

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND RELIGION

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Of all the movements Which have hit religion the hardest, Psychoanalysis, perhaps, the most important and the most active. The attack was launched by no less a person than Sigmund Freud who had at his command all the armoury of physical and psychological sciences and lashed vehemently the citadel of Religion.

Freud was the product of positivistic and materialistic tendencies fostered and nourished, by the steady progress of physico-chemical sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the application of carefully worked out techniques and procedure's, and by the employment of mathematical devices, the physical and chemical sciences had rescued, from the clutches of magic and Metaphysics, a large area of human thought hitherto regarded as mysterious and divine, and so inexplicable and inaccessible to human beings. Hence what was regarded as due to supernatural forces or as due to some transcendental, trans-empirical agency, became an object of scientific study, to be investigated and expounded like any other observable entity. True; not all phenomena belonging to the realm of magic, witchcraft and sorcery could be scientifically handled and interpreted in strictly objective manner. There are limitations, to the scientific treatment of data. But the point at issue is not the amount of area which was released from the suzerainty of magic and brought under the sway of physicochemical sciences, but it is the temper it

bred and the attitude it developed. This temper was scientific. It made people to look to the causes of effects and effects of causes by means of techniques which the scientists had developed in laboratories. Consequently all references to transcendental and mystical entities were ruled out in the interest of scientific rigour and clarity.

Comte, a representative of the positivistic temper in Europe, held that instead of the vague and dubious explanations of religion and metaphysics—vague, because they could not be verified by commonly accepted criteria of truth and validity and dubious, because their utility could not be upheld—what is required is a scientific approach to problems. Comte distinguished between the 'Theological', the 'Metaphysical', and the 'Positive' stages of thought. "The first stage, the Theological, projects human emotions into physical environment and explains events in terms of direct volitions or gods or spirits. The second stage, the Metaphysical, depersonalizes these gods and spirits and converts them into abstract essences, ontological beings, occult powers and the like. The final stage, the Positive, eschews all appeal to unobservable entities, and in the interest of prediction and control, restricts itself to formulating the invariable conjunction between phenomena." According to Comte, the Positive stage can be realized only if there is universal acceptance of the reign of impersonal and unchanging laws. In other words, if human beings continue to believe in the agency of super-natural forces or in the temporary suspension of the physical order due to the intervention of Divine Beings, the positivistic standpoint and the

philosophy behind it has not been properly appreciated. Comte is fully convinced of the fact that the destiny of human beings lies in the emancipation of human mind from the thralldom of irrational and unfounded suppositions and making it amenable to scientific methods of research and enquiry. Freud agreed with Comte here.

As is obvious, the scientific temper of which Freud and Comte speak demands a thorough investigation of the data, a careful weighing of the evidence and an utmost caution in formulating generalisations. A scientist is a doubter. He is not prepared to accept or reject a proposition unless good grounds are forthcoming for or against it. These grounds are not the grounds of religion or metaphysics but the grounds of empirical sciences, that is to say, the grounds obtained and certified by the techniques and methods of inductive disciplines. An inductively grounded proposition starts with the observation of facts and proceeds to frame hypotheses and subsequently laws, in reliance upon the laws of causation and uniformity of nature. Freud thought that as religion and metaphysics did not and could not accept the methodology of the positive sciences, they had no claim to knowledge—knowledge in the sense of a verifiable, objective and shareable experience. Freud's belief in the cogency and the universality of the critical spirit did not stem only from the triumph of physical and chemical sciences; it also arose from the discoveries made in the domain of psychological sciences. Hitherto dreams were regarded as a product of loose and scattered brain. Likewise abnormal phenomena were attributed to evil spirits or to defects in the brain. But Freud established with

the help of a vast amount of data, that both dreams and abnormalities could be explained by the laws of cause and effect and could not, therefore, be regarded as the results of agencies belonging to supersensuous domains.

In the beginning, the explanation offered for insanity and phenomena related to it were 'demonological' in character. Insane behaviour was regarded as the manifestation of some spiritual being or demon, who either actually inhabited the body of his victim or who merely played upon him from without. "If the phenomena manifested were in harmony with the religious views of the time, it was concluded that the controlling spirit was benign in character, and the individual possessed was revered as an exceptionally holy person, If, on the other hand, the conduct of the individual conflicted with the dominating ethical code, he was thought to be the victim of a malignant spirit" (Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity*, p. 2, Cambridge 1936). This hypothesis remained in the field for a long time till at the beginning of the Eighteenth century, as a result of the growing hold of humanitarian spirit and the advance of physical sciences, it was felt that abnormalities could be studied as physiological mishaps, that is to say, as defects of the nervous system and particularly of its central part, the brain. This hypothesis led to a great understanding in the aetiology of abnormalities, it also marked the end of an era of brutality in the treatment of the 'possessed' and the witches who were held responsible for quite a large number of abnormal cases. But it could not last long. It was Freud and his associates who

found that despite the immense superiority of the physiological over the demonological hypothesis, there were quite a good many abnormalities which could not be successfully treated through physiology and which as a matter of fact required the whole revision of the problem. The inadequacies of the physiological explanations led ultimately to one of the greatest and the most momentous discoveries of the modern age. It is :a discovery no less important than the discovery of America or that of the atom bomb.

