

Christianity: An Empty Box?

Osho,

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Modern Christians are making desperate attempts to save their religion from its primitive, superstitious past -- and from the fundamentalists! For example, a modernist in the church of England believes, it is said, in a God who works through evolutionary processes only, does not doubt the existence of Jesus Christ, but would not lose his faith if it were to be proved that Jesus never existed, and claims to believe in the supernatural, but not in the miraculous. His Jesus did not perform miracles and was not born of a virgin. The tomb was not empty. Ethics are more important to the modernist than doctrine.

Down the same path is traveling our old friend, the bishop of Durham, who got into trouble for his comments last year about the virgin birth and resurrection. He was recently quoted as saying, "Either God does not exist or else he must establish his own existence."

Is the resurrection of Christianity any more likely than that of a Jesus Christ himself?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ may be possible, but not the resurrection of Christianity.

In fact Jesus never died on the cross. It takes at least forty-eight hours for a person to die on the Jewish cross; and there have been known cases where people have existed almost six days on the cross without dying. Because Jesus was taken down from the cross after only six hours, there is no possibility of his dying on the cross. It was a conspiracy between a rich sympathizer of Jesus and Pontius Pilate to crucify Jesus as late as possible on Friday -- because on Saturday, Jews stop everything; their Sabbath does not allow any act. By the evening of Friday everything stops.

The arrangement was that Jesus would be crucified late in the afternoon, so before sunset he would be brought down. He might have been unconscious because so much blood had flowed out of the body, but he was not dead. Then he would be kept in a cave, and before the Sabbath ended and the Jews hung him again, his body would be stolen by his followers. The tomb was found empty, and Jesus was removed from Judea as quickly as possible. As he again became healthy and healed, he moved to India and he lived a long life -- one hundred and twelve years -- in Kashmir.

It is a coincidence, but a beautiful coincidence, that Moses died in Kashmir and Jesus also died in Kashmir. I have been to the graves of both. The graves are ample proof, because those are the only two graves that are not pointing towards Mecca. Mohammedans make their graves with the head pointing towards Mecca, so in the whole world all the graves of Mohammedans point towards Mecca, and Kashmir is Mohammedan.

These two graves don't point towards Mecca, and the writing on the graves is in

Hebrew, which is impossible on a Mohammedan grave -- Hebrew is not their language. The name of Jesus is written exactly as it was pronounced by the Jews, "Joshua." "Jesus" is a Christian conversion of the Jewish name. The grave is certainly of Jesus.

A family has been taking care of both the graves -- they are very close together in one place, Pahalgam -- and only one family has been taking care of them down the centuries. They are Jews -- they are still Jews -- and I had to take their help to read to me what is written on the graves.

Moses had come to Kashmir to find a tribe of Jews who were lost on the way from Egypt to Jerusalem. When he reached Jerusalem his deep concern was the whole tribe that had got lost somewhere in the desert. When his people were established in Jerusalem, he went in search of the lost tribe, and he found the lost tribe established in Kashmir. Kashmiris are basically Jewish -- later on Mohammedans forcibly converted them -- and Moses lived with them and died there.

Jesus also went to Kashmir, because then it was known that Moses had found the lost tribe there. The doors of Judea were closed -- he would be hanged again -- and the only place where he would find the people who speak the same language, the people who have a same kind of mind, where he would not be a foreigner, was Kashmir. So it was natural for him to go to Kashmir.

But he had learned his lesson. He had dropped the idea of being the only begotten son of God; otherwise these Jews would crucify him too. He dropped the idea of being a messiah. He lived with his few intimate friends and followers in Pahalgam.

Pahalgam is named after Jesus, because he used to call himself "the shepherd" -- Pahalgam means "the town of the shepherd." So it was a small colony of Jesus and his friends, surrounding the grave of their forefather and the founder of Judaic tradition.

Jesus remained a Jew to the very end; he never heard about Christianity.

But the followers who were left in Judea managed to create the story of resurrection. And there was no way to prove it this way or that. Neither could they produce Jesus -- if he was resurrected then where was he? Nor could the other party prove what had happened. They had put such a big rock on the mouth of the cave that it was impossible for Jesus to have removed it, and there was a Roman soldier on duty twenty-four hours, so there was no possibility of anybody else removing the rock and taking the body.

