Religion

You know, one of the strange things of life is what we call religion. You may have wealth, success; you may be very famous, well-known, or you may have failures, sorrows, a great many frustrations, but at the end of it all, death awaits all of us. Whether we live to be 100 or 10 or whatever it is, there is always death. Seeing all this, seeing our own littleness and sorrows, we want to find something beyond ourselves. Because, after all, one very soon gets tired of one, of one’s success, one’s vanities, the things that one does, of the family, the money, the position. When people get tired of these things, they feel they have been deceived. Then, in order to forget themselves, they try to identify themselves with something greater. That is, they like to think that there is something greater, and they say, ‘Perhaps if I could think about that, live in that, meditate upon that, have an image, a picture, an idol of that, then I could forget myself in it.’

When man tries to go beyond himself, beyond his struggles, beyond his sorrows, beyond all the things that perish round him, beyond all the things that live and die, he begins to search, to invent, to speculate. Actually, he does not really search, he does not really want to find out, but he hopes there is something which he calls God, and he clings to the belief in that which his own mind has created, thus trying to escape from all these troubles. So he begins to speculate, he begins to have theories of what God is, he writes books about it. The more clever, the more cunning, the more subtle you are, the more
ideas you have about God, and around that you will build a great many philosophies, systems of thought. From that grows the thought that you must have beliefs in order to attain reality, you must do certain practices, you must give up the world, you must do this, and you must not do that in order to get there, in order to forget the troubles, the sorrows, and the death that await all of us. So, we have a religion which demands that we shall believe. Society demands likewise. Because that is what each one of us wants—to believe in something much greater than ourselves, since we ourselves are very small.

All our conflicts, all our ambitions, are very small, very petty. So, we want to identify ourselves with something. If it is not God, it is the state—the state being the whole of India or the whole world—the government, the people who rule, the society. If it is not that, it is utopia, something very far away, a marvellous society that we are going to build; in the building of it you destroy many people, but that does not really matter to you. If you do not believe in any of these, you believe in having a good time and forget yourself in material things. Such a person is called materialistic, and the man who forgets himself in the spiritual world is called spiritual. Both of them have the same intention—one to forget himself in cinemas and the other in books, in rituals, in sitting on the banks of the river meditating, in renunciation—not to have any burden, to lose oneself in some kind of action, to lose oneself in the worship of something. So, there is the desire to lose oneself because one feels very
small. The self may not be small to you when you are young. But, as you grow older, you will see how little substance there is in it, how little value it has; it is like a shadow, with few qualities, full of struggles, pains, sorrows, and that is all. So, one soon gets bored with it and pursues something else in order to forget oneself. That is what all of us are doing. The rich want to forget themselves in night clubs, in amusements, in cars, in travelling. The clever ones want to forget themselves, so they begin to invent, to have extraordinary beliefs. The stupid ones want to forget themselves, and so they follow people, they have gurus who tell them what to do. The ambitious ones also want to forget themselves in doing something. So, all of us, as we mature, as we grow older, want to forget ourselves, and so we try to find something greater with which to be identified.

When we try to forget ourselves through something, through the state, through God, through a belief, through a guru; through action, then it creates illusions, it creates a false thing. When I forget myself through an idea, then the idea becomes important because I am forgetting myself through it. The ideal, being an invention of the mind, can also create illusions. So, I multiply illusions. These illusions, superstitions, beliefs, are what we call religion, and many books have been written about it—not how to dispel illusion, but how to arrange illusion in order to philosophize. But that is not religion, surely. Religion is not beliefs and dogmas, rituals and puja, putting on a sacred thread, muttering some words, however ancient they are. All those...
methods are a way of escaping from yourself through some kind of illusion. The escape which we call religion is not religion. Religion is something totally different, and the mystery of it is to find that which is not the mere invention of the mind.

So, we have to find out what is real religion, the true religion which is not merely an invention of the mind; it does not matter whether that invention is of Shankara or of anybody else, all such invention is still just a theory. Religion is a state of being which each one of us must find. That state of being cannot be understood, it cannot come into being if we do not know how the mind creates illusions through its various subtle desires. As I said the other day, the mind is not just a superficial activity. Ganga is not just what we see on the surface, Ganga is the whole river from the beginning to the end, from where it starts till it goes to the sea, and it would be foolish to think that Ganga is just the water on the top. Similarly, we are very, very complex entities and the inventions, the ideas, the theories, the superstitions, the rituals, the repetitions, the mantras, those are all just on the top. We have to go through and push all that aside—all of it, not just one or two ideas, not one or two beliefs or rituals that we do not like. That is very arduous, very difficult, because most of us are afraid—afraid of what society, friends, parents will say. But if one truly wants to find out what is reality, God, one must go beyond all that, push all that aside. You can only push it aside if you understand and so go beyond.

