CHAPTER IV

KRISHNAMURTI'S CRITIQUE OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS

I. Criticism of Religions by traditional philosophers - the logical Positivists, the Pragmatists, the Marxists and the Freudians.

II. Krishnamurti's criticism of traditional religions.

III. The Uniqueness of Krishnamurti's critique of Religion.
There are many critics of religion. They have set forth criticisms of very diverse kinds. Some of them are content with logical criticism of religious beliefs or assertions, i.e., with showing that religious assertions are false or meaningless. There are others who accept that these beliefs are invalid, yet they believe religion to be useful as it satisfies man's emotional needs. Some others argue that religion is a product of abnormal psychological fears and feeling of helplessness. It keeps man in the state of psychical infantilism and hence is a curse to humanity. Marxists, not content with merely showing the invalidity of religious beliefs and with the observation that religion satisfies man's emotional needs, formulate a programme of creating a society in which man won't feel any need of religion. All these critics want to do away with religion. They are anti-religious. Krishnamurti, though a severe critic of religion, differs fundamentally from all these critics. He is not anti-religious. On the contrary he feels that a true religious mind is a sane mind which can live without any belief or commitment. His criticism of religion, therefore, is from the level of such an unconditioned and completely free mind. In this chapter we shall have a broad outline of the different types of criticism and contrast Krishnamurti's criticism with those criticisms with a view to bring out the uniqueness of Krishnamurti's approach.

(a) Logical Criticism of Religion

(i) The traditional critics of religion such as atheists
materialists and sceptics have argued that religious beliefs are false on the ground that the arguments put forward by religious philosophers are invalid. They point out certain fallacies in the arguments of religious philosophers to prove the existence of God or Soul or immortality. But such arguments of the critics of religion have failed to compel religious philosophers to abandon their beliefs. Religious philosophers either improve and modify their arguments by avoiding the fallacies pointed out by their opponent or retort back by denying that what his opponents regard as fallacies are fallacies at all. Moreover, even if it is shown that the arguments of the religious philosophers are invalid, it does not follow that the conclusions arrived at on the basis of these arguments are false. Thus the traditional critics could not overthrow religion merely by showing that the arguments of religious philosophers are invalid. "What is required", as Ayer recognises, "is rather a criticism of the nature of actual statements" which comprise religious discourse.

(ii) Logical empiricists have pursued this line of attack. They claim to have eliminated transcendent metaphysics and theology or religion through the logical analysis of language. They do not hold that religious beliefs are false but they maintain that religious concepts and assertions are meaningless. They do this by formulating the criterion of factual or literal meaning. This is the celebrated verification

Principle. By applying this principle to religious concepts and assertions, they show them to be meaningless. Their argument runs as follows:

Empirical hypotheses (Synthetic sense-verifiable proportions) and tautologies (analytic propositions) form the entire class of significant propositions. Religious assertions are neither empirically verifiable nor are they analytically true. Hence they are nonsensical. Ayer, for example, shows how the statement 'God exists' is not literally significant. He says, "He (a theist) would say that in talking about God, he was talking about transcendent being who might be known through certain empirical manifestation, but certainly could not be defined in terms of these manifestation. But in that case the term 'God' is metaphysical term. And if God is metaphysical term then it cannot be even probable that god exists.--- And by the same criterion, no sentence which purports to describe the nature of transcendent god can possess any literal significance --- the notion of a person whose essential attributes are non-empirical is not an intelligible notion at all".

Like the concept of God, the concept of soul is also shown by Ayer to be meaningless. Ayer agrees with Hume that the self is a bundle of perceptions. But Hume had problem of personal identity which is connection between various perceptions of an individual. Ayer solves the problem by showing bodily identity to be the link between various

---

perceptions. He says, "We know that a self, it is not to be treated as metaphysical entity, must be held to be a logical construction out of the sense-experiences. It is in fact a logical construction out of sense-experiences which constitute the actual and possible sense-history of a self. And accordingly, if we ask what is the nature of the self, we are asking what is the relationship that must obtain between sense experiences for them to belong to the sense-history of the same self. And the answer to this question is that for any two sense experiences to belong to the sense history of the same self, it is necessary and sufficient that they should contain organic sense-contents which are "moments of the same body." By showing the self to be a logical construction out of sense-experiences, Ayer takes away the whole glamour of mystery from the religious idea of a soul surviving after death.

In this way important religious concepts such as the concepts of God and Soul are treated by the positivists as pseudo-concepts and consequently the whole religious talk as nonsense. Thus they claim to have eliminated religion through the logical analysis of language. The opponents of the positivists, however, argue that religion cannot be so discarded because people do believe in religion and it has been an important and indispensable aspect of individual and social life. To this Ayer's answer is that the question as to why

people believe in religion and what role religion plays in a society do not fall within the scope of philosophy. Such investigations might be done by psychologists or sociologists. As philosophers, the positivists are concerned only with the problem of validity of religious beliefs or more accurately with the problem whether religious concepts and assertions are cognitively meaningful.

Limitations of the Positivist Criticism: It may now be asked as to how far is the claim of the positivists to have eliminated religion on purely logical grounds justified. Before answering this question, however, it is necessary to make two observations. Firstly, this refutation depends upon the acceptance of (i) the Verification principle as the criterion of meaning and also of (ii) its applicability to religious assertions. Secondly, both these assumptions can be denied without self-contradiction and as a matter of fact have been denied by other philosophers who have denied that the verification principle provides an adequate criterion of meaning and ordinary language philosophers have denied its applicability to religious language. If these observations are correct, then the answer to the above question would be that the positivist refutation of religion is not conclusive as claimed by the logical positivists.

Even granting that the positivists have logically refuted religious doctrines, religion still continues to thrive in so far as people feel its need. People do not
accept religious beliefs because they have first found them to be rational. On the contrary, philosophers try to find or invent all sorts of reasons because people have first come to accept these beliefs.

Moreover from the positivists' view that religious assertions are cognitively meaningless, it does not follow that religion is irrational or unimportant or that it should be discarded. What the positivist criticism shows is that we cannot talk of religious assertions as true, false or probable in the sense in which we talk of factual statements as true, false or probable. This is also true, on the positivist view, of ethical and aesthetic judgements. But this does not make ethical or aesthetic forms of life irrational or less important. While clarifying his views that ethical judgements are not propositions, Ayer says, "it must not be inferred from this that I am treating them with disrespect." In explaining further what his view does not mean, he says, "I am not saying that morals are trivial or unimportant." What he says of ethical judgements and morals is equally true of religious assertions and religion. What the positivist criticism does is to show that religious concepts and assertions are fundamentally different both from empirical and formal concepts and propositions. This is what Wittgenstein in his later philosophy and the ordinary language philosophers have clearly said. To quote Ayer again, "Theological and ethical statements are no

1. A.J. Ayer, Philosophical Essays, p. 233
2. Ibid, p. 245
longer stigmatized as false or meaningless. They are merely said to be different from scientific statements—

'Every kind of statements', we are told, 'has its own kind of logic'. What this comes to—is that ethical (or religious) statements are sui generis.

To conclude, the logical criticism of religion, whether by the non-positivist or the positivist critics, is not conclusive. Secondly, mere logical criticism cannot eliminate or overthrow religion as its existence depends upon certain psychological and sociological causes. Other critics of religion, therefore, do not concentrate on or give much importance to the problems of validity of religious beliefs or cognitive meaningfulness of religious language. They enquire into the utility of religion for individual and social life.

(b) The pragmatist view

Pragmatists look at religion from a different point of view. They realise that religious beliefs are based on speculation but they feel that religion satisfied the emotional head of the human mind and so it is useful. According to them truth is what works. They, therefore, argue that though religion is based on speculative ideas whose truth cannot be tested by scientific method, and in this sense religion is said to have no truth-value, yet it must be accepted as having a pragmatic value. In short the pragmatists accept religion on the ground of its utility.

1. Ibid., p. 231
The pragmatists argue that though religion does not stand up to the narrow, scientific test of truth, it satisfies man's emotional needs and thus stands to the pragmatic test of truth. They further maintain that the emotional and practical satisfaction of man is at least as important as his cognitive and theoretical satisfaction. A.C. Bouquet quotes Mr. Hanbury-Tracy's description of a Tibetan to show that religion helps to develop emotional integration of a personality and makes people happy. "On the whole their theocratic system works well, and produces millions of happy individuals, who love their religion, with a whole-hearted devotion, and are quite willing to be dominated by their Buddhist monks and itinerant ascetics. The validity of religious concepts is immaterial; what matters is that religion is useful, and that it has a role to play in the society. It has therapeutic value and the psychologists appreciate the role played by religion in integrating personality in the cases of certain mentally weak or sick persons.

William James also strongly defends religion for its pragmatic values. He says, "That unsharable feeling which each one of us has of the pinch of his individual destiny as he privately feels it rolling out on fortune's wheel may be disparaged for its egotism, may be sneered at as unscientific, but is is the one thing that fills up the measure of our concrete actuality and any would be existent that should lack such a feeling, or its analogue, would be a piece of reality only half made up----- To describe the world with all various

1. A.C. Bouquet, Comparative Religion, p. 17-18
feelings of individual pinch of destiny, all the various spiritual attitudes, left out of description -- would be something like offering a printed bill of fare as the equivalent for solid meal. Religion makes no such blunder.1

For a religious man, religion becomes a standing support in all his states of mind. William James defines faith as "the sense of life by virtue of which man does not destroy himself, but lives on. It is the force by which he lives."2 William James is an empiricist. He does not subscribe to metaphysical views but as a pragmatist, he sees religion not only to be useful but also as an indispensable aspect of human life. He agrees with Professor Leuba that religions have stimulant and anaesthetic effect but still he feels that religions must continue. Their stimulant and anaesthetic effect is so great, says W. James, "that Professor Leuba, in a recent article, goes so far as to say that so long as men can use their God they care very little who is, or even whether he is at all. The truth of the matter can be put, says Leuba, in this way: God is not known, he is not understood, he is used—. If he proves himself useful the religious consciousness asks for no more than that—Not God but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life is in the last analysis the end of religion. The love of life at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse."3 W. James agrees with Professor Leuba and says that religion must exert a permanent function, then it does not matter whether the religious concepts are cognitively meaningful.

