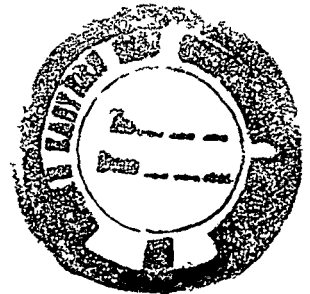


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NATURE AND JUSTIFICATION
OF
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS



By

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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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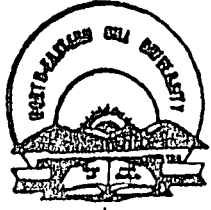
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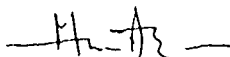
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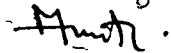
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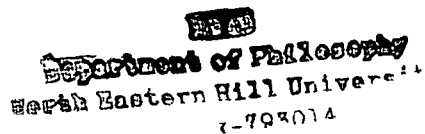
Certified that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by Krishan Singh Charak that the contents of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the dissertation had not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other University.

In habit and character Krishan Singh Charak is a fit and proper person for the degree of M.Phil.


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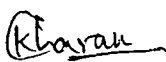
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* CHAPTER - I *
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Traditionally Religious Beliefs have their source in the experiences of some individuals who are supposed to be specially chosen by God for receiving the "revelation" of the ultimate truth about man, God and the universe to pass on this knowledge to the generality of mankind for their moral and spiritual good. The basic religious beliefs are given meaning by reference to the experiences of these individuals who refer to these experiences in their teachings. These basic or central religious beliefs are expressed originally in the ordinary language shared between the teacher and the taught but since these beliefs are not about things ordinarily perceived or experienced by common man, the question of their justification arises, both for the believers and the non-believers. The question of jurisdiction is the question of the truth of these beliefs. The believer settles for an answer in terms of faith. He assumes that the religious teacher is telling the truth revealed to him by God himself or his agency and even though he may not fully understand the meaning of those truths he tends to attach great significance to them. The believers believe in straight forward manner that the truth of

these beliefs will be confirmed by them as and when they have appropriate experiences. One question arises here-Is his faith in the truth itself justified? If yes-in what sense?

But for the non-believer the question of justification is a more serious one. He tends to treat these questions as quasi scientific questions. Since the truth of religious beliefs cannot be verified in experience in the ordinary sense of the term, it remains suspect. Moreover, the challenge the very meaningfulness of the propositions expressing religious beliefs. So, the next question I shall discuss in this proposed thesis is whether the non-believers stance is justified.

Traditionally, philosophers have tackled the question of justification of religious beliefs by constructing arguments which are known as proofs for God's existence and deriving the justification for religious beliefs in general from the considerations of God's nature and purpose in creation. But generally speaking their arguments have not met with great success. Recently however, the whole question of justification of religious beliefs by constructing proofs for God's existence itself has been put in question. Recent philosophers following Wittgenstein's general theory of language have claimed that

asking for justification of religious beliefs in itself unjustified. They suggest that language being a "form of life" the specific "language games" exist in the language as specialised human linguistic practices. For such practices to exist, there can be no justification in terms of something outside the practices. They claim that religious language in which the religious beliefs are expressed is such a specialised language game—a practice in which we talk about the attributes and the purposes of God, and man's relationship with Him. A large part of my thesis will be concerned with explaining the idea of religious language as understood in Wittgensteinian terms. I shall then raise the question: "Is the claim that 'asking for justification of religious beliefs is unjustified' itself justified?"

MEANINGFULNESS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS: A POSITIVISTS' CRITIQUE

Sir Alfred Ayer has been the foremost exponent of logical positivism, so I shall evaluate his position in particular while referring to logical positivism.

