CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRESENT STATE OF RELIGION

I. Theories of Origin of Religion.

II. a) Historical growth of Religion through three states—Tribal, National and Universal.

   b) Criteria of Universal Religion.

III. The present state of religion and psychological causes of continuation of religion.
Religion seems to be one of the earliest social institutions. It has such a tremendous hold on the human mind that many religious thinkers have come to believe that religion is something fundamental or innate to man, and that man will not be able to live without religion. The true significance of religious phenomena cannot be understood by analysing the etymological meaning of the word 'religion'. We would understand its true significance if we look into its historical origin and development through ages.

A religion in its present form is generally understood to be an established order, with its own theology, scriptures, rituals, symbols, shrines, teachers, etc. The important feature throughout its growth, is its attempt at establishing relations between man and some supernatural being.

It seems to be important to see how, from the origin of religion till it takes the present form, human motives have played an important role. Krishnamurti's criticism is focused on this aspect of traditional religion, so it becomes necessary to find out (1) Why a religion has come into existence? (2) What does development of religion mean? Whether this development lies (a) in refinement and sophistication of rituals and of ideas and modernisation of ceremonies or, (b) in attaining a broader perspective, finer principles, more liberalism and less dogmatism or (c) in freedom of human mind from psychological need of depending on authority, and freedom from fear? (3) How has a religion managed to survive through centuries? What are the consolidating factors that have helped religion to survive?
inspite of tremendous Socio-political changes and scientific progress? (4) What had made man to go to religion? Is there any other reason that takes man to religion except the feeble human mind that seeks comforts in its projections?

Krishnamurti's criticism may not be properly understood without an examination of these problems in relation to the role of human psychology in origin and growth of religion.

**Origin of Religion**

Traces of religion are found in primitive man. There is hardly any evidence about the origin and nature of primitive religion, but a lot about its early nature could be imagined by observing the religious practices of tribes, which are still away from civilised society and by examining the anthropological data. After a vast survey and deep study, anthropologists have come upon certain theories about the possible origin of religion. According to De Brosete and Comte the origin of religion is in Fetish worship. Fetishism means the imagination of entrance of life in any crude object. Thinking that the life that enters the object has power to bring luck or to control future, primitive man worshipped these objects.

Some scholars have come to the conclusion that religion has its origin in animism or ancestor worship. Like fetishism, animism and ancestor worship are also based on crude beliefs of primitive man. Animism is a belief that a spirit or immaterial soul exists in animate or inanimate objects. Tylor, after studying a large amount of anthropological data that was available, concludes that animism was the origin of religion.
According to this theory, man's religious feelings started with the belief in the existence of soul or spirit in living or non-living things. The spirit was thought to be responsible for good or evil actions of the object or living beings and also for the future of individuals possessed by it. The spirits are thought to have subtle power to do or undo good, so these spirits are worshipped in the forms they represent. According to Malinoufski the cause of animism is the fear of death. Because a man does not want to see the end of life, he seeks continuation of it in the spirit that dwells in the individual or the object.

Spencer thought ancestor-worship to be the origin of religion. According to this theory the fear of elders and also respect for them resulted in ancestor-worship. Performing rituals after death, celebrating death anniversaries, building of tombs etc., are the various ways of worshipping the dead. In primitive tribes the founder of the clan was sometimes exalted to the status of God. Totemic practices are the result of seeking communion with the father or god.

Robertson-Smith and later Freud thought that totemism was the beginning of religion. The totem animal represented god as well as sometimes a sacrificial animal. According to Freud the feelings of a son towards his father were ambivalent. A son has hatred and love for his father at the same time. A primitive son kills his father or head of the clan and with feeling of guilt and love imagines father's spirit in a totem animal, thus the deified father is worshipped in totem. Sometimes this totem animal is killed and eaten.
by the members of a clan. This totemic feast helped to
develop integration among the members of the clan. The
traces of religious behavior were seen in deification of
the father and propitiational rites.

Like Totemism, collectivism is another theory of the
origin of religion. According to this theory, religion is
based on the collective spirit or integration among the
clan members. Durkhem and Weber think that worship of the
collective spirit of a tribe is the beginning of religion.
Social consciousness is the main force in a tribe and tribal
men worship the spirit of the tribe as the supreme power.

One of the main theories of the origin of religion is
that religion originated in magic. There is hardly any
difference between magic and religion in its primitive form.
Frazer sees similar human motives behind magic, religion
and science, and points out that religion is a continuation
of primitive magic practices. The fear of nature and unknown
phenomena and the desire to control them lead to magic, science
and religion. In magic, man tries to control nature by hidden
powers, in religion, he tries to control it by pleasing it
with worship and sacrifices, and in science, he tries to
understand nature so that he can control it. Science becomes
an important source to control and tame nature in an advanced
society, but in primitive society people depend on magic and
religion to control, or divert the natural calamities. In
primitive society one may not be able to distinguish where
magic ends and religion starts, so Frazer thought that magic
was the beginning of religion.
Religion, according to Marx, is the fantasy of the human mind. In the course of evolution man acquired the power of forming concepts. When he reflected upon dangerous situations in nature he felt the necessity of a super-power to protect him. Lack of knowledge of natural forces and lack of control over them, resulted in modest nature-worship and perverted imagination about the super-power. According to Marx, religion is not essential to man. There was a time in the history of human society when there was no religion. It came into existence as a superstition of the ignorant, helpless and timid mind. The awful nature itself becomes a god for man. Marx says "All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection of men's minds, of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces".

