

SECOND SYMBOL PAPER



KRISHNAMURTI FROM THE OTHER SIDE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal Relevance

I was brought up in London in an ecumenical Protestant family environment which emphasised practical moral action over spirituality under the stern influence of my paternal grandparents who had been Baptist missionaries in Cuttack, India. Our unusually liberal Presbyterian church became increasingly important to me as I trained for Confirmation which I underwent at the age of fourteen. Sunday school themes included comparative religion (which I found riveting, feeling especially drawn towards Buddhism) and criticism of the materialism dominating our culture.

After my family moved house, I joined a thriving youth group at a nearby Church of England church. At first I was thrilled by their vitality, commitment and apparent radicalism. After an hour of happy-clapping worship we would hold a service in a local geriatric ward. However, I soon became uncomfortable with the group's fundamentalist, evangelical approach and endless moral admonitions. I can still recall clearly the incidents which essentially destroyed my faith in organised religion:

- In a sermon the vicar denounced all other religions as the work of Satan. Did this mean, I wondered, that the majority of the world, including those who had not ever heard of Christianity, was damned?
- A very perceptive old lady who I loved to talk with in the geriatric ward berated me for helping to impose a religious ceremony upon a captive audience. I saw her point and acknowledged our arrogance in expecting automatic gratitude. Thereafter I discussed whatever interested her as this seemed the kindest thing to do, and was later told off by a group leader for not talking enough about Jesus with her!
- I was always being urged to believe what I was told instead of learning for myself through experience, and so I resolved to find out everything for myself in future.
- I went on a family holiday to Israel which exposed me to a lot of brittle belief and religious bigotry, and vividly illustrated the pointlessness of millennia of conflict over such a small, arid land.

My faith in organised politics went the way of my faith in organised religion, and for many years I was a secular anarchist (Ni Dieu, Ni Maître!) despite occasional flirtations with Taoism and Zen Buddhism. In 1985 at the age of thirty, I borrowed the first volume of Mary Lutyens' biography of Jiddu Krishnamurti [1] from a friend¹. The book had a profound impact on me, generating a huge sense of relief, of "coming home". At last I had encountered someone who also rejected absolutely all authority yet stressed the paramount importance of the "religious life", but whose thinking had gone so much further than my own. I never did see or hear Krishnamurti while he was alive, but have continued to study his teachings through books, tapes, dialogue groups and visits to the Krishnamurti Study Centre and School (where for a while I considered teaching physics) at Brockwood Park, England.

1.2 Topical Relevance

The foregoing summarises how a (perhaps not so atypical) educated, middle-class Westerner who shared many of the "alternative" aspirations and values prevalent in the latter part of the twentieth century became engaged with the teachings of Krishnamurti. Yet Krishnamurti's cultural and religious origins were those of a Brahman (albeit destitute) family in southern India, i.e. Hindu, and he continued to teach and attract keen interest in India as well as in the West throughout his adult life. This paper therefore attempts to address the question "How were Krishnamurti's teachings influenced by his Hindu roots, and how do they compare with Hinduism?" This in turn begs the question "To what extent was he an ambassador or an innovator?"

More broadly, Krishnamurti was a significant figure in the "East-West" religious dialogue of recent decades. He was a prolific speaker and writer, and prompted many third-party biographies and commentaries. Few of these, however, were with his approval², and virtually all are from a Western perspective. How, then, do his teachings seem when viewed from a Hindu perspective - "from the other side"?

¹ I merely asked if he could lend me an interesting book as I had read all mine! Furthermore, I was highly sceptical having declined an invitation from a work colleague to hear Krishnamurti speak two years previously. My experience of another colleague who followed Sri Baghwan Rajneesh predisposed me to assume that Krishnamurti was just another Eastern charlatan "milking" gullible Westerners.

² Mary Lutyens' biographies constitute the most notable exception.

1.3 Approach and Structure

Although reasonably familiar with the life and teachings of Krishnamurti, I cannot claim to have a comparable grasp of the enormous religious and social pantheon that is Hinduism. Furthermore, it would be unrealistic to imagine that I can wholly set aside my Western upbringing to adopt a genuinely Eastern, specifically Hindu, perspective. I have therefore focused on a few central aspects of Hinduism that highlight resonances and/or dissonances with the teachings of Krishnamurti.

Chapter 2 places Krishnamurti into a historical context. The contents of Section 2.1 have been reproduced from the Krishnamurti Information Network (K.I.N.) website³ [2]. These have been supplemented in Section 2.2 with further pertinent information from a variety of sources including one that is sharply sceptical [3]. While it is the teachings and not “Krishnamurti the man” that are most important, these brief biographical details go some way to explain how he was and is viewed from a Hindu perspective.

As stated at the end of Section 2.1, Krishnamurti “authorised no one to become an interpreter of his work”. In the interest of accuracy, brevity and clarity, as well as in accordance with the above stipulation, I make no apology for presenting two pre-existing summaries of Krishnamurti’s teachings verbatim in Chapter 3. The first of these (Section 3.1) is by Krishnamurti himself, and is necessarily dense. He originally wrote it on 21 October 1980 for the second volume of Mary Lutyens’ biography [4] and then, on re-reading it, added a few sentences. David Bohm’s perspective (Section 3.2) is that of a leading theoretical physicist⁴ and profound thinker who was engaged in an extraordinarily productive personal association with Krishnamurti for some two decades⁵. It is therefore both authoritative and largely free from cultural religious bias. The contents of Chapter 3 have been reproduced with the kind permission of the copyright holder, the Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd.⁶.

Chapter 4 outlines selected elements of Hindu history, belief, practices and literature together with comments on their applicability, or otherwise, to the teachings of Krishnamurti. The principal, i.e. default, reference for the former is Zaehner’s excellent “Hinduism” [5]; the latter are largely my own. Another important source of information used in this Chapter is a recently published introduction to a post-modern understanding of Hinduism by Agrawal [6] which, unusually for such a book, includes two sections on Krishnamurti. However, Agrawal’s occasional lapses into fervent proselytisation suggest that his treatment of the subject should be treated with caution, especially by a researcher new to Hinduism such as myself.

Valuable though such commentaries and interpretations are, it is nonetheless important to deal with at least one significant source text. In Chapter 5 have examined the *Bhagavad Gita* as it is regarded by many scholars, e.g. [7], as the most typical expression of Hinduism as a whole. It is also, as will be elaborated later, at the cusp where Hinduism and Krishnamurti’s teachings appear to part company. Furthermore, my appreciation of the written text has been enriched by the dramatisation of this seminal dialogue between *Krishna* and *Arjuna* in Peter Brooks’ production of the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. Familiarity with the latter as the broader context within which the *Bhagavad Gita*, normally referred to in Chapter 5 simply as the *Gita*, appears is assumed throughout. Passages from the *Gita* are taken from Prof. Radhakrishnan’s translation [8] and indexed using his system of Chapter numbers in Roman numerals and line numbers in parentheses.

Chapter 6 summarises the most significant similarities and differences emerging from the comparisons between Krishnamurti’s teachings and Hinduism undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5.

Throughout this paper, quotations are enclosed “in double inverted commas”, while original emphases therein and (approximately) phonetic spellings of Hindu terms and names using the Roman alphabet are given in *italics*.

