are people who are skilled and approach even the outer world, whatever they see in a very fundamental manner.

Kabir: How come many more don't? Because if you talk about this, the brain without even examining says this is poetry or this is philosophy. Very rarely they say, let's look at it. Therefore, they are as responsible for sustaining disorder in the world as anyone else is. They can't excuse themselves. Not just scientists, I am talking of people who have physical security or certain kind of stability of knowing that there is a house for me to go, if I fall ill there is enough money to take care of me etc. I can't ask the woman who is working outside, she is so oppressed by us.

Lakshmi: Could it be Kabir that one is so embedded in examining something or making something happen ...

Kabir: Or you are getting so much gratification out of making that happen

Lakshmi: Maybe one is not aware or one has not put the time into looking at this.

Kabir: How long does it take to link the disorder in the world with the disorder in human consciousness? Ten minutes.

Lakshmi: Maybe they have an order in their little vicinity and that is fine.

Charlotte: But do they have order even in their immediate vicinity? So many people are committing suicide, so many people are depressed. Still we are not asking this question?

Ranjit: Part of the problem is there is already a structure out there because people were interested or maybe they found it easier.

Kabir: Is it that I don't want to do it because it is very disturbing? Disturbing in the sense that it will begin to disturb the immediate order I am caught in. You know there is a Muslim gentleman who became interested in what Krishnamurthy is saying, so he put his children in one of the Krishnamurthy schools. Immediately there was disturbance in his environment, people asked him why are you doing this, what about your identity, what about our religious identity. Similarly, due to the immediate need to escape from such disturbance, we don't realise what a terrible price others are paying for it. You don't feel that responsibility.

Lakshmi: I have a feeling that all this is related and embedded in the structure that has been constructed over centuries

Kabir: Also we must realise that the structures themselves are sustained by the way we behave. So we cannot separate the two. **The structure shapes the way I behave and the way I behave sustains the structure. It is one movement.** In fact there is a very well known sociologist called Anthony Giddens who talked about this and called it structuration. He pointed out that structure has a certain kind of fluidity in the sense that is sustained by the way we think. If you stop thinking that way the structure collapses immediately. If I stop thinking in terms of reward and punishment, the whole structure of reward and punishment collapses.

Lakshmi: We are keeping it alive.

Kabir: We are keeping it alive. It is not right to blame the structure because we are a part of the problem. Take the simple structure of asking the woman to cook in the house. It is sustained by thought. When I was doing the post school program we had a boy here from the Himalayas. All the girls were washing plates and he would sit back. So we said 'what's wrong, why aren't you washing plates? He said that's not men's work. We told him here everyone washes plates.

Lakshmi: What may have started naturally is now being used as a way of domination.

-----End of Part 3-----

The quality of attention

Create a new song

Kabir: Having created the curriculum we ask how do we bring attention into that. Therefore there is already an assumption that this curriculum must remain as it is more or less and somehow because I am interested in attention I should try and bring it in. Why can't I start the other way round totally where my main interest is attention and then I ask what kind of curriculum emerges from that. Because my main interest is attention and attention does not exclude anything. So I am not fighting skills or knowledge or talent but because my main concern is attention I realise they'll find the right place. **In fact it's very interesting; in 1984 Krishnamurthy said that the religious mind should be the only curriculum of these schools.** Immediately people said no one will come to these schools. But if my concern is to bring about a religious mind, it does not necessarily mean that I will put all those children in dhotis and make them grow hair in a certain way and what not. It might be that in that concern for a religious mind, knowledge and skill will find their right place. When I am observing the child, it's the same thing as technology to find whether it is finding its right place or to see if it is taking over. I have to be very alert to see that because technology has a way of taking over, not because of itself but because of the craving that the brain has cultivated. If this craving is not there, everything finds its right place but this craving has become a way of seeking psychological continuity. It's through craving and seeking experiences that this psychological continuity is sustained.

Lakshmi : So if we take the current situation, schools all over the world are running with a certain designed curriculum and a purpose of bringing out jobs. Are you saying they need to run their course? You can't do anything now?

