
J. Krishnamurti 's Critique of Religion

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ABSTRACT:

Jiddu Krishnamurti was a man who believed in rationality as a virtue. He believed in scientifically verifiable facts. He felt that fear in the heart of man leads him to God for reassurance. Hence it was necessary that man should be free from fear to lead a rational life. J. Krishnamurti was the messiah who was reluctant to don the robes of a messiah and showed the courage to tell the world he was like anyone of us and not special, and what he was, is something anyone of us could become, if only we would let go. His vision of life is not confined to any one nation and attitude; it surpasses national and sectarian boundaries and his message has bearing for all people irrespective of religious belief.

Key words: *Fear, God, categorized religion.*

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986) was a famous philosopher who delivered lectures on various aspects of human life like education, human life, and many spiritual issues. His aim was to bring betterment in the life of human beings. He was of the view that human society was, in the end, what the interrelations of individual human beings make it. He was of the considered opinion that basic changes in our society could be brought about by the individual. He maintained that human beings needed a holistic transformation in their beings which can be brought from within. His views on religion were revolutionary.

Religion is the opiate of human kind. People not only live by it but are also ready to die for it willingly. Yet it is difficult to define religion. According to *Cambridge Online Dictionary* religion is “the belief in and worship of a god or gods, or any such system of belief and worship.” In the words of *Your Online Dictionary*, religion is

1. belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe
- b. expression of such a belief in conduct and ritual
2. any specific system of belief and worship, often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy: the Christian *religion*, the Buddhist *religion*, etc. any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc. resembling, suggestive of, or likened to such a system: humanism as *religion*
3. the state or way of life of a person in a monastery, convent, etc.
4. any object of conscientious regard and pursuit

According to *Oxford Dictionary*, the term ‘religion’ is derived from Latin word ‘religio’ (meaning to bind) the origin of ‘religio’ is however obscure. According to is debated since antiquity. Cicero said it comes from ‘relegere’ (to read again, to re-examine carefully,) in the sense of carefully considering the things related to the worship of gods.

Avinash De Sousa remarked, “Those who look to Krishnamurti for a new religion or a new philosophy would be disappointed. He does not offer something more, but always something less. The very simplicity of Krishnamurti's teachings confuses our sophisticated minds. His teaching shall seem anarchic and destructive only till the perception dawns that his blows are aimed at our fetters. It is then that we realise that life, unconditioned by personal fears, ambitions, and desires, is not a void but a plenum.” (“Mind and Consciousness as per J. Krishnamurti”, Web)

Jiddu Krishnamurti was one of the most disputed thinkers of the twentieth century. On the one side he refuses to accept any of the categorized religions of the world, and on the other he spoke about a religious bent of mind in human beings so that human sufferings and afflictions could be brought to an end. He thoughtfully considered human life and came to the conclusion that misery was the fate of human kind. He felt that the only way in which human miseries could be minimized or brought to an end by the complete transformation of human psyche. Krishnamurti did not believe that our day-today living and religious living were incompatible. He remarked that man can get freedom from the treadmill of life, race for superiority and cut-throat competition by developing a religious mind and temperament.

There is no denying the fact that religion is one of the oldest social institutions of the world. Because of the stranglehold of religion on human psyche people feel that it is the strongest bond of man, even stronger than the family. People implicitly put faith in established religious order, religious scriptures, saints, rituals, visits to shrines etc. etc.

Krishnamurti was a constant and bitter critic of all the established religions. Naturally he questioned the people who flock to religious places and offer worship almost implicitly; why does a man put faith on certain ideas without questioning their correctness or soundness. This is so despite the fact that religious beliefs have created all types of conflicts and struggles in society. This leads him to think about the reasons why such beliefs are there. He remarked, “What is important is not what you believe but why you believe at all?” (Penguin Krishnamurti, P, 263) All this led Krishnamurti to know the psychology of such persons. Why people put faith in ideas and beliefs that have no rational basis or explanation whatsoever? On the contrary facts always remain facts, irrespective of person or place. He categorically stated, “. . . the facts are not influenced by belief or disbelief. So one has to ask why one believes at all in any thing: What is the basis of belief?” (Penguin Krishnamurti, P, 263)

Hence, the psychological basis of belief has to be ascertained. Krishnamurti was of the opinion that fear to face the fact is the basis of belief.