1. W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 387
2. Ibid p. 5
3. W. James, The Varieties of Religious Experiences p. 392
not and whether religious utterances have truth value or not.

This view of the pragmatists may be examined from two points of view. Firstly a follower of a religion will not agree that he finds the idea of god useful but he does not bother whether god is real or not, whether he exists or not. At the most he may say that he has his limitations of knowing and cannot enquire into such problems but he firmly believes that the god exists. For him the god is real first and from that conviction comes the relief.

Secondly, a neutral observer of religion may also think that it is not desirable to allow religious people to be ignorant but peaceful and happy with their false beliefs and superstitions. It is better to be unsatisfied but well informed than to be satisfied with ignorance. Russell, Laxmaneshastri Joshi, Freud and many such thinkers have condemned religion on the ground that it is based on ignorance. Laxmaneshastri Joshi says that religion is based upon the imagination of a supernatural being. Greater the ignorance, greater is the support to religion. Freud says, that religion presupposes an intimidation of intelligence.¹

Thirdly, philosophers also may not accept that religion has done good to people. In the history of religion we find that the results of faiths are not always good. Russell for instance, thinks that religions have done more harm while doing little good to humanity.

One has to decide whether one should accept greater

---

¹ S. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p.21
ignorance or drop religions and whether one can approve of the role of religion though it is based on absolute ignorance, only because it has some use. Even a religious man may not like the idea that the religion he follows though useful, has no validity and is based on complete ignorance.

The pragmatists admit that religion is based on complete ignorance. Even then they insist on its continuation because of its utility.

(c) Marxist Critique of Religion

The pragmatists justify religion because of its useful role in the human society, but Marxists go further than this and think of creating a society where the people won't feel the need of religion; i.e. where the utility of religion would come to an end. They foresee a society with equality and economic stability so that people's psychological need to depend on imaginary support and to go into escapism disappears. Thus, while pragmatists justify the religion, the Marxists revolt against the religion. They severely criticise religion and its role in the human society. Marxists criticism of religion is based on scientific materialism and theory of evolution. According to the theory of evolution and scientific materialism, life emerges from matter. Life came into existence late, but matter was there when life was not. Life and also thought emerge out of matter. Zachner explains Marxist dialectical materialism by saying, "Dialectical Materialism maintains, on the basis of evolution that mind, thought and all so-called
spiritual values derive from matter and are always, in the view of science, materially based. They are, nonetheless, the highest evolute of matter and are indeed the goal towards which matter "loves." Man is not above nature or matter and so there is no contradiction between mind and matter or soul and body and god is nothing but the laws of nature. The god of religion is the imagination of a helpless mind. Religious beliefs are the ideas of primitive man, who could not solve the riddle of nature. According to Marx, "All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of these external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces." Religion is a product of ignorance and so it is in constant conflict with science and scientists. Scientists had to suffer because the religious authorities did not approve of their discoveries. Engels holds that, "the history of religion is the history of the fight against the development of scientific thought. The church persecuted the greatest scientists with blind cruelty." Religion did not allow intelligence to grow and the masses that followed religion remained superstitious and ignorant. The capitalists use religion to exploit the ignorant masses. Religion survives because of ignorance, and because of man's urge to rely on personified natural forces and also because of the interest of exploiting classes. They:

1. Zachnef (Ed) The Concise Encyclopædia of Living Faiths p. 396
3. Ibid, p. 11
can use religion as means of blinding and curbing the popular mass;\textsuperscript{1} says Marx. He does not stop with speculations as to how religion comes into existence and develops and with the examination of the reasons why a religion has a hold on society. He wants to set forth a programme for eliminating religion from society as it is an obstacle in the progress and interest of the masses. He wants action and not speculation. He complains against the philosophers that the philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point, however, is to change it\textsuperscript{2}.

Marxist philosophy of religion emerges as they deal with political, economic problems of society. The first clash between Marxism and religion is because of the Marxists materialistic philosophy and scientific out-look. Religion is stripped of its god, heaven, soul\textsuperscript{a} by showing them to be invalid with the help of dialectical materialism. Science and scientific out-look have been used to remove ignorance on which religion is founded. Secondly, Marxism comes in collision with religion when it sees religion as a means of exploitation at the hands of the exploiting class. Therefore, there is a regular propaganda against religion, in the communist manifesto.

It may be asked whether Marxists have succeeded in removing religion, from the nations where communism is in force. Can the economic stability stop the urge of religion or can it stop, the feeling of pinch of one's individual

\textsuperscript{1} Marx and Engels, \textit{On Religion} p.128.
\textsuperscript{2} Zachner (Ed), \textit{The Concise Encyclopaedia of Living Faiths}, p.398
Can the changes brought through violence and propaganda bring real change in the conditions of a society? The answers to all these questions may be in the negative. Further, it appears that the Marxists have not really understood human nature when they expect that the ruling class which has come into existence to bring about social changes, will abolish itself. As a matter of fact the ruling class in the communist countries has come to stay. Vinoba Bhave while commenting on Marxism, says "Surely, you do not suppose that a revolution once brought about will continue to give its result for all time to come, like an endowed fund. The artificial cultivation for a short period of a quality which is not natural to the masses, is like borrowed capital. Ultimately it will transfer the power to those few who possess that quality." The ideal of a classless society may not be realised at all. The economic and political changes that are brought about by force, violence and propaganda may not last long, and they may not be able to remove the inner urge felt by man for religion. The cause of this urge is in human psyche. Temporary stability in social and political situation cannot abolish religion. The urge has to be vanished, and for that the causes of this urge are to be explored. Freud probed into the causes, and origin of religion but his intention of the search was not social and political but therapeutic.

Freudian Critique of Religion

Freud looks at religion from a different angle. He mainly concentrates on the origin of religion; he thinks that religion is a product of abnormal psychology and links the origin of religion with the totem sacrifice and the son-father relation. Sometimes, the father is represented as a totemic animal and sometimes as a god. Sometimes, he is regarded as a rival in sex relation. These mixed feelings result into the worship of the father in different forms. At the end of a long discussion in his book Totem and Taboo, Freud comes to the conclusion that, "the beginning of religion, morals, society and art converge in Oedipus Complex. This is in complete agreement with the psychoanalytic finding that the same complex constitutes the nucleus of neuroses." Freud finds the origin of religion in abnormal mental conditions and he condemns religion as a product of fear and does not agree with the view that religion is a product of 'oceanic feeling'. A child feels helpless and needs protection due to its physical limitations but the feeling of helplessness continues in adulthood and is sustained by fear; this leads to the imagination of an exalted father, a god, a superior. Freud says, "The derivation of religious needs from the infants' helplessness and the longing for the father aroused by it, seems to me incontrovertible, especially since the feeling is not simply prolonged from childhood days, but is permanently

1. G. Lauzun, Sigmund Freud, The Man and His Theories, p.199
2. S. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontent, p.9
sustained by fear of the superior power of Fate. It is very humiliating that the people do not want to get out of this illusion that some supernatural being is there to protect them. Religion is a commonly accepted device of keeping sufferings away, it is a mass delusion. Freud says, "A special importance to the case in which this attempt to procure a certainty of happiness and a protection against suffering through delusional remoulding of reality is made by considerable number of people in common. The religion of mankind must be classed among mass-delusion of this kind." He wonders how the concept of god comes into existence from an unknown source and takes control of the human mind and directs its activities. Like a pragmatist Freud is not inclined to allow the people to have religion and be comfortable; but he feels pain when he looks at the whole phenomenon of religion, from its origin to the state where it takes complete control of mankind. As a psychologist he does not stop at just discovering the facts about the human mind but he expresses his anxiety and pains that he feels about the future of mankind, and about the deterioration of human values due to religions. "Religion restricts this play of choice and adaptation since it imposes equally on every one its own path to the acquisition of happiness and protection from suffering. Its technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in delusional manner which presupposes an intimidation of the intelligence. At this

1. S. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontent, p. 9

2. Ibid., p. 18
price, by forcibly fixing them in a state of psychical
infantilism and by drawing them into a mass-delusion.
Religion succeeds in sparing many people an individual
neurosis. He condemns religion by saying, "The whole
thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality that
to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful
to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able
to rise above this view of life. It is still more humiliating
to discover how large a number of people living to-day, who
cannot but see that this religion is not tenable, nevertheless
try to defend it piece by piece in a series of pitiful rearguard
actions."

Coming to the 'purpose of life' Freud says that this
question is raised about human life only. No body talks
about the purpose of animal life. This question of purpose
of human life could be easily dismissed or it could be
reframed to mean as to what people demand from life. According
to him the answer could be happiness. Without entering into
any ideology, Freud asserts that behind all human activities
happiness is the only motive, but religions have made this
question about purpose of human life a very important and
ideological question and it is claimed that only religion can
answer it. Religion raises fictitious problems and claims that
answers are found in religion only. Freud discards such
discussions as the result of neuroses. With the help of

1. S. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 21
2. S. Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, p. 11
in abnormal conditions of the human mind that arise due
to unsatisfied instincts; therefore all religious concepts
are invalid.

As a matter of fact Freud was a scientist and a
therapeutist. But sometimes he goes beyond that role and so
he is called a psycho-philosopher. With the help of psycho-
analysis he systematically criticizes religion and its functions
in the society.

The approaches of the positivists, the materialists,
the psychologists or the pragmatists to religion are based on the
scientific outlook. While investigating into religions, they
are mainly engaged in showing that religion is invalid. For
example, the positivists reject religion as invalid by using
linguistic analysis, Freudsians show religion to be product of
abnormal psychological conditions of the human mind. The
materialists find religion to be a product of ignorance and
imagination. The Pragmatists, though they realise that the
origin of religion is in ignorance, they do not bother much
about its validity as they think the utility is more important
than validity.

There is a similarity among these thinkers and Krishnamurti
in holding that religious concepts are invalid. Like these
thinkers, Krishnamurti criticises religion but there is basic
difference between the criticism of religion by these
philosophers and that by Krishnamurti. Except Marxists, the main
interest of other Philosophers is speculative or theoretical.
They refute religion on theoretical grounds i.e. at the
intellectual level. Marxists go further and find out ways and means to abolish religion; because of their interest in and concern for down-trodden. they intensively work out a programme of changing society. Krishnamurti is also involved deeply in the problems of human life. He makes efforts to take his thinking to the people through discussions, discourses and schools. But there is vast difference between these two trends of thought. Marxism is based on absolute authority of its ideology, regimentation and indoctrination. One may see a spiritual light of peace and freedom in Krishnamurti's destruction of institutional religion, while in Marxism it is a final destruction of spiritual joy. According to Krishnamurti, the mind which sees the futility of all organised religion and which is thus free from all authority, dogmas, beliefs, can enquire into what a true religion is.

