CHAPTER 1
Scientists say man is rational but the fact is that everyday life is irrational. Now we are asking, show us scientifically why it is irrational. That is, show man in what way he has slipped into this irrationality; why human beings accepted this. We cart say it is habit, tradition, religion. And the scientists also, they are very rational in their own field, but irrational in their lives.

—J.Krishnamurti.

This chapter discusses the general concept of tradition with a view to providing a significant background for understanding Krishnamurti's views on tradition. In order to place Krishnamurti's ideas in the context of a general debate, and to give some idea of their uniqueness, we begin this chapter with a general discussion of the several important definitions of tradition. Some of these definitions are narrow, and others very broad; but they provide clarity and show in what ways Krishnamurti accepts or rejects them.

The word "tradition" has several meanings. In our academic circles, it is very often used in contrast with concepts like 'modernity', 'industrialization', 'westernization', "development" and 'progress'. Though many people have talked about tradition there has not been much discussion on it as a distinct concept. It is often discussed in relation to authority, convention, custom, habit, prejudice, norms etc. It is very difficult to conceptualize 'tradition' because the word
conveys different meanings, relative to the context of the discussion. In what follows, we will discuss some of the meanings of 'tradition'.

The word 'tradition' is derived from 'tradere' which means to transmit. According to the Oxford English Dictionary "tradition" means the action of handing over something to another. It also means delivery or transfer. It is especially oral delivery of information or instruction. It is the act of transmitting or handing down, or being handed down from one person to another or from one generation to another. Transmission may be of statements, beliefs, rules, customs, or the like especially through word of mouth, or by practice without writing. It further says that tradition is a long established and generally accepted custom or method or procedure, having almost the force of law.

Let us look at another view of tradition of a thinker of the early nineteenth century, who argued strongly in favour of it. Reacting to the American and French Revolutions, Edmund Burke, the English political thinker, who represented conservatism, maintained that tradition is the wisdom of ages, and that the life of the individual has to be rooted in the past. Institutions and customs are the products of the past. But tradition, in Burke's view is more than just institutions and customs; it is the 'spirit' of the people, defined in the course of a long history. So he feels that tradition has to be preserved and sustained. Institutions must be reformed, in accordance with their original principles, and purposes. Burke's reforming impulses were directed towards restoring the legacy of
the past and freeing it of corruption. "Tradition connotes nature and wisdom. To follow nature is "wisdom without reflection", because we naturally respect tradition, which contains wisdom of the ages. This wisdom is embodied in custom, which should therefore be regarded with deference, and even in the 'popular notions' which are not always laughed at".

Burke gave more importance to feelings than to reason or knowledge. Being inclined to preserve tradition, he argues that the French Revolution was against the nature of things, a rebellion against God, a rupture with the universal order. Burke's empiricism leads through traditionalism to a kind of epistemological populism and an apparent leaning towards irrationalism. For example, he thinks that "when our feelings contradict our theories, the feelings are true and the theory is false".²

Thus Burke prefers tradition to reason because he believes that it embodies more reliable knowledge. Though his traditionalism is assuredly anti-Enlightenment, in its epistemological rationale, it shares an Enlightenment belief in progress. In that sense he thinks that tradition is to be

respected because it represents the 'progressive experience' of mankind. He also thinks that tradition represents the wisdom of God, working through human experience in the course of human history.

Michael Oakeshott, a well known political scientist in the conservative tradition, argues along the same lines. Oakeshott says, "tradition is not a fixed and inflexible manner of doing things, it is a flow of sympathy". It may be temporarily disrupted by the 'incursion of foreign influences', or it may "reveal so deep-seated an incoherence that (even without foreign assistance) a crisis appears". But however caused, "political crises always appear within a tradition of political activity". Oakeshott suggests that even a revolutionary crisis invariably appears within a tradition. And in order to meet and resolve the crisis a society has nowhere to turn except to the tradition itself. Oakeshott insists therefore that even in a crisis, however serious it may be, men in a society "have no resources outside the fragments, the vestiges, the relics of its own tradition of behavior which the crisis has left untouched", and 'salvation' comes "from the unimpaired resources of the tradition itself". And he adds that "this is what no one is without and all, in fact, rely upon".

Edmund Burke, "Works and Correspondence" Vol.IV. p.388, Cited in Michael Freeman, p.29.

Having considered the views of some political thinkers, we will turn to a well known literary figure who is also a traditionalist. T.S. Eliot, early twentieth century poet and literary critic, attacked romanticism and humanism, and so paved the way for neo-classicism in the twentieth century. By 'tradition' he means all those habitual actions, habits, and customs, from the most significant religious rites to our conventional way of greeting a stranger. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent", his most famous essay, he suggests that following a tradition is not merely "blind or timid adherence" to the past, but involves "the historical sense.... a sense of the timeless and of the temporal together". That is, the poet sees himself as part of a large historical structure of texts and ideas, and judges his own work by the standards of the past. "What happens", Eliot writes, "is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment of something more valuable". This process of being absorbed by a tradition Eliot calls 'de-personalization', Neo-classicism, as Eliot set it up, is more than mere slavish imitation, a mere repetition of what has already been achieved, since "novelty is better than repetition". Tradition in the sense of passive is in fact repetition which is to be discouraged. Tradition represents the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages, and its knowledge is essential for really


6 Ibid. p.2296.
great and noble achievements. For Eliot, tradition is a matter of very great significance. At the same time, it is not something immovable, but rather something constantly growing and becoming different from what it previously was. Tradition carries within it both the essential and the non-essential, both the good and the bad. Tradition must therefore be used intelligently, and changes in the conditions of life must be taken into consideration, so that only the best is preserved and fostered. Eliot believes that the past directs the present and is itself modified and altered by the present. The task of the poet is to make sure that the past is examined critically, and only what is significant in it is acquired. Tradition in the real sense for him meant, a consciousness 'of the main current', which does not always flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations.

If Eliot confidently claims the poetic right to 'modify' tradition, the German philosopher Hans George Gadamer addressed the problem of how we can read and use traditions. Gadamer, who studies the problem from the hermeneutic point of view, claims that the historicity of humanity is manifested through tradition. For him tradition accounts for both humanity's finitude and its openness to possible future. Tradition is not simply a cultural repository for the present; nor is it an autonomous historical realm that has a life apart from concrete human activity. Tradition requires active appropriation, perpetuation and transformation by human subjects. For Gadamer tradition is ontological, which means that an individual comes to grips with tradition through living within it, and experiencing it.
Gadamer identifies authority with tradition. Here authority has nothing to do with obedience, but rather with knowledge. Authority is superior knowledge. The recognition of authority is always connected with the idea that what authority states is not irrational and arbitrary, but can be seen, in principle, to be true. That which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless. Our finite historical being is marked by the fact that the authority of what has been transmitted has power over our attitudes and behavior. Gadamer maintains that tradition is constantly preserved by an element of freedom. Even the most genuine and solid tradition does not persist by itself. It needs to be affirmed, embraced and cultivated. The preservation of tradition is active in all historical change.