Sir, Alfred Ayer, in his book 'Language, Truth and logic' talks about the meaningfulness of sentences. He strongly puts forward his views about the purpose of philosophy. He says "The traditional disputes of philosophers are, for the most part as unwarranted as they are unfruitful. The surest way to end them is to establish beyond question what should be the purpose and method of a philosophical enquiry".¹ He emphatically says that the traditional view of philosophy which considers Metaphysics as Indispensable part of philosophy is wrong. He proves that all metaphysical problems and there solutions are mere nonsense. He says "Metaphysical utterances are due to the commission of logical errors, rather than to a conscious desire on the part of their authors to go beyond the limits of experience".²

Logical positivists put forward a standard criterion as yardstick to which all propositions must conform. This Criterion they call the criterion of meaningfulness of sentences or the principle of verification. "The prin-

principle of verification is supposed to furnish a criterion by which it can be determined whether or not a sentence is literally meaningful... that a sentence had literal meaning if and only if the proposition it expressed was either analytical or empirically verifiable".³ According to this principle either the proposition shall refer to something verifiable in experience or the proposition should express a tautology. This criterion leaves out the sentences which are neither analytical nor are empirically verifiable. A.J. Ayer being aware of this difficulty modifies his principle of verification. In the modified form, he introduces a new term 'statement' "... and for this purpose I shall make use of the familiar word 'statement' though I shall perhaps use it in a slightly unfamiliar sense... any form of words that is grammatically significant shall be held to constitute a sentence and that every indicative sentence, whether it is literally meaningful or not shall be regarded as expressing a statement... any two sentences which are mutually transferable will be said to express the same statement. The word 'proposition' will be reserved for what is expressed by sentences which are literally meaningful".⁴ This criterion takes into consideration only the factual sentences

thus it overcomes problem faced by the previous criterion. It also segregates the statements which belong to the class of propositions from those which don't. And thus in this form the principle of verification states "a statement is held literally meaningful if and only if it is either analytic or empirically verifiable." ⁵ that is to say, "2+2=4", "a bechelor is unmarried." These propositions are true because they are analytic or tautologies. The reverse of them becomes false as it becomes self-contradictory. And the empirically verifiable propositions are true or false because they can be Judged to be so in experience, for example "it is raining outside of this room".

As to the nature of verification, Sir Alfred Ayer draws a distinction between "practical verifiability" and "verifiability in principle". Here what he wants to say is that a proposition may not be verifiable in practice as we may lack means and material for its practical verification, but it does not mean that it is not verifiable in principle. A proposition to be significant - it must be verifiable at least in principle. He gives an example of the propositions of this nature "There are mountains on the farther side of the moon" ⁻⁶ In this proposition though we have not seen the farther side

of the moon or no body has yet given an account of this but if we happen to go and make an observation we can know that this proposition can be termed as true or false as per the observation and this is what is meant by verifiable in principle and thus is significant. He contrasts this with a metaphysical proposition which he calls 'pseudo-proposition'- the absolute enters into, but is itself incapable of evolution and progress. This proposition according to this criterion is not even verifiable in principle and is thus insignificant.

He further makes a distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' sense of the term 'verifiable'. "A proposition is said to be verifiable in strong sense of the term, if and only if its truth could be conclusively established in experience,... it is verifiable, in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable".⁷

Ayer admits that conclusive verifiability cannot be taken as the criterion of significance of propositions for no general proposition of law can be conclusively verified. For example- 'All men are mortal', 'A body tends to expand when heated', 'Arsenic is poisonous'. He says that it is very nature of these propositions that their truth cannot be established with certainty

by any finite series of observations. So, he admits that 'no proposition other than a tautology can possibly be anything more than a probable hypothesis? So, since the criterion of conclusive verifiability is too strong, he switches over to weaker sense of verifiability. He says that "...the question that must be asked about any putative statement of fact is not, would any observations make its truth or falsehood logically certain? but simply, would any observation be relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood? And it is only if a negative answer is given to this second question that we conclude that the statement under consideration is nonsensical".⁸

He formulates the criterion in the following way, "let us call a proposition which records an actual or possible observation an experiential proposition... it is the mark of genuine factual proposition... not that it should be equivalent to an experiential proposition or any finite number of experiential propositions, but simply that some experiential proposition can be deduced from it in conjunction with certain other premises without being deducible from these other premises alone."⁹

Ayer says, by this criterion, we can rule out the significance of the utterances of certain kind which

are literally non-sensical. He gives the following example as being not even false but non-sensical- "...the world of sense experience was altogether unreal... that senses sometimes deceive us, just because the expectations to which our sense-experiences give rise do not always accord with what we subsequently experience. That is, we rely on our senses to substantiate or confute the judgements which are based on our sensations. And therefore the fact that our perceptual judgements are sometimes found to be erroneous has not the slightest tendency to show that the world of sense experience is unreal. And, indeed, it is plain that no conceivable observation or series of observations, could have any tendency to show that the world revealed to us by sense experience was unreal."