Kabir: Maybe you cannot. Maybe there is a certain kind of thing set in motion which will find its own destruction. So create a new song. Don't get obsessed by stopping that.

Lakshmi: Although that is overwhelmingly large.

Kabir: Which it is, therefore don't fight it because you will dissipate your energy. That old song will die because it's based on hatred and greed and its own contradictions will bring about one crisis after another. Its

continuity will be in crisis. So create a new song which says you don't have to live like this.

Lakshmi: You are saying continuity will be in crisis but it will not give up and go on putting scaffolding on the structure to sustain itself.

Kabir: It's exactly like your craving. Craving has a way of constantly sustaining itself even though it constantly creates an existential crisis. The perception that this is a totally unnecessary movement is to let go of it. Do this. Maybe it'll find its way of having an effect on it. Otherwise you might spend all your life fighting that and get caught up in this other movement. Which is why I think truth never fights the false.

Ranjit: Surprisingly, I also found that it is independent of social standing and surroundings etc. One realizes that even if there is no educational development around me that doesn't stop me from asking what the right thing to do is.

Kabir: The right thing has two dimensions. Total absolute rightness is to keep knowledge in its right place. In doing that, in the local condition I may build my school under a tree or teach in the local language. That is really a detail, what is far more important is the central thing. It is as precious for a child from a village as it is for a child from a city. It is not some kind of luxury meant for the child from the city and not for the child from the village. Who knows? The child from the village might have the capacity to say that I don't need economic security and I will give my life to this. He already understands how to live in simplicity. He doesn't have to have Adidas shoes or whatever.

Lakshmi: Coming back to the question of attention.

Kabir: Yes. So if my concern is attention, what kind of curriculum will flow from that? That is a work in progress. For that to gather momentum people will have to come together and discuss, do things, experiment and share with each other to see what can be done and explore independently and together. Come together, share with each other but we are concerned with attention. And we both mean the same thing by attention. If I mean something and you mean something else by attention then we are not talking about the same thing. This has been done extremely successfully in the field of science and mathematics where people meet again and again through conferences, seminars and meetings. Why not bring the same quality to this?

Lakshmi: And it's not like one person running away with something and then.... whatever comes out of that is built on existing stuff and not in isolation.

Kabir: Yes, because there's an interest in it we are working at it. For god's sake let's not bring reward and punishment into it and publications (how many papers have we published etc) because if we do then the whole thing will fall apart.

Lakshmi: So in the word attention there are two contrasting things: attending to something in a focused way and the second being what you are implying that you are aware of the whole.

Kabir: In fact, that's why Krishnamurthi spent a lot of his energy distinguishing between concentration and attention. Concentration is the activity of thought which pushes away distraction in order to focus on something. In the act of attention there is no pushing of anything away. So in the act of attention the focusing and non-focusing are two capacities of the whole movement of attention. So 'attention to' is different from 'attention'. 'Listening to' is different from 'listening'. We are normally in a state of non-listening and we feel we are listening to somebody because there is some interest in that or something to be gained from that. That listening to is coming from thought so it's not listening. So the brain has the capacity to have the state of listening and in that state of listening it can listen to the wind, it can listen to the bird. It is already in a state of attention. **So the brain has tremendous capacity not only to gather knowledge but also this quality of attention and listening which frees the brain from the compulsive dependence on knowledge.** So mind is free of knowledge and not a prisoner of knowledge or history. It can end. The brain therefore then is in contact with life as it is now and not through the lens of what it was. There is tremendous freedom in that and that has to be nurtured.

You begin probably by saying young children need a lot more time doing things that they enjoy. So when young children are making a bridge or playing in the sand pit, you do not say that it is a waste of time or this is relaxation. So you learn as an adult to go with what they are doing and bring some skill into it. So the skill is being imbibed by the child in a totally non structured way. So it is almost an intuitive feel and not just an algorithm that he has memorised.

Lakshmi: You are maintaining the connection. You are allowing it to be.