Our continually negotiated attitudes to the past reveal that we are not distancing and freeing ourselves from what has been transmitted. We stand always within a tradition. Conforming to a tradition is not an objectifying process, that is, we do not conceive of tradition as something alien. It is always seen as a part of us. It is a model or an example for us. Tradition is therefore not opposed to freedom and knowledge according to Gadamer. It is actually a legitimate medium through which one can realize freedom. It is hence a prejudice of the Enlightenment and romantic eras which assert that there is no rational ground to support the authority of tradition.

Prejudices are significant in as much as they are the cultural
Truth for Gadamer is understanding that occurs as a 'fusion of horizons' much like what occurs in genuine conversation. To recognize the horizontal nature of understanding is to recognise differences because there is always something beyond one's own horizon. Perspective, or what Gadamer calls 'prejudice' (voruteil), is not a bad thing to be overcome metaphysically. It is the preconditioned nature of understanding.

Edward Shils, an American sociologist worked extensively on the concept of tradition in the later decades of the twentieth century. In his book Tradition, he suggests that a tradition in its elementary sense is 'anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present. It makes no statement about what is handed down or in what particular combination, or whether it is a physical object or a cultural constitution; it says nothing about how long it has been handed down or in what manner, orally or in written form. The degree of rational deliberation which has entered into its creation, presentation and reception likewise has nothing to do with it in a tradition'. The concept of tradition, as we anticipations that make possible our understanding texts, cultural products, human actions and ourselves. Prejudices are neither suspended nor dogmatically maintained but are corrected or modified through the dialectical movement of understanding in the relationship of part to whole.

Edward Shils, Tradition (London and Boston: Faber and Faber,
understand it, is silent about whether there is acceptable evidence for the truth of the tradition or whether the tradition is accepted without its validity having been established. The anonymity of its authors or creators or its attribution to named and identified persons likewise makes no difference as to whether or not it is a tradition. The decisive criterion is that, having been created through human actions and imagination, it is handed down from one generation to the next generation. Edward Shils maintains that tradition is what is handed down and includes material objects, beliefs about all sorts of things, images of persons and events, practices and institutions. It includes buildings, monuments, landscapes, sculptures, paintings, books, tools, machines, practices and institutions made up by human actions.

Thus traditions are beliefs, standards and rules of varying but never exhaustive explicitness, which have been received from the preceding generation, through a process of continuous transmission from generation to generation. They recommend themselves by their appropriateness for the present situation. It is conformed to by recipients and especially because of a certain measure of authoritativeness which possess by virtue of their provenness from the past. The authority of traditions is engendered by the sheer fact of their previous observance by predecessors. Shils further says that the traditional rule possesses authority because its acceptance establishes an attachment to the past of a family, town, country
or corporate body to which an inherent value is attributed. Membership in a primordial and a civil body carries with it not merely attachment to the symbol of the body as it stands at a particular moment in time but to symbols which expose a sense of creation of a state of communion with past powers. It is of the same order as any act of communion with one's contemporary society. The affirmation of tradition, tacit or explicit, is an act which binds the recipients to the past. The performance of an action which is carried on from the past by authority but which is performed only because no other alternative mode of action exists can be imagined as tradition— Shils notes that traditions are slightly modified by both endogenous and exogenous factors.

An Indian scholar V.P.Varma is of the opinion that:

Tradition is an inclusive concept. It connotes the initiative character of a certain dominant religious, theoretical, metaphysical and ethical values and beliefs. It also stands for the crystallisation of deference and reverence for certain symbols. Tradition also includes folk ways, mores and semi-institutionalized patterns of action in a society. At a more extended level, tradition may be identified with the totality of the historical heritage of a nation or a community.

Tradition is a generic term and to a large extent identical with historical continuity in the field of social, cultural and interpersonal existence.

J. Duncan M. Derret in his paper "Tradition and Law in India" maintains that 'tradition is that element in the present which represents (and re-presents) the past, whether or not people are conscious of it, whether or not they accept it, ...'. For him, an institution is traditional if the present society conforms to it. An outlook is traditional if the present generation approaches the same matter in the same way. He further adds that there are two kinds of traditions as there are two ways of self-consciously employing it. One form of tradition is 'fossilisation' as when a ceremony is retained even when its function has ceased. Another is the opposite of fossilisation. In it the old is continued functionally in the current, and thus grows and moves in keeping with the needs and general growth of society. This form of tradition has a furtive and a slightly fraudulent air: it masquerades as the same, and yet it is constantly subject to change.

Acton defines tradition systematically in his paper 'Tradition and Some Other Forms of Order'. He holds that "a belief or practice becomes a tradition when, a) It persists over several generations, b) If it changes at all, it changes only slightly and gradually, and c) It is not questioned by its

adherents nor thought by them to need justification. Thus it may be said that traditions are chronic, continuous and authoritative. An Indian sociologist Sachidananda holds that tradition is transmitted value and behavior pattern of a community. Traditions are tested, recalled and esteemed. Their age long succession is an assurance of value which has already occurred in the process of their instrumental functioning as a constituent of social cohesion or social solidarity. Many writers have noted that traditions are not static. Old traditions die and new ones are continually being built up. Leaving aside external influence, there are also, endogenous factors of change in tradition. The famous historian Eric Hobsbawm speaks of 'invented' traditions, which are taken to mean "a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and norms of behaviour by repetition which automatically implies continuity with the past." 

After considering different ideas of tradition, we may use a typology to arrive at an overview of the many meanings of tradition. We will use the typology suggested by S.L. Sharma. 


Sachidananda, "Tradition, Modernity and Modernization in India" In Srivastava (ed), p.41.


S.L. Sharma says that it is possible to distinguish at least three meanings of tradition in sociological literature, i.e. existential, ideal-typical and analytical. As an existential category "tradition refers to the heritage of a particular community." The emphasis in this usage is on the historical particularities or the concrete elements of the tradition of a community. Anthropologists frequently use the term in this sense in their field studies of tribes and pre-literate societies.