Of course Freud is not the first to discover the nature and importance of the Unconscious. Many thinkers of the past, both European and Asian; had alluded to it in may or the, other but to 'establish it on scientific grounds, in a strictly objective, dispassionate manner, with the help of evidence judicially collected and carefully sifted, was left to Freud and his co-workers. There is a world of difference between a brilliant flash land its establishment, through incontrovertable evidence. Almost ,a14 discoveries made at the present moment were imagined by. people of the bygone ages. It is said that Hindu scriptures make mention of *uran khatola*, hence Hindus can take the credit of being the first to invent aeroplane. Such a talk may satisfy the vanity of people but it can claim no scientific value, for there is a long journey from a guess to its scientific establishment and technological use From the speculations of the earlier thinkers about the nature of the unconscious forces to the well-established hypothesis of Freud about the same, there is a great distance. Consequently the references of some earlier thinkers to the hidden dark forces of

human mind do not in any manner minimise the importance of Freud.

In almost all religious literatures, particularly the Semitic; one can find occasional references to Satan and his activities to delude the unwary and to use as tools those of us who are in his grips that is to say, those of us who have sold their souls to him. The Satan is an evil agency which takes possession of the human, soul and employs it for his own nefarious designs.: The victim helpless and seeks the assistance of God to free himself from his clutches. Freud's Unconscious performs precisely the functions which Semitic religions have ascribed to Satan. ± The Unconscious(in the opinion of Freud, is a great reservoir of force whose nature and extent is unknown to the owner and who, works in strange manner, using its victims as an instrument for its own satisfaction: To explain the tremendous power of the Unconscious over the life of an individual, the Unconscious is some times likened to a huge ice-berg which comes floating down from the Poles 'to the Equator. From a distance the ice-berg looks like a mountain Any ship that strikes against it by chance is shattered to pieces and sinks instantaneously. But strange to say, only one tenth of the ice-berg is above water whereas nine tenth of it is below' water. The Unconscious is the nine tenth of us which is, so' to say, below water, and therefore unknown and unknowable to us for all practical purposes. Moreover, as the Unconscious is nine tenth of the human mind, the Conscious part which is merely one 'tenth, is not only comparatively insignificant but also an instrument in the

hands of the Unconscious for the gratification of forces which lie within it.

The Unconscious, according to Freud, consists of a great many things among which repressed sexual infantile tendencies rank the foremost. Freud believed that during infancy when children are physically and mentally weak, their natural urges, for which he uses blanket term, namely that of sex, are very often thwarted and lead to the formation of complexes whose grip is almost satanic and which cannot be removed except through techniques associated with psychoanalysis and its derivatives. The complexes are associations of unwanted unwholesome and rejected tendencies of one's self. They are rejected and repressed as they fail to agree with the accepted social norms' of decency and rationality. In other words, whatever the individual thinks as conflicting with the approved standards of good life are rejected. These are driven away from the conscious level and thrown into the unconscious to lie there not as dead inert forces but as live agencies to influence and dominate the subsequent course of an individual life. The rejected tendencies are very like the fallen angels who in company of Satan plot against humanity to lead them away from the path of righteousness which is no other than that • of decency and rationality likewise the repressed tendencies plot to overthrow the Conscious side' of the personality, thereby to acquire control of entire self and so to use tile person for their down •purposes. Abnormalities are different ways which the Unconscious manufactures to gratify its own wishes. Dreams are' symbols' which the Unconscious puts up for self-fulfillment.

With the Unconscious as the chief; if not the only, agency: to explain whatever pertains to life either 'directly or indirectly overtly or covertly, a programme 'is laid for complete 'determinism in the field of human life. Not only !are conscious phenomena amenable to strict scientific treatment through the discovery of causes of effects and effects of, causes about also unconscious processes. Hence every, mental process came under the domain of the law of Causation. Dreams are no longer the products of the loose and scattered brain nor are abnormalities the creations of demons and spirits. Dreams have their causes in the Unconscious mind so have abnormalities.

Thus conceived psychology became as deterministic as Physical sciences were. Freud filled up gaps in the picture of a complete deterministic universe where runs, both on physical and mental side, an unbroken chain of causal relationships from one end to the other. Hence what the physicists had done in respect of the physical universe, Freud did for the mental world. In this manner the desire of Freud came to be fulfilled. In company with the physicists Freud offered a complete positivistic account of the universe. And we know that according to Comte and Freud, positivism marks the coming of age of humanity.