(II)

Krishnamurti's Critique of Religion

(a) Krishnamurti's first challenging question is: 'Why do people go to religion?' He raises this question and goes deep into the root of human psyche. Why does a man rely on certain ideas without questioning their validity. When Krishnamurti sees that beliefs and specially religious beliefs have created all sorts of conflicts in the human society, he tries to find out what makes people accept such beliefs. He says, "What is important is not what you believe but why you
believe at all. Why does one seek relief in ideas? Why does one want to depend on illusions? Krishnamurti wants to know the psychology behind man's dependence on ideas. Among the different ideas, religious ideas have been the main source of psychological relief to man for centuries. Krishnamurti wonders as to why people rely on ideas if they are not going to affect the facts. Facts remain facts whether one tries to escape from them or one faces it. Krishnamurti says, "the facts are not influenced by belief or disbelief. So one has to ask why one believes at all in anything; what is the basis of belief." The problem is, if the facts are not going to be affected by beliefs, if they are what they are, then why does one want to believe in ideas instead of accepting facts as they are.

Krishnamurti thinks that to go into the problems of religion, one has to go into the psychological problem of belief. Since the appearance of man on the earth as a thinking animal, traces of religious behaviour are noticed. Thought that has become conscious of its security, manifests itself as fear; and the fear is the cause of belief. Krishnamurti shows how thought breeds fear and is responsible for beliefs. "Thinking about what I have done breeds fear, doesn't it? Thinking about what might happen in the future also breeds fear. So I see—that thought is responsible for fear, both of the past and of the future. And thought is also responsible for fear by projecting an ideal, a belief, and holding on to

2. J. Krishnamurti, The Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader
that belief—- it is all operation of thought

Fear to face the fact is the cause of belief. Belief is an escape from reality. Krishnamurti further shows how fear is the cause of belief by asking painted questions about the basis of beliefs. "Is it fear, is it the uncertainty of life - the fear of the unknown, the lack of security in the ever changing world? Is it the insecurity of relationship, or is it that faced with the immensity of life, and not understanding it, one encloses oneself in the refuge of belief? So if I may ask you, if you have no fear at all, would you have any belief?" One wants to believe because of fear. Belief, in any ideology, god, or authority gives a feeling of security. One can pattern this behaviour according to the authority in which he believes and relieves oneself from the responsibility. A belief occupies the whole consciousness of a believer and then he acts according to the dictates of that consciousness. If the consciousness is not occupied by such beliefs the individual has to face emptiness, for which he is not prepared. He is ready to deceive himself rather than to face the reality. He prefers an imaginary support of belief to facing facts of life. Dependence on belief becomes his second nature, a habit. An individual does not question his belief because he is afraid of losing that support; on the contrary sub-consciously he justifies it.

Like Krishnamurti, Russell and Freud also say that man

Russell says; "Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown, and partly as I have said the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing." 1 Freud says that the origin of religion can be traced in the feeling of 'infantile helplessness'. 2 Krishnamurti's straight comments on fear and religion are: 'Your Love of god is love out of fear, your week-end religion is fear'. 3 Your god is the result of your own fear. 4

The religious people, however, may not agree that their gods are the result of fear. They may even insist upon the need of fear, such as the fear of god or the fear of sin, for a moral and religious life. This becomes a vicious circle. People accept beliefs because of fear and having accepted certain beliefs in god, hell and heaven, are afraid of these gods and their disfavour, hell, sin etc. believed by them. This fear, which is the cause of acceptance of different types of beliefs, is a psychological one.

In order to understand the true import of Krishnamurti's view that fear is the cause of beliefs, it is necessary to be clear about the meanings of the words 'fear' and 'belief' as used by him. It is necessary to distinguish between fear as a healthy, natural instinct which is necessary for life and the psychological fear which leads man to accept all sorts of

---

1. B. Russell: Why I am not a Christian p. 25
2. S. Freud: Civilization and Its Discontents p. 9
3. J. Krishnamurti: Beyond Violence p. 115
4. Ibid. p. 95
non-scientific beliefs. The former protects man from danger while the latter cripples him down, makes him weak and accept beliefs. For example, fear of death, as a healthy natural instinct is protective. It leads a man or an animal to avoid dangers and risks to life and to take necessary precautions. It is absolutely necessary. On the contrary the psychological fear of death i.e. the fear that one's personality would cease to exist, leads a person to accept beliefs in survival after death and immortality of soul etc. It is only this psychological fear which, according to Krishnamurti, is detrimental to a truly religious life.

Similarly, to accept factual beliefs based on scientific evidence is rational and necessary for understanding nature. When Krishnamurti asks for the cause of beliefs, he is not taking about such scientific, factual beliefs. These beliefs do not create any problem. But man accepts certain other non-scientific, ideological, religious or metaphysical transcendent beliefs. These beliefs are projections of the human mind. Krishnamurti holds that these beliefs are forms of escape from the fact and therefore a truly religious mind must be free from them.

In the light of this distinction, it may be said that when there is a genuine or real fear, man does not try to escape from it by taking recourse to some idea or concept. On the contrary, he deals with it directly and removes the fear as he removes his finger from a flame. Such a fear is not the cause of beliefs. It is the psychological fear that causes
us to accept various beliefs and which is thought by religious people as conducive to our moral and religious life. Russell condemns the people who take up this position. "I say people who feel that are showing cowardice, which in any other sphere would be considered contemptible. But when it is in religious sphere it is thought to be admirable; I can't admire cowardice whatever sphere it's". Because of fear one wants to rely on god. Like fear of god dependence on god also is admired in religion. Complete resignation to god or leaving every-thing to his mercy is thought to be highly religious.

Krishnamurti goes into the problem of thought, fear & belief in details with the intention that man should be free from the burden of the psychological fear. He thinks, "fear is one of the greatest problems in the world, probably the greatest problem". He points out that the feeling of emptiness, helplessness created by psychological fear cannot be removed by embracing any number of beliefs or ways of escapes, as a bottomless pit cannot be filled. "We are concerned only with this fear which breeds dependence, which is again increased by dependence. If we understand fear we also understand dependence. So to understand fear there must be sensitivity---If one is at all sensitive, one becomes conscious of one's own extra-ordinary emptiness--a bottomless pit which cannot be filled by the vulgar entertainment of drugs, nor by entertainment of the churches--nothing can ever fill it. Knowing this the fear increases---And flight

1. B. Russell, Bertrand Russel Speaks His mind p. 29
2. J. Krishnamurti, Beginning of Learning p. 160
from this cavity is fear. And fear stops us from
understanding this bottomless pit. It is neurosis which
feeds upon itself. Being afraid of facing the loneliness
one imagines, gods, heaven, rebirth and tries to live on this
imaginary support.

(b) Beliefs continue inspite of social progress.

The religious beliefs are originated in primitive mind.
Social conditions of those times were responsible for
superstitions and unscientific thinking. But in the age
of scientific progress, also, man feels the need of the support
of beliefs in non-scientific concepts. Though the external
conditions are changing in the present society and man has
knowledge and power to control nature; yet the thought does
not feel psychologically secure and so breeds fear that
results in the acceptance of beliefs. The human mind which is
conditioned by the past traditions and religions, does not want
to leave them; it seeks relief in depending on them. This
human tendency helps faiths to continue.

From the childhood the human mind is so conditioned that
it has become incapable of independent thinking and accepts
faiths inherited from the past generations. Conditioning is one
of the factors that keep faiths alive. Hardly any one asks as to
why one accepts beliefs. Krishnamurti asks a group of children,
"Have you found out why the older people do puja? They are
copying—they do it first of all because it is a tradition; their grandfathers did it."—Before you do anything should

née J.Krishnamurti: The Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader p. 177
you not find out why you want to do it? Even if millions of people believe in puja, should you not use your own mind, to discover true significance of it? It is difficult to think of an individual who can easily challenge the social inheritance and specially the religious part of it. Galloway, who realises this fact says, "Society with its long tradition thus becomes a constraining power over the individual and he is almost omnipotent to cast off the spell of its authority."

The continuity of religious beliefs is secured by the fact that they are part of a social inheritance to which each individual falls heir. He assimilates them in youth and in manhood they have insensibly become part of his way of thinking. Religious beliefs are very smoothly assimilated as compared with other aspects of social inheritance. They are accepted without questioning by the masses. Krishnamurti sees fear at the root of belief and also fear as one of the main reasons that sustain belief with conditioning. Man clings to particular habit because of fear. Habits give psychological security. He is afraid of loneliness and find easy to be carried with the masses and their habits. It is comforting to have belief and be relaxed; "It is just a nice idea to pacify your fear; so you do not question anything but just believe in god."

But if you really go into this whole problem of fear then you will find whether god will protect you or not.

Is man free from fear after leaving his whole burden of

1. J. Krishnamurti - Life Ahead p. 76
2. Galloway: Philosophy of Religion p. 85
3. J. Krishnamurti: Life Ahead p. 58
anxiety on god? He is not free from fear as he claims to be and so he goes on multiplying his ideas and beliefs, and there is no end to the beliefs and no end to the fear. One of the reasons for the continuation of fear and belief, is that there is somewhere deep in the heart of even a religious man, a doubt about the existence of god and his help in emergency. This doubt remains because these beliefs are not directly verified by any one. He just relied on them out of the feeling of helplessness. Thus an individual cannot be free from fear even though he believes that god is kind and will protect him. The obvious fact is that this belief in god is not based on reasoning concerning matters of fact. It is not based on any scientific evidence. The belief is always an idea and lacks adequate support.

Though there is always conflict between science and religion, a religious man seeks assurance of validity of religious beliefs from scientific methods. While making arguments in support of beliefs he likes to rely on scientific evidence. But he may condemn science for destroying faith because science has proved the invalidity of religious beliefs. Darwinian and Copenican theories have shown the century-old beliefs to be false.