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Coming to the meaningfulness of religious beliefs, Ayer says that "the existence of a being having the attributes which define the God of any non-animistic religion cannot be demonstratively proved. To see that this is so, we have only to ask ourselves what are the premises from which the existence of such a god could be deduced. If the conclusion that a god exists is to be demonstratively certain, then these premises must be certain, for, as the conclusion of a deductive argument is already contained in the premises, any uncertainty there may

be about the truth of the premises is necessarily shared by it... no empirical proposition can ever be anything more than probable. It is only a priori propositions that are logically certain. But, we cannot deduce the existence of a god from an a priori proposition... why a priori propositions are certain is that they are tautologies. And from a set of tautologies nothing but a further tautology can be validly deduced. It follows that there is no possibility of demonstrating the existence of god."¹¹

He further says that we can not prove the existence of God even probable. Because if we bring in probability then the existence of God will become a matter of empirical hypothesis. And then applying the criterion of verification, it would be possible to deduce from it, and other empirical hypothesis, certain experiential propositions which were not deducible from those other hypothesis alone. He says that if 'god' be taken as a metaphysical term, then it cannot be even probable that a god exists, as metaphysical terms are neither true nor false and therefore have no literal significance. He even goes to the extent of saying that 'utterances about the nature of God are non-sensical.

So, we find that logical positivists in general

and A.J. Ayer in particular give a strict criterion for the meaningfulness of all types of sentences. But, this criterion though^v seems from out-side a very complete has some commonsense problems and logical difficulties. In the Introduction of his book Language, Truth and Logic he accepts some of these problems. First of all the main-force of his criterion of meaningfulness of sentences i.e. "it is the mark of genuine factual proposition... not that it should be equivalent to experiential proposition, but simply that some experiential proposition can be deduced from it in conjunction with certain other premises without being deducible from these premises alone". Ayer admits that any statement can pass this criterion. Given any statement 'S' and any observation statement 'O', then 'O' follows from premises (i)'S' and (ii) if 'S' then 'O' without following from (ii) 'O' alone. Thus the statement 'the absolute is lazy' and 'if the absolute is lazy, this is white, jointly entails the observation statement 'this is white'. Further,

"God governs the world,

If good governs the world, then this rose
is red,

-this rose is not red".

The other objection is that Ayer concludes that the

"Utterances about the nature of God are non-sensical". This seems a very paradoxical conclusion. In common sense view, the religious beliefs are such that the people may say, for example the atheists, that the belief in god is false but none will say that it is out right non-sensical. Thus, the logical positivists claim that religious beliefs are nonsensical and meaningless is unjustified.

Further, the 'meaningfulness' of a proposition is presupposed to any attempts of verification. Until a proposition is meaningful or is intelligible the question of its verification doesnot arise. The question of verification arises in relation to establishing the truth of a claim and not in the 'sense' of a claim. Though a proposition may not be verifiable but it can be meaningful. The question of truth if at all, should come after the meaningfulness of a proposition and not before that.

Further more, for a religious believer what counts as relevant for verification is not the same as what would count so for a scientist. For example, a religious believer already sees certain things as 'miracles', or certain loss as a 'punishment' etc. These ordinary events will be relevant for verification for a religious

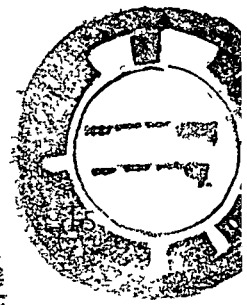
man. So, a religious believer uses a language in which events are already described in a way such that they appear meaningful. Their meaning, it seems, cannot be translated in a non-religious language. This is a point which will be raised in Ch. 4. with reference to 'Wittgenstein's theory of language.'

What is said in religion, ethics, aesthetics and poetry is already meaningful though not in the same way as propositions of science. The subject matter of all the said subjects is not verifiable in the same way as proposed by the logical positivists but we cannot simply discard them as meaningless.