As man was bewildered by the wonders of nature and frightened by strange phenomena like storm, lightning, thunder, floods, famine and occasional out-break of epidemics, he tried to find out the causes of these calamities. Being unable to deal successfully with natural forces, he found himself helpless and tried for an easy escape from this feeling of helplessness and insecurity by imagining some power or spirit behind the whole scene, the power which was beyond his comprehension but which could control the situation. That power which was imagined to have control over nature and environment becomes the centre of human aspirations and in the process of establishing relations with it, religion came

1. Marx and Engels: On Religion
into existence. The idea of a supernatural power is the imagination of a depressed mind, it is the day-dreaming of unsatisfied souls. Laxman Shastri Joshi says "The idea of the other world is the result of a weak and frustrated mind." 1

The various theories based on anthropological data, about the possible origin of religion have not contradicted each other; on the contrary they all agree on a point that religion came into existence as a reaction of the human mind which was afraid of either nature or forefathers or unknown powers. Out of this fear and feeling of helplessness religion came into existence with a view to give a sense of security and protection.

These theories do not seem to differ on the point that religion had its origin in ignorance of man, about his environment and natural phenomena. As he did not know the scientific causes of natural phenomena, they were interpreted as the will of God or of some spirit. Ignorance helps religion to consolidate while scientific discoveries put religion in uncomfortable situations. Different scholars emphasised different sources of the beginning of religion because they found those sources to be important in certain tribes at different stages in the history of human society. But they agree on the point that religion had its origin in the human mind which was developing from its pre-human state of awe.

Religions came into existence in various parts of the world because religion, as a feeling of security, was a

1. Laxman Shastri Joshi, Criticism of Hinduism p. 47.
common psychological need of timid and ignorant minds. It is argued that the fact that religion sprang up in different human societies that had no communication with each other shows that religions are congenital or innate. Vincent Herr argues that a religious need is basic to human nature, in all times and places, and religious beliefs are common to all cultures and societies, and from this it follows, according to him, that "... the growth of religious consciousness in children proceeds both from their innate natures and from... education." Similarly Radhakrishnan argues that the comparative study of religion and anthropology shows that belief is common to the human mind and that accounts for the existence of God. He says, "The general consent of mankind, the longing of human souls which has been used as a proof of the existence of God, receives impressive ratification." He saw "All religions spring from the sacred soil of the human mind and are quickened by the same spirit." These religious philosophers use the anthropological data that belief was common to all human societies in different parts of the world, to support their religious opinions and sentiments. The fact that belief was common to mankind does not prove the existence of god or the innate spirituality of human nature. On the contrary, we may say that the common psychological need of feeling of security or the fear of insecurity is expressed in a similar way in all human societies. The unity in human

1. Vincent Herr, Religious Psychology p.63
2. S.Radhakrishnan, East and West in Religion p.18
3. Ibid., p.19
different parts of the world. This is the basis of common belief and not existence of god nor innate spirituality in mankind.

It is natural and also essential to react to environment and seek security. All animals do seek security and struggle for survival, but man, with his distinctive power of thinking, could imagine long-term security. That imagination without factual grounds became a psychological relief rather than actual security. Primitive man sought this security in religion. Fear of insecurity and the feeling of helplessness, lack of scientific knowledge and the power of imagination can be said to be the causes of religion.

(II)

Following Galloway we may examine the historical growth of religion in three stages.

(1) **Primitive stage of Religion.**

Religion in its primitive form is mostly characterised by animism, fetishism, totemism, ancestor worship, practice of magic, various taboos and prohibitions based on crude and superficial thinking.

Physical security was the main objective behind all rituals. Most of the reasons of physical insecurity were found in nature. Because of ignorance about the scientific causes of natural calamities, primitive man imagined a spiritual power in nature - the sun, the moon, the sea, the sky, the rivers, trees, hills, stones, etc. They became the objects of worship. Most dangerous animals were worshipped.
Life was imagined even in inanimate things. Diseases or natural calamities were thought to be the visits of demons, as punishments of sin. Many unexplained events were accepted as miracles. Fear of the unknown is present at all times in the history of human society, but in the primitive society, as there was absolute ignorance about natural laws, the human mind was obsessed by fear of any natural phenomenon as lightning, storm, flood, earthquake, epidemic, etc. Cruel, irrational and desperate behaviour was the result of panic. Sacrificing animals, or human beings, burning witches, beating sick persons by imagining the presence of evil spirits in them, are the examples of ignorance and cruelty.

There was a feeling in primitive men that they were surrounded by good and evil spirits, who controlled their destiny. To make these spirits happy and calm, various cults came into operation. The pictures of the deities were drawn or carved on stones, gifts and sacrifices were offered to them with mixed feelings of awe and reverence. Sometimes magic was practised to have control over the deities or spirits and some men were thought to have developed the power to master the spirits. They would become the authority in conducting ceremonies and rites. The ceremonies were crude expressions in the form of tribal dances, beating of drums, shouting, etc.

An important feature of the religion at this stage was that it served to create social integrity. There was a feeling of unity among members of the community with a common totemic symbol. Religion was more of a social phenomenon than a personal one. The tribe itself was regarded as sacred. The tribal life was
not divided as private and social, or religious and political. The relations of the tribesmen among themselves or with the chief of the tribe were neither purely social nor purely religious. They were bound by totemic principles as well as by loyalty. A tribal man lived a life that was not separated into secular activities such as daily professions and religious practices like worship, prayer, etc. His business was part of his religion. Life was simple and guided by straightforward principles of survival and protection from terrors of nature. The fears were expressed in crude superstitions, taboos, and prohibitions.

When the tribes merged into a nation, the nature of religion also seems to have changed.