Thus, not being very sure about the validity of his beliefs, a religious man is not free from fear. He is not confident about the promises given by the religions. Still he suppresses the doubts and clings to the beliefs. Believing
is more comfortable than doubting. Beliefs are more important than verification in a common man's life. This human nature is expressed by Krishnamurti, in the following passage, "belief more important than truth, dogma more vital than the direct perception. When belief becomes all-important, then you are willing to sacrifice every thing for that; whether that belief is real or has no validity does not matter as long as it gives comfort, security, a sense of permanancy." The beliefs are the expressions of desires and they overpower the reason. Hereditus shows how the desires are dominant. "It is hard to contend against the heart, for it is ready to sell the soul to purchase the desire".

Beliefs remain strong when the reason is suppressed. The mind haunted by fear becomes incapable of reasoning or understanding the truth; and the lack of such understanding may go on to breed beliefs and ideas. Thus the fear creates gods and the very dependence on god sustains the fear. Fear and belief are interdependent. Beliefs do not help to overcome fear as thought by religious people; beliefs help an individual only to escape from facts. Therefore Krishnamurti says gods are escapes. All religions are forms of escapes. Krishnamurti says, "But if it (what is) is painful we want to escape from 'What is' into concept. This is our daily life. There is nothing to argue about. So your Gods, your beliefs, your ideas, principles are escape from the daily misery. daily

1. J. Krishnamurti, Beyond Violence p. 47
2. Lazerowitz, The Structure of Metaphysics p. 78
fears, daily anxieties. So, to understand something, cannot we ask: "Are concepts necessary?" I am afraid and I see the absurdity of escaping from that into something which is a concept, a belief in the Masters, in God, in the Hereafter, into leading a perfect life—Why can't I look at that fear? —And do not concepts prevent me from looking at that that fear? The concepts are barriers; they act as barrier which prevent you from looking. Because concepts or beliefs prevent us from looking or understanding the fact, they continue to exist. Beliefs can overpower understanding because man wants to escape from the fact. The mind cannot face the fact and therefore it needs religion to escape. As long as man wants to escape from the fact, the beliefs will continue to exist however much the society may progress in all other fields. All religions therefore, are are means of escapes.

(c) **What do we believe?**

We have seen that, according to Krishnamurti, fear is the root cause why people accept different types of beliefs—economic, political, philosophical, religious and so on. An individual is a product of his conditioning and he does not question these beliefs probably because he is afraid that without them he would be nothing, a non-entity. By accepting different types of beliefs, an individual acquires the sense of belonging and this gives him the sense of security. Thus he accepts a certain politico-economic

1. J. Krishnamurti; The Awakening of Intelligence p. 213.
ideology and belongs to a capitalist or a socialist, a democratic or a communist group. He accepts a certain philosophy, and belongs to a materialist or a spiritualist school. Similarly he accepts certain religious beliefs and belongs to this or that religious organization and calls himself a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian or a Parsee.

Among these different types of conditioning, religious conditioning seems to be one of the strongest types. It begins at a quite early age—almost from the birth. Generally an individual belongs to the religion he is born in. He almost inherits religion from his parents as one inherits language, culture from the family one is born in. Religion, thus, is a matter of social inheritance. William James says, "His religion has been made for him by others, communicated to him by tradition, determined to fixed forms by imitation and retained by habit." Krishnamurti also holds that religion is a matter of conditioning and a result of thousands of years of propaganda. He says, "--- for most of us religion is the result of our conditioning. You are a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian or that you will, because you have been told from your childhood that you are a Hindu with all the beliefs, dogmas, traditions, and you have accepted it." What we believe or what we follow as religion is somebody else's experience. Krishnamurti criticizes such passive acceptance. "--- one must be aware of the fact that the mind is conditioned, that your mind when it says it is a Hindu, is conditioned, it is shaped by the past, by the

1. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 28
2. J. Krishnamurti, "What is the Religious Mind?" quoted in *The Mind of J. Krishnamurti*, ed. by
centuries of culture; it is the result of a historical process and a mythical process and the religions that you have are the result of other people's experiences. It is not your direct experience. It is what you have been told either in the book or by some teacher or by some philosopher; it is not something which you perceive." 1 It is possible that some individuals or some societies may revolt against their own religious traditions. But if they revolt because they have been told to do so by some other authority, then they are equally conditioned and their action is the result of a more powerful propaganda. Krishnamurti says, "As the communist accepts in his youth that there is no God, you accept that there is God. There is not much difference between you and the person who denies God; both are the result of a conditioned mind." 2 Thus a theist and an atheist, a religious man and an anti-religious man are the result of conditioning.

We have noted that religious conditioning is one of the strongest types of conditioning. To this Krishnamurti adds, "Where religious matters are concerned, we become totally irrational, insane, and all these build the walls of our conditioning. Again, this is a fact, a psychological undeniable fact." 3 He says, "You see, another peculiarity with religious people is that they are totally illogical. Psychologically, they have no sanity." 4 He says so because

1. Ibid., p. 303
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 306-307
4. Ibid., p. 305
religious people accept or are prone to accept any belief, however absurd, illogical, unscientific it may be, uncritically because it gives them a sense of security, and satisfaction. It is, therefore, necessary to submit the so-called religious beliefs to a careful scrutiny. Krishnamurti critically considers the validity of various religious beliefs such as the beliefs in God, soul and immortality, belief in the efficacy of rituals and other religious practices to make man free; belief in the authority of scriptures, gurus and god-men. We shall in this chapter expound Krishnamurti's views on the validity of these beliefs.

(i) Criticism of the beliefs in God, Soul and Immortality.

(a) God is the central figure for most of the religions. The whole structure of religion with its practices is built around him. Prayers are addressed and sacrifices offered to him, shrines are built and mythologies fabricated around his supposed life-story. In him lie the aspirations of religious man. All the major religions, except perhaps Buddhism and Jainism, assume the existence of God. As Zachner points out the Western religious tradition equates religion "with the worship of God, and the belief in the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient lord is taken to be the hallmark of religion".1

This concept of God is the concept of an infinite, omnipotent and omniscient person, who is the creator of the universe, the moral governor, who is good, kind and helps

1. R.C. Zachner, The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths, p.XII
his devotees and of their miseries and sufferings. Belief in such a being is thought to be necessary for being religious and the realization of God is regarded as the final culmination of a religious life. What, then, is Krishnamurti's attitude towards God and the belief in God?

Krishnamurti seems to distinguish between two questions:

(a) Is there a God? or what is God? Can God be known? and
(b) Is the belief in God valid, a powerful incentive to better living and a necessary ingredient of a true religious life?

To take the second question first, Krishnamurti's answer is to know nothing about God and yet to believe it and even to find security in such a belief is almost neurotic. He says, "The belief in God gives you security, but you don't know anything about God, except what some idiotic man talks about him: God. So you know nothing about God and yet you believe in him and you think you will find security in a belief which has become neurotic because it has no validity. You believe in God gives you a false hope of security. Your action based on a false belief, on a belief which is radically false, must be neurotic. That belief is based on fear."

If one does not know for oneself whether there is God and what the nature of God is, then there are two alternatives—namely, either one relies on one's own experience or thought or vision or one accepts some authority. Both these ways are dangerous according to Krishnamurti. He warns people not to be deceived by the projections of our own wants and longings. He says, "You must know that your own mind can create the

1. J. Krishnamurti, J. Krishnamurti in India 1974-75, p.70
image of what it wants; it can imagine God with a beard, 
or with one eye; it can make him blue or purple. So you 
have to be aware of your own desires and not to be deceived 
by the projections of your own wants and longings. If you 
long to see God in a certain form, the image you see will 
be according to your wishes; and that image will not be 
God, will it? If you are in sorrow and want to be comforted, 
or if you feel sentimental and romantic in your religious 
aspirations eventually you will create a God who will supply 
what you want; but it will still not be God.

One cannot also rely on any tradition for the knowledge 
of God. Different faiths and traditions have different images 
of God. "--- a man who has been brought up and conditioned 
in the Catholic world may have a vision of Christ. Obviously 
such visions are the projection of his own conditioning; and 
those who have been brought up in the tradition of Krishna 
have experiences and visions born of their culture. So 
experience does not prove a thing. To recognise the vision 
as Krishna or Christ is the outcome of conditioned knowledge, 
therefore it is not real at all, but a fancy, a myth, 
strengthened through experience and utterly invalid. Why 
you want a theory at all and why do you postulate a belief? 
This constant assertion of belief is an indication of fear— 
fear of everyday life, fear of sorrow, fear of death and utter 
meaninglessness of life. Seeing this you invent a theory 
and the more cunning and erudite the theory, the more weight 
it has. And after two thousand or ten thousand years of

--- Krishnamurti, J. Krishnamurti in India 1974-75, p.70
C. J. Krishnanrurti, The Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader, 
p.12-13
propaganda, that theory invariably and foolishly becomes 'the truth'.

Thus Krishnamurti shows that the belief in God is not valid. It is a projection of the mind which seeks security from psychological fear. He further points out that this belief has very little significance in a man's life. He says, "You believe because it gives you satisfaction, consolation, hope and you say it gives significance to life. Actually your belief has very little significance, because you believe and exploit, you believe and kill, you believe in a universal God and murder each other. The rich man also believes in God, he exploits ruthlessly, accumulates money, and then builds a temple or becomes a philanthropist". Belief in God divides the people into believers and non-believers. "Therefore" says Krishnamurti, "Your belief in God is really spreading misery in the world, though it may have brought you momentary consolation, in actuality it has brought you more misery and destruction in the form of wars, famines, class-divisions and the ruthless action of separate individuals. So your belief has no validity at all."