³ Permission to do so was requested from the copyright holder, Krishnamurti Foundation of America Inc., by email on 24 April 2003 following advice given in correspondence with the Krishnamurti Information Network enquiries contact. No response has been received to date (almost 10 months later). Issue of this paper must therefore remain free of charge and at the discretion of the author.

⁴ David Bohm was for over twenty years Professor of Theoretical Physics at Birkbeck College, University of London. Since receiving his doctorate at the University of Berkeley, he taught and did research at U.C., Princeton University, University de Sao Paulo, Haifa and Bristol University.

⁵ “The Ending of Time” Gollancz (1985), comprising thirteen dialogues between Krishnamurti and Bohm in 1980, is regarded by many as the seminal enquiry into Krishnamurti’s teaching. It is interesting to recall the interactions between Jung and Pauli in this context.

⁶ Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Ltd., e-mail: info@brockwood.org.uk, website: www.kfoundation.org

1.4 East and West, Religion and Psychology

Analytical Psychology is considered by many to be at the religious end of the spectrum of approaches to depth psychology, and it is equally arguable that Krishnamurti's teachings are at the psychological end of the religious spectrum. It is therefore interesting to compare quotations from Krishnamurti and Jung respectively on the nature of religion:

"We mean by religion the gathering together of all energy to investigate ... if there is anything sacred." [9]

"... Jung's definition of religion is a wide one. Religion, he says, is 'a careful and scrupulous observation of what Rudolf Otto aptly termed the *numinosum*.'" [10].

The terminology may be different, but these suggest a high degree of commonality at the most general level. As both were prolific writers, it may be possible to find alternative quotations that suggest total disagreement. Such are the risks of selection; I merely chose the most general statements that I could find in each case.

Jung was, of course, a man of the West and Krishnamurti a man of the East. While the latter emphasised universality in his teachings, as might be expected of one attempting to bridge the divide, Jung examined the depth of difference between the two world views. The following quotations offer a glimpse of his conclusions:

"In our more primitive Western forms of religion – primitive because lacking insight – the new bearer of life appears as a God or Saviour ... The East has for thousands of years ... founded ... a psychological doctrine of salvation which brings the way of deliverance within man's ken and capacity." [11]

"The mistaken idea of a merely outward *imitatio Christi* is further exacerbated by a typically European prejudice which distinguishes the Western attitude from the Eastern. Western man is held in thrall by the 'ten thousand things'; he sees only particulars, he is ego-bound and thing-bound, and unaware of the deep root of all being. Eastern man, on the other hand, experiences the world of particulars, and even his own ego, like a dream; he is rooted essentially in the 'Ground', which attracts him so powerfully that his relations with the world are relativised to a degree that is often incomprehensible to us. The Western attitude, with its emphasis on the object, tends to fix the ideal – Christ – in its outward aspect and thus to rob it of its mysterious relation to the inner man. It is this prejudice, for instance, which impels the Protestant interpreters of the Bible to interpret ... the Kingdom of God as 'among you' instead of 'within you'. I do not mean to say anything about the validity of the Western attitude: we are sufficiently convinced of its rightness. But if we try to come to a real understanding of Eastern man – as the psychologist must – we find it hard to rid ourselves of certain misgivings. Anyone who can square it with his conscience is free to decide this question as he pleases, though he may be unconsciously setting himself up as an *arbiter mundi*. I for my part prefer the precious gift of doubt, for the reason that it does not violate the virginity of things beyond our ken." [12]

I admit to being puzzled by the penultimate sentence above, but am struck by the beauty of the concluding line. Jung was generally careful not to over-state which he could say with certainty, and valued experience over belief. Krishnamurti was passionate about this to the extent that his mode of speaking and writing consisted more of questions than of answers.

As an ex-physicist (if that is possible!) I leave the last quotation in this section to a man who neither claimed to be a psychologist or a religious teacher, Albert Einstein (source reference unknown):

"The most beautiful and profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their primitive forms - this knowledge is at the centre of true religion."

Such atonement for our (Western) Faustian hubris, expressed with poetic elegance here by a genius who could so easily have instead succumbed to it, is a prerequisite for the humility to accept both our unconscious contents and our common humanity⁷. These are timeless experiences which reconnect us with the spirit of nature, and as such are of vital importance in the processes of healing and individuation.

⁷ I contend that such humility was also both a prerequisite for, and a consequence, of Einstein's extraordinary scientific insights.

2. A BIOGRAPHY OF KRISHNAMURTI

2.1 A Brief Historical Sketch (K.I.N.)

“The extraordinary story of Krishnamurti, hailed early in life as the messiah for the twentieth century, is a tale of mysticism, sexual scandals, religious fervour and chicanery, out of which emerged one the most influential thinkers of modern times.

Krishnamurti was "discovered" as a young boy on a beach in India by members of the Theosophical Society who were convinced that they had found the new World Leader, a spiritual saviour who would be as historic and influential as the Buddha or Jesus. By the 1920's he was attracting worldwide press attention and idealists, spiritual adventurers, progressive politicians, intellectuals and romantics alike flocked to his talks in their thousands, eager to embrace a new Christ from the Orient.

Then in 1925 Krishnamurti experienced a mysterious spiritual awakening while en route to India from America. And in 1929, in a dramatic act of renunciation he bewildered his thousands of disciples by abandoning the Theosophical Society that had moulded him, setting out on a teaching mission of his own, as a secular philosopher of spirituality with no affiliation to sects or dogmas.

For more than sixty years Jiddu Krishnamurti traveled the world giving public talks and private interviews to millions of people of all ages and backgrounds, saying that only through a complete change in the hearts and minds of individuals can there come about a change in society and peace in the world. He was born in Mandanapalle, South India on May 12, 1895 and died on February 17, 1986 in Ojai, California, at the age of ninety. His talks, dialogues, journals and letters have been preserved in over seventy books and in hundreds of audio and video recordings.

Throughout his lifetime, Krishnamurti insisted that he wanted no followers. "To follow another is evil," he said, "it does not matter who it is." He created no organization of believers and disciples, authorised no one to become an interpreter of his work and asked only that, after his death, those who shared his concerns preserve for posterity an authentic record of his talks, dialogues and writings and make them widely available to the public."

2.2 Further Comments

Krishnamurti was born in 1895 in South India and "discovered" as a suitable vehicle for Lord Maitreya (believed in the occult hierarchy of Theosophy to be the *bodhisattva* or 'Buddha to be' who had earlier incarnated as *Krishna* and Christ) when he was nearly fourteen. He was legally adopted by Annie Besant, a leading Theosophist of whom Zaehner [5] writes in his chapter describing the encounter of Hinduism with British colonialism and Christianity:

"... it would be no exaggeration to say that no single person did so much to revive the Hindu's pride in his religious heritage as did [Annie Besant]... It is largely due to the Theosophical Society and its uncritical adulation of all things Hindu that Hinduism has been able not only to shake off its previous inferiority complex but to face the other great religions of the world at least as an equal."

In October 1947 Krishnamurti made his first trip to India in almost a decade. This coincided with the granting of Indian independence, which forced former imperial subjects to choose between British nationality and loyalty to their new country. Krishnamurti chose India. Although he was to spend much time travelling in Europe and America, his orientation from then on "was decisively Indian, and perhaps even anti-western. He was indeed returning to his roots." [3]. Later Washington writes:

"Where does spiritual wisdom come from? What is its purpose? Krishnamurti had often taught that there is no source, that the Masters⁸ are an illusion, that each consciousness is alone in the universe with its own reflections; yet in his notebooks and conversations he referred again and again to a power which possessed him, a power which he had recognised in youth, experienced repeatedly at the height of his Theosophical fame in the form of magisterial visits, and ever since in less tangible ways.