(11) **National Religion.**

In the process of the development of religion, there is a sort of logical and psychological continuity. It is not easy to draw a distinction between primitive and civilised religion, or ancient and later, or present, religions, because one may find even in the highly developed and spiritualistic religions all sorts of practices, based on animism, superstitions, taboos, etc. Worship of the cross, exposition of dead bodies of saints or shrouds in Christianity, instrument-worship on Dassera day in Hindus are nothing but current practices of animism. Prohibition of the eating of pork in Islam, and beef-eating in Hindus are the examples of taboos in the present state.
of religions. Superstitions have no limits in any religion at any time.

There is a psychological continuity and link throughout the historical development of religions. Godfrey Phillips explains this continuity by saying, "This combination of dread with aspiration accompanies every stage of religious growth. It has its wild and demonic forms, and at lowest can inspire grisly horror and shuddering.... But it is not left behind as man climbs out of crudity and barbarism, it climbs with him from mere fear of the spirits to the speechless humility of the creature before the creator who is infinite and truth..... There is unbroken, if winding, road from the shuddering of the animist to the adoration of the Christian singing in his most sacred moment. 1 Bambrough sees this link without break not only between primitive and sophisticated religions but he sees the same link between childhood understanding of religion and the advanced sophisticated understanding of religion in adulthood. He says, "There is an absolute continuity that connects ancient and primitive theology with contemporary sophisticated theology, a continuity unbroken by any jumps, gaps or sudden mutations. Where there is such an unbroken historical development, there cannot be a logical gap or gulf.... This historical continuity and the logical continuity can both be seen again in the development of every individual Christian, in his growth from a primitive and childish understanding of the affirmations.

1. S. Radhakrishnan, The Religions of the World, p. 28-29
of his faith, when he is a child, to a more advanced and sophisticated understanding of them when he grows and puts away childish things.

In spite of such continuity, the nature of a religion changes with the advancement of society. The primitive religion which was confined to a tribe and its narrow sphere, became a national religion as the tribes merged to become a nation. Compared to tribal societies, nations had political stability, prosperous economies and a broader outlook towards life. Therefore a national religion, in a progressive and stable society, under the patronage of rulers, developed a definite philosophy and theology. Life was more orderly and thinkers had time to speculate. Man learned to cultivate and to produce other necessary things, so life became more comfortable. In such conditions great religious teachers were born. Under their guidance religion became a unifying force in a nation. Systematic propaganda became important. Religious conferences were held from time to time in various parts of a nation. Social, moral and cultural values had a distinctive place in national religion. Arts and literature became the expressions of religious emotions. Churches, temples, mosques were built under the patronage of the state; cults were all well organised; ceremonies had a lot of stately grandeur. Mythology took a definite shape, a priestly class came into existence with precise duties and a distinct way of life. They monopolised religions. People, as well as rulers of nations, accepted their authority as spiritual guides. Religion took the form of a full-fledged organisation.

1. R. Bambrough, *Reason, Truth & God*, p. 27-28
Systematic rituals took the place of the crude religious rites of tribal religion. Unsophisticated predictions of the tribal chief were replaced by the revelations of religious heads or saints. As compared to primitive religions, national religions developed into systematic institutions.

The objects of worship also became more abstract and subtle with the development of religion. The gods and goddesses were now conceived in human forms instead of in the form of natural objects as in the case of tribal religions. Gradually the concept of god also underwent change, and God came to be looked upon as a perfect being in all respects. Tribal deities satisfied the expectations of a small group of primitive men, while a god in a national religion had to become acceptable to a large number of people in a comparatively civilised society, so the gods were endowed with the best possible qualities that a man could conceive of. Accordingly, changes in the nature of prayers and worship also took place. Worship became more complex; huge shrines were erected as houses of gods and places of pilgrimage became important.

This growth of religion from the tribal to the national stage was not uniform in all places or in every respect. Religion is still in a tribal stage in some far-off jungles of Africa, Australia, Latin America, and India. But, in general, we may say that with the progress in society some features of religion also change.

In spite of these changes, a question remains whether human aspirations and motives behind the religiosity have
changed. It seems that the psychological reasons that gave birth to a religion continue throughout its growth; the external features such as the ways of worship, prayers, ceremonies have changed as a part of the cultural progress of society; the theological and philosophical developments have taken place with the speculative and intellectual growth of man; but the internal, psychological reasons, such as fear of the unknown, feeling of insecurity, remain constant.

Scientific and cultural progress have helped modern society to express religious feelings in more sophisticated ways. The rituals are modernised and feelings and motives are philosophised and justified, but the fear to face reality and seeking relief in escape have remained the constant psychological reasons for embracing a religion. Feelings of insecurity, depending on imaginary power and hoping to place the unknown by prayer and worship, are the same psychological complexes at all stages of religious development. Whether one offers a human being, an animal or a fruit at the sacrificial altar, the motive behind the act is the same. Whether one worships a stone, a tree, an animal, man or an idea of a super-being, his expectations from the object of worship remain the same. To imagine god in a crude object is as unscientific as to imagine Him in any finer and subtle idea. In all forms of primitive religions, the feelings of fear, insecurity, dependence were expressed openly. They were not enclosed in a highly subliminal and spiritualistic religiosity. The later sophisticated prophecies, revelations,
visions, and rituals have their roots in the same human motives, which were expressed in crude fetishism, totemism animism, ancestor-worship, and magic or primitive man. This fact remains true even at the final stage of universal religion in the historical growth.