Thus Krishnamurti holds that the belief in God is neither valid nor does it provide an incentive to better living. Our incentive must be our own desire to live in a better way. What leads to a better life is intelligence. But "through lack of intelligence, we accept the idea of superintelligence which we call 'God', but this 'God', this super-intelligence, is not going to give us a better life---It is the lack of

3. Ibid., p. '206-207
intelligence that is preventing a better-living, not non-belief in God.\(^1\)

All this shows that Krishnamurti does not accept that the belief is either valid or a healthy incentive to better living. Does this mean he denies God or that he is an atheist? He says, "I am not denying God—it would be foolish to do so."\(^2\) His attitude towards the problem of God as towards all other problems is that of learning or finding out the truth. But he finds that belief obstructs learning. "Belief is a denial of truth, belief hinders truth; to believe in God is not to find God. Neither the believer nor the non-believer will find God."\(^3\) If, therefore, one wants the truth about God, one must give up all beliefs, all prejudices and must have an open mind. "The question of whether or not there is a God or truth or reality, or whether you like to call it, can never be answered by books, by priests, philosophers or saviours. Nobody and nothing can answer the question, but you yourself."\(^4\)

But how can I find if there is God. Krishnamurti's answer is that for finding out whether there is God, the mind must be free from the known. When the thought itself realises that it cannot go beyond, the known, beyond its own tether, beyond its own rooted brain cells, then thought becomes completely silent. "Only when the mind is completely silent, not only on the upper level but fundamentally, right through,"

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 206  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 207  
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 207  
\(^4\) J. Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known*, p. 12
on both the superficial and the deeper levels of consciousness - only then can the unknown come into being". The unknown is not something to be experienced by the Mind.

In a discussion in Bombay when he is asked whether this unknown is God, he says, "I refuse to use the word God and that is not an invention of thought". He refuses to call this God probably because of the traditional theological associations of the concept of God. Thus though Krishnamurti decries the belief in God and refuses to use the word God, he admits the possibility of the mind going beyond thought and working on a quantitatively different level. This mind he calls the "Religious Mind". His criticism of the belief in God, therefore, is fundamentally different from the positivist or the Marxist criticism is that belief in that the latter do not seem to admit the possibility of the mind going beyond thought. Their criticism is from the anti-religious or irreligious point of view while Krishnamurti's criticism is from the point of view of a truly religious mind.

(b) Another important belief common to all the major religions of the world (except perhaps Buddhism) is the belief in the existence of a permanent soul which survives after death, which is immortal. (Though Buddhism does not accept the existence of a permanent soul, it believes in the survival after death). Our life as we live it is full of sufferings.

conflicts and frustrations. There are also so many forms of fear—the fear of losing the job, fear of losing reputation, fear of hell, fear of death etc. We are unhappy. Not knowing how to put an end to sufferings, how to be free from fear, how to achieve permanent happiness, our mind invents the Atman, the superior self, which is above all sufferings, which is immortal and full of bliss. This soul or Atman is a product of thought. Thus thought has created the division between body and soul. "The whole religious tendency in the west as well as in the east, says Krishnamurti, \"has been this division of the soul and the body\".1 The soul is conceived as immortal and surviving after the bodily death. The thought which is afraid of death, of coming to an end invents the Atman or the soul or the Higher Self. But is there such a permanent soul or is it merely an illusion?

Krishnamurti feels that this whole division of the soul and the body is a false division. There is no actual division but there is only a psychosomatic entity. Man has invented an immortal soul because he does not want to die, because he cannot put an end to sufferings and because he is unhappy. It is therefore, a projection of thought. Like all other beliefs, this belief also, is rooted in fear. As Krishnamurti says, \"We want immortality, whatever that may mean, and we want to survive, both physically and psychologically. We avoid death at any price, put it as far away as.\"

1. J. Krishnamurti, Tradition and Revolution, p.194
possible". And we find this safety, this relief in the idea of an immortal soul and in the belief in reincarnation or resurrection.

As Krishnamurti points out we are rational enough to accept that the physical organism, the body, through time, through usage, wears itself out. It dies through old age, disease, accident etc. We accept this to be inevitable. What we are frightened of is our ego, our personality coming to an end. Therefore "the whole Asiatic world believes in reincarnation". They believe that "the thing that has been put together by time as the "me", the ego, that incarnates till that entity becomes perfect and is absorbed into the highest principle, which is Brahman, or whatever you like to call it..." And Christianity has its own form of continuity of the "me", the resurrection. They believe in those ideas so firmly that a great believer once said to Krishnamurti, "If you don't believe it, you are not a religious man".

Krishnamurti finds these beliefs to be absurd. They have no validity but they are the projections of the human mind. They have their root in the fear of death and in the desire to be free from sufferings and to be happy. Yet Krishnamurti wonders how a person who finds his life miserable and boring, longs for yet another one of that type. He says, "You believe in reincarnation. You who live a shoddy life, a mischievous life, a corrupt life, a life of fear, a life in which there is no love and you want that life to be born

1. J. Krishnamurti, Truth and Activity, p. 135
2. Ibid., p. 137
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
another time. Is that what you want? And you believe in that.  

Secondly, this belief must have at least a practical bearing on the conduct of a person who accepts this belief. It must make a believer "behave rightly, accurately, with tremendous care." Krishnamurti says, "if you really believe, then what you do now matters enormously. Because what you do now will either help or destroy you in the next life." But this also does not normally happen.

Thirdly, this belief does not help the believer to be free from fear and also to end suffering. As Krishnamurti points out, the fact is that a person suffers and that he wants to put an end to suffering. To tell him that the Atman is beyond death and suffering is of no value to him at all. "It is like a man who is hungry and you describe food to him."

Lastly, the belief also comes in the way of a genuine investigation into the problems of death, fear and sufferings. A truly religious mind is one which is always in the state of learning, which wants to find out the truth. But this and all other beliefs obstruct the mind from learning. Beliefs, therefore, are not conducive to a truly religious life, according to Krishnamurti.

(ii) Criticism of rituals and religious practices.

We have so far seen how Krishnamurti exposes the futility of the religious beliefs in God, soul and immortality. Another important aspect of an organised religion consists of rituals.

1. J. Krishnamurti, J. Krishnamurti in India, 1974-75, p.68
2. J. Krishnamurti, Truth and Actuality, p.137
3. J. Krishnamurti, J. Krishnamurti in India, 1974-75, p.68
4. J. Krishnamurti, Tradition and Revolution, p.106
and religious practices such as fasting, prayers, chanting a *mantra*, putting on the sacred thread, going to the church and performing puja. Krishnamurti thinks that these so-called religious practices have no religious significance at all. According to him, they not only are irrelevant to and unconnected with a true religious life but also have undesirable effects on the mind. "Ceremonies are obviously not religion, because in performing ceremonies, you are repeating formula which has been handed over to you. You may find a certain pleasure in performing ceremonies, just as others do in smoking or drinking; but is that religion? In performing ceremonies you are doing something about which you know nothing. Your father and your grandfather do it, therefore you do it, and if you don't, they will scold you. That is not religion." Rituals are traditionally followed and they have hypnotic and anaesthetic effects. These external practices and psychic experiences are not religion. He also condemns worship because what one worships is not a real thing, it is a symbol. "And what is in a temple? A grown image fashioned by a human being according to his own imagination.--- The symbol is not real thing. So why go to it? God is never in a symbol. So the worship of a symbol or of an image is not religion." Then why do people worship and why the empty traditions continue? The answers lie in the operation of the human mind. "You propitiate god because you are afraid of them, but that is not worship," says Krishnamurti. One can develop sentiments around any object and call it holy; therefore, a symbol is not holier than any roadside object and mantras are not more meaningful than any other word in any language.

1. J. Krishnamurti, *This Matter of Culture*, p. 36
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 176
He says, "Take a piece of stick, put it on the mantelpiece and every day, put a flower in front of it—give it a flower, repeat some words—'Coca Cola', 'Amen', 'Om', it does not matter what word you do it and you will find out. If you do it, after a month you will see how holy it has become. You have identified yourself with the stick—you have given it a sense of holiness of fear, out of constant habit of this tradition—The image in the temple is no more holy than a piece of rock by the roadside. What are the big idols and symbols, which are placed in big, beautiful houses, in dainty dresses, and are worshipped, respected, revered, honoured by lakhs and lakhs of people for centuries after centuries? They are mere product of fear and habit. To go on repeating what is done by others, does not require such repetition makes mind blunt and incapable to face the facts. It is like escaping in drugs instead of accepting the challenges.

"The bead and the word do quieten the chattering mind, but this is a form of self-hypnosis. You might as well take a pill" says Krishnamurti. It is claimed by religious people that prayers, worship etc. have helped them to withdraw senses from empirical experiences of pleasure and pain and thus the mind is quietened and it acquires a new power. Krishnamurti agrees that some sanskrit words have vibrations that give feeling of quietness but he asks, "Do you want to do it because you find a pleasant hypnotic effect in repeating certain words?"

He criticises the tendency of the people to follow such practices, because millions of people have done it for centuries.
without trying to find any significance of the practices, without raising a question what these hypnotic effect has to do with religion. And Krishnamurti answers to those who claim to have power from religious practices, "the mind creates the image and then derives power from its own creation. That is what the mind is everlasting doing: producing images and drawing strength, happiness, benefit from those images thereby remaining empty, inwardly poverty-stricken." Instead of gaining strength, the mind becomes timid and dependent. Now it is a question whether prayers, worship etc. are expressions of emotions of religious mind as it is said or they are the expressions of a frightened mind to cover the fear? One may get a momentary relief, or psychological relaxation by expressing his fear in the form of prayer, but that is not religion.

There might be certain practices which are good as physical and psychological exorcies. But there is no reason to associate them with religion or god. His utter disgust with rituals which are performed for a mere idea or a symbol as against his tender feeling towards nature are well expressed in the following passage, "A man in sanhyasi robes used to come every morning to gather flowers from trees in a nearby garden. His hands and his eyes were greedy for the flowers and he picked every flower within reach. He was evidently going to offer them to some dead image, a thing made of stone. The flowers were lovely, tender things just opening to the morning sun, and he"

1. J. Krishnamurti: *This matter of Culture*, p.171.
did not pick them gently, but tore them off, viciously stripping the garden of whatever it held. His god demanded lots of flowers—lots of living things for a dead stone image.  

To conclude, Krishnamurti holds that religion has nothing to do with rituals and other external practices and disciplines. He says, "So religion must be something which can be found only when the mind has understood and put all this aside."  

(iii) **Criticism of the authority of priests, gurus, god-men and scriptures.**

The third characteristic feature of religion is the authority of the priests, the gurus, the god-men, the scriptures and the tradition. The older the civilization, the greater the weight of the tradition. One has to go into this problem of authority and be free from it if one wants to be truly religious.

Let us first consider the role played by the priests in religion. They help the people to perform daily religious practices. They preserve the traditions and beliefs. In addition to the professional priests, there are godmen who claim to have some visions and revelations. They claim to help people in their pursuit of happiness, peace, liberation and realization of the ultimate truth. The priests as well as these godmen assume great authority in religious affairs.