The results of these findings were highly disturbing to moralists and religionists. Already they were smarting in their brain by the deterministic accounts of the physical reality; the success of Freud and his followers drove as it were the last nail in their coffin. If no phenomenon, physical or mental, is beyond the

grip of Determinism, religion and morality, and in fact all values, stand on shaky grounds. Instead of being heaven-born as sanctioned and ordained by a Supernatural Being, they have their source in human situations, psychological and sociological. Freud thought that if values rested upon theology or metaphysics, they would never be autonomous, for their validity would depend upon the metaphysics or religion which supports them. Freud wanted to preserve the autonomy of values and this was not possible, in his opinion, so long as values rested upon unscientific grounds. Thus in the psychology of Freud both positivism and humanism join hands. It is a triumph of the scientific spirit on one hand, and a victory for humanism on the other.

But the gain for humanism and critical spirit is not necessarily a gain for other disciplines. Many theologians supposed that Freud's researches into the realm of the Unconscious region and his insistence on the universality of causal law were inimical to what religion had stood for ages. And Freud made no secret of his intentions in this respect. Not only did he desire to root out superstition, irrationality and chance from the field of sciences, he also wanted to show the utter futility and worthlessness of religion.

Freud did not attack religion on the ground that its assumptions were contradictory to the fundamental postulates of physical sciences. He attacked it primarily on psychological grounds—the kind of ground which his theory of Psycho-analysis had supplied. Freud found the ground already prepared by

Feuerbach who in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), *Preliminary Theses towards the Reform of Philosophy* (1842) and *Foundations of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843) had made a searching analysis of religion and pronounced it as a projection of human imagination and an expression of human need. In *The Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach wrote that "the fundamental dogmas of Christianity are realized wishes of the heart, and that belief in God arises from man's tendency to compare particular, imperfect human beings with the general notion of the highest conceivable human perfection." The source of this conception is the character and conduct of some of the noblest persons he is acquainted with, but he *projects* it outside the human sphere and believes that there is some being who possesses all these virtues to the maximum degree. Human beings forget that the predicates they ascribe to a super-human being are really human predicates and that the subject and the predicates have an identical reference. The identity is broken when it is erroneously supposed that the possessor of the predicates is a Being other than man. Feuerbach says, "The identity of subject and predicates is clearly evidenced by the progressive development of religion, which is identified with the progressive development of human culture. So long as man is in a mere state of nature, so long is his God a personification of natural forces. When man inhabits houses, he also encloses his God in temples. The temple is only the manifestation of the value which man attaches to beautiful buildings. Temples in honour of religion are in truth temples in honour of architecture." Again he says, "The other world is nothing more than the reality of a

known idea, the satisfaction of a conscious desire, the fulfilment of a wish." He maintained affinity between religious beliefs and dreams. "Feeling is a dream with the eyes open," he says, "religion the dream of the waking consciousness; dreaming is the key to the mysteries of religion." In the Preface to the second edition of *The Essence of Christianity*; he wrote "that Christianity has in fact long vanished not only from the life of mankind, that it is nothing more than a *fixed idea*, in flagrant contradiction with our Fire and Life Assurance companies, our railroad and steam carriages, our picture and sculpture galleries, our military and industrial schools, our theatres and scientific museums."

From Feuerbach to Freud the way is not long. In *The Future of Illusion*, Freud speaks of many religious ideas which have exercised strong influence on mankind and says that the ideas are "born from the need to make tolerable the helplessness of his childhood And the childhood of the human race. "Freud thinks that religious ideas have sprung from the „same need as have all other cultural achievements: namely, the necessity, for defending ourselves against the supremacy of nature. with its elements which seem to mock at all human control, such as earthquake, whirlwind, flood, disease and above all the painful and the insoluble riddle of death, forces which bring again to mind our Weakness and helplessness, of which which bring we thought the work of civilisation had rid us.

Before Freud wrote *The Future of Illusion* from which a few extracts have been given, he had realized as is evident from his

Leonardo de Vinci that the religions „pod is n?thing but a glorified father. In, this book, he, writes, "Psycho-analyss, has made us aware of the intimate connection between jVie father-complex arid the belief in God, and has taughtlits that they personal pod is psy-, chologically nothing other than a magnified father; it show;us every day how young people can Jose th9ir, religious faith as soon as father's authority collapses. We thus recognisC, the, root of religious need as lying in parental complex."

Freud's first book containing his arguments about the nature of religion is *Totem and Taboo* (1913). In this book Freud traced the the origin of civilization, morality, law and culture and also of religion to the psychological connection between the Oedipus Complex and totemism as it existed within small primitive groups. Freud explains the psychological basis of Christianity „and of all forms of organized religion, by bringing it within the orbit of Oedipus Complex. He starts by saying that primitive tribes were much more afraid of incest than the moderns and had consequently taken strong measures to see that this sin was not committed.. The measures took the form of taboos which meant that a person committing incest invited the wrath of invisible forces. Freud discovered that the restrictive measures prohibiting incest were related to totemism—a practice among primitive tribes of naming themselves after Some species of animals or plants and offering worship to it. The origin of this custom is shrouded in mystery. According to Spencer and Gillen, it arose as an explanation of conception, and birth. Andrew Lang associates it with the *mana-like* qualities of the tribal name, while Durkheim

regards it as an expression of an impersonal force thought of as resident in some totemic object. Whatever be the origin of Totemism, the important point in this connection is that Freud in common with many of the earlier thinkers, among whom the name of Robertson Smith stands prominent, held that Totemism was the starting point of all religions particularly the Semitic ones. Robertson Smith maintained that "the blood of the victim offered in sacrifices was believed to be the same blood as that of the god to whom the sacrifice was made. The flesh of such a victim might not be eaten except at a communal meal upon ritual occasions."