⁸ The Great White Brotherhood of Masters were central to Blavatsky's, and thus the Theosophists', doctrine. In Blavatsky's later description, the hierarchy is headed by the Lord of the World whose helpers, in descending order of authority, are the Buddha, the Mahachohan, Manu and Maitreya. During his early Theosophical training, Krishnamurti was allegedly instructed by Maitreya's assistant, Master Koot Hoomi [3].

Lutyens had an insight into what he meant by 'the power' one day at Brockwood, when she passed the open drawing-room door and felt an extraordinary throbbing presence emanating from the place in which she had just been talking to her subject [4]. Others testified to similar experiences. It was this power that seemed to be the source not only of Krishnamurti's teaching but of his very being, though distinct from both. Faced with such a power, he held that his mind was a classic vacancy – a vessel through which the power passed [13] – and that the centuries had been preparing for his unique being, which he habitually referred to on such occasions in the third person.

But the way of resolving these contradictions – and the way in which Krishnamurti himself resolved them – is to locate the spiritual source within the self. This has been the solution of mystics in all ages, from ancient Buddhists and mediæval Christians to Krishnamurti's friend Aldous Huxley. More significantly, it also appears among the Hindu doctrines of *Advaita Vedanta* [qv Section 4.1], which identifies the soul as an aspect of that absolute reality to which it aspires. Krishnamurti had always insisted that individuals must work out their own destiny. But in so doing, he had simply revived an ancient doctrine – just as Theosophy said he should. By listening to the voice of his deepest self, Krishnamurti was perhaps returning to the ascetic ways of his Hindu ancestors.”

Finally, it is worth noting that, despite Krishnamurti's frequent injunctions against people interested in his teachings behaving as followers or disciples, this is exactly what they did time and time again. Robert A Johnson, a Jungian analyst, gives a vivid first-hand account of this in his reflections on the two years he spent with Krishnamurti⁹ at Ojai, California from 1945 [14] in which he wrote:

“...the poor man lived in constant frustration that his Western audience was not able to comprehend his simple teachings. I learned that he was not the first great teacher who had failed to educate his followers in a simple doctrine of awareness.

...I realise now that different truths are important for different stages of life, and Krishnamurti made the awful mistake of indiscriminately introducing an old person's wisdom to people of all ages and stations in life. Krishnamurti would allow his students no tools in climbing the vertical cliff he confronted us with.

...Krishnamurti was explicit in his teaching that the age of gurus was over and that one had to take the responsibility for one's own life into the self. But few people heard this, and most of his community consisted of people who adored the master. ...Later I was to hear this same teaching from two other great men who were highly conscious of their inner worlds, Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, India, and Dr. Jung in Zürich, Switzerland.”

⁹ This was before he met Jung and subsequently became an analyst.

3. THE TEACHINGS OF KRISHNAMURTI

3.1 The Core of Krishnamurti's Teaching (Krishnamurti)

"The core of Krishnamurti's teaching is contained in the statement he made in 1929 when he said: 'Truth is a pathless land'. Man cannot come to it through any organization, through any creed, through any dogma, priest or ritual, not through any philosophic knowledge or psychological technique. He has to find it through the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, through observation and not through intellectual analysis or introspective dissection. Man has built in himself images as a fence of security—religious, political, personal. These manifest as symbols, ideas, beliefs. The burden of these images dominates man's thinking, his relationships and his daily life. These images are the causes of our problems for they divide man from man. His perception of life is shaped by the concepts already established in his mind. The content of his consciousness is his entire existence. This content is common to all humanity. The individuality is the name, the form and superficial culture he acquires from tradition and environment. The uniqueness of man does not lie in the superficial but in complete freedom from the content of his consciousness, which is common to all mankind. So he is not an individual.

Freedom is not a reaction; freedom is not a choice. It is man's pretence that because he has choice he is free. Freedom is pure observation without direction, without fear of punishment and reward. Freedom is without motive; freedom is not at the end of the evolution of man but lies in the first step of his existence. In observation one begins to discover the lack of freedom. Freedom is found in the choiceless awareness of our daily existence and activity.

Thought is time. Thought is born of experience and knowledge which are inseparable from time and the past. Time is the psychological enemy of man. Our action is based on knowledge and therefore time, so man is always a slave to the past. Thought is ever-limited and so we live in constant conflict and struggle. There is no psychological evolution.

When man becomes aware of the movement of his own thoughts he will see the division between the thinker and thought, the observer and the observed, the experience and the experiencer. He will discover that this division is an illusion. Then only is there pure observation which is insight without any shadow of the past or of time. This timeless insight brings about a deep radical mutation in the mind.

Total negation is the essence of the positive. When there is negation of all those things that thought has brought about psychologically, only then is there love, which is compassion and intelligence."

3.2 An Introduction to the Teachings (David Bohm)

"My first acquaintance with Krishnamurti's work was in 1959 when I read his book, 'First and Last Freedom'. What particularly aroused my interest was his deep insight into the question of the observer and the observed. This question has long been close to the centre of my own work, as a theoretical physicist, who was primarily interested in the meaning of the quantum theory. In this theory, for the first time in the development of physics, the notion that these two cannot be separated has been put forth as necessary for the understanding of the fundamental laws of matter in general. Because of this, as well as because the book contained many other deep insights, I felt that it was urgent for me to talk with Krishnamurti directly and personally as soon as possible. And when I first met him on one of his visits to London, I was struck by the great ease of communication with him, which was made possible by the intense energy with which he listened and by the freedom from self-protective reservations and barriers with which he responded to what I had to say. As a person who works in science I felt completely at home with this sort of response, because it was in essence of the same quality as that which I had met in these contacts with other scientists with whom there had been a very close meeting of minds. And here, I think especially of Einstein who showed a similar intensity and absence of barrier in a number of discussions that took place between him and me. After this, I began to meet Krishnamurti regularly and to discuss with him whenever he came to London.

We began an association which has since then become closer as I became interested in the schools, which were set up through his initiative. In these discussions, we went quite deeply into the many questions which concerned me in my scientific work. We probed into the nature of space and time, and of the universal, both with regard to external nature and with regard to the mind. But then, we went on to consider the general disorder and confusion that pervades the consciousness of mankind. It is here that I encountered what I feel to be Krishnamurti's major discovery. What he was seriously proposing is that all this disorder, which is the

root cause of such widespread sorrow and misery, and which prevents human beings from properly working together, has its root in the fact that we are ignorant of the general nature of our own processes of thought. Or to put it differently it may be said that we do not see what is actually happening, when we are engaged in the activity of thinking. Through close attention to and observation of this activity of thought, Krishnamurti feels that he directly perceives that thought is a material process, which is going on inside of the human being in the brain and nervous system as a whole.

Ordinarily, we tend to be aware mainly of the content of this thought rather than how it actually takes place. One can illustrate this point by considering what happens when one is reading a book. Usually, one is attentive almost entirely to the meaning of what is being read. However, one can also be aware of the book itself, of its constitution as made up out of pages that can be turned, of the printed words and of the ink, of the fabric of the paper, etc. Similarly, we may be aware of the actual structure and function of the process of thought, and not merely its content.