So, religion is something entirely different from the beliefs in which
we have been brought up. But, you see, very few of us are free from fear, and it is fear that prevents the discovery of what is God. When we have fear, we become very insensitive. After all, when we look at a tree or a beautiful cloud or a beggar or a woman in tears, or when we see something beautiful, the love of that thing, the love of it for its own sake, is the beginning of real religion. But we do not live that way, we live in order to get something. I love my country because it is my country; this love of my country is a very subtle form of loving myself. But if you can love a tree, an animal, a human being—not for what they will give you but just to love, without asking a thing in return—that is the beginning of religion. You can know that love only when there is no fear. When the mind is no longer afraid, then it can go beyond its own imaginations, its own projections, its own ideas.

So, religion is something which is not an invention of the mind. It is a state of being in which the mind is not inventing as it does now because it functions in fear, in desire, in success, in ambition, in various forms of activities. Only when the mind has understood the whole working of itself is there then a possibility of it being quiet, being very still. That stillness is not the peace of death: that stillness is very active, very alert, very watchful, intensive, passive. Then alone, one can find out; then alone that which we call God, truth, or whatever name you like comes into being. But one cannot go after it. One has to understand the trees, the love of the trees, the love of the beautiful; one has to understand sorrow, joy, and all the struggles of
human existence. Then one can go beyond all that; then the mind is really a cessation of the self, the ‘me’. Only then can that which we all worship, that which we are all seeking or trying to find, come into being.

Question: What is emotion? Is it good or bad since human beings have it?

Krishnamurti: Don’t you know what emotions are? When somebody pans you; you cry; when somebody dies, you cry. When you see something beautiful, you laugh. It is a form of sensation; it is not right or wrong.

You see, we always like to think in terms of good or bad—‘this is right,’ ‘this is wrong,’ ‘this is good’—and we think we have solved the whole problem of existence by calling everything good or bad. We want to suppress an emotion in order not to feel because that emotion creates pain, so we say it is bad. But if it is a pleasurable emotion, we do not want to suppress it, we want to keep it, have more and more of it.

So, emotion is a thing to be understood, to be watched over, to be cared for, so that you will understand it, so that you will not say it is good or bad. It is the instinct, or rather the conditioning of the mind, which makes us call anything good or bad, as though you have really understood the little child if you call him good or call him naughty. If you want to understand the child, you study him, you watch him when he is playing, when he is crying, when he is sleeping; you do not condemn him. But you see, condemning

इसलिए हमें भावावें को समझना चाहिए, उसकी निगरानी करनी चाहिए, उसकी देखभाल करनी चाहिए ताकि आप उसे पूरी तरह समझ सकें, ताकि आप यह न कहें कि यह अच्छा है या बुरा है। यह तो हमारी प्रवृत्ति अथवा मन की संरचना भी होती है जिसके कारण हम किसी भी बात को अच्छा या बुरा कहते हैं, इसी प्रवृत्ति के कारण आप किसी छोटे से शिशु को अच्छा अथवा बुरा कह देते हैं मानना ऐसा करके आप उसे समझ समझ गए हों। यदि आप बच्चे को समझना ही चाहते हैं तो आप उसका अध्ययन करें, जब वह खेल रहा हो, जब वह रो रहा हो, जब वह सो रहा हो, उस समय उसे ध्यान से देखें, आप उसकी निंदा न करें। परंतु किसी चीज़ की, या किसी व्यक्ति की, या किसी विशिष्ट बात की निंदा करना कितना आसान होता
something or somebody or some quality is so easy. You say, ‘that is bad,’ and there it ends, but to understand the thing requires a great deal of care, patience, attention; that means watchfulness.

है। आप कहते हैं, ‘यह खराब है’ और बात बही खल्म कर देते हैं, किंतु किसी चीज़ को समझने के लिए बहुत सावधानी की, वैयक्तिक व्यवहार की अवधारणा जागरूकता की आवश्यकता होती है।