1. J. Krishnamurti, *This matter of culture* p.167
A common man thinks that he cannot have direct communion with god without these mediators. Some decades back this class of religious teachers enjoyed absolute status in certain communities. Even in the present scientific age this class has enough control over their communities. The Pope in Christianity, Imam in Islam, the Mobed in Parsees, the Monks in Buddhism, the Brahmins or Acharyas in Hinduism have a great hold on their respective communities. And the godmen who are supposed to be specially endowed with insight and knowledge of religious life, sway the masses at their will. They gain religious authority very fast. Whatever they may say or do their authority is hardly challenged.

Krishnamurti sees a grave danger in accepting any authority. He always asks people to doubt, question and test everything before it is accepted. In following some authority an individual destroys his free thinking. But he prefers the easy way of acceptance. So the godmen have a big number of followers. They are even regarded as gods. These gurus rise in the east but they have a demand in the west. We buy arms from the western countries for our security and they buy religion from us for their psychological security. The security at both the levels—our security from other nations and their security from inward psychological crisis—has become a complex problem on which lot of money and energy are wasted. The people from the west are generally suffering from material prosperity, and all our Bhagwans fly to their rescue. There is a great demand for these godmen both in the east and in the
west. The reason for this demand is mainly fear, feeling of insecurity, a desire to escape. The gurus seem to have a key to an easy escape from inner crisis and they are thought to be competent to offer a happy and peaceful life with spiritual experiences. They become the authority in religious life.

Krishnamurti denies authority in all its forms. Authority is the denial of freedom. It blocks the intelligence.Above all, religious authority, where faith is dominant and dogmatism is powerful, there is hardly any scope for free thinking. Krishnamurti has said, "where religious matters are concerned we become totally irrational insane". Because the people do not want to think independently, they do not want to doubt, the teachers flourish with their systems, and dogma.

Krishnamurti condemns this state of affairs in harsh words. "As the animals in the circus are trained to act for the amusement of crowds, so the individual, through fear, looks for these spiritual performances the so called priests and swamis, the dispersers of spurious spirituality and of all the inanities of religion. Their main function is to entertain; they invent rituals, disciplines, and worship, which may look beautiful but soon degenerate into superstition and knavery under the cloak of service". This is the relation between the guru and the disciple; a relation between a ring master and the animals in a circus. Krishnamurti describes the whole psychological procedure, of how the relation is built between a guru and a follower. It is built up on some irrational assumption that a guru is enlightened and he can pass over his vision to the disciple; "Let's take a very simple fact. You

1. Luis S.R. Vas, (Ed), The Mind of J. Krishnamurti p.306
2. Ibid, p.250
are the teacher and I am the disciple; — Do I want to
learn, or do I want to follow the authority which you
represent, which you have invested in yourself? You say
you know, you are enlightened. And I want to have that, I
am greedy, I want something that will give me happiness. So,
I follow you, the teacher, as a disciple—I have never
asked why I follow you. What is the reason, that is the
beginning of accepting you as my authority? You may be a
eccentric, you may have had some little experience which you
have blown up to be a tremendous thing and I am incapable
of judging because you fascinate me by your beard, or your
eyes, or whatever it is, and I just follow. One may realize
this fact if one can see with open mind what is going on in
the camps of the godmen in our country. Krishnamurti describes
the situation particularly in India: ‘You have no love, you
have devotion, devotion to guru, to your god, to your scripture,
or to the image you have erected which is the image of yourself
really—. In the devotion there is fear.—Religion is not
what is going on in this country. There is no religion in this
country though there are all kinds of people who are doing
miracles. Women long hair, you know all that childishness that
is going on in this country, but that does not indicate a
religious spirit at all. ‘Propaganda organized by teachers is
no religion. Instant saneyasa, instant awakening of kundalini
offered by gurus are not religion. Instead of doing any good
to humanity they are disturbing the normal life of individuals
with false hopes and fears. Gurus promise freedom through

1. J. Krishnamurti: The Impossible Question p.163
2. J. Krishnamurti: J. Krishnamurti in India 1974-75, p.60
conformity to a certain system or method. Krishnamurti asks them, How can these be a compromise between freedom and the acceptance of authority? They are opposite poles. Where there is authority there freedom cannot be. And "where there is authority there must be obviously fear." But fear creates authority. Fear of so many things makes man cling to authority and because of fear one cannot leave traditions. Krishnamurti's analysis how the tendency of acceptance is rooted in human nature and how ultimately it leads to authority, "Why is it that we are so prone to accept---? To follow is one of our traditions, like the animals in a park we follow the leader, the teacher, the gurus and thereby there is authority." And it is just an idea, an illusion that the gurus know and followers do not know. The fact is that the Gurus flourish on the fears of the followers. The gurus have daring to exploit while the followers are meek and hence are exploited. Krishnamurti condemns the following as a deadly action of mind and denies the leadership specially in religion. "A leader in the religious world is the denial of religion." Again he says, "When you accept authority in spiritual matters, that is the very essence of decay." This is why he often warns his audience not to treat him as an authority because he speaks from a platform and he is conscious that this very fact that he is on the platform, that very physical position, may create authority.

Another forceful authority in religion besides the authority of priests, gurus and god-men, is that of scriptures.

1. J. Krishnamurti, Education and Significance of Life, p.60
2. J. Krishnamurti, Talks and J. Krishnamurti Dialogues, Soanen
3. Ibid, 1968, p.77
4. Ibid, p.89-89
5. J. Krishnamurti, Krishnamurti in India 1974-75, p.37
6. Ibid, p.36
In all religions, it is the scriptures or holy books that lay down the rules of religious and moral behaviour. The Bible, the Quran, the Gita, the Vedas, the Granthasahib, the Pitikas, the Gathas are the holy books of different religions. Their commandments are obeyed by the followers of these religions. The authority of these holy books is regarded as unchallengeable.

Obedience to scriptures does the same harm to the human intelligence as is done by following a guru or god-man. Belief in scriptures come in the way of the intellectual development of human beings. Some geniuses, who could have contributed genuinely to human progress could not do so because they remained confined to exploring, interpreting and commenting upon the state literature of the past. It may be worth spending some talent on it as a part of history of the past civilization. But the problem is whether it is that important to explore this literature with a view to find meaning of life, or ultimate values or truth, that may be applicable to the present society. For everchanging society there cannot be any ultimate truth which has been discovered some centuries back. The laws of physical world do not change. There is a fundamental difference between the physical world and the living world. One cannot fix the rules of life once for all. Bronowske says, "The creation is not static, but changing in time in a way that physical process do not. The physical world ten million years ago was the same as it is to-day...but the living world is not the same."

Krishnamurti may ask whether it is possible to apply rules set by any organised

1. (Ed) Bronowski, The Ascent of Man p. 308
religion, which is a "frozen thought of man" to this everchanging world and specially to the human society. It may be ridiculous to ask the present society to conform to the norms established in a primitive society. When the civilized society is trying to abolish death sentence, some countries are executing hundreds of men and women in public places, according to the law of religion. Following laws of religion, arms are amputated and criminals are whipped in public. Is not this primitive? Krishnamurti regards this to be a height of cruelty. "We are obviously savages when we kill thousands for some cause or other. Killing another human being is height of savagery." The laws of religion were formulated in a primitive society; they were crude and cruel because of the limitations of the society. One cannot expect even from a highly intelligent person in that society, something which would prove to be very enlightening for the present society. Laxmanshastri Joshi says that a person like Shankeracharya would have given a new logic and materialism to the world instead of Mayavada, if he would have lived in the present scientific age. The modern society has the advantages of technological and scientific knowledge; it need not rely on imagination and superstitions of the past. The present need not conform to the past.

Krishnamurti denies that he has any link with the past tradition and feels that such a link is unnecessary for one who is aware of the present. He says about himself, "He denies that his teaching is the continuity of ancient teachings."

1. J. Krishnamurti; Education and Significance of Life, p. 40
2. J. Krishnamurti; Commentaries on Living 2nd Series, p. 49
3. Laxmanshastri Joshi; Criticism of Hinduism, p. 209
He has not read any of the sacred books of India or of the west, because they are unnecessary for a man who is aware of what is going on in the world. To such a man who denies totally and completely the acceptance of the word, the symbol, with its conditioning, to him truth is not second-hand affair. He totally denies the past, its teachers, its interpreters, its theories, and its formulas. Truth is never in the past. The truth in the past is the ashes of memory—and in the dead ashes of yesterday there is no truth. Aldous Huxley while saying that organised religions offer false solutions to the basic problems of life, quotes Krishnamurti as saying, "When you quote the Bhagavad Gita, or the Bible, or some Chinese sacred book, surely, you are merely repeating—and what you are repeating is not the truth. It is lie; for truth cannot be repeated." The Mahavakyas from the Upanisads are repeated without knowing what it means. Krishnamurti's answer to a swamiji who tries to justify scriptures is: "When you say 'I am that' or Thou are that', there is a statement of a supposed fact—which may not be a fact at all." And when it was claimed that the Mahavakyas are utterances of the sages who had direct experience, Krishnamurti raised the question whether that experience could be conveyed. If it cannot be conveyed then there is no purpose in repeating it. What we read in scriptures is second-hand information, and the second-hand information is not truth at all.

"Truth is not perceived until the moment when it is lived."

1. J. Krishnamurti: The Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader p.11,12
2. J. Krishnamurti: The First and Last Freedom p.12
3. J. Krishnamurti: The Awakening of Intelligence p.148
4. Ibid
5. Carlo Suares: Krishnamurti and The Unity of Man p.2
It is for him who perceives it, and not for those who repeat what others say. Therefore scriptures have no value in understanding of truth.

After examining Krishnamurti's views on various aspects of religion, it is essential to see what Krishnamurti says about the important functions, which the religions are believed to perform. Firstly it is claimed that religions help an individual to attain freedom and secondly it fosters morality in a society.

(C) The functions of religion.

i) Freedom.