So, to conclude I can say that the logical positivism even if true is irrelevant to the understanding of religious beliefs. It fails as a criterion of meaningfulness for the truth of religious beliefs.

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STATUS OF COSMOLOGICAL PROOF OF
GOD'S EXISTENCE: THE RUSSEL AND COPLESTON DEBATE

In natural theology, there are different arguments which strive to prove the existence of God. And the proponents of these arguments claim that the existence of God can be philosophically proved. Out of these arguments many are long refuted but the cosmological argument for the existence of God is still widely accepted, so I shall evaluate exclusively this argument.

Cosmological argument is based on the fact that the Universe is a 'cosmos', an ordered system based on rational principles and not a disordered chaos. So, any argument based on this assumption of cosmos is a cosmological argument. Another aspect of this argument, is that this is an a posteriori argument because it is based on the observed facts or human experience. On this basis all arguments namely, the argument from contingency, the design argument or teleological argument and moral argument etc. are cosmological in nature. But, here I shall touch only upon the arguments of contingency, Religious argument and moral argument. Firstly, because the design or teleological argument is long been refuted. Secondly, it is excluded from the debate between Russel

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and Copleston. So, I shall refer to only the argument from contingency, Religious argument and moral argument while talking about the cosmological argument.

The Cosmological argument is based on the first three of the five proofs of existence of God propounded by St. Thomas Aquinas. Basic to this concept is the notion of contingency which means dependence. Aquinas three proofs can be states as under.

First Proof :

"Somethings in the world are certainly in process of change : this we plainly see. Now anything in process of change is being changed by something else. This is so because it is characterstic of things in process of change that they donot yet have the perfection towards which they move, though able to have it; where as it is characteristic of something causing change to have that perfection already. For to cause change is to bring into being what was previously only able to be, and this can only be done by something that already is: thus fire, which actually hot, causes wood, which is able to be hot, to become actually hot, and in this way causes change in the wood. Now the something cannot at the same time be both actually x and potentially x, though it can be actually x and potentially y: the actually hot cannot

at the same time be potentially hot, though it can be potentially cold. Consequently, a thing in process of change cannot itself cause that same change, it cannot change itself. Of necessity therefore anything in process of change is being changed by something else. Moreover, this something else, if in process of change, is itself being changed by yet another thing; and this last by another. Now we must stop somewhere, otherwise there will be no first cause of the change, and, as a result, no subsequent causes. For it is only when acted upon by the first cause that the intermediate causes will produce the change: If the hand does not move the stick, the stick will not move anything else. Hence one is bound to arrive at some first cause of the change not itself being changed by anything, and this is what everybody understands by God".¹

Second: The first cause argument:-

"The second way is based on the nature of causation. In the observable world causes are found to be ordered in series; we never observe, nor ever could, something causing itself, for this would mean it proceeded itself, and this is not possible. Such a series of causes must however stop somewhere; for in it an earlier member causes an intermediate and the intermediate a last (whether the intermediate be one or many). Now if you eliminate a

cause you also eliminate its effects, so that you cannot have a last cause, nor an Intermediate one, unless you have a first. Given therefore no stop in the series of causes, and hence no effect, and this would be an open mistake. One is therefore forced to suppose some first cause, to which everyone gives the name 'God'".²

The Third way :-

"Some of the things we come accross can be but need not be, for we find them springing up and dying away, thus sometimes in being and sometimes not. Now everything cannot be like this, for a thing that need not be, once was not; and if everything need not be, once upon a time there was nothing. But if that were true there would be nothing even now, because something that doesnot exist can only be brought into being by something already existing. So that if nothing was in being nothing would be in being now, which contradicts observation. Not everything therefore is sort of thing that need not be; there has got to be something that must be. Now a thing that must be, may or may not owe this necessity to something else. But just as we must stop somewhere in a series of causes, so also in series of things which must be and owe this to other things.