How can such an awareness come about? Krishnamurti proposes that this requires what he calls meditation. Now the word meditation has been given a wide range of different and even contradictory meanings, many of them involving rather superficial kinds of mysticism. Krishnamurti has in mind a definite and clear notion when he uses this word. One can obtain a valuable indication of this meaning by considering the derivation of the word. (The roots of words, in conjunction with their present generally accepted meanings often yield surprising insight into their deeper meanings.) The English word meditation is based on the Latin root "med" which is, "to measure." The present meaning of the word is "to reflect," "to ponder" (i.e. to weigh or measure), and "to give close attention." Similarly the Sanskrit word for meditation, which is *dhyana*, is closely related to "*dhyati*," meaning "to reflect." So, at this rate, to meditate would be, "to ponder, to reflect, while giving close attention to what is actually going on as one does so."

This is perhaps what Krishnamurti means by the beginning of meditation. That is to say, one gives close attention to all that is happening in conjunction with the actual activity of thought, which is the underlying source of the general disorder. One does this without choice, without criticism, without acceptance or rejection of what is going on. And all of this takes place along with reflections on the meaning of what one is learning about the activity of thought. (It is perhaps rather like reading a book in which the pages have been scrambled up, and being intensely aware of this disorder, rather than just "trying to make sense" of the confused content that arises when one just accepts the pages as they happen to come.)

Krishnamurti has observed that the very act of meditation will, in itself, bring order to the activity of thought without the intervention of will, choice, decision, or any other action of the "thinker." As such order comes, the noise and chaos which are the usual background of our consciousness die out, and the mind becomes generally silent. (Thought arises only when needed for some genuinely valid purpose, and then stops, until needed again.)

In this silence, Krishnamurti says that something new and creative happens, something that cannot be conveyed in words, but that is of extraordinary significance for the whole of life. So he does not attempt to communicate this verbally, but rather, he asks those who are interested that they explore the question of meditation directly for themselves, through actual attention to the nature of thought.

Without attempting to probe into this deeper meaning of meditation, one can however say that meditation, in Krishnamurti's sense of the word, can bring order to our overall mental activity, and this may be a key factor in bringing about an end to the sorrow, the misery, the chaos and confusion, that have, over the ages, been the lot of mankind, and that are still generally continuing without visible prospect of fundamental change, for the foreseeable future.

Krishnamurti's work is permeated by what may be called the essence of this scientific approach, when this is considered in its very highest and purest form. Thus, he begins from a fact, this fact about the nature of our thought processes. This fact is established through close attention, involving careful listening to the process of consciousness, and observing it assiduously. In this, one is constantly learning, and out of this learning comes insight, into the overall or general nature of the process of thought. This insight is then tested. First, one sees whether it holds together in a rational order. And then one sees whether it leads to order and coherence, on what flows out of it in life as a whole.

Krishnamurti constantly emphasizes that he is in no sense an authority. He has made certain discoveries, and he is simply doing his best to make these discoveries accessible to all those who are able to listen. His work does not contain a body of doctrine, nor does he offer techniques or methods, for obtaining a silent mind. He is not aiming to set up any new system of religious belief. Rather, it is up to each human being to

see if he can discover for himself that to which Krishnamurti is calling attention, and to go on from there to make new discoveries on his own.

It is clear then that an introduction, such as this, can at best show how Krishnamurti's work has been seen by a particular person, a scientist, such as myself. To see in full what Krishnamurti means, it is necessary, of course, to go on and to read what he actually says, with that quality of attention to the totality of one's responses, inward and outward, which we have been discussing here."

4. COMPARISON WITH HINDUISM

4.1 The Nature of God

“Hindu” is simply the Persian word for “Indian”, and Hinduism is therefore both a way of life and a national religion. Krishnamurti was consistently explicit and emphatic in his rejection of both nationalism and organised religion, though he was clearly less uncomfortable with some of the philosophical aspects of Hinduism (and Buddhism) than with Western religion. Unlike the Semitic faiths¹⁰ of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, both Hinduism and Krishnamurti’s teachings are quite free from dogma¹¹ concerning the nature of God. Although Hinduism is associated with a wealth of literature going back millenia, it has no single equivalent to the Torah, Bible or Quran. Krishnamurti, though a prolific writer and orator, claimed to teach entirely from personal insight and did not accept the validity of “received wisdom” from books.

The apparent ambiguity about God in Hinduism is expressed in the *Rig Veda* which, dating from 2000 BC or earlier, was the first of the *Vedas* - the most ancient sacred texts of Hinduism. Borrowing the terminology of Kant, there are two concepts of this explicitly single God:

- Formal concept – *Nirguna Brahman* – ultimate Reality / attributeless Being which is beyond empirical identification. To this the 9th century philosopher/saint *Shankara*, the founder of the philosophico-religious system known as *Advaita Vedanta* or Non-Dualism, could assign only the formal properties of *sat* (truth), *chitta* (consciousness) and *anand* (bliss).
- Determinate concept – *Sagun Brahman* – personal God / supreme Being to which empirically identifiable properties can be assigned. This is *Ishwara*, the Hindu trinity:
 - *Brahma* (+ *Saraswati*): the Creator
 - *Vishnu* (+ *Lakshmi*): the Sustainer
 - *Shiva* or *Mahesh* (+ *Parvati*¹²): the Destroyer

Hindus must face the challenge of holding the tension between these concepts, for both are seen to be necessary for a complete and integrated understanding of God. *Shankara* maintained that, rather than *Sagun Brahman* being *Nirguna Brahman* made manifest, *Nirguna Brahman* was an abstraction of *Sagun Brahman*. This means that *Ishwara* is *Brahman* as apprehended by thought which satisfies human religious aspirations and provides the foundation for proceeding to a sense of ‘knowing’, *Nirguna Brahman*, in which “the self-conscious mind is completely laid aside and its cognitive relation to the object of knowledge is totally suspended. In this sense ‘knowing’ becomes a ‘way of being’ in relation to God.” [6] In this state the subject-object distinction totally disappears:

“That which is the true essence
and inhabits the whole universe
as its Soul
that is the cosmic Soul, the Reality
and That are Thou” [15]

Brahman can mean either the eternal substrate of the universe from which the ‘eternal *dharma*’ (Section 4.3) proceeds, or the spiritual prerogative of the *Brahmin* caste. In classical Hinduism it is both the state that is natural to the liberated soul – *moksha* (Section 4.4) – and the source from which all phenomenal existence derives its being. In the earliest texts it can be roughly equated with “the sacred” [5] which brings to mind Krishnamurti’s definition of religion in Section 1.4, especially given his caste background.

The dark aspect of God manifests in *Shiva* or, more commonly in popular cults, in the dreadful *Durga* or *Kali* forms of his consort. Unlike *Vishnu*, whose benevolence is rarely in doubt, *Shiva* is “wrathful, incalculable, jealous in the Old Testament sense of that term, and devoid of comeliness. ...the reconciliation of all opposites: therefore he is both creator and destroyer, terrible and mild, evil and good, male and female, eternal rest and ceaseless activity. ...he remains a *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum*” [5]

¹⁰ The essence of which are submission to the One God who is personal, transcendent and holy, and who reveals himself in history and acts in history.