Freud believed that every race including the most highly civilised had at one time passed through a stage of totemism.

In working out totemistic beliefs, Freud was specially indebted to Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy*, and *The Golden Bough* and to Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*. From these he learned that there were two great taboos among the ancients—one was not to kill the totem and the other was not to have sexual relation with any woman of the same totem. Both these taboos Freud associated with Oedeipus Complex which briefly put, is the desire to kill the father and marry the mother.

Since religion was nothing but anthropology for Freud, he thought that the totem animal stood for father in the primitive mind and was honoured precisely for that reason. The totem was regarded sacred, and was not to be molested except once a year when he was ceremoniously killed and eaten in common. Both these things Freud got from Robertson Smith. From Charles

Darwin, he learnt that originally men lived in hordes, each horde dominated by a single powerful, violent, suspicious man.

The net result of all these influences was that Freud became convinced of his standpoint with regard to religion, morality and civilisation. He writes, "The father of the primal horde, since he was an unlimited despot, had seized all the women for himself; his sons being dangerous to him as rivals, had been killed or driven away.

One day, however, the sons came together and united to over-whelm, kill and devour their father who had been their enemy as well as their ideal. After the deed, they were unable to take over their heritage since they stood in one another's way. Under the influence of failure and regret they learned to come to an agreement among themselves; they banded themselves into a clan of brothers by the help of the ordinances of totemism, which aimed at preventing a repetition of such a deed, and they jointly undertook to forgo the possession of the women on whose account they had killed their father. They were then driven to finding strange women, and this was the origin of the exogamy which is so closely bound up with totemism. The totem feast was the commemoration of the fearful deed, from which sprang man's sense of guilt (or 'original sin') and which was the beginning, at once, of social organization, of religion and of ethical restrictions."

"Now whether we suppose that such a possibility was an historical event or not, it brings the formation of religion within

the circle of the father-complex and bases it upon the ambivalence which dominates that complex. After the totem-animal had ceased to serve as a substitute for him, the primal father, at once feared and hated, honoured and envied, became the prototype of God himself. The son's rebelliousness and his affection for his father struggled against each other through a constant succession of compromises, which sought on the one hand to atone for the act of patricide and on the other to consolidate the advantages it had brought. This view of religion throws a particularly clear light upon the psychological basis of Christianity, in which, it may be added, the ceremony of the totem feast still survives, with but little distortion, in the form of communionism" (*The Collected Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. IV, by Sigmund Freud, The Hograth Press.)

In *Totem and Taboo*, the position is precisely the same (*Totem and Taboo*, Penguin edn., pp. 217-20). Explaining the agency through which the sense of guilt had travelled from one generation to the other, Freud observes, "We base everything upon the assumption of a Psyche of the mass in which psychic processes occur as in the psychic life of the individual. Moreover, we let the sense of guilt for the deed to survive for thousands of years, remaining effective in generations which could not have known anything of the deed—without the assumption of a mass psyche—social psychology could not exist at all. If psychic processes of one generation did not continue in the next—there would be no progress in this field and almost no development (*Totem and Taboo*, Penguin edn., pp. 240-1). Besides *Totem and*

Taboo and *The Future of Illusion*, Freud has another book, *Moses and Monotheism*, which carries forward and elaborates his religious views. This book is not concerned with the Jewish religion only as its name suggests but is concerned with the problem of religion in general. There is no new argument. Freud begins with a doubtful history. He supposes that Moses wanted to save the monotheistic religion of Amenhotep, better known as Ikhnaton, which was repudiated after his death by the Egyptian priesthood. Moses did this by adopting the Hebrew as his own people in spite of the fact that he himself was an Egyptian, and leading them outside Egypt. Freud thinks that in the wilderness where he took the Hebrews, there were rebellious uprisings against him and that in the end he was murdered. From these facts, Freud concluded that "the revived knowledge of the murder of the Moses and many centuries later, the crucifixion of Jesus, released the suppressed memories of the ancestral murder of the horde-father." He writes, "I invite the reader to take a step forward and assume that in the history of human species something happened similar to the events in the life of the individual. That is to say, mankind as a whole passed through conflicts of a sexual-aggressive nature, which left permanent traces but which for the most part were warded off and forgotten; later, after a long period of latency, they came to life again and created phenomena similar in structure and tendency to neurotic symptoms" (*Moses and Monotheism*, 1939, p. 129).