But because Pontius Pilate was from the very beginning against crucifying Jesus.... He could see the man was absolutely innocent. He has some crazy ideas, but they are not criminal. And what harm does it do to somebody? If someone thinks he is the only begotten son of God, let him enjoy it. Why disturb him, and why get disturbed? If somebody thinks he is the messiah and he has brought the message of God...if you want to listen, listen; if you don't want to listen, don't listen. But there is no need to crucify the man.

But Jesus learned his lesson -- learned the hard way. In Kashmir he lived very silently with his group, praying, living peacefully, no longer trying to change the world. And Kashmir was so far away from Judea that in Judea the story of resurrection, amongst the followers of Jesus, became significant.

So I say a kind of resurrection certainly happened -- it was a conspiracy more than a resurrection. But certainly Jesus did not die on the cross, he did not die in the cave where he was put; he lived long enough.

But Christianity cannot even conspire to revive itself, to resurrect itself. There is a great movement among Christian theologians, and they are making desperate efforts. Their very efforts show that they are going to fail. In fact their efforts are ridiculous.

There is one theologian who says, "There is no God, and we have to accept godless Christianity."

He knows that it is impossible to prove God to the coming generation; to the young and the fresh mind it is impossible to prove God. And the days of belief are over. It is a scientific age: you must prove, give the evidence; nobody is going to accept something just by your saying it. So he is ready to sacrifice God to save Christianity. What will Christianity be without God?

There is another theologian who is ready to believe that perhaps Jesus is only a myth, he never existed. It is as difficult to prove Jesus' existence as the existence of God, because no contemporary literature even mentions his name. There is no proof other than those four gospels of his own disciples -- they cannot be called proof. This theologian is willing to drop Jesus to save Christianity, but what will Christianity be without God, without Jesus? But they are so desperate to save Christianity that they don't see the implications of what they are doing.

Another theologian says there have been no miracles; all miracles are just inventions of the followers.

Up to now, for two thousand years, Christianity has depended on the miracles. Those were its basic foundations to prove it a superior religion to any other religion -- because Gautam Buddha does not walk on water, Mahavira cannot revive a dead man, Krishna cannot heal the sick just by touching them, Mohammed cannot make wine out of water.

These miracles have been, for two thousand years, the superiority of Christianity over all religions; otherwise what has Christianity got? But he is ready to drop the miracles because now they are continuously hammered. Nobody is ready to believe in them -- they go against the very way things are. And nature does not change its rules, its laws, for anybody; it does not take anybody as an exception. So the new theologian feels embarrassed. He knows himself that it is impossible to prove the miracles.

I asked the archbishop in Bombay, "You represent Jesus, the pope represents Jesus. You should do at least some little miracles as evidence that you are really representatives; otherwise what have you got to prove that you are the representative? Walk on water, and the whole world will become Christian. And you say faith in Jesus can do miracles -- then try it! You must have faith."

But no theologian, nor any pope, is ready to walk on water. They all know that nature does not change its laws for anybody.

So it is a bold step, but very dangerous.

If you take away all the miracles of Jesus then a very poor man, just a carpenter's son, is left behind, with nothing to be compared with Gautam Buddha or Mahavira or Zarathustra. Really you take away all his glory which depends on miracles. But you cannot prove miracles, and because you cannot prove miracles you create suspicion about Jesus. So it is better to drop miracles; at least the suspicion about Jesus will be dropped. But you don't understand the implication: without miracles Jesus means nothing.

Without miracles Buddha remains the same, because he never did any miracles. People loved him not for his miracles. People loved him for his clarity of perception, of seeing into the very root of things, of giving insights to people to transform life. Walking on water is simply stupid. Even if you can do it, then too it is not a miracle, it is simply stupidity, because you will remain the same. You will not come out of the water a transformed human being.

Just to give you an idea of how Gautam Buddha and Jesus will behave in a similar situation.... Lazarus is dead. His sisters are great devotees -- Lazarus was a great friend of Jesus. They send a message to him, "Come, Lazarus is dead!" And they keep his body inside a cave. Jesus comes and he calls Lazarus, standing outside the cave, "Lazarus, come out!"