¹¹ The absence of dogma in Hinduism can be over-emphasised – there are certain pre-suppositions in post-Vedic Hinduism which are rarely, if ever, disputed. The chief of these is the doctrine of the transmigration of souls or rebirth – the process of *samsara* governed by the law of *karma* (action). Conversely, the Semitic faiths cover a broad spectrum and, at the “mystical” end of this (e.g. Qabbalism, Gnosticism, Sufism) are perhaps no more dogmatic than Hinduism (which itself covers a broad spectrum).

¹² Also known as *Kali*, *Durga* and *Uma*. These multiple forms of *Shiva*’s consorts are known as his *shakti*. In the *Veda*, *Rudra* was considered to be the wrathful god, whereas mild and gentle (the meaning of his name) *Shiva* was to be his counterpart. Only in later times, in the Epic of the *Mahabharata* (13:145f), does *Shiva* acquire the wild and dark traits of a dark gothead.

Krishnamurti rarely used the word ‘God’, preferring to call it ‘the Nameless’, ‘the Eternal Reality’ and characterised it as ‘the source of all energy’ [4]. His teachings refuted any notion of a personal God, or of coming to ‘know’ God through thought, or, by inference, of the dark aspect of God. In this context *Ishwara* (or, for that matter, any other personal God) must be regarded as a man-made delusion and certainly not a step towards apprehension of ultimate Reality. But is there a different tension here, this time between the teachings and the teacher? It is interesting to recall from Section 2.2 that the Theosophists and, at least when directly under their influence in his youth, Krishnamurti himself [3, 16], believed that he was a vehicle for the Lord Maitreya whose previous incarnations included *Krishna*, the most important *avatar* of *Vishnu*. In later life Krishnamurti was extremely reluctant to discuss his personal identity, referring to himself in the third person as ‘the speaker’ during public talks.

To this day Hindus are predominantly worshippers of either *Vishnu*, *Shiva* or *Shiva’s shakti*, each of which their devotees regard as the supreme Being. If one were forced to choose which of these most closely fitted with the concept of God taught by Krishnamurti, it would have to be *Vishnu*. As will be seen later, Krishnamurti developed some important themes of the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which *Krishna* plays a central rôle. The name Krishnamurti (which is, of course, very common in India) means ‘embodiment of *Krishna*’.

4.2 The Principal Scriptures

The vast corpus of sacred literature in Hinduism is divided into two distinct categories: *sruti* (hearing) and *smrti* (memory). *Sruti* comprises the oldest scriptures, the *Veda* (eternal wisdom or knowledge), which is in three historical strata: the *Samhitas* (hymns and formulas, c.1200-900 BC); the *Brahmanas* (sacrificial texts, c.1000-500 BC) and the *Aranyakas* (forest treatises culminating in the *Upanishads* c.700-300 BC).

The *Upanishads* and their dual search for the eternal ‘self’ or ‘soul’ (*atman*) within man and the eternal ground of the universe outside him (*Brahman*), mark the transition to polytheism to pantheistic monism, the second historical period of Hinduism (Section 4.5), and from *sruti* to *smrti*. Zaehner notes that “The great discovery of the *Upanishadic* sages was that the soul is immortal in that it has true being outside space and time and that its connection with the world of matter – the world of *samsara* or perpetual flux – must therefore be transient and in some sense unreal. There have been mystics in all religions and even outside any religion who have vividly experienced timeless Being, but all religions do not believe in transmigration and do not therefore attach the overwhelming importance to this beatific experience that the Hindus undoubtedly do; for those who have no belief in transmigration the experience would seem to be no more than a prefiguration of death which too must put a stop to any experience the soul can have in space and time.” [5]. This observation is salient, for Krishnamurti, while not teaching a doctrine of transmigration, repeatedly stressed the importance of “dying to one’s-self”. “How to realise this eternal soul and how to disengage it from its real or imaginary connection with the psycho-somatic complex that thinks, wills and acts, is from the time of the *Upanishads* onwards the crucial problem facing the Hindu religious consciousness.” [5]

Smrti comprises the *Sutras* (aphorisms, usually philosophic), the Law Books (notably the Laws of *Manu* c.100 AD), the *Puranas* (mythological verses extolling the gods c.300-1200 AD), and the great epics, the *Mahabharata* (c.400-100 BC) and the *Ramayana* (c.200-100 BC). As already mentioned, the *Mahabharata* contains the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Lord), a second transition point from the pantheistic monism of the *Upanishads* to the fervent theism of the popular cults (third historical period in Section 4.5).

4.3 Dharma

Hindus call their religion the *sanatana dharma*, ‘eternal *dharma*’. The concept of *dharma* is elaborated in two distinct senses in the aforementioned scriptures:

- Canon laws and, by extension, the religious assumptions on which these laws (notably the caste system) are based. These were the subject of the Law Books mentioned in Section 4.2.
- Eternal or natural law which governs all human and non-human existence and which, as the scriptures warn repeatedly, is subtle and very difficult to know. To this *dharma* there is neither beginning nor end for either the macrocosm or the microcosm; everything is in bondage to Time and to desire – the desire above all to live and to do (*karma* = doing).

Tension and conflict between these aspects pervades Hinduism, greater emphasis on the former being a characteristic of orthodoxy. Krishnamurti, in contrast to this and in common with other twentieth century reformers, rejected the former aspect and embraced the latter (qv “choiceless awareness” in Section 3.1).

However, he did not teach the associated doctrine of *samsara* in its traditional form of a revolving wheel returning ever again to the point from which it started, and in which there can be neither purpose nor salvation (see also Footnote 11).

4.4 Moksha

Moksha or *mukti* is variously translated as the escape, release, liberation or emancipation of the human soul from time, space and matter (*samsara*, *karma*). It is not unlike what we in the West call the freedom of the Spirit [5]. Its achievement is both the highest goal of Hinduism and the central concern (though unnamed as *moksha*) of Krishnamurti¹³. As such it is arguably at the centre of the common ground between Krishnamurti's teachings and Hinduism. However, the means of achieving *moksha* is a matter of profound disagreement within Hinduism. Some Hindus believe that *moksha* can be attained by the individual's own unaided efforts, while others insist that this is impossible without the grace and assistance of a higher power. Krishnamurti's teaching is a paradoxical synthesis of these two views – it is only through unaided but effortless awareness that grace, and thereby freedom, is attained. Clearly we must also function in the world of time, space and matter, and this is the proper domain of thought ("Thought is time" Section 3.1).

As noted above, Krishnamurti did not expound the classical Hindu view of the cyclical nature of Time, but he did carefully isolate and identify "psychological time" in his analysis¹⁴. The reason for this was his linkage of choiceless awareness, as a means to freedom, to the "ending of psychological time", i.e. the adoption of a mental modality other than thought in the psychological domain. Krishnamurti quite literally had no time for "becoming". Of all the aspects of his teachings, this is perhaps the hardest to grasp.

The second tension in Hinduism is between *moksha* and *dharma*, as exemplified by *Yudhishtira* in the *Mahabharata* or, in recent times, by the life of Mahatma Gandhi. This is the tension between liberation from, and doing what is right in, this world. In the *Mahabharata* it does at least seem that these might be two facets of the same thing. The relationship between their equivalents in Krishnamurti's teachings appears to be closer still. It could even be argued that he considered *dharma* and *moksha* to be synonymous.