Freedom is the aim of all religions. They invariably discuss man's freedom from pains and sufferings and point out ways to attain it. Man is not happy with the life on the earth. He does not find meaning in the life which is full of miseries, fears, sorrows, envy, brutality, wars and discontents. He cannot accept that life means this miserable plight and imagines something beyond the worldly pleasures and pains; he feels need to be free from these confusions and while in search of permanent freedom, religions come to his help. Religions promise absolute freedom and whatever is not possible in this world or after this life. Salvation, liberation, Moksha, Nirvana are the different terms of freedom from bondage, says Buddhism from sufferings. Freedom, as the great ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, so does this Dharma and Discipline have but one taste, the taste of freedom.1

1. (Ed) Zachner: The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths
To achieve the freedom each religion has its own formula and code of conduct. Long torturous methods are prescribed by some religions. Krishnamurti, "Throughout theological history we have been assured by religious leaders that if we perform certain rituals, repeat certain prayers, or mantras, conform to certain patterns, limit our appetites, and refrain from sexual indulgence, we shall, after sufficient torture of the mind and body, find something beyond this little life. And that is what millions of so-called religions people have done through ages, either in isolation, going off into the desert or into the mountains or a cave or wandering from village to village with a begging bowl, or in a group joining a monastery, forcing their minds to conform to an established pattern". The established patterns and rituals themselves became bondage. Krishnamurti denies the possibility of attaining freedom by following any organised religion. Religions promise freedom but they cannot give it because they expect conformity to some pattern. Krishnamurti says, "freedom cannot be found in any retreat, in any system, or belief, nor through the conformity and fear called discipline. Discipline cannot offer freedom, they may promise but hope is not freedom. Imitation as a means to freedom is the very denial of freedom. Freedom offered by religions in this life or after, is an illusion. Here in this life one is always under the pressure of dogma; but that is not freedom; and life after death is itself an illusion. However ridiculous the illusions be, people like to live with them.

Where there is a belief there is fear. They can never be

1. J. Krishnamurti: *Freedom from the Known*, p.10
2. J. Krishnamurti: *Commentaries on living* 2nd Series p.103
separated and fear and freedom cannot go together. Origin and survival of religion rest in fear. Therefore freedom seems to be the last thing that a religion can give to man.

(ii) Does morality depend on religion.

Moral behaviour has been generally associated with religious behaviour. It is thought that because of religion people many times abstain from doing wrong things. Fear of god puts them on the right path, so religion is essential for the general good of a society. Krishnamurti denies this view on two grounds: (1) that the good behaviour done under the pressure of religion is not morality at all and (2) that from the history of religion it might be shown that religion has done more harm than good to the society. According to Krishnamurti virtue is not a forced good conduct. The morality which is imposed by external forces such as religion or some other social, political or economic forces would not have any intrinsic value. It cannot be called a virtue. Virtue cannot be cultivated or imposed.

The concept of morality arises because of conflict of desires. The desires that are harmful to society are either curbed by law or condemned by moral code. There is a narrow margin between one's personal interest and his responsibility to society. One may for instance like to hoard a certain commodity in his own interest but it may not be justifiable in the interest of the society, so there is a conflict. It is entirely a problem of human consciousness, in which there is a conflict between desires and a sense of responsibility. Bronowski says, "Justice is a universal of all cultures. It is a tightrope that man walks between his desires to fulfill
No animal is faced with this dilemma. Religion may ask to resolve the dilemma by suppressing controlling, sublimating the desires. The desires treated in this way may come up in another form and become more dangerous. Religions preach morality and help to cultivate virtue according to a religious ideology. Krishnamurti does not call such a conduct a virtue. "When the mind cultivates, it is cunning calculation, it is a self-defence, a clever adjustment to environment." Self-perfection is the very denial of virtue. How can there be virtue if there is fear? He asks, "Can we discard the morality of society which is really quite immortal. It morality has become respectable, approved by religious sanction." Virtue, according to Krishnamurti, is not a calculated behaviour. It must bloom in freedom. A religious dogma exerts a heavy pressure of rules and norms where freedom is not possible. Krishnamurti holds that many of the virtues recognised by the society are not virtues at all. They are forms of respectable behaviour. When morality is associated with religion it becomes a blind faith. It cannot do good either to the society or to the individual.

In the history of religion there are number of crimes committed in the name of God or religion. Many times what is thought to be good according to a religion is not actually beneficial to mankind, and what is thought to be sin might not be harmful but based on superstition.

Many times religion indirectly preaches cruelty. The ideology becomes so important that religious people go to any extent to observe the ideology. The so-called lovers

1. Bronowski: *The Ascent of Man* p.411
2. J. Krishnamurti: *Commentaries of Living 1st Series* p.33
of god, who are supposed to love men, have killed men out of their frantic love for god. Such cruel acts are justified as sacred. To kill women by calling them witches was sacred. To burn widows was thought to be sacred. To allow some body to suffer is sacred, because sufferings are believed to help him to get rid of his sin. There is no limit to such idiosyncrasies and abnormalities.

Krishnamurti thinks that goodness and love cannot flourish in religion, which has its origin in fear and stupid imagination. Russell also holds this view by showing why religion is so cruel sometimes. "Fear is the basis of the whole thing - fear of mysteries, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand. It is because fear is at the basis of those two things."

Virtue cannot be the result of suppression nor can it flourish under the domination of religion. As Krishnamurti often says goodness can flower only in freedom. Kai Nielson, in the concluding passage in his Contemporary Critiques of Religion, raises the question why morality is to be based on religion. "--- there is no theoretical reason why we should try to base moral beliefs on religion's ones. The starvation and degradation of people remain evil whether or not there is a god; honesty, understanding, truth, --- remain humanly speaking indispensable whether there is or is not a god. We need an orientation in life in virtue of which life can become significant. But we do not need a belief in god for

1. B. Russell: Why I am not a Christian p.25
that.--- life makes sense in a godless world.--- That there are those who do not feel this way - that there are those who would despair or suffer alienation with loss of religious belief - attests to the psychological power of religious belief, but it does not show that their despair or alienation is justified or rational. A cool, non-evasive inspection of the grounds of morality and an honest review of what is necessary to give us a sense of significance of life, show that such despair and alienation are quite without warrant.1 Thus morality need not be linked with religion. Religion neither enhances morality nor does it do any charitable work which is really beneficial to mankind. While rendering services to the people the religious institutes aim at instilling ideas in their minds. The innocent minds are indoctrinated in exchange of hospital services and education. Krishnamurti sees that the traditional religions, with their theology, rituals, scriptures, moral codes, grand ceremonies, and charity work could not help man to be happy and peaceful. The services that are claimed to be rendered to humanity by religious institutes, could be done even otherwise with the love for humanity. The love for mankind would not have created divisions and wars which are fought in the name of god.

Russell appreciates the emotions behind religion but says they have lost their values because of the beliefs. "The mystic emotion, if it is freed from unwarranted beliefs--- may give something of very great value--- I do not deny the value of experiences which have given rise to religion.

Through association with false belief, they have led to much evil as well as good; freed from this association it may be hoped that the good alone will remain.  

"Religion not only cannot foster morality but as we said it also is the cause of cruelty and fear. Krishnamurti criticises religion as it divides people in groups.

(e) The evil effects of Religion.

1) Religion disintegrates society.

A major blow religion gives to the humanity, according to Krishnamurti, is that it divides the world population in warring factions. Among the various harmful effects of religion, violence caused by it is a grave problem. Violence is the result of disintegration. There is disintegration at all levels, individual as well as social. Religion, instead of integrating human personality, divides it into soul, mind and body. It treats body just as an instrument of the mind and recommends that the self should control the mind and the mind should suppress the senses and mortify the body. This whole idea of disciplining the mind and the body makes them insensitive and makes conflict inevitable. Thus religion disintegrates personality and tortures both the body and the mind. Krishnamurti asks, "Can the mind which has been subjugated, intimidated, forced, compelled to believe, can such a mind be free to think?" A mind that is not free to think is not a sane mind.

Religion also disintegrates human society. Firstly, it

1. B. Russell, Religion and science p.189
2. J. Krishnamurti, The First and Last Freedom, p.63
divides people into believers and non-believers, theists and atheists, religious and anti-religious and then it divides religious people into Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists etc. Thus religion is one of the most powerful disintegrating forces. It is thought that religion unites people; it brings people together. But this is not true. No doubt followers of one faith or one religion appear to have come together. But they are united only in opposition to people of another faith or religion. When the people of one faith or religion are left to themselves, they disintegrate and divide themselves into castes and sub-castes, sects and schools. And there is no end to this process of disintegration. The followers of one faith are separated from the followers of the other faiths and they themselves are further divided into various smaller groups again. Krishnamurti wonders whether a mind conditioned to believe can see how religion divides at all levels. Krishnamurti asks, "Please do not say that beliefs bring people together. It does not. That is obvious. No organised religion has ever done that. Look at yourselves in your country. You are all believers, but are you all together?—You are divided into many petty parties, castes. You know the innumerable divisions. The process is the same right through the world—Christians destroying Christians, murdering each other for petty things, driving people into camps and so on, the whole horror of war".1

The divisions and wars could be imagined in other fields, such as political, economic and social fields, but the sad

1. J. Krishnamurti, The First and Last Freedom p. 64
you will". 1 In any pursuit of pleasure, there is always fear of not getting pleasure. Therefore, the mind forms a habit to feel secure and this habit makes the mind dull, insensitive and callous. Without the understanding of the whole movement of thought, all beliefs, all rituals and "all the circus that goes on in the name of religion" 2 has absolutely no meaning. "The religions that we follow are created by our hopes and fears, by your desire for inward security and reassurance and with the worship of authority, whether it is of a saviour, a master or a priest, there comes submission, acceptance and imitation. So we are exploited in the name of God, as we are exploited in the name of parties and ideologies - and we go on suffering". 3

Thus Krishnamurti denies religion in all its aspects. In denying the validity of religious beliefs in God, Karmä, Soul immortality, he looks like an atheist or a sceptic or a positivist. In asserting that consciousness is the brain-cells, that thought is material and that nothing else exists, he propounds materialism. In denying all speculation, all systems of philosophy, his attitude is antimetaphysical. In treating religious beliefs as projections of the human mind he resembles Freudian critics. In denying the validity of the pursuit of salvation and in concentrating on the problems of living he appears to teach humanism. Though there are points of resemblance and points of contact between Krishnamurti's criticism of religion and the criticisms of religion by other critics, there is a fundamental difference

1. J. Krishnamurti, The First and Last Freedom, p.29-30
2. J. Krishnamurti, The Impossible Question, p.56
3. J. Krishnamurti, Education and the Significance of Life, p.63
prevents widow marriages and denies freedom and equality to women; encourages child marriages; Muslim women face a more miserable life because of their religious codes. In many fields religions have become a constant hindrance to social development. Inspite of the tremendous scientific progress, the conservative, obscurantist and anti-scientific attitude of religions prevents society from taking full advantage of the results of advanced technology. Russell has enumerated evils of religion and has thrown light on the functioning of religions in society. He says, "With our present industrial technique, we can, if we choose provide a tolerable subsistence for every body. We could also secure that the world's population should be stationary if we were not prevented by the political influence of churches which prefer war, pestilence, and famine to contraception. The knowledge exists by which universal happiness can be secured; the chief obstacle to its utilization for the purpose is the teaching of religion. Religion prevents our children from having a rational education; religion prevents us from removing the fundamental causes of war; religion prevents us from teaching the ethic of scientific co-operation in place of the old fierce doctrines of sin and punishment. It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age; but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door, and the dragon is religion."