Lazarus says, "Have you come? Great, I am coming!" And he comes out. It seems to be dramatic, it seems to be all planned. It seems the man was not dead. He was a friend, his two sisters were devotees -- it was as if he was simply sitting there, waiting.

But it is not a miracle. And even if it is a miracle, even if Lazarus comes back to life, he is not transformed. We don't hear anything else again of Lazarus. A man who has died, a man who has gone through the process of death to the beyond, who comes back, cannot be the same. Lazarus would have become a great master, but he remained the same person -- no change at all.

In a similar situation Gautam Buddha behaves differently.

And I think that is the way any wise man will behave. A woman, Krishagautami, had only one son. Her husband had died, her other children had died; she had seen death in its brutal ugliness. Only one son remained, and she was living only for him; otherwise there was nothing for her to live for. She wanted to kill herself; she had lost everything -- all those people she had loved and lived for. But her neighbors suggested, "One son is alive -- without you he will also be dead. Take care of him. We understand your sorrow...."

But one day that boy also died, and Krishagautami went completely mad. It was a coincidence that Buddha was staying in the same city of Shravasti. Somebody suggested to Krishagautami, "A great mystic is here. Why don't you take your son to him? He can do anything; he is a man of tremendous power. Seeing your situation, and knowing his compassion, something is possible. Perhaps your son may come back to life."

Krishagautami went with the dead body. She put the body at the feet of Gautam Buddha and said, "I have lost everything -- all my children, my husband. I was living only for this son; now he is also dead. I have heard much about your compassion. Now is the time to show it. Let my son get up again, resurrect him." Buddha said, "On one condition: you go into the town...to resurrect your child I need a few mustard seeds, but they should be from a family where nobody has ever died."

Krishagautami was not in a state of mind to realize that this was impossible, that the condition could not be fulfilled. She went from one house to another and people said, "We can give you as many mustard seeds as you want. We can fill our bullock carts with mustard seeds and bring them to Gautam Buddha if your son can be revived. But our mustard seeds won't help, because not only one but thousands must have died in our family. For generations after generations, people have been dying. These mustard seeds are not going to fulfill the condition."

She went on, and the same was the answer everywhere. She went to the king of Shravasti and told him, "Can't you do just a small thing for me? A few mustard seeds and my son can be back, alive."

The king said, "You can have as many mustard seeds as you want."

But the woman said, "There is a condition, and the condition is that in your family no one should have died. And your family is royal -- certainly you will fulfill my condition."

The king said, with tears in his eyes, "Royal or not royal, death makes no difference. My father has died, my son has died, and an unaccountable number of people must have died in my family before I was born. You have to forgive me; I can give you anything you want, but that condition cannot be fulfilled."

The whole day going round the city, the woman became alert of a fact...death is inevitable, today or tomorrow.

After seeing the king she came back to Buddha, touched his feet and said, "Please forgive me. I was asking you to do something against nature, and you were wise enough not to say no to me. Instead you gave me an opportunity to understand that my asking was wrong. Please initiate me. I don't have anything to live for, but I would like to know what it is that lives and what it is that dies." Buddha initiated her, and she became one of the great meditators among his followers.

Now, which one do you think is a miracle, Lazarus or Krishagautami? Which one do you think is doing the miracle? -- Jesus or Gautam Buddha?

Gautam Buddha is not doing a miracle at all, but if you understand it rightly, he is doing the miracle, because he is changing the woman from a mad state into a meditative state. Even if Lazarus becomes alive he remains Lazarus, and one day he will die again, so what is the point?

But Christianity has depended on these miracles in proving its superiority over other religions; in fact those religions are far superior, because they don't depend on such stupid, childish ideas.

So there are theologians who are ready to drop all miracles. But if you drop all miracles then Jesus is left naked; you have taken all his clothes, he has nothing to give to the world.

One theologian takes God away, another theologian makes Jesus himself a myth, another theologian takes miracles away, and the fourth theologian takes religion itself away -- he wants a religionless Christianity, but Christianity has to remain! I don't understand: when you have taken all the contents, why cling to the box? Now even religion has to be taken away because half of humanity is already religionless.

The communists don't believe in religion, and the communists are not only in the communist countries, which is half of humanity; communists are in other countries also. In fact, three-fourths of humanity has already dropped religion. The remaining ones are only formally religious. They are not much disturbed by the idea of taking religion out. But then what remains?