From Freud's religious writings, it would be obvious that according to Psychoanalysis, as Ernest Jones observes, 'religious

life represents a dramatization on a cosmic plane of the ambitions, fears and longings which arose in the child's relation to his parents.' Man's relation to supernatural powers and his relations of dependence, fear and love to them are simply the reproduction of the child's attitude towards his parents. His anthropocentric view of the universe is a continuation of his own sense of importance he felt during his childhood, while his desire to propitiate the spirits of dead ancestors or other spiritual beings arise from his repressed death wishes against his parents with a consequent fear of relation. Fear of death and problems connected with it do not arise from philosophical contemplation but from ambivalence towards person's loved ones. Again, the importance which a child has about himself gets transferred to a part of his own self, called the super-ego an ideal of what a person should be after moral education. The sense of supreme value is related to God, the Father, so as to win His approval and to be reconciled with Him. The idea of sin can be related to the sense of inadequacy in coping with life and is aroused in the child in his endeavour to make all his impulses conform with adult standard. All sin can be expressed in term of disobedience to the Father or else descretion of the Mother. Both are the components of Oedipus Complex. One is emphasized in Protestantism and the other in Roman Catholicism. Again, reconciliation with the Father against which we have sinned can be obtained in two ways, one leading to father type of religions, the other to son type of religions. The former are monotheistic pure and simple because they permit of no truck save with the one Almighty, loving and

forgiving God; the later of which Christianity is a typical exponent, accept a divine or semidivine intermediary between God and man. This intermediary offers himself as a vicarious sacrifice to the wrath of the Father. People can have salvation, that is to say, win reconciliation with their Heavenly Father by identifying themselves with the intermediary which is Jesus in the case of Christianity, being called the son of God.

II

We have seen that Freud agreed with Comte in holding that it was absolutely essential to pass beyond the theological and the metaphysical stage to that of the positivistic one in order to understand correctly the life within and the life without. He was convinced of the fact that whatever transcended the world of sensory experience could be nothing but an illusion. Consequently he could not believe that our mental apparatus could not reach the real nature of things! "In the long run," says Freud, "nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction religion offers to both is only too palpable." This shows Freud's prejudice against religion. Right from the beginning, he believed that religion was opposed to reason and experience, that it contained a large element of metaphysics, which could not be verified on strictly scientific lines, and that in the interest of critical, unbiased enquiry, it was necessary that the law of cause and effect should have an undisputed sway over every territory of human thought. Freud has given no reasons in support of his contention. Nobody denies the value of scientific methods and

techniques in the domain of Physical sciences, but should this methodology be considered adequate or necessary for such disciplines as deal with non-physical reality is a highly debatable matter. Freud had a faith in the supremacy of the scientific method and this faith he acquired from the prevailing mood of his times but he has offered no grounds for this whatsoever, Nor has Freud given any reasons for his contention that religion is contradictory both to reason and to experience. He does not say what he means by reason or experience. If reason and experience are confined to processes as used by scientists in the investigation of physical phenomena, then surely religion will fail to conform to the dictates of reason and experience, but there is no justification for this restricted sense. Besides, it will be committing the fallacy of *petitio principii*; it will be like giving the dog a bad name and then killing it.

Freud also believed that the ethical commands to which religion seeks to lend its weight, require some other foundation. Since human society cannot do without them, it is dangerous to link up obedience to them with religious belief. Danger arises from the fact that "religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world in which we are placed, by means of the wish-world which we developed within as a result of biological and psychological necessities. But it cannot achieve its end. Its doctrines carry with them the stamp of the times in which they originated, the ignorant childhood days of the human race" (Ernst Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, III, p. 359). It seems that Freud wanted to keep morality unsoiled by religious

considerations because religion according to him was nothing but a fairy tale, at best a wish-fulfilment on infantile level, and therefore incapable of providing a firm footing to such an important affair as morality is in human life. Freud's indictment of religiously grounded morality cannot be understood unless we know in what sense Freud takes religion. According to Ernst Jones, Freud said what "In my *Future of an Illusion* I was concerned much less with the deepest sources of religious feelings than with what the ordinary man understands by his religion." To this Jones remarks, "He (Freud) added later that this is the only religion that ought to bear the name."

It is very unfortunate that Freud has taken a childish view of Religion. It is the view of an untutored layman who finds himself in an alien world the nature and complexities of which he fails to comprehend and who accordingly conjures up an imaginary world and an imaginary being to compensate for his disabilities and deprivations. This religion is indeed a means for the fulfilment of unconscious wishes. It is peopled with jinns, fairies, and houries. It is fortified by hell and paradise. It is also presided over by a Being who is nothing but a glorified Father possessing all the virtues and failings of an earthly father. It may have its origin in totem-ism and the myth of patricide which Freud invokes to interpret and inveigh religion. But it is not the religion in its highest form. And certainly Freud's conception of religion is not true of Islam. It may be true of Christianity in its decadent form—the form in which Freud witnessed it during his lifetime, but it

cannot be true of Christianity even in its highest form. Not, for that matter, is it true for many developed religions of the world.