4.5 The Four Periods of Hinduism

Historically Hinduism may be divided into four periods:

1. Religion of the Vedas (c.1500-500 BC): Early polytheism akin to the religions of other Indo-European nations. Its principal literary monument is the *Rig Veda*.
2. Classical Hinduism (c.500 BC-800 AD): Subsequent pantheistic monism in which, ultimately, the human soul is identified with the Absolute – an extreme form recently revived in India and introduced to the West with a strong emphasis on *moksha*. For many this constitutes the highest religious truth of which all forms of religion, both Hindu and others, are but imperfect and impermanent manifestations.
3. Mediæval Hinduism (c.800-1900 AD): Monotheism and canon law, especially regarding the caste system. Preoccupation with *moksha* is replaced by the cult of loving devotion (*bhakti*). This is still the predominant form of Hinduism among the (largely rural) masses.
4. Hinduism in the Modern World (from c.1900 AD): Contemporary Hinduism in which its spiritual essence has been reasserted. A re-evaluation of the tension between the two *dharmas* began with the post-19th century reform movements. It reached its climax with the advent of a living saint, Mahatma Gandhi, who led an onslaught on the caste system and other flagrant social injustices perpetrated in the name of 'canon law'. Gandhi's assassin was, of course, an orthodox Hindu¹⁵.

Krishnamurti's teachings explicitly reject the first and third of the above, but have much in common with the second, and are not unsympathetic to the fourth. His declaration that "man cannot come to [religious] truth through any organisation, creed, dogma, priest, ritual, philosophic knowledge or psychological technique" (Section 3.1) is an utterly uncompromising version of pantheistic monism. In contrast, Gandhi accepted all religions as they are – *dharmas* orientated towards *moksha* – and encouraged each to aim at perfecting itself rather than at converting individuals from a *dharma* that is theirs to one that is alien to them.

¹³ Krishnamurti concluded his speech at Ommen on 3 August 1929, in which he dissolved the Order of the Star, with the words "My only concern is to set men absolutely, unconditionally free." [1]

¹⁴ He was equally dismissive by association of the Western preoccupation with "progress" i.e. linear time.

¹⁵ Until a century or so ago the acceptance of the caste system was considered by the orthodox to be the sole criterion of being a Hindu.

5. THE BHAGAVAD GITA

5.1 Significance

In the preface to his translation of, and commentary on, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Prof. Radhakrishnan makes the timeless and general, but nonetheless pertinent, observation that "...restatement of the truths of eternity in the accents of our time is the only way in which a great scripture can be of living value to mankind." [8].

Aldous Huxley wrote in his introduction to the 1945 Svami Prabhavananda / Christopher Isherwood version that "The *Gita* is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy¹⁶ ever to have been made. Hence its enduring value, not just for Indians but for all mankind..."

Zaehner [5] describes the *Gita* as "the most important, the most influential, and the most luminous of all the Hindu scriptures" and notes that "This marks a turning point in Hinduism, for here for the first time a totally new element in Hindu spirituality makes itself felt – the love of God for man and of man for God."

The *Gita*'s influence has extended eastwards to China and Japan and, latterly, to the lands of the west. The two principal scriptures of *Mahayana* Buddhism are deeply indebted to its teachings. Within Hinduism, the *Gita* refined and reconciled the following strands into an organic unity:

- Vedic cult of sacrifice
- Upanishadic teaching of the transcendent *Brahman*
- *Bhagavata* theism and tender piety
- *Samkhya* dualism
- *Yoga* meditation

This is not to say that all historical commentators agreed on it; rather it enabled each perspective to attain a satisfactory interpretation by suggesting that "the one eternal truth from which all others derive cannot be shut up in a single formula". [8] This resonates with both Krishnamurti's declaration that "Truth is a pathless land" (Section 3.1) and Lao Tzu's famous statement concerning the Tao, and yet the *Gita* endorses scriptural authority:

XVI (24) Therefore let the scripture be thy authority for determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing what is declared by the rules of the scripture, thou shouldst do thy work in the world.

The *Gita* comprises the teachings before battle of the God *Krishna*, avatar of *Vishnu*, to *Arjuna*, leader of the *Pandavas* armies and a mortal man of the *Ksatriya* (warrior) caste. The setting is highly significant, for the battle is about to be fought on the *dharmaksetre* (field of righteousness). That this may also be interpreted as the battleground for moral struggle within everyman is made clear by the rôle of *Krishna* as *Arjuna*'s charioteer, i.e. standing beside him in his chariot. Throughout Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, the chariot symbolises the psycho-physical vehicle of individual existence. In this convention, the horses are the senses, the reins the controls, and the charioteer is the spirit or true self, *atman*. [8] It is nonetheless *Arjuna* who, as leader of the *Pandavas*, must ultimately take responsibility for guiding the chariot in battle. Such an extraordinary combination of crisis and intimacy offers ample opportunity for exposition, through dialogue, of the nature of God and of the relationships between God, man and the world.

5.2 Personal God vs Ultimate Reality

The emphasis in the *Gita* is on the Supreme as the personal God who creates the material world by His nature (*prakrti*). He lives in our hearts, is the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices, stirs our hearts to devotion and grants our prayers, is the source and sustainer of values, and enters into personal relations with us in worship and prayer [8]. Radhakrishnan's analysis continues later "Those who look upon the Supreme as

¹⁶ Philosophia Perennis - the phrase was coined by Leibniz; but the thing - the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being - the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the Perennial Philosophy may be found among the traditionary lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms it has a place in every one of the higher religions. (www.perennial.org)

impersonal and relationless regard the conception of *Ishwara* with his power of self-manifestation as the result of ignorance (*avidya*). The power of thought that produces forms which are transient and therefore unreal compared with the Eternal Reality, this power of producing is sometimes called *avidya*. But *avidya* is not something peculiar to this or that individual. It is said to be the power of self-manifestation possessed by the Supreme.”

- III (6) Though (I am) unborn, and My self (is) imperishable, though (I am) the lord of all creatures, yet establishing Myself in My own nature, I come into (empiric) being through My power (*maya*).

This drives a wedge between Jung, whose theory of archetypes is in broad agreement, and Krishnamurti, whose teachings adamantly refute both intermediaries and the power of thought (though the latter may have been used in a different sense). Furthermore, *Krishna* makes it clear that, as the *avatar* of *Vishnu*, he always incarnates of his own accord when needed:

- IV (7) Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O *Bharata* (*Arjuna*), then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself

Krishna elaborates on the criteria in verses IV (8-11). *Arjuna* later “sees” (with the third eye given by *Krishna*) the terrible side of the Supreme:

- XI (25) When I see Thy mouths terrible with their tusks, like Time’s devouring flames, I lose sense of the directions and find no peace. Be gracious, O Lord of gods, Refuge of the worlds!

His vision proceeds to the *Kauravas* rushing to their destruction in this mouth like moths to a flame, for “when we will a deed, we will its consequences also” [8]. In this terrible form, God is Time:

- XI (32) Time am I, world-destroying, grown mature, engaged here in subduing the world. Even without thee (thy action), all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall cease to be.

5.3 God, Man and the World

This section is, more than any other, potentially limitless. However, its contents have been restricted to a few pertinent points from the *Gita* including some that don’t fit conveniently under any other heading.