Krishnamurti completely rejects the traditional concept of religion according to which religion consists in accepting

1. B. Russell: Why I am not Christian p.42
certain beliefs, performing certain religious practices, accepting certain authorities, and aiming at personal salvation. He shows how all this is a product of thought with fear as its root-cause. All the religious beliefs are, therefore, projections of the human mind. They are neither valid nor do they help individuals to overcome their fear. They are also not helpful in uniting people. Belief builds, belief isolates, belief divides. A belief hinders the understanding of ourselves and of 'What is'. Krishnamurti says, "Organized religions with their temporal and spiritual authority are equally incapable of bringing peace to man, for they also are outcome of our ignorance and fear, of our make-believe and egotism". Similarly religious practices make the mind dull. Krishnamurti, "If you practice a certain system daily, your mind invariably becomes dull. This is so simple and obvious. So systems, methods, practices, must completely disappear". Thirdly, acceptance of any authority destroys intelligence. It is therefore, important that our mind must be free from all authority. Krishnamurti says, "You are alone to find out, there is no book, nobody to help you". Lastly, "there is the pursuit of personal salvation. I want to be safe, I want to reach Nirvana, or heaven, I must find a place next to Jesus, next to Buddha or on the right hand of a particular god". Krishnamurti points out that what we are seeking in all this is "permanent pleasure, permanent gratification - which we call truth, God or what

1. J. Krishnamurti, Education and the Significance of Life, p.74
2. J. Krishnamurti, Beyond Violence, p.51-52
3. Ibid; p.51
4. J. Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p.99
you will". In any pursuit of pleasure, there is always fear of not getting pleasure. Therefore, the mind forms a habit to feel secure and this habit makes the mind dull, insensitive and callous. Without the understanding of the whole movement of thought, all beliefs, all rituals and "all the circus that goes on in the name of religion" has absolutely no meaning. "The religions that we follow are created by our hopes and fears, by our desire for inward security and reassurance and with the worship of authority, whether it is of a saviour, a master of a priest, there comes submission, acceptance and imitation. So we are exploited in the name of God, as we are exploited in the name of parties and ideologies - and we go on suffering".

Thus Krishnamurti denies religion in all its aspects. In denying the validity of religious beliefs in God, Karmā, Soul immortality, he looks like an atheist or a sceptic or a positivist. In asserting that consciousness is the brain-cells, that thought is material and that nothing else exists, he propounds materialism. In denying all speculation, all his systems of philosophy, his attitude is antimetaphysical. In treating religious beliefs as projections of the human mind he resembles Freudian critics. In denying the validity of the pursuit of salvation and in concentrating on the problems of living he appears to teach humanism. Though there are points of resemblance and points of contact between Krishnamurti's criticism of religion and the criticisms of religion by other critics, there is a fundamental difference.

1. J. Krishnamurti, The First and Last Freedom, p.29-30
2. J. Krishnamurti, The Impossible Question, p.56
3. J. Krishnamurti, Education and the Significance of Life, p.63
between Krishnamurti's approach to religion and the approaches of the other critics. This makes his criticism unique.

(III)

Uniqueness of Krishnamurti's critique of religion.

(1) Though Krishnamurti, like other critics of religion, denies all traditional organised religions completely with all their dogmas, their authorities etc., he does not do so from any anti-religious standpoint. On the contrary his aim in criticising religions is to find out what a true religion is. He says, "To find out what true religion is, you have to push aside everything that stands in the way. If you have many coloured or dirty windows and you want to see the clear sunlight, you must clean or open the windows, or go outside. Similarly to find out what true religion is, you must first see what it is not, and put that aside. Then you can find out, because then there is a direct perception. So let us see what is not a religion". 1 He then shows that accepting certain beliefs, performing certain rituals, accepting certain authorities, doing good, or serving and helping others, and such other things conceived by the mind have nothing to do with a true religion; these things are not religion. So to discover what is true religion, you must inquire deeply into all these things and be free from fear. It is like going out of a dark house into the sunshine. Then you will not ask what is true religion; you will know. There will be the direct experiencing

1. J. Krishnamurti, Life Ahead, p.98
Thus his approach to religion is entirely different from those of the traditional religious as well as anti-religious philosophers. And this unique approach gives a totally new and rich significance to his criticism of religions. His criticism is not a reaction from some anti-religious standpoint—which standpoint is itself a product of conditioning. It is free from all bias, all prejudices, all conditioning. And it is aimed at freeing the mind from all conditioning.

(ii) Krishnamurti's criticism is not a verbal and intellectual crusade against religion. It is not a theoretical or logical refutation of religious beliefs and dogmas. It has a practical aim. It aims at helping a person to see the futility of all religious beliefs and thus to be free from all bias, all conditioning. It is therefore, neither to be accepted nor rejected. It is to be understood. Its truth is to be directly tested by observing one's own thought and mind. Krishnamurti, therefore, asks his audience to listen carefully to what is being said and spends much time to explain what is "listening". In listening we are sharing, investigating into all this, not accepting or denying, but exploring together and therefore, being in communication with each other. We cannot be in communication with each other if we have our own thoughts, opinions, judgements, our own particular form of belief to which we cling to, and that makes it impossible to investigate to explore, to examine. When we are communicating together, it is necessary that we understand not only the words, the

T. J. Krishnamurti, Life ahead, p.99
meaning of the words but also try to find out what lies
behind the words—\(^1\). Krishnamurti compares our brain
functioning in old habits to a gramophone record playing
the same tune over and over again. He says, "We repeat
the same pattern, the same ideas, and physical habits, over
and over again, so we never catch anything fresh."\(^2\) This is
why our brain is incapable of 'listening'. "A talk recorded
on tape can be wiped out and begun again; unfortunately the
recording on the tape of the brain has been impressed on it
for so long that it is very difficult to wipe it out and
begin again".\(^3\) He however, assures his audience that it is
possible "to put aside the old tape, the old way of thinking,
feeling, reacting, the innumerable habits that one has",\(^4\)
provided one is really serious; one really gives total attention.
He says, "Do listen with full attention, so that in the very
act of listening, the old memories, the old habits, the
accumulated tradition, will all be wiped away".\(^5\) This
therefore, is the full significance of his criticism of the
long, old religious traditions.

(iii) Though Krishnamurti wants to wipe out the old tradition,
the old ideology, he does not want to substitute a new one
in its place. In this respect also, Krishnamurti differs
fundamentally from all other critics of religion. They all
want to substitute a new ideology for an old one. Krishnamurti
says, "To break away from one tradition and conform to another

---
\(^1\) J. Krishnamurti, *J. Krishnamurti in India - 1974-75*, p. 36
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Ibid.
to leave his leader and follow that, is but a superficial gesture.\(^1\) He does not want to start a new sect, a new religion. He does not want to assume the role of a new prophet a new saviour. He talks as a human being without assuming any authority. He says, "We are working together to find out how to live in peace. It is not that the speaker tells you what to do, what to think - he has no authority, no philosophy."\(^2\) Rather he would like us to question the fundamental assumption which we have uncritically accepted that it is not possible to live in this world without accepting beliefs. He says, "I am not attacking beliefs. What we are trying to do is to find out why we accept beliefs; and if we can understand the motives, the causation of acceptance, then perhaps we may be able not only to understand why we do it, but also be free from it".\(^3\) What he wants, therefore, is not to change beliefs, not to substitute one belief for another, but to be entirely free from all beliefs, "so that one meets life anew each minute. This, after all, is the truth; to have the capacity of meeting everything anew, from moment to moment, without the conditioning reaction of the past, so that there is not the cumulative effect which acts as a barrier between oneself and that which is."\(^4\) Thus when he denies the old traditional religions, he does not preach a new religion with another new set of beliefs, but a religion in which there is no kind of fear or belief. It is a religion without belief.

---

1. J. Krishnamurti, *Education and the Significance of Life*, p. 61
3. J. Krishnamurti, *The First and Last Freedom*, p. 57
The traditional philosophers - both religious and anti-religious - assume in common that to be religious is to accept certain beliefs, certain theories. All religions are the product of thought. All the traditional religions and their critics move within the field of thought. Krishnamurti's criticism of religion is aimed at showing the limitation of thought. When thought sees that it has created the world of reality - of me, my house, my property, my country, my God; sees that all this is the product of thought, that it is responsible for creating all confusion and disorder, and that it cannot put order into this world of reality, i.e., when thought sees its limitations, it becomes completely silent. Out of this total silence, total freedom, arises intelligence, love, compassion. A new brain, a new mind emerges which is very sensitive. This is the religious mind. This mind has the capacity, has the energy to investigate, to find out if there is something really true and sacred. Thus Krishnamurti's criticism takes religion out of the field of thought, the field of the known. There is no scope for speculation for theory, for belief, for authority in the field of religion.

"That state of mind which is no longer capable of striving is the true religious mind, and in that state of mind you may come upon this thing called truth or reality or bliss or God, or beauty or love. This thing cannot be invited." ¹ One may come upon this thing without inviting, without waiting, without seeking or exploring, just as a cool breeze comes in when you leave the window open. "You cannot invite the wind but you must leave the window open, which doesn't mean that you are

¹ J. Krishnamurti, Freedom from the Known, p.122.
in a state of waiting; that is another form of deception. 1

In the next chapter we shall discuss the nature of religious mind according to J. Krishnamurti.

****

1. Ibid., p. 122-23