Higher religion is not a fairy tale. According to Iqbal, "it is a search for a larger life"; "a deliberate enterprise to seize the ultimate principle of value and thereby to reintegrate the forces of one's personality"; "it is symbolic of those subtle movements of reality which seriously affect the destiny of the ego as a possibly permanent element in the constitution of reality" (Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore, 1951, pp. 182, 189, 192). Accordingly Iqbal says, "And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of the modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it hereafter" (Ibid.p. 189).

The religion of an ordinary man is the religion of dogmas, rituals and priesthood. A dogma is an uncritical belief with a strong emotional tone; it may be a principle laid down by an agency whose authority cannot be challenged or a belief whose roots go to the remote past. But whatever be the case, a dogma is not open to doubt, it cannot be questioned, it has to be accepted because it is sanctioned and ordained by an authority which admits of no change or development. Understood in this manner a religion which harbours and encourages dogmas, and which at the same time demands unquestioning acquiescence in respect of

them, is simply a negative and a reactionary force. It is a hindrance in the path of scientific thinking, it thwarts rational enquiry and is what Freud rightly calls "the forcible imposition of mental infantilism." The sooner we get rid of such a religion the better. A religion which cannot tolerate examination of its fundamentals, which admits of no reinterpretation or re-evaluation in the light of life's fresh demands, stands condemned because of its rigidity, irrationality and intolerance. And Freud was certainly right in drawing our attention to this aspect of religion. But it would be tragic if religion is identified, as Freud has done, with dogmas, uncritical beliefs and fanciful thinking. An ordinary man's religion is no doubt replete with illogical, dogmatic beliefs, but not that of an enlightened person, with technology and science around him.

Here I want to sound a note of caution. Though I think that Freud was substantially right in condemning dogmas, illogicalities, and uncritical beliefs as he found in the religions with which he was acquainted, I feel that Freud overshot the mark, for there does remain an element of mystery in all religions which cannot be dispelled by any amount of discursive thinking. It would be a mistake to suppose that mystery can be removed by the increase of knowledge or by the expansion of the domain of scientific disciplines. I agree with Whitehead when he says, "Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind and within the passing flux of immediate things ; something real but yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility and yet the greatest of present facts, something which gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose

possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach ; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest" (A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, chapter 12). Freud would call these things as contradictions, but many thinkers including the Existentialists would regard them as mysteries. They would further say that since religion is essentially a concern with the mysterious or, as Stace says, with the 'hunger of the soul for the impossible, the unattainable and the inconceivable', it cannot accept or fruitfully employ the methodology of the physical sciences. It is a pity that Freud was not acquainted with the religious experience in its higher forms and so looked at the problem from what the Existentialists would say a spectator's or an outsider's point of view. Herein lies the tragedy of Freudian thinking.

Freud has very strongly criticised ritualism and rightly too. In ritualism he has found a parallel between religion and neurosis, and has demonstrated thereby the psychological mechanism involved in rituals. Many patients are seen exhibiting ritualistic behaviour of a private nature which has nothing to do with their religious thinking and yet bears close resemblance to religious forms. These patients are in the grip of complexes and try to solve their own problems through their actions. For instance. in washing compulsions, the washing ritual is an attempt to get rid of a strong sense of guilt. The sense of guilt is not the product of anything undesirable which the patient might have done in the past, it is on the other hand an indication of the destructive forces of which the victim is not aware. Through his ritualistic

behaviour, the patient tries to undo the destruction which he has unconsciously planned and which should not reach his consciousness. If they ever reach the conscious level then the patient can deal with them directly and perhaps get rid of them. But he deals with them indirectly and unconsciously and so helps in their continuance. Hence, according to Erich Fromm, the ritualistic behaviour "protects the patient from an unbearable feeling of guilt but it also tends to perpetuate those impulses because it deals with them only indirectly."

Since the rituals performed under the direction of unconscious destructive forces are parallel to the ritual performed by religionists, it has been thought by psycho-analysts that the psychological mechanism in the later cannot be different from that of the former. As there are destructive forces at the bottom of compulsive acts, so there are unconscious destructive forces working behind religious rituals. These forces the psycho-analysts found in the destructive hate of the father-figure represented by God.