Kabir: Yes, you are doing the cooking and maybe you just talk about why you are using the pressure or heat. In the initial years, knowledge is absorbed in an unstructured experiential way. Then you create the abstractions. Then you might give a tremendous amount of time just going for a walk in the forest. Our children go for walks 2 or 3 times a week for an hour or two. So if you come to school, you will be horrified by how little academic work they do. And you might say 'Oh my God, how will they get prepared. But we noticed that they are able to'.

Lakshmi: As we are talking I find it so unnatural that we have come to a state of introducing knowledge in such a severed fashion.

Kabir: I think we think it is quicker and more efficient. We don't realise that in doing that we are doing something else which is wrong. It seems as if, if the child is bending over the table and learning multiplication tables by heart, somehow it is more efficient.

Lakshmi: First of all putting them within four walls. That in itself is starting this whole process.

Kabir: It is very interesting that Shibhumi has no walls. It has only spaces and a roof. The children really haven't experienced walls in a long time. You sit and you can look out completely without a wall obstructing you. There is a huge open space.

Lakshmi: But then, the automatic response could be that children could get distracted that way.

Kabir: I find that they don't. I find that if they are getting distracted, it is one more opportunity to learn about the nature of distraction.

Charlotte: Looking at a bird for instance, is that a distraction?

Kabir: No, that's not distraction. But it can be distraction. If while solving a mathematical problem, they go off somewhere else while doing so, it could be a distraction and if this goes on and on. Then you might say 'hey what's happening?' Sometimes the adult doesn't even interfere because I want them to be alert to what is happening to them. I don't want to be constantly monitoring them. If I am constantly monitoring them there is no inner freedom. It has already become a structure. Do what I say is structure.

Ranjit: It is so natural to find everything is together in nature. But when we come to study something we compartmentalise things.

Kabir: There are three snakes that live in our roofs. Our roof is made up of hollow pipes that support tiles. These snakes, they are there. Sometimes they come out. The other day, they came out and wrapped themselves around Tanushree's hand. It's extraordinary to see that quality of relationship and not to push them aside to say it is my space or your space.

Ranjit: How do adults deal with this situation? It's not the child probably.

Kabir: This is all a part of the work we do. I have these three young women who have come; we talk about these things all the time. They are interested, they are absorbing. They have their own movements of inattention and greed. We have established a relationship where I can point to that greed and say 'look at what is happening to you'. And it becomes a movement of learning rather than a criticism of my personality. You can do that. We give such feedback to each other.

Lakshmi: So you have some to a stage where it is no longer a criticism? So it is possible to simply talk about these things.

Kabir: Yes! We give such feedback to each other.

Ranjit: I think what is saying is because of relationship the personality is longer dominant.

Kabir: Not only that we say it – there is no room for personality here. The self has no room or space here. We are learning together. As the sense of self arises in hurt or fear I am alerting you, you are alerting me. So we are actually cooperating together. It is not that I am criticising you. That itself is an extraordinary thing for a group of adults to have come together and do.

Kabir: Not to separate that out and say 'Oh well that it is mysticism'. But to ask 'What is it really about? How does it connect with the world that I see in which there is entropy'. It is just out of curiosity. We need to have these dialogues where you have the mathematical ability to be able to bring it out. And we are doing it together. We don't insult each other saying that 'Oh this is all poetry and nonsense and so on'. Every one of them has said it. Either they are so stupid that they have gotten caught in an illusion or they are pointing to something extraordinary in this universe.

Lakshmi: Is it kind of like making room for creativity rather than have a notion of the outcome?

Kabir: It is important to start with the mind that doesn't say that I already know and whatever is there has to fit into my knowing. After all knowing by itself might be caught in some sort of assumption.

Lakshmi: This leads me to a question as to if in the educational realm, can we ask for five or ten percent of space where such a thing is possible? Whether in form of a subject or approach where we can have some children who can do this as an open ended thing?

Kabir: But how do you sustain it? For example, Krishnamurthy used to say that when you begin the class can you spend ten minutes talking about these things. People don't do it. Even in our schools they don't do it. Which is such a pity! You know what we have done? We sit together thrice a week for twenty minutes with thirteen year olds and we go into such questions and then we drop it so that it never becomes a burden or a routine. If we adults are deeply interested we will find so many ways of communicating this.

-----*End of Part 4*-----