It seems you are clinging just to the label, to the name "Christianity." It is a desperate effort, and stupid too. Why not accept that Christianity is dead? God is dead, miracles are dead, religion is dead, Jesus is no longer born out of a virgin Mary -- so what are you saving?

I have been looking into all these theologians who are prominent people in the Christian world. They have taken all the contents; only an empty box.... But why carry on this empty box? For what reason? Just an old habit, an old attachment. And then there is another effort...because you cannot carry an empty box for long; you will also feel that you are doing something foolish. And others will start feeling, when they look into your box, that you have a great Christianity! -- Jesus is missing, God is missing, miracles are not there, the Virgin Mary is not there. All that was Christianity is not there; then why are you carrying this empty box?

So there is another effort going on, side by side, to fill the box with something.

So Christian theologians are studying other religions, so as to have something similar. It is going to be imitation, inauthentic, because it is not their experience. They call it "comparative religion"; in all Christian colleges they study comparative religion.

I asked the professors and the principals of those colleges, "Why should you be worried about other religions? -- you have Christianity." But the problem is that they have to fill the box with something, so from other religions they are collecting ideas.

They are studying psychoanalysis. Now every Christian preacher has compulsorily to study psychoanalysis. Now, what does psychoanalysis have to do with religion? But the problem is, what religion used to do was to console people in their misery. Now they don't have that religion at all, so they have to find some contemporary way to console people. And psychoanalysis is a very thriving business all around the world; the most highly-paid professionals are psychoanalysts. So Christians think, "They must be doing something for people. Let us learn their art and use it to save Christianity." But they don't understand

that Freud was against religion, the whole of psychoanalysis is against religion. They cannot use it.

They are studying Karl Marx because the man has converted three-fourths of humanity; he must have something -- the idea of equality of human beings. Although he is against religion and against God, he has certain values; those values can be taken.

They are collecting all kinds of things in the box where Christianity used to be. It is so eclectic that it does not make one organic whole. If you look into the box you will get into a madness, because the things they are taking belong to different systems. Within those systems they have a living quality; out of those systems they are dead. Somebody's eyes, somebody's hand, somebody's legs, somebody's heart....

And do you think in your box there will come a man, because you have arranged everything that is needed for a man? -- hands, head, eyes, heart. Everything is there, but it is just nonsense. Those eyes were able to see in an organic unity in a body; now they cannot see. There is no organic unity, and you cannot bring an organic unity.

Christianity is dead.

Their desperate effort to save it simply confirms that it is dead. But it needs guts to accept it.

You will be surprised to know:

When Joseph Stalin died it was not declared to the world. It took a few days for the communist high command...because they had believed that this man is immortal. Stalin, man of steel, he cannot die! But men of steel, whatever your conception may be, have to follow nature: he died. For a few days they delayed informing the world. In fact they could not believe it, but finally they had to accept that Stalin was dead.

The same happened with Mao Tse-tung. His death was not immediately reported to the world because he had become a God.

I know about Sri Aurobindo, because he himself was teaching his whole life that his special work was to give methods to people to attain physical immortality. All old teachers have taught you spiritual immortality; that's not a big problem, because the spiritual element in you is already immortal.

He used to say, "I am doing the real thing. The physical body, which is not immortal, I am going to make it immortal." And one day he died.

One of my friends was there in Pondicherry, in his ashram. He told me, "For seven days we were hiding the fact that Aurobindo had died. We could not believe it ourselves, because if he himself is not immortal, then what about us who have gathered here just to become physically immortal? And the man who was going to make us physically immortal is dead! Now we cannot even ask him, 'You deceived us. What happened?' To declare it to the world looks so embarrassing."

The chief disciple, "the Mother" of the Sri Aurobindo ashram, finally found a solution to it. She said, "He is not dead, he has gone into deep *samadhi*, the

deepest that anyone has ever gone. He will wake up again -- he is simply asleep."

So they made a marble grave for him, with all the comforts, because he was just sleeping and one day he was going to wake up; this was his last experiment in physical immortality. Then years passed, but he did not knock from the grave. People started suspecting, but the mother was over ninety, and she was still preaching physical immortality.

Then one day she died. And it was very difficult for the believers, because the believers had some investment; their investment was their own immortality. If both the leaders were dead, then there was no hope for them. And they had not yet told them the real secret; they had been telling them that they were working on it.