One is forced therefore to suppose something which must be, and owes this to no other thing than itself; Indeed it itself is the cause that other things must be".³

Now, on taking a close look on these three ways we find all the three ways highlight one thing i.e. the induction from contingent to necessary being. And this Induction is carried out on the basis of so called principle of sufficient reason - "In case of any positive truth, there is some sufficient reason for it, something which in this sense makes it true, in short, there is some sort of explanation, known or unknown, for everything"⁴

And it is due to this fact that the philosophers after Aquinas propounded the "Argument from contingency of the world". Since everything in the world is contingent and everything existing not only in the world but even the world must have a reason for its existence, this is the fact which Copeland in a debate with Russell highlights. He gives three arguments.

Argument from contingency:- "...we know that there are at least some beings in the world which do not contain in themselves the reason for their existence. For example, I depend on my parents, and now on the air, and on food, and so on. Now, secondly, The world is simply

the real or Imagined totality or aggregate of Individual objects, none of which contain in themselves alone the reason for their existence. There is not any world distinct from the objects which form it, anymore than the human race is something^y apart from the members. Therefore I should say, since objects or events exist, and since no object of experience contains within itself the reason for its existence, this reason, the totality of objects, must have a reason external to itself. That reason must be an existent being. Well, this being is either itself the reason for its own existence, or it is not. If it is, well and good. If it is not, then we must proceed farther. But if we proceed to infinity in that sense, then there is no explanation of existence at all. So, I should say, in order to explain existence, we must come to a being which contains within itself the reason for its own existence, that is to say, which cannot not exist." 5

The objection which Russel cites in this argument is that we cannot talk of 'necessary' being in this context. He is of the view that the word necessary can only be applied to analytic propositions i.e. to say the propositions of Mathematical certainty, for example $2+2=4$ and a bachelor is an unmarried man. These proposi-

tions are necessarily true because the denial of these arguments become self contradictory. He says "... the word 'necessary' I should maintain, can only be applied significantly to propositions. And, in fact, only to such as are analytic - that is to say - as it is self contradictory to deny".⁶

Again, on the question of a proposition of the form "if there is a contingent being, then there is necessary being" as proposed by Copleston, Russell says that there is no sense in calling some beings as contingent and others as necessary. "... I donot admit the idea of a necessary being and I don't admit that there is any particular meaning in calling other beings 'Contingent'.⁷ Because cotingent means accidental but there is no reason that these beings should be something other than they are.

Copleston's position comes out from the point that the orderly form of the world can be explained- that the existence of contingent being cannot be explained without the help of a necessary being. He says "If you add up chocolates you get chocolates after all and not a sheep".⁸

So, if we are to explain the reality of the

world we need a necessary-being and since the reality is explicable, therefore there exists a necessary being which we can say is the self-existent cause of the world. On this Russell's objection is that we cannot even raise the question of the cause of the 'whole'. He says the question "Does the world have a cause?" is meaningful but when we say that the God is the cause of the world - God is used as a proper name. Here 'God exists' is meaningless - It is equal to saying "the existent round square exists."⁹

Further, to the question of sufficient reason - an adequate explanation of some particular being or even the world as a whole - Russell says this cannot be got and one should not expect to get.

Russell's position amounts to saying that the world is just there and the concept of cause which is applicable to particular things in the world is not applicable to the whole. And the idea that we can explain the world in causal terms is meaningless. The important question raised by Copleston is that - then the world should be 'grateutous' as considered by Sartre - Russell says that it would amount to saying that it is something other than what it is. But he says "I should say that the world is just there, and that is all."¹⁰

Argument from Religious Experience:

"... By religious experience I don't mean simply feeling good. I mean a loving, but unclear, awareness of some object which irresistibly seems to the experience as something transcending the self, something transcending all the normal objects of experience, something which cannot be pictured or conceptualised, but of reality of which doubt is impossible - at least during the experience. I should claim that cannot be explained adequately and without residue, simply subjectively. The actual basic experience at any rate is most easily explained on the hypothesis that there is actually some objective cause of that experience."
11

In this argument we find that the gist of the argument is subjective. It is only the experiencer who is sure of his experience but even he cannot define it in clear terms rather there is no conceptualisation of this experience which amounts to saying that even the experiencing person does not know what it is. Russel in an objection says that this sort of experience is not an experience like the normal experience which people admit. It is very subjective and private.