Another meaning of tradition is ideal-typical which signifies a set of values common to a community or society. In this sense tradition is shorthand for such values as sacredness, ascription, and slow change. Such a conception of tradition offers a criterion for determining what a traditional society is like. The last one, which is analytical-referential, is a more acceptable meaning of tradition. Analytically tradition connotes routine acceptance of a body of beliefs and action patterns from the past out of sheer reverence for the wisdom of the past. An excellent exposition of analytical notion of tradition can be seen in Edward Shils. Thus defined, the constituents of tradition are: givenness, a past, recurrence, filial and uncritical acceptance. More important than anything else to a traditional society is its proclivity to accept the heritage from the past without critical scrutiny. It is in this sense that

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See Shils, Tradition.
tradition is a mode of uncritical acceptance of the past. And according to the functional approach, all traditional cultures are sustained by a consistent corpus of norms and values.

Traditionalism:

When we encounter tradition in our lived experience, especially in our own Indian context, we seldom evaluate it neutrally or classify it according to types; we in fact live it, either as an unthought habit or as an oppressive structure. Very often we see it manifested concretely in strongly held ideas and rigid institutions. In other words we encounter it as traditionalism, an attitude which I intend to examine below.

Traditionalism is the selfconscious, deliberate affirmation of traditional norms, with full awareness of their traditional nature. It is based on the feeling that the merit of the norms derives from their traditional transmission or from sacred origin. This could be manifested as a revivalistic and enthusiastic attitude. It is usually dogmatic and doctrinaire and insists on uniformity. It insists on a thorough-going adherence and, does not discriminate between what is workable and what is unworkable. It regards all elements of tradition as equally essential.

Traditionalism is not content with the observance of a tradition in a particular sphere only, as in family or in religious life. It is satisfied only if the traditional outlook permeates all spheres: political, economic, cultural and religious and unifies and subordinates them to the sacred as it is received from the past. Traditionalism is almost always
ideological and extremist. It insists passionately on the full and conscious adherence to tradition with a form and elaboration unknown in the ordinary observance of tradition. It treats exceptions, qualifications, and deviations as unhealthy or aberrant and wicked. It regards the pristine tradition in all its fullness as an adequate guide to conduct. Traditionalism is not only hostile to liberty, it is also radically hostile to tradition, the vague, flexible tradition which even when it does not include the tradition of liberty at least allows liberty to live on its margin of ambiguity, to grow gradually, and to take deeper roots. In oligarchical societies traditionalism prevents further growth of elements which can give rise to freedom. In the process of an ideological upsurge of traditionalism, tradition may be changed, stretched and modified by unified and nationalized searches for a consensual base for political authority and economic development.

Traditionalism, as well as healthy development of 'traditions' depend upon the definition or active invention of a past, an idea we will look at briefly.

The Invention of Tradition:

The creation of tradition is not a short-term process. What we regard as tradition is the result of a long period of development. The existence of tradition and the persistence of primordial sentiments are shaped substantially by an individual's perception and loyalties from his childhood and adolescence through the process of socialization. In the course of time the personal experience of many becomes the collective experience of the community which is then enshrined as a tradition. This then works as regulative of the daily life. Time-honored customs
pervade and regulate most aspects of daily routine. Wisdom is often equated with age and knowledge of the past rather than with youth or education or a vision of future improvement.

To carry forward tradition, certain human agencies and institutions are needed. Generally the tradition is transmitted from one generation to another through the family, schools and religious institutions. At present, the media also play a significant role in this regard.

Tradition should be understood in the context of social change. Today, tradition is being revived worldwide. Its resurgence can be seen in various forms. Tradition is invented by interested groups to suit modern day politics. It is argued that tradition is renewed, created and discovered, to a goal towards which man aspires and appeals in some specific historical guise. As Gusfeild puts it:

Tradition is not something waiting out there always over one's shoulder. It is rather plucked, created and shaped, to present needs and aspirations in a given historical situation. Men refer to aspects of the past as tradition in grounding their present actions in some legitimating principle. In this fashion, tradition becomes ideology, a program of action in which it functions as a goal or a justificatory base.

Thus tradition is re-invented, re-created, re enacted, re-represented, re-embodied, re-placed as a new form of tradition rather than the tradition of ancient form. Traditional continuity and authenticity appear as mere shadows of reality, inspite of territorial restoration, genealogical restoration, and cultural renewal.

**Summing Up:**

From the above discussion we may say that tradition has the following general features:

1) Tradition is related to the past. It is the knowledge about the past and, by and large, it is a mode of uncritical acceptance of the past.

2) It works as authority, in which an individual believes and regulates his attitudes and daily life accordingly.

3) Tradition generally lacks the total adaptability that would allow its followers to adjust their behavior to new circumstances.

4) Tradition elevates the cultural and religious aspects of life and its values. They form a coherent pattern giving men a reasonability, an orderly rationale for a relatively stable life, at whatever level of society they find themselves.

5) Tradition or a traditional structure pervades intimate human relations; it affects the relationship of one human being to another as well as to the world about them which gives people a degree of security in facing their appointed destiny within a traditional structure.

6) Tradition is a more or less homogeneous body of rules and ideas. As such, it is used as a normative or coercive force upon the people who are subjected to it.
7) Traditional structures can supply skills, and traditional values can supply sources of legitimization, which are capable of being utilized in pursuit of new goals and with new processes.

8) Tradition has the capacity to evoke conformity even though it has undergone some modifications or changes.

9) It is selective as only some of the elements of the past are useful for fulfilling needs of society.

Krishnamurti's Conception of Tradition:

Having discussed some views of prominent thinkers on tradition, we shall now examine Krishnamurti's views on tradition. According to Krishnamurti, tradition, broadly speaking, means carrying the past over to the present. It is to hand down, to pass on, to give from generation to generation a certain set of ideas, systems and beliefs. Tradition is a passing on of not only one's particular inheritance but also the weight of all the collective thought of a particular group of people who lived in a particular culture. That is, tradition is following a belief or an idea without much reflection. It is repetition of beliefs, conclusions: relying, in brief, on what the ancient people have said. In Krishnamurti's view, man finds some kind of hope or security in tradition, and therefore carries the burden of this accumulated knowledge.