In their attempt to bring the religious ritual in line with the abnormal compulsive acts of patients, the Freudians have failed to distinguish between the rational and irrational rituals. The similarity in the case of the two is limited to the external form of the behaviour which is neither a relevant nor a material point of resemblance in this case. Most of the arguments which the psycho-analysts employ in respect of religious behaviour and their aetiology assume the form of analogy. None can deny the

important role of analogical inference in daily life. But there is a well-worked out procedure and clear-cut canons to regulate inferences of this kind. There can be pointless, trivial and unimportant resemblances which can lead to dubious and specious reasoning. In some cases, in spite of a great amount of similarity, one important difference would render the employment of analogical process ineffective and even absurd. Logicians have told us that it would be absurd to argue from the vast amount of similarity that the earth bears to the moon that the latter would have life when it is known that the moon has no water and no life can exist without water. Here one important difference has ruled out the possibility of analogical inference. The same is true of rational and irrational rituals. There is an important difference between the two which does not permit the employment of analogy. In the words of Erich Fromm, "The rational differs from the irrational ritual primarily in its function; it does not *ward off* repressed impulses but *expresses* strivings which are recognized as valuable by the individual. Consequently it does not have the obsessional-compulsive quality so characteristic of the irrational ritual; if the latter is not performed, the repressed threatens to break in and therefore any lapse is accompanied by considerable anxiety. No such consequences are attached to any lapse in the performance of the rational ritual; non-performance may be regretted but is not feared" (Erich Fromm, *Psycho-analysis and Religion*, Yale, 1961, p. 103).

I need not talk of the priesthood which forms, according to Iqbal, a part and parcel of the faith of an ordinary person. There is

organized priesthood in Christianity but none whatsoever in Islam. While talking of spiritual values, Prof. M. M. Sharif says, "It must be clearly understood that in Islam there is no priesthood and no organized church. No class has the monopoly of spirituality. There is no division of a society between the Church and the State and between secular and religious laws or their ministers" (M.M. Sharif, *Islamic and Educational Studies*, Lahore, 1964, p. 19). Christianity does recognize priesthood and the evils which result from this institution have been pointed out by many writers including Freud and Nietzsche.

After having discussed the popular form of religion, that is to say, the religion of an ordinary person, let us discuss the developed religions and see which of them are most vulnerable to Freudian attack. Religions can be classified in several ways but the one most convenient is to distinguish them as authoritarian or democratic in spirit. This distinction accords with the prevailing mood and can amply show what is living and what is dead in Freudian religious psychology.

It seems to me that Freudian criticism of religion applies to authoritarian type of religion but fails in the case of religions democratically conceived. In authoritarian religions the emphasis is on the omnipotence of God and the relative insignificance and powerlessness of man. Man is required to obey God in view of his own importance and the mightiness of God. Thus whatever credit human life can or does command is due to the mercy and grace of the Almighty for He apportions credit or discredit to human

actions in his own inscrutable ways. Credit simply signifies the pleasure of God and discredit His displeasure. And as none can ever know what actions of his elicit the pleasure of God and what displeasure, as God looks into the hearts of people and heart may be impure in spite of our best efforts and intention, none can ever be sure that his obedience has been properly appreciated or recognized by the Supreme Being. Thus the religious attitude in authoritarian religions is characterised by fear and trembling - fear, not in the existential sense but fear in the ordinary childish sense, for the fear is born of insecurity, ignorance of God's ways and the tragic sense of powerlessness.

The attitude mostly desired in authoritarian religions is that of unquestioning obedience and the emotion generally excited is that of fear. Freud is quite right when he finds in this attitude the image of father working, and the ambivalent attitude which the children have towards their earthly father manifesting itself on a grand scale. Children do hate their father and also love him because of his authority and control. Likewise God is feared and loved in authoritarian religions because of His limitless power and all-embracing control. As a child feels awfully weak both mentally and physically in comparison to his father, so does a religious devotee feel immeasurably small in the face of the omnipotent, omniscient and all-controlling Deity. And as the only way to win the pleasure of the earthly father, so the child thinks, is through obeying him in letter as well as in spirit, so the only way in which God's pleasure can be sought is through complete surrender, that

is to say, by throwing one's self completely at His mercy and asking for his grace.

There is no denying the fact that religion is very often conceived in this manner. God is regarded as a potentate, lording over the destinies of human beings in His own inimitable manner, giving bounties to whomsoever He wills and hurling infamy, destitution and disabilities again on whomsoever He likes. God is very like a wayward, irresponsible child whose pleasures or displeasures cannot be anticipated or rationally comprehended. This view was held with regard to gods in Greek mythology and also gods of the early Vedas. This view is still the view of the unlettered, untutored or what Freud says, the ordinary people of today. Unfortunately Freud thinks that this is the only view of religion. Hence he called it an illusion and did not visualise any future for it.

Our conceptions about God and His relation to His creation develop side by side with our notion about earthly powers, that is to say, about kings, their deputies and lieutenants and the relation they bear to their subject. In the past, the feudal lords, chiefs and landlords used to wield undisputed power over the lives and destinies of the people they ruled. There was no constitution to define and limit their powers, nor any recognition of the fundamental rights of human beings which the constitution could guarantee and the courts could uphold. Everything depended upon the sweet will of the lord—which will worked whimsically, almost arbitrarily, to the detriment of the subject. His pleasure

could be obtained by flattering him in and out of season, by admiring and extolling his real or supposed virtues and by offering sacrifices, human or otherwise, in his defence and for his glory. The god or gods of our forefathers were characterised by all these things. They were autocratic, impulsive, wayward, irresponsible, self-centered, pleased with flattery and offended by disobedience. They were not subject to any law, their power was unlimited, they could decree in any manner it suited their fancy, and it was not within the power of any creature to question them.