(iii) Universal Religion

In the historical growth of religion, universal religion is thought to be the final stage. It is not restricted to a particular tribe or a class or a nation but is open to the whole of mankind. Galloway, Radhakrishnan, Vivekananda, Max Muller and others thought of a Universal religion in its historical growth, mainly because of unification of human society in the present world. With the techniques of easy communications and mass media, there is an exchange of cultures and thought. The world, as one society, shares the sciences, arts and cultures of all nations. Problems of one nation have become world-problems. Even internal instability in any nation becomes a concern of all nations in the world. Radhakrishnan, while expressing the need of a universal religion says, "The most impressive phenomenon of our times is the growing unification of the world". He thinks that world-problems may not be solved by nuclear wars but by spiritual unification or fellowship of faiths. He feels that universal religion which may create universal brotherhood, is the need of the time. Maximum number of people should be bound by one spiritual ideology.

1. Radhakrishnan, *East and West in Religion* p. 25
In considering which, if any, of the present day major living faiths, like Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, is fit to become a universal religion, these thinkers apply the following criteria:

1) The number of adherents, the territory occupied, and the ability of religion to survive.
2) Less dogmatism and acceptance of broad and subtle principles.
3) Individualisation of religion.
4) Its compatibility with scientific outlook.

Let us examine the adequacy of these criteria in detail.

The first criteria of universal religion that is applied to any historical religion is the number of adherents and the territory occupied. A religion that has big following is called universal religion. Galloway recognises Mohammedanism, Buddhism and Christianity as universal religions, and one of the major reasons, is the number of followers.

The rapidity of growth of a religion or the number of heads that follow a particular faith or the territory occupied, depends upon external conditions rather than upon the quality of religion. Sometimes the spread of religion depends upon the social, political, economic background of a particular period in history. Buddhism could gain a foothold with rapidity all over India not only because of its appeal to the masses with its broad principles but also because Brahmanism had become very ritualistic, it was the monopoly of a few high-caste people and was beyond the reach of the common man.
Buddhism also received royal patronage that enhanced its speed of growth. Later Buddhism was uprooted from India with the same speed because of the zealous propaganda of the Vedic religion by persons like Kumarila, Shankaracharya and others. Hinduism also received royal patronage from the kings of Gupta Dynasty. Islam established itself very firmly because of Mohammed's direct and simple message as well as his permission to propagate religion by the sword. To spread religion had become one of the pious duties of a religious man. There might also be truth in what Galloway observes about Islam. He says, "Among less advanced races such as negroes, Islam by virtue of its simplicity and directness has won its way". Islam got the advantage of the social background of these races; but the same is true in the case of Christianity in certain tribal areas. The Christian missionaries could exploit and might still be exploiting the social situations of backward communities. The victims of social injustice are helped with the motive to convert them. Conversion is fast among educationally and economically backward classes. What was won by Islam with the help of the sword, is being won by Christianity with the help of bread.

The spread of Hinduism is limited to India because conversion did not fit into its principles till recent times. It did not spread nor did it shrink to a large extent. Its rigid principles hold it more or less to the same size. For a certain period Buddhism became a big blow to its existence.

1. Galloway, Philosophy of Religion p.14)
but it was re-established by thinkers like Kumarila, Shankaracharya and by the patronage of the Gupta kings. Hinduism is confined to a limited territory, so it is not considered as a major religion by many thinkers. Also on the basis of the number of followers, Hinduism is not considered as a universal religion. Further, counting of heads that follow a particular faith seems to be a very superficial criteria for deciding whether a religion is a universal one, because there may be a large number of followers of any faith who really do not know the intrinsic value of their faith. There may be thousands of Christians who do not know what Christ wanted to say; what he meant by love, and brotherhood. Also thousands of Buddhists may not know what Buddhism is and what Nirvan meant to the Buddha. The number of such followers cannot be significant to qualify a religion to be universal.

Similarly a religion is sometimes considered to be fit to be universal because it survives in all odd conditions. For example, Hinduism being the most ancient religion, its ability to survive is also considered to qualify it to be a universal religion. In spite of tremendous pressure of heavy propaganda of all three major religions, Hinduism survived. This criterion is also superficial. As many other factors as royal patronage, rigid dogma etc. helped it to remain unshaken.

The next criterion that is considered to evaluate a religion as universal is that a religion should be less
dogmatic; it should have a minimum of theology and also have broad principles. A rigid dogma may not be acceptable to a large number of people. In the course of development, religions drop some unscientific beliefs and superstitions and accept broad outlooks. On this ground, some religious thinkers claim that their faiths are fit to become universal. But all historical religions, though they seem to be flexible and tolerant, are basically dogmatic. The crude natural objects, that represented primitive gods, have been replaced by subtle and sophisticated ideas of God of developed religions; but the authority of belief has not changed. Human behaviour is guided by man's inner convictions according to the faith he accepted. One who accepts a traditional religion cannot be free from its dogmatism. Eating flesh of totemic animals is tribal religion is as dogmatic an expression of religion as eating bread and wine, distributed by a priest, after a mass in Christianity. One who accepts Christianity accepts its dogma, superstitions and rituals. Christianity is one of the major faiths that are highly esteemed as universal religions; therefore illustrations of its dogmatism may not be out of place here. Christianity, even in its present form, is as unscientific, and appealing to the primitive instincts in man, as any other organised religion. Its god is the loving, just, merciful father and creator of the world. He is prayed to in the present century as, "We believe in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth.... And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the begotten son of God... begotten not made... who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate from the holy spirit... was crucified
for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day... and ascended into heaven and sits to the right hand of the father... of whose kingdom there will be no end....  

In ritualism also, Christianity has not advanced much; it follows all traditional rites based on superstitions. The rites of baptism and the Eucharist are examples of paganism. The meaning of baptism is an acceptance of an individual into the Christian congregation. It was done by bath in open air but now it is done by the sprinkling of water by a priest with the words, "I baptize you in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit." The rite of the Eucharist came with the belief that Jesus celebrated his last meal with his disciples and distributed bread as his flesh and a cup of wine as his blood which was poured for many. Now it has become a regular ritual in the mass as the blessings of bread and wine. Arnold Meyer describes this ritual as "a great festival of Christian faith."  