Krishnamurti, while reiterating some of the current notions about tradition, also gives a subtle and fundamentally
new meaning to the concept. He suggests that tradition means betrayal. It is the betrayal of the present by the past.\textsuperscript{18}

Tradition, according to Krishnamurti, is a barrier to living life in harmony and peace. Life in its actuality is in the 'present'. But tradition, which is of the past, cannot comprehend the beauty of actual life. Human beings, as we know, are 'traditional' in the sense that they are the result of the accumulations derived from the past. Their activities in the present are the repetition of the past. Krishnamurti says, "To carry the past over to the present, to translate the movement of the present in terms of the past destroys the living beauty of the present".\textsuperscript{19}

Tradition may be very ancient or a day old. It may imply a remote or a recent past. Yet all tradition is profane. Krishnamurti says: "there is nothing sacred about tradition, however ancient or modern. The brain carries the memory of yesterday, which is tradition and is frightened to let go because it can not face something new. Tradition becomes security".\textsuperscript{20}

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\textsuperscript{18} J.Krishnamurti, "4th Public Talk, Bombay 29th January, 1978". The Krishnamurti Text Collection (CD-Rom) (Madras: KFI)
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p.71.
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Krishnamurti holds that the brain or mind as we know it is itself traditional. It is through the brain that an individual carries the past over to the present. "The brain is the centre of all senses. It is the centre of the past, it is the storehouse of experience and knowledge, tradition". The human mind is caught up in tradition since time immemorial. Somewhere along the line of evolution, the mind began recording and repeating the past in the psychological sense. It started creating for itself a tradition by way of security. Thus the mind immersed in tradition has become an instrument which functions in a groove of imitation. The brain or mind becomes traditional by conditioning or programming itself through social, cultural and environmental conditions. It becomes mechanical. It interacts with people, nature, and ideas mechanically. The traditional man or mind, functions strictly within tradition because it is afraid of public opinion. Krishnamurti says that a person who is born a brahmin continues to be the same till he dies, moving in the same circle, in the same pattern, in the same framework. The traditional mind is not free from thought that is born of experience, of tradition, of memory; it is anchored in the past and therefore cannot be free.

Our brain is repetitive, it moves only within the boundaries of established structures of tradition. Tradition is the habit of acting in a routine way. The mind is the result of

habit, it is the result of tradition, the result of time realised as repetition, as continuity with the past.

**Tradition as Psychological Inheritance:**

The human being is conditioned by the past from the cradle to the grave. The past, which is tradition, is forcefully acting upon him. Apart from the conditioning of the mind by the factual past which is history, the mind is conditioned by the psychological past, which is tradition. Culture and human environment all over the globe are structured so as to make the mind conform to tradition. Krishnamurti says:

The imprint of the past on the young mind, the conscious and unconscious conditioning of the student to obey, to conform (the communists are now doing this very efficiently as the Catholics have for generations. Other religious sects are also doing it, but not so purposefully or effectively), parents and society are shaping the minds of children through tradition, belief, dogma, prevents the coming into being a new social order'.

This psychological inheritance dictates all aspects of life. The brain derives power from this psychological inheritance. It determines and defends itself. It safeguards

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and limits itself to its own groove. The psychological past is no better than the physical past. "Psychological inheritance is as conditioned as the inheritance of property, both limit and hold the mind in a particular pattern of society, which prevents a fundamental transformation of society".

Positive Thinking:

Many people have argued that in order to free oneself from tradition, one should cultivate 'positive thinking' and a 'positive attitude'. The cultivation of positive thinking involves a somewhat better understanding of the world around us, and makes us free of tradition to a certain extent. But this freedom is illusory. The traditional mind always thinks and functions in a positive way. All its actions, however radical or negative they may be, are still traditional. They are the products of the past. They are the continuity of the tradition in a modified form. Positive thinking is no more a thinking; it is merely a modified continuity of what has been thought; the outward shape of it may change from time to time, depending on compulsions and pressures, but the core of positive thinking is always traditional. Positive thinking is the process of conformity, and the mind that conforms can never be in a state of discovery.

\[24\] Ibid., p.57.
The traditional mind is the product of time. It has evolved through time. The past is its background. Its evolution is a process by which the past modifies the present and passes into the future. Krishnamurti says that the past constitutes the background of mind. It includes the racial, communal, religious memories and experiences. The patterns of traditions in which the mind is set have not radically changed. The old traditions continue to exist unchanged. They perpetuate themselves. This has been going on for millions of years, and basically, there is no basic change in human beings. Because of this, Krishnamurti says:

So the past going through the present, modifying itself, is the future. And that has been our evolution. Though biologically we have changed from millions of years till now, psychologically, inwardly, subjectively we are more or less what we were a million years ago—barbarious, cruel, violent, competitive, ego-centric.  

It is evident that tradition entails the principle of seeking pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Pleasure lies in the repetition of past pleasant experiences, and in the avoidance of the painful ones. The mind which is formed by tradition lives by hoarding such memories from the past. Krishnamurti says, by way of example; "Suppose I had an affair which gave me pleasure. Then thought comes along and says: 'I would like to repeat it'. So it brings affair, memory, reaction to memory as thought,

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thought building images, demanding images. All this is part of tradition, the carrying over of yesterday into tomorrow".

The older the civilization, the greater the pressure of tradition. The mind which is traditional for a longer time is more conditioned. The habit of repeating the past is stronger in the mind which is ancient. The older the civilization, the greater the conditioning. As Krishnamurti observes: "The older the civilization, the greater the weight of tradition, of authority, of discipline which burdens the mind. People who belong to an old race, as in India, are more conditioned than those who live in America (for example, where there is more social and economic freedom, and where people have fairly recently been pioneers)". 27

The ancient past or tradition constitutes the unconscious part of the traditional mind. The mind consciously acts on the basis of the unconscious past. The conscious part of the mind is confined to the immediate present. It constitutes the superficial part of the whole of the traditional mind. The present of the traditional mind is nothing but unconscious determination by the past. "The deep unconsciousness is the past, and we are operating from that. Therefore there is the

division into the past, the present and the future". 28 Krishnamurti further says:

The conscious mind is occupied with the immediate, the limited present, whereas the unconscious is under the weight of centuries and cannot be stemmed or turned aside by an immediate necessity. The unconscious has the quality of deep time, and the conscious mind, with its recent culture, can not deal with its passing urgencies. 29

The unconscious is hidden. It is more potent than the superficial mind. It is made up of the racial, religious and environmental influences; and appears as though it is mysterious. But in fact the unconscious can be understood and revealed. According to Krishnamurti:

The hidden or unconscious mind is the repository of racial memories, religion, superstition, symbol, peculiar traditions of a particular race, the influence of literature both sacred and profane, of aspirations, frustrations, mannerisms and varieties of food—all these are rooted in unconsciousness.