Sri Aurobindo used to give an audience only once a year to his disciples. The rest of the year he was working constantly -- that was the idea in the ashram for physical immortality. Now both are lying in their graves, and there are still idiots living in the ashram, believing that they will awake one day.

Idiots are also miracles -- they still believe. My friend who has been there, and still is there, is a doctor of philosophy, but he still believes. He had been coming to see me, but there is no way to convince him. I tried every possible way, but he said, "Patanjali himself says in the *Yoga Sutras* that *samadhi* and *susupti* -- samadhi and deep sleep -- are exactly alike. They have gone into deep sleep to find out the secret of physical immortality."

I said, "But how long will it take? By that time you will all be dead! Even if they come.... You just go and open the grave, and you will know that it is no longer sleep. There are only skeletons, stinking of death, not the fragrance of immortality.

But the believer is such that he goes on believing, because his belief is basically for a reason: he is afraid that perhaps they are dead, and then what about him? And that stops him -- the idea that they are dead. Do you see the point? He cannot accept that Sri Aurobindo and the mother are dead because that means he will have to die -- and he does not want to die. That's why he has come and lived there for years, waiting for the secret to be revealed. He will wait: "They are asleep and working."

Desperate efforts....

And they happen only when something is really gone and you don't have it. Then you get into a frenzy of creating some way that you can continue to believe in it. For example, *The Bible* believes that God created the world four thousand and four years before Jesus Christ, which is only six thousand years before now. Now, that is disproved so abundantly that it is absolutely wrong.

In India we have found cities which were lying hidden underneath the earth, seven thousand years old -- and not ordinary cities. I have been to Harapur, Mohanjodro -- both are in Pakistan now -- and it is something to see. Seven thousand is a very orthodox idea; there are scholars who say they must be more than fifteen thousand years old. But even if they are only seven thousand years

old, there must have been a long past to those cities, because that kind of city cannot be created instantly.

They have bigger roads than New York. Now, a city seven thousand years old, having a wider road than New York...it means they must have had vehicles, traffic, otherwise why create such a road? They had beautiful bathrooms, they had a system of running water. Even if they were seven thousand years old, they must have been developed for thousands of years to come to such technology, to such plumbing, that they can have running water in their bathrooms, in their houses. They had swimming pools....

In China we have found human bodies, frozen in ice, ninety thousand years old. Now, when all these facts came to the Christian theologians, there was great turmoil: What to do? -- because God created the world six thousand years ago. I am giving you this example of how a desperate believer functions.

One theologian came up with the idea, which became accepted by the whole Christianity, that God created the world exactly as it is said in *The Bible*, six thousand years ago, with cities under the earth, with bathrooms, with plumbing, with wide roads, with ninety-thousand-year-old bodies...just to test your faith!

"God can do anything. If he can create the world, do you think he cannot create something that looks ninety thousand years old to all scientific investigation? But the world was created six thousand years ago." A desperate effort to cling to superstitions! But there comes a point where all your superstitions are proved to be superstitions. Then this situation arises that you start saying, "They are all superstitions, and we can drop them and still we can save Christianity."

You cannot.

Those superstitions have been the very backbone of your Christianity.

Without those superstitions your Christianity will lose all its life. And it will be more absurd to believe in a Christianity devoid of all superstitions, miracles, God -- even of religion.

Now they are saying it is only ethics, not doctrine.

But ethics need not be Christian -- ethics has nothing to do with Christianity.

Ethics is a science in itself. I have been a teacher of ethics, and I had never thought that ethics can be Christian. Ethics asks what is truth? what is good? what is bad? It has nothing to do with religion; it has something to do with your actions. And it is the same for everybody. Whether you are in Tibet or China or in America, it does not make any difference, the ethical standard will be the same. Ethics is a science completely in itself.

Now, finding nothing in their doctrines, they are falling back on ethics, saying that the essential thing is not doctrine -- because all their doctrines have been proved wrong. Up to now it was doctrine; now because all doctrines are proved wrong, or at least questionable, and they have not been able substantially to support their doctrines and their truth....