These illustrations are an evidence of the very forceful dogmatic nature of Christianity. Rituals, that are based on theology of particular religions, cannot be universally accepted. What is true for Christianity about its dogmatism, is equally true of any recognised religion. Each religion has its own religious concepts and theology. Most of the religions believe in God and the immortality of the soul, but that does not mean they have one universal religious faith. One's accepted faith is different from that of another. For example, Muslim religious dogma keeps its followers separate from the followers of the Christian faith. Russell points out, "The
Mohammedans, for instance, also believe in God and Immortality, and yet they would not call themselves Christians.\(^1\) Mohammedanism is equally dogmatic in its nature. Like Judaism and Christianity, God has objective reality apart from man in Islam. The Islamic God is all powerful, merciful and Mohammed is the prophet, whose utterances are compiled in the holy Koran. The Koran, for a Muslim, is the last word in all aspects of life. The orders of the Koran are absolute. The tradition of prophets remains unquestionable and categorical. Islam became more dogmatic and authoritative in character because religion was constantly associated with politics. Religion dominates the political activities. Most of the Muslim countries have Islam as a state religion; and political discontent involves religious discontent. The present revolutionary forces in Iran and Afghanistan are the examples of interferences of religion in politics. Holy war (jihad) and the conquest of territories by force were justified in Islam for the spread of religion. Religion is a part of political activities in Islam. H.A.R. Gibbs says, "No distinction was drawn between the religious and political aspects of the community and even in the later theory of Islam they have always remained bound up with one another."\(^2\)

Freedom of the human mind, which is essential to make a religion universally appealing, is denied in Islam. The authority of the Koran combined with the authority of state made the religion a powerful dogma.

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1. B. Russell, Why I am not a Christian, p. 14  
Buddhism, which may be said to be the first universal religion, had a minimum of dogma. In its original form it was free from the authority of scriptures, philosophy, and rituals. It did not believe in God in any form. With minimum dogmatism and with no theology, it was acceptable to all. However, it soon developed its mythology, ideology and rituals, with various practices of meditation. In its present form it has become much dogmatic like any other traditional religion. Its theory of Karma and rebirth are based on unscientific superstitions.

The third criterion is the character of religion, that makes it individualised. An individualised religion can be universalised. A religion is an individual and an inner aspect which need not be socialised. Religion does not consist in practising formal ceremonies and rituals laid down by an organised religion but it consists in the individual's spiritual growth. If a religion means an individual's own spiritual growth, independent of any authority, in that case, the religion might be acceptable to all. Then the spirituality might not be depend on any particular religion, and it may not be described or prescribed by any organisation. The major religions, or the so called universal religions, however, have fixed concept of the ultimate spiritual state, as salvation, liberation, Moksha, Nirvana and so on. They have also laid down certain methods and rules to attain this stage. These fixed paths of liberation slowly condition the mind according to their theology, mythology or philosophy. A Buddhist's personal religious experiences may be according to Buddhist idea of Nirvana and a Christian's concept of salvation may be
A religion may be universalised if it is free from any particular dogma of a religion; but in the historical growth of any religion, it is not separated from its dogma at any stage. What we considered to be universal religions historically are magnified, sophisticated, refined forms of primitive religion. There is historical, psychological and logical continuity between primitive religion and the so-called universal religion. At a cursory glance we find a vast difference, but when we penetrate the surface we may find that religions, at different stages, are psychologically related, and historically linked to each other. The present sophisticated religion develops historically from tribal religion; there is no break, of gap in its development. There is a psychological continuity between the primitive religious mind and the present religious mind. So far as commitments, devotion, reliance and escapism are concerned, there is hardly any difference between the primitive mind and the civilised mind. Their expression, as worship, prayer etc. at different stages of religious development emanate from a common psyche. There is also a logical continuity that connects ancient and primitive theology with contemporary sophisticated theology.

Along with this continuity, dogmatism, which is one of the essences of tribal religion, perpetuates. Religion at all levels is dogmatic; though dogmatism is less in the present forms of religions, they are not free from it. Each historical religion has its own dogmatic principles,
which are persisting from its origin and from the period of its formation, during which the religion took its fullfledged shape, in the form of theology, philosophy and rituals. No dogma of any religion will appeal to all human beings. No definite concept of god of any religion or religious book as the Bible, Koran of the Geeta, will be acceptable to the entire humanity.

Religious philosophers, who though of universal religion as one that propounds principles which are not meant for members of a particular tribe or citizens of a particular nation, but for all human beings, irrespective of their nationalities, thought of their religion as the would-be-universal religion. These philosophers tried to take a broad view but their commitments and prejudices came in the way of seeing truth. For example Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan and other Hindu thinkers claim that Hinduism with its deep spiritual insight fulfills the criteria of universal religion. They consider Hinduism fit to be a universal religion, mainly taking into consideration its philosophical aspect. The philosophical concept of ultimate reality in Hinduism is the Upanisadic concept of Brahman. This concept receives a wide applause from most of the spiritualists. Hindu philosophers also claim that this relation between matter and mind, individual self and soul, good and evil, unity and plurality, on the bases of reasoning. On the basis of spiritual unity in Brahmaparinamvada in vedanta, Vivekananda shows how Hinduism is compatible with modern sciences. It seems clear that the conclusions
of modern materialistic science can be acceptable harmoniously with their religion only to the Vedantins of Hindus.\textsuperscript{1}

Christian philosophers, in a similar manner, talk in praise of their religion. They also have grounds to speak so, because of the great following that Christianity commands. At present, it is one of the recognised major religions which have crossed the borders of the lands of their origin. Christian thinkers hold the claim of Christianity to be a universal religion because of its principles of love, tolerance, universal brotherhood and also its social characteristics.