29 J.Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p.23.

30 Ibid., p.23.
Psychologically the unconscious is made up of one's secret desires, motives, hopes, beliefs, pleasures, fears and sorrows. It is the storehouse of all the unreflective factors. It is the past, or the tradition which influences the present and the future. Imitations of all this are given to the superficial mind through dreams and in various other ways when it is not wholly occupied with everyday events.

To Krishnamurti, there is in fact no such thing as the unconscious. The unconscious is part of the whole consciousness. The unconscious is what is suppressed or pushed behind as it were, by the mind. The mind has the tendency to be conscious of what it likes and it suppresses what it does not like. Everything that is there in consciousness is that which has come from outside. The whole of consciousness is the product of society. It is the result of conditioning by external factors. So the unconscious is not independent of the influences of society:

Society influences all of us, it constantly shapes our thinking, and this pressure of society from the outside is gradually translated as the inner; but however deeply it penetrates, it is still from the outside, and there is no such thing as inner as long as you do not break this conditioning.

Much of the discussion and analysis of the concept of the tradition that we surveyed so far concerns itself with tradition at a superficial level i.e, as a manifestation of social forces. But Krishnamurti tries to delve deep into the matter and wants to trace the psychic and mythical origins of tradition. He explains the origin and source of tradition, working backwards from a discussion of our immediate perceptions in everyday life. He holds that the 'observer is culture'. Our mind which is conditioned by the past, by culture and tradition, organizes the stream of perceptions from the world. Whereas in actuality, truth is changing from moment to moment, as far as the perceptual act is concerned, we experience the world around us without having the total experience.

Krishnamurti maintains that all our experiences and perceptions, however modern they seem to be, are traditional. They are the products of the mind which is traditional and dominated by the past. Our perceptions are traditional since they are based on conclusions and prejudices. Krishnamurti holds that knowledge also is traditional since it is the repository of conclusions and ideas.

Krishnamurti is unique in saying that knowledge is tradition. Tradition is not only belief but also knowledge. Tradition is knowledge, since it is knowledge of the past. To know is to be in the past. To know is to be in tradition. So science is also tradition-bound in the sense that it works on the basis of the past. Scientific knowledge, however experimental or rational it may be, is still traditional. It is the continuation of the tradition with some modification. Thus scientific
knowledge is limited like any other knowledge. Scientific knowledge is essential for biological survival. But it is also destined to be limited and traditional, and that which is limited and tradition-bound is always a source of misery. Krishnamurti argues:

After all, knowledge is a form of tradition, is it not? And tradition is the cultivation of memory. Tradition in mechanical affairs is essential, but when tradition is used as a means of guiding man inwardly, it becomes a hindrance to the discovery of great things. 32

Human beings have given undue importance to knowledge. They think that life is impossible without knowledge. Knowledge is treated as the guiding factor in all areas of life. But Krishnamurti contends that knowledge cannot help us to live a holistic life. Being limited, knowledge is inadequate to meet life which is in the present. But human beings accumulate knowledge in the hope of being secure and certain. In the words of Krishnamurti:

we are afraid that without knowledge we would be lost, we would not know how to conduct ourselves. So, through reading what the sages have said, through other people's beliefs and experiences, we gradually build up a background of knowledge which becomes tradition; and behind this tradition we take refuge. We think this

32 Ibid., p.122.
knowledge or tradition is essential, and that without it we would be lost, we would not know what to do.

Tradition regards knowledge as the means of freedom or liberation. But knowledge is itself tradition, and freedom is beyond tradition. Tradition or knowledge is the continuity of the past which includes disposition, control, sublimation, suppression. So knowledge, being on the side of tradition, cannot achieve freedom; it is a barrier to freedom. According to Krishnamurti, it is not possible to attain enlightenment through knowledge. He asks: "Why did not the gurus, the Gita, question knowledge? Why did they not see that knowledge means the past, and that the past cannot possibly bring enlightenment? Why did traditionalists not see that discipline, Sadhana, comes from knowledge?"

Tradition is resorted to for the sake of security and comfort. The mind finds itself secure and comfortable in following a certain kind of belief or idea. By identifying with tradition, the mind feels anchored and ultimately gets conditioned by it. Not content with this security, the mind seeks to make tradition an authority. The mind invests tradition with authority to govern its actions. It has a desire to be secure, and therefore strongly defends the authority of tradition. Authority is exercised in various forms: the authority of scriptures, parents, gurus, state, law and police


J. Krishnamurti, *Tradition and Revolution*, p.77
etc. Krishnamurti explains how authority comes into being and how it is imposed on young minds by parents, teachers and society. People desire to find a safe and acceptable form of behaviour, or they would like to be guided as to how they should behave in different situations and to be told what to do. Being confused, worried, and not knowing what to do, people go to a priest, or to a teacher, or to their parents or to somebody else, seeking a way out of that confusion. So it is the desire in us to find a particular way of life, a way of conduct that creates authority. "I have the desire to be comforted, to be told what to do. So I create an authority. That authority does not really exist outside me".

Authority may be outward or inward. Outward authority is what others impose on us. It comes in the form of rules, regulations and laws enforced by society, whereas inward authority is what one imposes on oneself in the form of accepting and following ideals for leading life ideally. Inward authority is living according to one's own ideals. It is disciplining one's mind internally. Discipline and living according to an external ideal is itself tradition. In this, tradition brings about a conflict between 'what is' and 'what should be' which is the ideal. Krishnamurti wonders:

And what happens to you? You get crushed, you are just broken. You never think, act, live vitally, for you are afraid of all these things. You say that you must obey, otherwise you will be helpless. Which means what? That

35 J.Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p.36.
you create authority because you are seeking a safe way of conduct, a secure manner of living. The very pursuit of security creates authority, and that is why you become a mere slave, a cog in the machine, living without any capacity to think, to create.

Krishnamurti maintains that the traditional mind can never find freedom or truth; because tradition is the past and freedom is in the 'now'. As it has been already mentioned, tradition and freedom do not go together. Any acceptance of authority is the very denial of truth. Krishnamurti further says, "Truth is never in the past. The truth of the past is the use of memory, memory is of time, and in the dead ashes of yesterday there is no truth. It is not within the field of time." 37

There is also the authority of the ideal which is not outward but inward. When we say "I must be good, I must not be envious, I must feel brotherly to everybody", we create in our mind the authority of the ideal. Do we not?" 38

Krishnamurti says that tradition does not contain truth. Tradition is full of symbols which are of knowledge. And the symbol is an outward sign of what is in the past, but truth is in the present. Krishnamurti says:

37 Mary Lutyens, Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader, p.11
38 J.Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p.37.
The word, the symbol has become an extraordinary destructive thing for most of us, and of this we are unaware. Do you know what I mean by symbol? The symbol is the shadow of truth. The word, the symbol, the image, the idea is not the truth, but we worship the image, we revere the symbol, we give great significance to the word, and all this is very destructive; because then the word, the symbol, the image becomes all important.