The contrasting views of Krishnamurti and Gandhi on religions generally (Section 4.5) are touched upon:

- VII (20) But those whose minds are distorted by desires resort to other gods, observing rites, constrained by their own natures.
 (21) Whatever form any devotee with faith wishes to worship, I make that faith of his steady.
- IX (23) Even those who are devotees of other gods, worship them with faith, they also sacrifice to Me alone, O Son of *Kunti* (*Arjuna*), though not according to the true law.
 (24) For I am the enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices. But these men do not know Me in My true nature and so they will fall.

Both men would probably have agreed with the first of these verses (Krishnamurti on condition that the word “other” be removed!), but only Gandhi with the second. The third and fourth verses echo the somewhat equivocal tolerance of the first. The *Gita*’s attitude to inclusivity is similarly compromised:

- IX (32) For those who take refuge in Me, O *Partha* (*Arjuna*), though they are lowly born, women, *Vaisya*, as well as *Sudras*, they also attain to the highest goal.
 (33) How much more then, holy *Brahmins* and devoted royal saints; Having entered this impermanent sorrowful world, do thou worship me.

In other words, all can achieve *moksha*, but some more easily than others.

Krishna tends to panentheism (everything subsists in God) rather than pantheism (everything is God) – a subtle but important difference, when he says:

- IX (4) By Me all this universe is pervaded through My unmanifested form. All beings abide in Me but I do not abide in them.

IX (5) And (yet) the beings do not dwell in Me; behold My divine mystery. My spirit, which is the source of all beings, sustains the beings but does not abide in them.

This is arguably one of the ways in which the *Gīta* allows for the existence of indeterminacy, free will and evil. However, it is difficult to reconcile this statement of panentheism with:

X (20) I, O Gudakesa (Arjuna), am the self seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the very end of beings.

5.4 The Three Paths

If man is part of the Divine, what he needs is not redemption so much as an awareness of his true nature. If he feels himself a sinner estranged from God, he requires a technique by which he reminds himself that he is essentially a part of God and that any feeling to the contrary is illusory. This awareness is not intellectual, but integral; so man's whole nature requires overhauling. The *Gīta* complements its metaphysical aspects by giving comprehensive, practical instruction in discipline (*yoga-sastra*) emphasising three paths:

- *Jñāna-yoga*: Knowledge of Reality
- *Bhakti-yoga*: Adoration and love of the Supreme Person
- *Karma-yoga*: Submission to the will of the Divine purpose

Yoga used in this context means binding, balancing and enhancing one's psychic process. [8] An example of the "instruction manual" approach in the *Gīta* is contained in VI (10-14) which continues to the beautiful imagery of:

VI (19) As a lamp in a windless place flickereth not, to such is likened the *yogi* of subdued thought who practises union with the Self (or discipline of himself)

The chapter concludes:

VI (46) The *yogin* is greater than the ascetic; he is considered to be greater than the man of knowledge, greater than the man of ritual works, therefore do thou become a *yogin*, O *Arjuna*.
 (47) And of all *yogins*, he who full of faith worships Me, with his inner self abiding in Me, him I hold to be the most attuned (to me in *Yoga*).

5.4.1 Jñāna-yoga

By 'knowledge' is understood not simply book-learning which, according to the *Upanishads*, leads nowhere, but the intuitive apprehension of *Brahman* – a term which is variously interpreted by the philosophers, not least Krishnamurti! In the *Gīta* this term means the direct apprehension of timeless Reality and the inter-connection of all things as cohering in the 'Great Self', and therefore also in the individual 'self' once it is liberated from its mortal bonds. Many of Krishnamurti's teachings come within the compass of *Jñāna-yoga*¹⁷.

IV (33) Knowledge as a sacrifice is greater than any material sacrifice, O scourge of the foe (*Arjuna*), for all works without any exception culminate in wisdom.
 (34) Learn that by humble reverence, by inquiry and by service. The men of wisdom who have seen the truth will instruct thee in knowledge.

Krishnamurti refuted all authority to teach, instead trying to "enquire together" with his "followers". The body of his writings and recorded speech is nonetheless referred to as "The Teachings".

IV (39) He who has faith, who is absorbed in it (i.e. wisdom) and who has subdued his senses gains wisdom, and having gained wisdom he attains quickly the supreme peace.

The "faith" necessary for gaining wisdom is not blind belief, it is the aspiration of the soul [8]. The former, more usual definition of the word was anathema to Krishnamurti; the latter is reminiscent of his frequent pleas for people to "see the urgency of all this". *Jñāna* is defined as:

¹⁷ Indeed, in the view of Agrawal [6], they significantly advance it.

- XIII (7) Humility (absence of pride), integrity (absence of deceit), non-violence, patience, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity (of body and mind), steadfastness and self-control.
 (8) Indifference to the objects of sense, self-effacement and the perception of the evil of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.
 (9) Non-attachment, absence of clinging to son, wife, home and the like, and a constant equal-mindedness to all desirable and undesirable happenings.
 (10) Unswerving devotion to Me with wholehearted discipline, resort to solitary places, dislike for a crowd of people.
 (11) Constancy in the knowledge of the Spirit, insight into the end of the knowledge of Truth – this is declared to be (true) knowledge and all that is different from it is non-knowledge.

5.4.2 Bhakti-yoga

The introduction of *bhakti* marks the transition from the pantheistic monism of the *Upanishads* to the theism of Mediæval Hinduism and clear divergence from Krishnamurti's teachings. Even so, "there is only the slightest shift from the ideal of 'holy indifference' typical of the *Upanishads* to a somewhat warmer (and more personal¹⁸) relationship between God and man. The doctrine of love which is called the 'most secret of all' is held in reserve for the last lines of the last Chapter of the *Gita*, yet even here there is the utmost restraint." [5] However, an earlier verse indicates the essence of *bhakti*, indeed (in Radhakrishnan's view) of the whole teaching of the *Gita*:

- XI (55) He who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, free from attachment, who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to Me, O *Pandava* (*Arjuna*)

As indicated later in XII (1-5), *bhakti* is both better and easier than meditation on the Absolute. After a long list of affirmations for those practising *bhakti*, *Krishna* declares that faith is the most important quality:

- XII (20) But those who with faith, holding Me as their supreme aim, follow this immortal wisdom, those devotees are exceedingly dear to me.

Even those who rely on the authority of teachers reach life-eternal. The following unequivocal statement is doubly incompatible with Krishnamurti's teachings.

- XIII (25) Yet others, ignorant of this (these paths of *yoga*) hearing from others worship; and they too cross beyond death by their devotion to what they have heard.

5.4.3 Karma-yoga

It is equally important to clarify the concept of a 'path of action'¹⁹ in the *Gita*. It is not meant to imply that the active life, as against the contemplative, has inherent value. The *Gita* is flexible, making allowances for personality types broadly comparable with Jung's categories of introvert and extravert:

- III (3) O, blameless One, in this world a two-fold way of life has been taught of yore by Me, the path of knowledge for men of contemplation and that of works for men of action.

Krishna stresses the importance of working without concern for the results:

- II (47) To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction.

To achieve this, work must be done in the spirit of sacrifice:²⁰

- III (9) Save work done as and for a sacrifice this world is in bondage to work. Therefore, O son of *Kunti* (*Arjuna*), do thy work as a sacrifice, becoming free from all attachment.

Action must be in accordance with one's own *dharma* (reflecting personality, caste etc.):

- III (35) Better is one's own law though imperfectly carried out than the law of another carried out perfectly. Better is death in (the fulfilment of) one's own law, for to follow another's law is perilous.