There are others who consider Buddhism to be fit to become a universal religion because of it being less dogmatic and because of an absence of theology. Its principles are also highly philosophical which are not committed to one particular standpoint.

The fact is that each organised religion has both universal and particular aspects. Generally, those who wish their own religion to be recognised as a universal religion want to hold that their religion, even with specific rituals, and customs, historical and accidental features, dogmatic beliefs carried over by tradition from generation to generation, can claim universality. One can quote Galloway as an example of such a claim. He says, "Christianity is the third and the greatest of the universal religions; and it is easy to see...... that it fulfills better than any other faith, the conditions of a universal religion."\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} Swami Vivekanda, \textit{The Speeches and Writings of Swami Vivekanand}; p. 465.

\textsuperscript{2} Galloway, \textit{The Philosophy of Religion}; p. 143
times, all places, all men in all circumstances; a
universal religion is valid not only for some followers
but for all persons.

How can one arrive at a truth which is universally
valid when no two individuals may agree on a point? The
answer is that some principle may be valid for all
individuals thought its validity is not recognised
by all. What comes in the way of seeing the truth are our
prejudices, commitments and conditioning. Universal religion
is universally valid, but its validity cannot be realised
by a biased person. If, therefore, a person is free from
all his conditioning, from all his prejudices and commitments,
then alone he would be able to see the truth as it is. A
mind, which is free from all inward and outward authorities
as those of theology, philosophy, ideology is alone capable
of enquiring into the nature of religion. A mind loaded
with ideas is not free to see the truth; it is not possible
to investigate, in its true sense, when one sees from his own
stand-point. An enquiring mind is a free mind. Universal
validity can be recognised by an unconditioned mind. To such
a mind, the criteria of universal religion may be different
than to a mind that has some religion, some stand-point.

(1) For such a mind, firstly, the universal religion is one
that has no supernatural being and hence no theology.
Theology is followed by dogmatism. Dogmatism and theology
cannot be separated. Even a minimum of theology cannot be
a criterion of a universal religion. As we have seen a
minimum of theology or modernised theology is an equally forceful dogma. Any principle to be universally acceptable must be absolutely free from any dogma. Acceptance of any supernatural being as a deity leads to a theology. Universal religion has to be free from such beliefs and their dogmatism. (ii) Therefore, the second criterion of a universal religion may be said to be an absence of beliefs which cannot be verified. Beliefs which are not corroborated by science cannot be universalised. An individual who is committed to a particular religion easily accepts the beliefs that are accepted traditionally in his religion, but a person who is not committed to that faith may not believe in them. The facts that are verified by science or senseexperience are universally acceptable. A religion that contradicts science may be accepted by the followers only but may be challenged by others; or at least the others may not accept such a religion. All organised religions have several beliefs which are not based on scientific methods, or which cannot be proved by scientific methods. Religion, in its traditional sense, is always related to something supernatural, which is beyond the scientific method, not only that, but it is always thought that religion contradicts science. There is always some controversy between science and religion. In fact, however, a true religion should not contradict science but ought to be compatible with science and scientific methods. Such a religion may be acceptable to one and all in principle. (iii) Thirdly, though a universal religion does not contradict science, it does not stop with scientific knowledge. It goes beyond science in the sense that it seeks to give peace
love, compassion to humanity; it solves the problems that arise out of fear. Love, peace, freedom from fear must have been sought by man from the beginning of human society. MAN needs them at all times and places. These basic needs of peaceful human life do not conflict with any political, social, religious ideology. Those political and social ideologies that propound revolutions based on bloodshed, also aim at peace, or expect to have a happy and peaceful life at the end of such revolution. Peaceful human life is a universal need. A religion that promises such a life is universally acceptable.

All the organised religions promise a life full of love, peace, compassion; but none of them can fulfill it. None of the traditional and organised religions satisfied the criteria of a real universal religion, that is free from theological dogma, that is compatible with scientific methods and that can solve human problems such as freedom from fear, sin, guilt, comparison, competition and violence. Religions are supposed to give security, peace, significance of life and solve mainly the psychological problems that arise from fear, frustration, conflict, struggle, despair, etc. All the living faiths fall short of these promises. On the contrary a religion very often becomes the cause of unrest, directly or indirectly. The organised religions do not fulfill the promises of peace and love, and they also become the cause of violence and misery and still one cannot deny that religion has a hold on modern society and that the major population of the world does follow a religion in some form or another though not a single faith could be universalised. It is also
argued that religion is losing ground in modern society due to scientific progress, materialistic thinking ground and excessive industrialisation.

(III)

Since the role and nature of organised religions, in the present society, are the main points of Krishnamurti's criticism of religion it is essential to see whether these religions have really any hold on the present society of the scientific age and if so, why do people continue to embrace religion, and what is the nature or the present state of religion.

When we speak of any organised religion in its present form, we have in mind the concept of a religion that consists of God as a centre of faith, some rituals, sacred books, priests, saints, places of worship of shrines, ceremonies, feasts, pilgrimage, some ideas of soul, immortality, sin, and so on. General expectations of a common man from such a religion are material prosperity, and spiritual aspirations, whatever that may mean. The common man's concept of religion is this, and a majority of the world's population observes this type of religion even in the present advanced, civilised societies. It satisfied man's psychological need of reliance and dependence; therefore religion is still a dominant aspect of a society. People who observe a busy urban and industrialised society, sometimes feel that religion has still a strong hold on the present society, and also it is
difficult to predict that in the near future this hold of religion may be relaxed or will vanish and its importance may be reduced.