As it was mentioned earlier, thought is the source of tradition. Tradition has its continuity through thought. Thought gives permanency to symbols, words, images of the tradition. Krishnamurti maintains that thought ensures the continuity and persistence of tradition in the present. There is nothing permanent either on earth or in our mind. But thought can give continuity to something it thinks about. It can give permanency to the word, or to an idea which is tradition. It can build an image and give to that image continuity and permanency. It is the tendency of the 'human mind that it "wants permanency in everything, in relationship, in property, and in virtue. It wants something which cannot be destroyed. That is why we say good is permanent, or truth is absolute." 40

39 Ibid., p.121.
40 Ibid., p.110.
Thus all our conditioned knowledge and traditions are barriers to the discovery of truth. In its nature, tradition is divisive and is a source of conflict. Tradition not only conditions our thinking but also separates us from others. If one identifies oneself with a particular tradition, which he claims is real, it implies that he isolates himself from the whole or that which includes all other traditions. As Krishnamurti says:

Knowledge is a hindrance when it has become a tradition which shapes or conditions the mind to a particular pattern, because then it not only divides people and creates enmity between them, but it also prevents the deep discovery of what is truth, what is life.  

As pointed out earlier, for Krishnamurti, life is in the present. Life is discontinuous whereas tradition is associated with the past and maintains continuity. Traditional life is no life at all. It is irrational and unwholesome. That is why Krishnamurti declares that man is basically irrational, for he is tradition-bound. Man gives undue importance to thought and knowledge which are the source as well as the expressions of tradition. Being based on thought man's life goes on mechanically and thoughtlessly.  

41 J.Krishnamurti, *This Matter of Culture*, p. 123.  
According to Krishnamurti even the 'self' or 'I' or the 'me' is the product of tradition, for the 'I' is the product of thought which is tradition, and the 'I' is the source of division and conflict. Where there is the 'self' there is incompleteness. Incompleteness necessarily leads to sorrow. 'I' is related to thought and its continuity. The 'me', survives by the maintenance of thought. It has the tendency to separate the 'I' from others; it is divisive. 'Me' exists due to desire, or it represents the desire for security. The desire is the product of thought, or when the desire takes the form of 'me' the duality is created. Duality is the root cause of all our problems. So far tradition has been discussed in its psychological and subtle sense. Krishnamurti also explains it as manifested in human relations, comprising the institutions like society, religion and family etc. To Krishnamurti society is the psychological extension of the traditional mind. Society does not have an independent existence. Krishnamurti says, "society by itself is non-existent. Society is what you and I, in our relationship, have created; it is the outward projection of all our own inward psychological states".

In course of time man developed certain social structures and institutions. But many of the structures, and values that have been built in the course of human development are inhuman and anti-developmental. That is why there have been

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movements struggling against political, social and cultural structures which are inherently violent and oppressive. These institutions flourish because of the individual's assumption of power through them. It is a fact that where the power-relations exist, there the conflict starts. The individual assumes power because it gives pleasure to him. As Krishnamurti says, our social structure is based on the principle of pleasure. The individuals who are powerful, dominate and exploit others for the sake of pleasure. And they build institutions or structures starting from the individual to the collective level. The dominance, the authority, are institutionalized, which can be seen in the form of state, law and justice. As Krishnamurti puts it:

The powerful families build themselves into high positions, they acquire big properties, they have more money, more clothes, more cars; they get together and frame the laws, they tell the rest of us what to do. So gradually there comes into big society with laws, regulations, policemen, with an army, and navy.\(^44\)

In the course of evolution man evolved not only biologically but also, it is claimed, psychologically. Biological evolution is a fact whereas the psychological evolution is a product of thought. It becomes internalised in our psyche and this becomes potentially violent also. There is also violence pervading institutions like family, caste, religion, education and so on. These institutions perpetuate

\(^{44}\) J.Krishnamurti, \textit{Life Ahead}, p.58.
violence through very well-developed methods of internalization. And internalized violence does not look like violence even to those who are subjected to it. In the words of Krishnamurti,

> We are violent people, aggressive, not only physically but also psychologically, inwardly. Violence is not merely physical action, violence is also psychological...aggressive, imitative, comparing oneself with another and so on, all that is a form of violence.\textsuperscript{45}

With the passage of time there has definitely been a change in these institutions. But it is only a modification. The basic structure of the mind has never changed. One of the reasons is that these institutions, not only have limited transformation, but also sustain themselves due to human failure to change. Ultimately they are tradition-bound and perpetuate exploitation:

> For all these institutions combine in themselves necessity, stability, emotion and sentiment. Several of these institutions are human at one level and violent at another level. That is precisely the reason why none of these institutions remained the same either in form or content.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} J.Krishnamurti, \textit{Last Talks at Saanen}, 1985. p.47.
Many of these institutions are powerful, authoritative and hierarchial. All these are characteristics of tradition. Krishnamurti in all his talks, refers particularly to religion, family, state and nationality, where one can locate tradition in an effective way. They have a divisive character and they are being continued, because they lack creative potentiality.

Human Relations:

To be is to be related. Relationship is the basis of our existence, and of our society. The relationship may be with people, property, and ideas. The relationship between man and woman, among different castes, among different religions, among different classes, constitute our life. Krishnamurti says, "our life is movement in relationship, however much one may think, we live alone, one is always related to something or other, either to the past or to some projected images in the future".  