Belief, in a sense, becomes an escape from reality. Krishnamurti showed how fear is the cause of belief: “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 ?” (Penguin Krishnamurti, P. 264)

One wants to believe because of fear. Belief in any ideology, god, or authority. provides a feeling of security. One can pattern his behaviour according to the authority in which he puts faith in and in this manner, relieves himself from the responsibility of logical belief. A particular belief

controls the whole consciousness of a believer and then he behaves according to the dictates of that thinking. If his consciousness is not occupied by such beliefs the individual has to face vacuum or emptiness for which he does not seem prepared. Naturally, he is prepared to deceive himself rather than come face to face with reality. He likes to hide himself behind an imaginary support of belief to face facts of life. In this way gradually his dependence on belief becomes ingrained. The individual refuses to question his belief because he is afraid of losing that support.

Many other thinkers also think in the way Krishnamurti does. Here we have the examples of Freud and Bertrand Russell, who maintain that man fears religion because there is fear ingrained in his consciousness. Bertrand Russell came to the startling conclusion that "religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown, and partly . . . 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." (Russell, p. 25) In the like manner Freud also remarked that the origin of religion can be traced back to the feeling of 'infantile helplessness'! (Freud, P. 9) Krishnamurti's views smack of a similar logic. He believes "Your love of god is love out of fear, your weekend religion is fear" (Krishnamurti Beyond Violence, P. 115). Again, "Your god is the result of your own fear" (Krishnamurti, Beyond Violence, P. 95) Thus, we find all these thinkers believe that fear is the beginning of all faith. He comes to the conclusion that "fear is one of the greatest problems in the world, probably the greatest problem" (Krishnamurti, Beginning of Learning, P. 160)

When man accepts scientific, objective and logical beliefs there is no problem. The problem arises when one accepts the non-scientific, metaphysical and transcendental beliefs. Such beliefs are created in the mind of people and hence these are the beliefs that should be shunned. Such beliefs were the products of primitive people. But in such times of scientific advancement as ours the acceptance of metaphysical and transcendental facts that do not have any basis in facts does not befit a rational being.

People who implicitly and whole-heartedly believe in religious phenomena without being very sure about the validity of these beliefs cannot be free from fear. In reality, believing is always more reassuring than doubting. This human tendency is expressed by Krishnamurti, in this passage, ". . . belief more important than truth, dogma more vital than the direct perceptions. When belief becomes all-important, then you are willing to sacrifice everything for that whether that belief is real or has no validity does not matter as long as it gives comfort, security, a sense of permanency." (Krishnamurti, Beyond Violence, P. 47)

Krishnamurti, about the belief in god and other supernatural beings is summarily dismissed in these lines, "The belief in God gives you security, but you don't know anything about God, except what some idiotic man talks about God. . . 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. Your belief 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". (Krishnamurti in India, 1974-75, P. 70) Hence Krishnamurti asked people to shed fear and that can be possible only when you accept scientific, objective realities.

End Notes

- i. Bertrand Russell : *History of Western Philosophy*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London; 197
- ii. Karl Marx, *On Religion*, on Internet
- iii. Krishnamurti, *Beginning of Learning*, Victor Gollanz Ltd.; London; 1975
- iv. Krishnamurti, *Krishnamurti in India, 1974-1975*, Krishnamurti Foundation, London, 1076
- v. Avinash De Sousa, "Mind and Consciousness as per J. Krishnamurti", *Mens Sana Monographs*,. 2012, Jan-Dec; 10(1):

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