One can observe the stately grandeur of churches and temples, expensive living of a number of godmen here and abroad, their large number of followers all over the world, the number of centres erected by religious societies, the world-wide interest and publicity of papal elections, the revival of religious laws in certain countries, the increase in the number of church-goers, even in Russia. These are not the signs of dying religion.

Scientific knowledge and sophisticated thinking have changed the nature of the objects of faith and that of religious expressions, but they have not been able to change the psyche that demands religion. New scientific discoveries destroy the old religious faiths and superstitions but the modified faiths enter from the back-door, because man feels their necessity. Laxmanshastri Joshi rightly says, "No religious institution will be weakened by establishing falsity of its beliefs and principles. For that its utility must end. Science could not destroy faiths because religion survives not because its principles are valid but because the human mind needs it. Man finds it useful to escape from fear; a frightened mind finds relief in relying on god or religion.

In spite of the overcoming of natural calamities with scientific progress, fear perpetuates in some form or another and the mind feels the need for dependence; therefore a religion survives and flourishes. In primitive society, the causes

1. Laxmanshastri Joshi, Criticism of Hinduism, p. 10
of fear were unknown forces behind the natural calamities, and the motive of religious behaviour was the security from those dangers of nature. Science has helped man to discover the causes of many disasters and man has also been successful in removing some of them. He is quite hopeful of removing others as well. He has developed confidence in science; he knows that progress in science is going to make him more and more safe from natural and physical adversities. He sees that many epidemics have been, and are being, eradicated; he can obtain advance indications of floods and storms, so that he is able to save life and property. Modern man may not rely on religion for the securities from external forces, but these scientific achievements do not remove the psychological need for religion.

In modern society, some old fears are replaced by new fears and the need of depending on the supernatural continues. The human mind seeks relief in the imagination of illusory supports and tries to live on religious illusions or superstitions. A civilised man is not ready to reduce his religion to superstitions; he tries to rationalise and justify his fears. The urge for security, and the reactions to the objects of fear, are expressed or interpreted as moral and spiritual behaviour. In spite of progress in science, man has not discarded religion; on the contrary, he tries to justify it on some other subtle grounds, such as morality, experience of bliss, need for inner peace and such other things.

Among the various fears that keep man engaged in religious
affairs the fear of death is the foremost one. Fear of death is an unending harassment of the human mind. Scientific progress has not been able to conquer death. Man cannot face the idea of his ultimate end, nor is he able to tolerate the separation from his close relatives and friends for ever, though he knows its inevitability; this turns him towards religion. Death was an awesome phenomenon to the primitive man and it is equally bewildering to the modern man. Religions pacify the fear of death by various explanations like the immortality of the soul, rebirth, etc. Some kind of life after death is believed in by all religions. Religions are deeply concerned with the meaning of death. Religions that are creations of fear naturally respond to the fears of analysing the causes of fears and promising freedom from them. Religion attempts to answer questions such as:

What is death? What happens to an individual when he dies? How can he have peace after death or a better position in heaven? Such a discussion arises to avoid the idea of the ultimate end of life. It is very difficult for a man to think his 'I' to be a fiction and its absolute disappearance after bodily death; so the idea of immortality or life after death arises. Man's yearning for immortality consolidates religion.

The idea of the day of judgement and the idea of assigning Hell or Heaven to an individual soul after death, are accepted in Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Hinduism speaks of the immortality of the soul, and Buddhism and Jainism believe in rebirth. As all religions are interested in the
problem of death, so also they are interested in the problem of creation. One of the reasons why all religions discuss the problem of creation of the world with keen interest may well be the fear of destruction and death. In understanding the problem of creation, religion may have expected to find the answers to the problem of destruction. Thus the fear of death and destruction is present in all stages of religion.

The other reason which makes man feel uneasy and insecure in the present society is his economic insecurity. The poor want money to satisfy their basic needs; but even the rich are not economically secure and satisfied. They either want to maintain the wealth they have or they want to add to it. Therefore there is conflict, worry and fear - fear of losing money or fear of not earning money. The economic position of an individual decides his status in society. Money is not only the means of subsistence but it also enlarges one's ego and elevates his image as a virtuous, noble and generous being. Therefore, there is desire for money; when there is this desire for it, there is simultaneously a fear of losing it. Fear makes man feeble and leads to beliefs and dependence.

Fear of the unknown future takes man towards religion. Uncertainty of economic conditions is, thus one of the factors that keep religion alive in the present age.

Consciousness of guilt is one of the important factors which helps a religion to gain a hold over modern society. What is guilt and why does it arise? According to Freud, fear of the loss of one's parents' love gives rise to guilt in a child. A child is afraid of doing anything that would
displease his parents. An adult is afraid of being punished or humiliated by the society in which he lives in case he commits an action which might not be approved of by the society. Further, this place of external authority is taken by the super ego.

With external authority, the problem of guilt is not so grave because many undesirable intentions and actions can be concealed from it; the desire for such actions can be suppressed and then there is no sense of guilt. From the super ego, however, even the intentions of the ego cannot be concealed. In the case of the super ego, the place of fear of loss of love is taken by permanent unhappiness. Freud says, "The super ego torments the sinful ego".

In the modern society there is a lot of scope for conflicts between the desire to satisfy one's passion and the desire to keep the standard of behaviour, or between desires and codes of ethics. In case a person fails to maintain the standards of behaviour in pursuit of his desires then his conscience troubles him, it makes him restless. Then inner conflict between opposite desires, the remorse felt for misdeeds and other similar things, disintegrate the human personality. A sense of guilt leaves its impressions upon the human mind, whether it be at the conscious or the unconscious level. Man's well-forgotten misdeeds also leave marks on his mind and he becomes restless, for no apparent reason he becomes uneasy and seeks solace and peace in religion.