Copleston Clarifies his position and says that

this is not very subjective because it can be understood by the impact of the experience on the life of the experiencer. It is a real experience and is like falling in love. And the explanation is the existence of actual cause of the experience. He says that this experience is not like hearing 'Satan' as the religious experiences is not an experience of an object of disgust and horror but of love, kindness and benevolence and this changes the behaviour of the person and attests the veracity of the experience.

But Russel's position is different. He says that the change of character cannot be a proof. There may be some important experiences in life which affect the life of the person but they may not be religious experiences. Even the works of fiction have the great influences on the life of the reader. If a man is reading a work of fiction he may fall in love with the person in fiction who never existed. In that sense he is not loving a real person but a phantom. Here Copleston agrees but says that "yes, in one sense man is loving a phantom - perfectly true. But in another sense he is loving what he perceives to be a value."

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The Moral Argument:-

This argument is again an argument based on

the dependance - dependance of morality on God. Copleston says "... All goodness reflects God in some way and proceeds from him, so that in a sense the man who loves what is truly good, loves God` even if he doesnot advent to God. But, still I agree that the validity of such an interpretation of man's conduct depends on the recognition of God's existence obviously".¹³

Thus Copleston holds the position that the goodness has a divine origin. Accordingly, we cannot distinguish between good and bad without the reference to God. God is the author of morality. If there is no God then there is no absolute values and no absolute law. So, it is only by reference to 'absolute values and its foundation in God that we can explain the terms or acts as good and bad, right and wrong.

But, accordingly to Russel this is not the case. We donot refer to any external objective principle for making the judgements as right or wrong, good or bad. We do this in accordance with our feelings and emotions. "I donot have any justification any more than I have when I distinguish between blue and yellow? I can see they are different".¹⁴ Further he takes a utlitarian stand and says "... I think right conduct is that which would probably produce the greatest possible balancce

in intrinsic value of all the acts possible in the circumstances, and you're got to take account of the probable effects of your action in considering what is right."

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Lastly, Russel does not accept the concept of 'absolute' values as these values are changing from time to time and from place to place. What is right today may be considered wrong tomorrow.

Hence they fail to reach to any conclusion in any of the arguments. This seems due to the reason that both Russel and Copleston hold two different positions. Copleston representing a theistic position and Russel representing an atheistic or agnostic position. Further, with the given arguments in the debate it is not possible to convince a person who does not have faith in God in a strong sense of the term. Because Copleston's arguments are based on the dependence of the world on the absolute and necessary being i.e. God which cannot be got out of the logical analysis. It is a matter of faith that we accept. Hence the principle of sufficient reason which Copleston applies to both particular things and to the world as a whole is not very convincing. So far the position of Russel is concerned - he seems to hold two different positions. On the one hand he seems to be denying the claim that 'there is a reason for the world as a

whole'. And on the other hand he seems to find 'asking for reason for the world as a whole' meaningless.

The debate ends up in impasse and leaves us with two positions open for choices- either the universe is an inexplicable brute fact or that its existence is intelligible through its dependence upon a reality i.e. God. In the next chapter I shall highlight that both the proponents are wrong so far the point of dealing with the religious entity i.e. God is concerned. I shall also show that not only they did not reach to any conclusion but it is not possible to reach to any conclusion in this sort of judgements.

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CHAPTER - IV

RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE AND THE NATURE OF
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS :

The criterion of meaning as advocated by logical positivists denies the possibility of meaningfulness of religious language as such. According to this criteria, as we have seen, an utterance to be meaningful must be verifiable at least in principle. The religious utterances are such that any sort of verification cannot be applied to these utterances outside the religious form of life. Religious utterances do not refer to any confirmable object and hence stand at an altogether different level than the verifiable utterances. The object of religious utterances is 'God' which is not amenable to any verification and hence the nature of investigation totally changes. The logical positivists' criteria lost acceptability because they tried to judge the utterances of empirical and metaphysical nature with the same standard yard stick. Same stands true of the Russel and Copleston debate. Copleston is trying to justify the existence of God through logical conclusions drawn from the real world and Russel counters all the arguments put forward by Copleston. The nature of the debate is such that not only they fail to reach to any conclusion with the arguments at hand but it is not possible to reach to any conclusion in this sort

of debate. The problem at hand is such that we use the concepts in religion and moral spheres without their teleological contents.