This is the last effort of a dying religion. You drop those doctrines -- they are dangerous, they are killing you -- so you jump upon something else that can give you a resurrection. But ethics is purely a science in itself. It thinks about values --

which have nothing to do with Hindu, Mohammedan or Christian. Ethics is not going to save Christianity; it is not going to give a resurrection.

There is no possibility for Christianity.

And it will be good that they accept it and drop the dead body. It is a great load, and by carrying it unnecessarily, you are missing your life. And living with a dead religion you are bound to become dead. Your churches are graveyards. There is no song of life, there is no dance of existence.

It is better to simply get out of the old habit. These are just old habits. I don't know why Christian priests', nuns', bishops' old clothes are called habits -- I don't know. But one thing I know: just drop the habit! -- whatever it means. Just be natural and human.

And it is not only a question of Christianity. Your question was concerned with Christianity; otherwise the same is the situation with other religions.

Man has come of age, and he does not need those old, superstitious religions; he needs a more scientific approach to explore his being. And that will be possible only if he gets rid of the old habits. And they are very dirty, because for thousands of years the same habits have been used by so many people. They are stinking!

Get out of those habits as quickly as possible.

Osho,

This morning, as you spoke of the "questionless answer," I watched my questions dissolving into silence, which I shared for a moment with you. But one question survived, and that is: if we don't ask you questions, how are we going to play with you?

That's really a question!

It will be difficult, so whether you have the questions or not, still you can go on asking just the same. Your question need not be yours, but it must be somebody else's, somewhere. And my answer may help somebody somewhere, sometime. So let us continue the game.

I cannot say anything on my own. Unless there is a question, I am silent.

Because of the question it is possible for me to respond. So it does not matter whether the question is yours; what matters is that the question is bound to be somebody's somewhere.

And I am not only answering you. I am answering, through you, the whole of humanity...not only the contemporary humanity, but also the humanity that will be coming when I will not be here to answer.

So find out all the possible angles and questions, so that anybody, even in the future when I am not here, who has a question can find an answer in my words. To us it is a play. To somebody it may become really a question of life and death.

Osho,

Questions seem to be the offspring of the capacity to doubt; and doubt, the spark of an alive and active intelligence.

Without questions -- and thus, without doubt -- how can intelligence continue to flourish?

And yet within you is the ultimate in silence and the ultimate in intelligence.

It is true in the beginning. Doubt helps your intelligence, sharpens it. Questioning makes you aware of many possibilities of which you may not have been aware before.

But this is only the beginning of the journey. At the end, when all your questions have disappeared...and the real master never gives you the answer. Let me repeat it: the real master never gives you the answer, so you cannot doubt it. He brings you to a point where all your questions disappear. His answers are murderous, killing your questions, destroying them mercilessly, to bring you to a point where there is no question in your consciousness.

The master does not give you any answer that you can doubt. This non-questioning consciousness is the answer. And it is your experience; you cannot doubt it, it is there.

From this point, silence and intelligence are just two aspects of the same thing. From this point, not knowing, innocence and knowing are two aspects of the same thing. This is the mysterious world which is available to you if you can pass the jungle of questions and doubts and reach into the clear, where there are no questions and doubts, and no answers either. Just you are in utter silence, with immense clarity, with tremendous sharpness.

That's why I am against belief, because it will never allow you to reach to this stage. It will stop you in the very beginning of the journey. It will not help to make you more intelligent; it will make you more unintelligent. It will make you more fanatic, superstitious, but it will not allow you to come into the clarity which can be called the very goal of what transpires between master and disciple: the moment of total silence, the moment where everything is crystal clear.

But it has to be earned. Belief is cheap. This will bring you something totally different, what I call trust in existence. In the dictionaries, trust and belief and faith are all synonymous -- but not in reality.

Belief is opposite to trust. You believe because you have doubt; the belief is an antidote to doubt, it is a need to cover up the doubt. Trust is when you don't have any doubt, so trust is not a belief. Belief is always in something -- in some doctrine, in some principle, in some philosophy.

Trust is in the totality of the cosmos. It has nothing to do with books -- *Holy Bibles, Gitas, Korans* -- no. Then there is only one scripture which is spread all around you -- in the trees, in the rivers, in the ocean, in the stars. And you don't have to read it; you have to be just silent, and it starts showering on you all its wisdom, which is eternal.

I am against belief because I want you to come to the point of trust.