1. Freud, Civilization and its Discontent; p. 63
The sense of guilt or the fear of facing one's real self leaves man in a miserable and helpless condition. He is afraid of himself, consciously or unconsciously he tries to avoid himself. When the burden of his guilty conscience becomes unbearable he tries to escape and engage himself in certain activities in which he hopes to forget himself. He pursues art, undertakes social work, becomes addicted to drugs, or most probably takes up religion.

Among the various alternatives available to one, for relieving oneself from this tormentation, religion is the easiest and the most socially approved method to rely on. Religion in its various forms continues to give assurances of peace, hence practising religion is one of the important activities towards which man is attracted for peace.

Religion becomes important when unhappy experiences such as frustrations and disappointments in life are thought to be the results of fate. "If a man is unfortunate," says Freud, "it means that he is not loved by the highest power, and threatened by such loss of love, he once more bows to the parental representative in his super ego." Unhappiness is blamed on oneself and Fate becomes an expression of the angry divine will. To displease the divine authority becomes a sin. The ideas of sin and fate are not scientific, they are superstitions. There is no scientific reason for many actions which when performed are said to bring ill-luck.

The sense of guilt in moral behaviour is a sense of sin.

1. Ibid
in religion. Russell finds the origin of ethics in superstitions. He says, "Current morality is a curious blend of utilitarianism and superstitions, but the superstitious part has a stronger hold, as is natural, since superstition is the origin of moral rules. Originally certain acts were thought displeasing to the gods and were forbidden by law because the divine wrath was apt to descend upon the community, not merely upon the guilty individuals. Hence arose the conception of sin, as that which is displeasing to god."¹

May it be called a sense of guilt or the awareness of sin, the fact remains that they have their origin in psychological and unscientific fear. This fear is not due to the anticipation of some actual difficulty or calamity but due to some psychological complex and ignorance. These unscientific fears lead to irrational beliefs and superstitions.

The hidden or obvious sense of guilt that arises due to fear of God, of parents, or the super ego makes man uneasy. Sometimes inspite of a stable material position, this mind which is uneasy and restless is one of the important causes for the perpetuation of religion in the present society.

Along with many other expectations, the expectations of some higher experiences from religion is also a reason for the continuation of religion. People who are committed to their beliefs may not view the sources of religion to be fear or escape from oneself, they think that the real source of religion

¹ B. Russel, Why I am not a Christian, p. 54
is some noble experiences like peace, joy, a feeling of oneness with the universe, etc. The expectation of such experience is one of the chief attractions towards religion in the present society. These experiences become the final purpose in the lives of many people and they leave their homes, families, and wealth in their pursuit. The gods in the society foster these expectations and guide the people with advice about meditation and other practices.

What is this experience? What relationship does it have with religion? Huxley tried it with drugs and Rajneesh finds it in sex, while others enjoy it in aesthetic appreciation. One of Freud's friends calls it an oceanic feeling and claims that it is the source of religion. Freud argues by telling him that even if the existence of oceanic feeling is accepted, "What claim this feeling has to be regarded as the source of religious need." He further says that the "feeling of oneness with the universe.... sounds like a first attempt at a religious consolation, as thought it were another way of disclaiming the danger which he recognises as threatening it from the external world."

What one thinks as religious experience or transcendental meditation, apart from our practical daily life, is an escape from facing reality. Fear, guilt and such psychological complexes cannot be avoided with scientific and technological progress; on the contrary they are increasing in the present civilization. An individual lives in a society where there is competition, comparisons, a struggle to win and to avoid defeat. When one cannot face defeat and frustration, drugs and religion help him

1. Freud, Civilization and its Discontents
2. Ibid
There can hardly be any other sound reason for the origin and continuation of religious attitudes except the feeling of helplessness; and this helplessness is well matured by the tradition of 'Gurus' - they inspire the people with the hope of mystic experiences. Dr. Kovoor says, "They are the greatest menace to society. They thrive on the fear of the unknown that they inculcate in their followers."

Having examined the present state of religion, their superficial and showy disposition and the desperate dependence of man on religion due to fear and escapism, one may feel that such a religion must come to an end. They are dangerous to human progress, ' a dragon' as Russell calls it.

They do not satisfy the inner urge of man; they are highly dogmatic and are not compatible with science. The religions as they exist to-day are not going to help man to liberate himself from suffering, ignorance and violence. Instead of unifying they divide men. Therefore, they must vanish. But human mind may not be satisfied with the satisfaction of its biological needs. It may enquire into the problem of the meaning of life. Why there are sufferings? Why is man always haunted by this or that fear? How can these sufferings and fears come to an end? What can bring about peace and love on the earth?

The answer given by traditional religions in terms of God, Karma, Sin, Hell, Heaven are no solutions to human problems. They do not satisfy the rational, sane human mind.
The religions have totally failed to bring about a fundamental inward change in the human psyche. The only answers which would be found satisfactory by a rational mind, are those which are free from theological ideas and supernatural beliefs. More than 2500 years ideas back the Buddha attempted to give answers. He was moved by human suffering and found its causes in man himself, and in the will of god. He also saw that Metaphysical speculations and theological beliefs have no relevance to the human problems. However, he could not reject the beliefs in Karman and rebirth.

In the present century J. Krishnamurti has given such answers. He traces the roots of suffering to the human consciousness itself, keeping all metaphysical explanations out. Both J. Krishnamurti and the Buddha alike are concerned with human life as it is lived here and now. They both deny God and soul, all theology and metaphysical speculation. The resemblances between their teachings are so great that it may be proper to consider the Buddha as the precursor of Krishnamurti.