This conception which clearly parallel that of the political remained for a considerably long period and still forms part of the creed of the ordinary person and of those people also who though very intelligent and educated suffer from infantilism in respect of religion. With the rise of democracy and the consequent downfall of earthly kings one after the other, a new conception arose in the field of politics, which governs the relation of the rulers and the ruled and also defines the powers and limitations of the head of the state. There is a constitution which sets forth, in clear unambiguous terms, the rights and obligations of the people and any infringement of these can be contested in a court of law and decree obtained for their restoration and enforcement. The important thing in this connection is that the state in framing its constitution is guided by certain values which it means to uphold and for which it is prepared to die. The state therefore becomes a repository of certain values, very often called an ideology, which it jealously guards and which it puts up before the world as a justification for its existence and even survival, During the first

and the second world war, Churchill often said that they were fighting for Christian values. Now-a-days the Americans do the same. They attack Vietnam or Cuba in order to defend the cause of the free world. Religion has consequently changed her conception of the Supreme Deity to come in line with present-day thinking. The God of religion can no longer be regarded as a potentate, sitting in heaven on a throne, deciding the fates of people in whatever manner He likes. He has become on the other hand a source and symbol of values. As the head of a state stands for certain values which the country cherishes and upholds, so the God of religion stands for values which humanity cherishes for its own betterment and uplift, The president or the flag of a country is nothing, if considered in their individual, personal capacity. One is just a flag and the other is just a man, as good or as bad as any other man is. But as standing for certain values and as symbolising the dreams and aspirations of the people, both the flag and the Head possess significance, When people stand in respect before the flag of their country, they do not respect the flag as such, they respect the values which the flag symbolises. These values are the expression of the wills of the people. We bow to the values and not to earthly beings or powers. In religion, too, same kind of thinking has set in. The God of religion has to be respected not because He is a super-human being with unlimited power and influence over the lives and destinies of people but because He stands for values or what amounts to the same thing, He is the expression of the wills of human beings. Such a religion is immune to Freudian attacks.

In *The Pakistan Times* (27th July 1962,) I pleaded that Islam as a religion stands primarily and essentially for certain values. The Quran mentions ninety nine names of God which describe in a way such moral and spiritual excellences as can become the summum bonum of human life. These names may be likened to Platonic Ideas since they represent in the most complete and perfect form whatever human mind is capable of conceiving as constituting the noblest and the best in the universe. The values which God's nature signifies need not be assimilated by a person in toto. Each person's life is unique and therefore not suited to the cultivation of each value which the ninety nine names of God suggest. What is needed is that each person considering his own limitations and possibilities should select out of these values such as would best conduce to the furtherance of his moral and spiritual aims. Since life's goals can be achieved not in one but in many ways, the choice which different people make cannot lead to identical plans.

Religion as a creed of values does not necessarily mean that the idea of God as a Person has to be ruled out. No doubt there are the philosophical difficulties in this idea, but these difficulties do not stem from the view of religion outlined above. If we keep in view the comparison of religion with notions of political sovereignty, it can be seen that even in democracy there does exist loyalty to the Head of the state besides loyalty to the values which he symbolises in his person. People do love and respect their sovereigns, even fight and die for them. They know that the sovereign is just a puny mortal. But it is not as puny mortal that

the sovereign commands respect and allegiance. Respect is due to him as he projects the image of the country and expresses the aspirations of his people. Likewise God would be loved and respected as He represents in His person what is best and noblest in human life; loyalty to Him will be, primarily and essentially, a loyalty to values.

It is not suggested that Islam is free from authoritarian elements. Many people have conceived it on these lines. But it seems to me that as the eternal truths of Islam were revealed at a time when people entertained feudal notion about their kings, it was necessary that God should have spoken in the diction which people of those times could understand. But the Quran has taken care not to confine its meanings to that diction alone.

There is a story that when the Holy Prophet died, some of his devotees were stunned and failed to believe that such a thing could come to pass. Umar, an outstanding companion of the Prophet, is reported to have said that whosoever would say that the Prophet had expired, he would lose his life. At this another distinguished companion the Prophet rose. He read a verse from the Quran, saying that all things are temporary and evanescent. The only exception is the Person of God. He then remarked addressing those who could not reconcile themselves to the death of the Prophet that if they worshipped the Prophet then he was dead, but if they worshipped God, then God is not going to die; He is eternal and ever alive.

The story means that the propagators of values may leave the theater of existence after a brief sojourn, but the values they propagated and symbolised live forever. Accordingly religion is not so much a cult of personality as a cult of values.

Freudian criticism does not apply to this conception of religion.