Relationships are tradition bound. They are rigid, static, hierarchical, authoritative and divisive. These relations are exploitative, prejudiced and preconceived. They are based on images which are the product of thought. In the words of Krishnamurti:

In relationship which are moving not static we form a relationship and later get into the habit of looking at it from a fixed point of view- whether the relationship is with one's wife, or one's children, or one's

47  
J.Krishnamurti, Network of Thought. (Madras: KFI, 1992), P-39,
neighbors. Such relationship ceases to be creative, they become dead. Habit of any kind dulls the mind. 48

Our relationships are based on images, and we continue to see things with the help of images, these prevent us from directly seeing the reality. The image is nothing but the memory which conditions our everyday life. Our relationships are based on the pictures we build about ourselves. So the relationships are superficial. Krishnamurti says, "the relationship is between these two verbal pictures in memory, it is not actual, and therefore, there is always division and conflict. When you have been hurt in that relationship; it is the image you have built about yourself that has been hurt". 49

Relationships are put together by thought. Thought, which regulates relationships is always rooted in the past, so that relationship is not real and fresh but dead and old. The relationships are also often traditional, in the sense that they are based on mutual need and use. They involve exploitation and violence. So the very basis of society is violence. As Krishnamurti says, "as long as social structure is based on mutual need and use, it is bound to be violent and disruptive". 50

49 J.Krishnamurti, Total Freedom, p.292.
Human relations, in general, are based on cultural background and economic foundation. As marxists have argued, all human relations are economic in character. They hold that the uneven distribution of wealth and resources is responsible for social conflicts. Though Krishnamurti does not discuss much human relations from the economic point of view, he recognizes the fact that economic factors also play a role in human relations. He reiterates that human relations are bound by political, social and economic factors.

Religion as Tradition:

Religion, according to Krishnamurti, is the product of tradition. It is put together by thought, and is rooted in the past. All our religions are organized sets of beliefs and superstitions. They are conditioned by the tradition which carries beliefs and superstitions to the future. Religions are institutions which affect all aspects of human life. They demand conformity with tradition. As Krishnamurti puts it: Religion as we generally know it is a series of beliefs, dogmas, rituals, superstitions; it is the worship of idols, of charms and gurus, and we think all these will lead us to some ultimate goal. Belief will never free your mind, belief only corrupts, binds, darkens. 51

Belief in the existence of God is fundamental to most religions. God is believed to be omniscient and omnipotent. God is also believed to be the creator, the sustainer and the

51. J.Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p.135.
destroyer of the people and the world. But God according to Krishnamurti is an idea invented by man as an escape from his misery, anxiety, despair and loneliness. Krishnamurti says, "God is your invention because you find life so dull and boring. It is such pain. So you invent God who is all perfect, all living; you worship that which you have put together by thought".  

For Krishnamurti, the question whether God exists or not is meaningless. God is the outcome of the individual's running away from reality. God is the product of thought, an abstraction of the hopes and feelings of the people. God is the product of human thought and knowledge, and as thought and knowledge are limited, God is also limited. Krishnamurti says:

Shut your eyes and close your ears. You can still think. Thinking about God is within the field of thought. The man who has not thought at all, to him there is no God. The ancient ones, thinking about something superior, wanting something greater, said that was God. That was the product of thought. So that was within the field of knowledge.  

Religion is mostly an imitation and repetition of what others did in the past. There is no scope for free inquiry and understanding in religion. In religion, rituals are repeated and symbols are copied.

52  
J.Krishnamurti, Mind Without Measure (Madras: KFI, 1990), p.130

53  
J.Krishnamurti, Tradition and Revolution, p.133.
Why do older people perform rituals? Because their fathers did it before them and also because it gives them certain feelings, sensations, it makes them inwardly quiet. They chant some prayers, thinking that if they do not do so, they might be lost. And young people copy them, so your imitation begins.

Tradition in the form of religion is being transmitted from one generation to another. There is no place for scepticism and doubt in religion. Krishnamurti holds that organised religion with its set of beliefs, is irrational. According to Krishnamurti religion is not doing pooja or performing ritual, nor is it wearing a particular kind of dress. Organised religions with all their paraphernalia have nothing to do with what is truly religious. Doing pooja, performing rituals in front of an idol or altar may give one a sense of satisfaction. But it is not religion. Krishnamurti says: "Putting on the sacred thread, calling yourself a Hindu, a Buddhist, or a Christian, accepting certain traditions, dogmas, beliefs...has all this thing, anything to do with religion? Obviously not".  

The traditional or the mechanical character of the human mind is clearly revealed in the case of organised religions. The fact that an ordinary stone or stick becomes God

54 J.Krishnamurti, _Life Ahead_, p. 50.
55 Ibid., p.98.
is testimony to the traditional attitude of the mind. The mind hypnotizes itself in the name of religion. It tends to believe anything to be sacred and divine. It deceives itself into believing as God what is not really so. Krishnamurti explains: "Take a stick or a piece of stone, put it on a mantelpiece and every day place a fresh flower in front of it at the same time saying something like 'Om' or 'Amen'. Do this for a month, and you will see how holy that stick or stone has become, although of course only your devotion has made it so and it is not really different from any other you might pick up by roadside".

Prayer is one of the characteristic religious activities. The religious man prays for the grace of God and totally surrenders to him. Prayer is supplication. It is a kind of begging to fill one's empty bowl of the confused and insecure mind. In prayer, the person underestimates himself. He suppresses his own potentialities. Prayer is self hypnosis. It works like a drug which calms the superficial layers of the mind for the time being. It helps one to escape from the actuality of life. Being repetitive and mechanical, prayer in fact renders the mind dull and inactive. According to Krishnamurti:

Prayer is a sedative which enables us to continue in our psychological prison without feeling the need of bursting it open and destroying it. The mechanism of prayer, ....gives a mechanical result....It has all kinds of ideas, concepts and beliefs about the unlimited

Religious people abide by their scriptures. They act according to them. They treat the scripture as sacred. They approach it for the answers to their problems. The sacred book is one of the basic requirements of religion in the sense of tradition. Every religion considers its scriptures as the ultimate authority. Scriptural authority is considered as the source for religion. Scripture means the written word, which is past. Religious people exploit other people in the name of sacredness. Krishnamurti says:

Through fear you create a spiritual authority, and to administer that authority there are priests who exploit you through belief, dogma, creed, through show, pomp and pageantry, which throughout the world is called religion. It is essentially based on fear, though you may call it the love of god or truth; it is if you examine it intelligently, nothing but the result of fear, therefore, it must become one of the means of exploiting man.