Moral and religious philosophers in recent times have rightly come to reach at the roots of the problem. Alasdair MacIntyre in his book After Virtue rightly says - how the crisis in moral sphere arises and the enlightenment project of justifying morality was bound to fail. He says, "... moral judgements are linguistic survivals from the practices of classical theism which have lost the context provided by these practices. In that context moral judgements were hypothetical and categorical in form But take away from them that in virtue of which they were categorical and what are they?"¹ And it is due to this reason that in modern times we find the interminable status of moral debates and confusion in the moral spheres.

The same inspiration seems to be working behind Wittgenstein's stand. As to the nature of language and sort of justification it requires, Wittgenstein's theory of language games is enlightening. So, a brief description of this theory shall help in a great way in understanding the nature of religious language.

Wittgenstein in his book Philosophical Investigations propounded the theory of "language games and forms of life". This theory puts forward the 'use -criterion' of meaning. According to this, "the meaning of a word is its use in the language"² The concept of 'language games' is basic to the whole theory of meaning. A language game is described by Wittgenstein as, "a whole consisting of language and actions into which it is woven.... to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life"³. Here we find that the language games and the forms of life are inseparable or interwoven. These wholes, consisting of languages and actions provide the intelligibility and justification to us within a particular language game.

Wittgenstein talks of the multiplicity of language games. This is due to the multiple usage to which language is put, 'to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life'. Again the forms of life are 'the given' and have 'to be accepted'.

Another important point in language games is the "model component" which is illustrated by Wittgenstein with help of an example of a 'picture of a boxer in a particular stance'. This picture of the boxer can be interpreted in different ways. Wittgenstein being

aware of these difficulties involved in the interpretation he makes a distinction between 'surface grammar' and 'depth grammar'. The importance of this distinction is apparent in the use of language, for example, the sentence - 'You will go there' can be put in different ways,

(a) by an officer to a subordinate during army manoeuvres;

(b) by a friend to a man who had just said that he could not make up his mind whether to go such and such place or not;

(c) by an actor to another in a course of a play, etc.

In case of the 'surface grammar' the construction of sentences is the same in all the cases. But the sentence, 'you will go there' has multiple use-used for the purpose of request, an order etc. Wittgenstein says that in order to get at the meaning of an utterance, it is always necessary to penetrate below its 'surface grammar' to its 'depth grammar'. This refers to the point that meaning of an utterance is 'context' based. Until we get the context we cannot get at the meaning of an utterance. Here again A.C. MacIntyre's suggestion that the context which is missing is to be supplied

and this can be done by the 'depth grammar'. In order to get at the meaning of a sentence we have to understand it as a 'move' in a particular language game which forms its context.

Language games are dynamic in nature. This is due to the fact of the requirements in a form of life. To meet these requirements new words and new language games come into existence and some of them become obsolete and are forgotten. This is made explicit by the following analogy :

"Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with addition from various periods, and this surrounded by multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses."

The analogy of 'language games' plays an important part in understanding the different aspects of language. The words in language are like the pieces in chess. A piece in chess has a meaning attached to it by virtue of the part it plays in chess moves. Until it is used in chess it has no meaning. So, is with the words-the meaning of a word is its use in language game. Until a word has been given a place in the language it does not acquire any meaning. Rather, I shall say the words

are labeled with the particular meanings and apart from this label it is nothing. Once a word is given a place in a language game it continues to have a place. Even if the bearer of the label dies or ceases to exist. For example as Wittgenstein says, if mister N.N. dies, it does not mean that the name ceases to have meaning. If this had been the case then there will be no sense in talking about Mr N.N. whether he was a good person or a bad one. Wittgenstein says that "... the word meaning is used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word, that is to confound the meaning of the name with the bearer of the name. When Mr N.N. Dies one says that the bearer of the name dies not that the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that, for if the name ceased to have meaning, it would make no sense to say 'Mr N.N. is dead!'"⁵

So, the word still has meaning in the language games even if the bearer of the name ceased to exist. But, the name which has never been used in a language game - cannot have any meaning. This brings us to the further point - since the words have meaning only in language games - the possibility of a private language is ruled out. By Private language is meant a language which only the user can understand. By a "private language is meant

one that not merely is not but cannot be understood by anyone other than the speaker".⁶ This language is not possible because there is noway of checking its proper use. Since the meaning of the words can only be understood in the language games and forms of life, private language is devoid of this aspect. Further the language must have the quality of communication- spoken or used by one person and understood by the other. This is the basic requirement of any language. "Words are connected with the primitive, the natural expressions of the sensations and used in their place".⁷ And it is in this way we teach and learn the language. It is in this way that a child replaces crying by the verbal expression of Pain.