¹⁸ My comment inserted in parentheses. I am not familiar enough with the *Upanishads* to form my own view of the scale of this shift.

¹⁹ The terms 'action' and 'work' are regarded as interchangeable throughout this sub-section.

²⁰ Not to be confused with the Vedic concept of sacrifice

5.5 The Three Modes of Nature

XIV (5) The three modes (*gunas*) goodness (*sattva*), passion (*rajas*), and dullness (*tamas*) born of nature (*prakṛti*) bind down in the body, O Mighty-armed (*Arjuna*), the imperishable dweller in the body.

This heralds a major tri-structural theme in the *Gita* which is applied in subsequent chapters to differentiate three kinds of faith, food, sacrifice, penance, gifts (XVII) and relinquishment, knowledge, work, doer(s), understanding, steadiness and happiness (XVIII). The characteristics of the modes are summarised below:

<u>Guna</u>	<u>Approximate meaning</u>	<u>Ethic</u>	<u>Ishwara</u>	<u>Property</u>
<i>sattva</i>	perfect purity / luminosity	knowledge	<i>Vishnu</i>	stability
<i>rajas</i>	impurity leading to activity	passion	<i>Brahma</i>	creation
<i>tamas</i>	darkness and inertia	dullness	<i>Shiva</i>	decay

To rise above bondage, we must rise above these modes of nature (which are present in everyone) to become *trigunatita*:

<u>Guna</u>	<u>Attachment</u>	<u>Result of Relinquishment</u>
<i>sattva</i>	knowledge	light of consciousness (<i> jyoti</i>)
<i>rajas</i>	action	austerity (<i> tapas</i>)
<i>tamas</i>	negligence	tranquillity or rest (<i> santi</i>)

5.6 Application to Arjuna

At the beginning of the *Gita*, *Arjuna* is deeply distressed at the prospect of fighting and killing his own kith and kin. As such, he is "...being guided by social conventions and customary morality rather than by his individual perception of the truth. He has to slay the symbols of this external morality and develop inner strength. His former teachers ... have to be slain before he can develop the wisdom of the soul. *Arjuna* is still talking in terms of enlightened selfishness." [8]. *Krishna* appeals to *Arjuna*'s sense of duty, to his *dharma* as dictated by his caste:

II (31) Further, having regard for thine own duty, thou shouldst not falter, there exists no greater good for a *Ksatriya* than a battle enjoined by duty.
 (32) Happy are the *Ksatriyas*, O *Partha* (*Arjuna*), for whom such a war comes of its own accord as an open door to heaven.

In the concluding chapter, after his lengthy teachings, *Krishna* says:

XVIII (17) He who is free from self-sense, whose understanding is not sullied, though he slay these people, he slays not nor is he bound (by his actions).

This does not mean that *Arjuna* can kill with impunity. Evil actions spring from ignorance, and he who has become conscious of unity with the Supreme Self will not feel the need to do any wrong. *Krishna* later repeats his supreme secret:

XVIII (64) Listen again to My supreme word, the most secret of all. Well beloved art thou of Me, therefore shall I tell thee what is good for thee.

(65) Fix thy mind on Me; be devoted to Me; sacrifice to Me; prostrate thyself before Me; so shalt thou come to Me. I promise thee truly, for thou art dear to Me.

(66) Abandoning all duties, come to Me alone for shelter. Be not grieved, for I shall release thee from all evils.

Arjuna replies:

XVIII (73) Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through Thy grace, O *Acyuta* (*Krishna*). I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to thy word.

Arjuna (re)turns to his appointed action – to fight the *Kauravas* – but now with self-knowledge rather than an egoistic mind. He has learned that God made us for His ends, not our own.

6. CONCLUSION

Zaehner [5] concludes “Hinduism” thus:

“If it has a message at all, it would seem to be this: to live out your *dharma*, which is embedded in the conscience, to do what instinctively you know to be right, and thereby to live in harmony with the *dharma* of all things, so that in the end you may see all things in yourself and yourself in all things and thereby enter into the eternal and timeless peace which is the *dharma* of *moksha*, the ‘law’ of freedom that has its being outside space and time yet comprises and hallows both.”

Stripped of all reference to personal Gods, scriptures, techniques, laws and so on, this statement appears somewhat anodyne and yet, like Krishnamurti’s teachings, is far from simple. The essential difference between the two centres on the way the latter regards time and, by extension, thought, becoming and the relationship between *dharma* and *moksha*.

In his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, Radhakrishnan [8] wrote about *Jñāna*:

“Wisdom is not to be confused with theoretical learning or correct beliefs, for ignorance is not intellectual error. It is spiritual blindness. ...Wisdom is direct experience which occurs as soon as the obstacles to its realisation are removed. The effort of the seeker is directed to the elimination of the hindrances, to the removal of the obscuring tendencies of *avidya*. According to *Advaita Vedanta* wisdom is always present. It is not a thing to be acquired; it has only to be revealed... Utter silence of the mind and the will, an emptying of the ego, produces illumination, wisdom, the light by which we grow into our true being.”

This is closer still to Krishnamurti’s approach which was always based on enquiry and reduction – identifying and removing the spurious. The origins of Krishnamurti’s teachings in the *Advaita Vedanta* tradition have become apparent independently at several points in this paper.

In Agrawal’s view [6] Krishnamurti redefined “some key concepts of Hinduism in a way which proves to be too maverick for the traditionalists. In particular, Krishnamurti provides a completely new understanding of God, self, living and dying, love, devotion and meditation... Furthermore, his rejection of ‘disciplehood’, idolatry and asceticism in the practice of religion puts him outside popular Hinduism. All the same, the focus of his teachings remains on *moksha* or what he calls ‘the first and last freedom’ which he redefines as freedom from the self, where the self in question is the familiar ego-centric consciousness known as the empirical self. Further, his belief in an ‘eternal divine reality’ connects him with the *Rig Veda*, and his claim that ‘for freedom to be the I must go’ connects him firmly with the Vedantic interpretation of reality as non-dualistic. So the crux of the matter is very much in keeping with Hindi spirituality; and his own practice of locating his teachings in his own self-realisation, for from being un-Hindu, advances the tradition of *Gyan Marg*.²¹ The sages of the *Upanishads* have again and again asserted what Krishnamurti has (pro)claimed that ‘No one can give you liberation, you have to find it within... He who has attained liberation has become the teacher – like myself. It lies in the power of each one of us to enter the flame, to become the flame.’ [4].”

The following table summarises some of the main relationships established in this paper between some significant aspects of Krishnamurti’s teachings and of Hinduism. Those items pertaining to the *Bhagavad Gita* are indicated with an asterisk *:

<u>Accepted from Hinduism</u>	<u>Rejected from Hinduism</u>	<u>Krishnamurti’s Major Innovations</u>
Classical aspects, esp. <i>moksha</i>	Hinduism as nationality	Psychological time
<i>Advaita Vedanta</i>	Authority of scriptures*	Unification of <i>dharma</i> & <i>moksha</i>
Shankara’s non-dualism	Personal God*	Meditation = attention
No single way to truth*	Mediæval Hinduism	Choiceless awareness
Non-attachment*	Canon laws	
Observing without observer*	Cyclical time*	
<i>Jñāna-yoga</i> *	<i>Bhakti</i> *	
Faith as urgency*	Organised/other religions*	

²¹ Agrawal’s spelling – qv *Jñāna-yoga* (Section 5.4.1)

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