Krishnamurti however admits that religious scriptures do contain what is sacred. But the sacred is adulterated by the profane. Since the scriptures are ancient, they are interpreted

58 J.Krishnamurti, Total Freedom, p.13.
and re-interpreted several times. In the process they are deprived of their original core or essence. Ultimately what remains are the rituals and dogmas in all religions, and the seekers get caught in their net:

It would have been a most interesting task to find in the various religious scriptures the old authentic teachings. Some traces remain and it is because of them religions still attract men of integrity and goodwill. This is regrettable indeed, for the earnest spirits get trapped in the net of rituals and dogmas. ⁵⁹

Tradition in the sense of religious dogmatism has been reduced with the advent of science, and some of the religious beliefs have been proved to be irrational. But yet the religions have not disappeared. They hold on to their symbols, rituals and beliefs in the name of eternity. The religious world-views are proved to be irrational and baseless, and yet they maintain their dogmas through propaganda and force. On one hand, the religions try to come to terms with science, but they claim to be the custodians of eternal truth on the other. In the words of Krishnamurti:

They continue their propaganda in order to maintain their power over minds. They seek to get hold of children to condition them better. The religions whether of church or of state demand from man every virtue, but their history shows a succession of

Belief is the fundamental feature of religion and belief is where truth is not. Belief and truth do not go together. Therefore beliefs divide people. "So belief brings enmity, division, destruction and that is obviously not religion", according to Krishnamurti.

**Family as the Extension of Tradition:**

Family is the center of tradition. It is the most effective and powerful institution in carrying out tradition. It is the embodiment of traditional values, morals and customs. All kinds of conditioning start within the family, and family is the source of continuity of tradition from generation to generation. It is through the elders in the family that the beliefs, culture and values are handed down to successive generation. In the family, the relationships among members are fixed and defined and individual members have to play their parts accordingly. The relationships among them may be close and intimate but still are authoritative and hierarchical.

The family dictates the code of conduct to the individual according to his background. The customs, ceremonies and norms are part of tradition, and in the family they are carried out without questioning their validity. The individual adheres to them because his family gives a kind of security to

Luis S.R Vas (ed), *The Mind of J. Krishnamurti*, p.95

J.Krishnamurti, *This Hatter of Culture*, p.25.
him. In the family, ownership of property and its protection are involved. Obviously the family is an institution which seeks power and domination, thus leading to oppression. In the family, freedom is limited. Though some families claim that they are totally free, in practice, the freedom in them is very limited, for essentially, the family as an institution is tradition bound. And the tradition is bound to the past which is limited.

At present the family and its values are contested due to their traditional character. The family is an especially oppressive institution for women, and in most traditions, the family is patriarchal in character. Women are treated as second-rate human beings. They are used as objects for the pleasure of the man. Krishnamurti says that it is a tradition to treat women contemptuously, almost like a door-mat. He asks "Are you conscious, for example, why you treat women differently from men? Why do you treat women contemptuously? At least men often do".  

The life of women is controlled more by tradition than that of men. There are more restrictions upon women in the name of tradition. Tradition dictates their lives in several aspects. Krishnamurti says: "You are controlled by tradition— you must do this and not that, you must wear your sari in a certain way, you must not look at the boys or at the girls. Tradition tells what to do".  


63 Ibid., p. 38.
Family dictates everything in the name of tradition, not only to women, but also to children, who are moulded according to the patterns of tradition through family.

State as the Continuation of Tradition:

State is also a product of time, which is tradition. People form the state to protect themselves from others. It is the collective interest of individuals that is exercised in the form of the state. It is the extension of the individual's belief system. As Krishnamurti puts it, "gradually, through centuries, we establish a system of law, of authority, the state, the government, the police, the army to protect "me" and 'mine'.

The state, like the family, is authoritative. The authority of the state is derived from the tradition of the dominant sections of the society whose interests are sought to be imposed on others. The state functions according to traditional norms. Therefore it becomes an exploitative institution in the hands of powerful people. In the words of Krishnamurti,

There is the outward authority of the state, of the law, of the police. We create this authority outwardly because we have property which we want to protect. The property is ours and we don't want any one else to have it, so we create a government which becomes our authority; it is our invention, to protect us, to protect our way of life, our system of thought.

Ibid., p.36.
Ibid., p.36.
The state expects the individual to conform to its norms and rules. It reduces an individual to a citizen. The citizen is one who obeys the rules of the state. The citizen is not free to think and act as he wishes to. He has to abide by the ideology of the state even though the ideology is irrational and authoritative. Krishnamurti argues:

Whether it is communist, capitalist or socialist, the state has ideas as to how I should behave. There are those who say the state is all important. If I live in such a state and do anything contrary to the official ideology, I am coerced by the state—that is by the few who control the state.

Nationalism is another powerful and destructive manifestation of tradition. Nationalism, like family, religion and state sets up its own ideas, symbols and sentiments. Krishnamurti thinks that nationalism is a form of glorified tribalism. It is a very narrow and primitive conception. Though it gives a certain identity to the individual, it has the tendency to cause separation and division. It puts a group of people in opposition to other groups, and this gives rise to conflict, violence and war. Nationalism is basically a product of thought, and therefore has all the possibilities of making human beings conditioned and destructive.

\[66\] Ibid., p.37.
Social Morality;

Even the morality that people observe is traditional, in the sense that it is mechanical and inauthentic. Morality that is dictated by society means conformity to the existing social structure. Social morality is based on self-centredness and mutual exploitation. It is based on norms of respectability which are merely expedient. Krishnamurti contends that social morality is no morality at all. In his words:

Today all morality is to be moral, for the accepted morality is the morality of respectability, and I am afraid we all crave to be respected - which is to be recognised as good citizens in a rotten society. Respectability is very profitable and ensures you a good job and a steady income. The accepted morality of greed, envy, and hate is the way of the establishment. 67

Thus tradition is authoritative in all its dimensions. The institutions of family, religion, state and society or the world as a whole are authoritative. The individual is conditioned and controlled by authority under the garb of tradition. Men are bound by tradition 'within' as well as 'without'. Krishnamurti declares:

Everything about you, if you have observed it, reflects a way of life in which authority is very established. There is the authority of Gurus, the authority of

67 J.Krishnamurti, [Mary Lutyenes (ed)], Only Revolution, p.144.
political group, the authority of the parents and of public opinion.  

Tradition as authority kills the initiative of the individual. Tradition means copying and following the past in a variety of ways, which are barriers to clear understanding and creativity. They act as hurdles to the discovery of truth which is sacred. Krishnamurti says that tradition, or carrying the past over to the present and future deprives man of the rare privilege of comprehending the highest form of intelligence: Initiative is destroyed, when you are merely copying, when you are bound by tradition, following a political leader or a religious Swami. To follow anybody is surely detrimental to intelligence. The authority destroys intelligence. It conditions freedom.  

Individuals identify themselves with tradition for the sake of psychological security. But as there is no such thing as psychological security, the tradition becomes a threat to the physical security of men. Seeking security through traditional institutions like family, state and nationalism often results in threats to physical security.

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68 J.Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p. 33.  
69 Ibid., p. 30.