The problems in understanding language arise when we donot command the clear view of the use of words and try to interpret them in different ways than they should actually be linked and understood. "A main source of our failure" says wittgenstein is that "We donot command the clear view of the use of words - our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in seeing connections."⁸ So, "The consufions which accupy us arise when language is like engine idling,

not when it is doing work." ⁹ "... when language goes on holiday." ¹⁰ Also, the misunderstandings arise out of the illusion that the language at our disposal is, as if not very exact and we want to have a very complete language. As if whatever we said is vague and not clear. "When we believe that we must find the order, must find the ideal, in our actual language, we become dissatisfied with what are ordinarily called 'propositions' 'word' and 'signs'..." ¹¹ "...to see that we must stick to the subjects of our everyday thinking and not go astray and imagine that we have to describe extreme subtleties, which in turn we are after-all quite unable to describe with the means at our disposal, we feel as if we have to repair a torn spider's web with our fingers". ¹²

What we have to do is to look at the working of our language. Language is a vehicle of thought and means of communications. If this purpose is achieved, it suffices our purpose. We must not strive after the illusive ideal. What can be said can be said clearly. "... It is clear that every sentence in our language is in order as it is that is to say we are not striving after an ideal, as if our ordinary vague sentences

have not yet got quite exceptionable sense, and a perfect languages awaited construction by us - on the other hand it seems clear where there is sense there must be perfect order - so there must be perfect order even in the vaguest sentence".¹³

Language is governed by rules like the rules in the games. We learn these rules from our elders as a specific training in learning language and games or by watching them use these rules. Just as a man watches the game being played and from that he infers the rules of the game. These rules stand as sign posts to guide our working in language-games. They don't stand in our way to obstruct our use of words. They only guide us as per our requirements. There is no fixed meaning of the word 'rule'. It is used differently in different games. Every game is played according to certain rules. "to obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs"¹⁴ and "not a hocus-pocus which can be performed by the soul."¹⁵ "To understand means to understand a language. To understand a language means to master a technique."¹⁶ And so the questions of meaning, of understanding, of following a rule are

to be treated by taking into account the use of signs with in a certain language game.

The essence of the matter concerning the meaning of language games lie in the remarks of Wittgenstein "... look at its use and learn from that."¹⁷
 "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is".¹⁸ And the injunction: " one must always ask oneself: is this word even actually used in this way in the language game which is its original home?"²⁰

Now, coming to the 'religious language'. Religious language is rejected by logical positivists on the grounds that the words used in such a language donot refer to any public object i.e. verifiable object. The words like 'God' donot stand for any object which the user and others can observe. This is so because God by definition is beyond the empirical level. It does not make sense to say that the word 'God' refer to such and such an object. Similarly, the sentences containing the words 'God', 'Soul' etc are not verifiable and hence are meaningless. Secondly, it is not possible to check the application of rules: if the words are used rightly as by nature the sentences

are not verifiable.

But, we see that these objections of the logical positivists do not hold ground. Because the strict criterion of meaningfulness as propounded by the logical positivists is too strong as we have seen in chapter 2. I shall come back to this point after the brief description of the nature of religious language and Religious beliefs.

In lectures Wittgenstein took a lot of pains to place the religious utterances in their original and native habitat and made it clear that these utterances are of basically different nature than the scientific expressions and hence the nature of enquiry and its justification totally changes. We cannot put the two under same methods of enquiry. Concepts employed in religious language do not admit of ordinary empirical verification. The 'being' that is approached is that in which the subject concerned has an essential involvement. Religion for believer is more a way of life than a way of knowledge or truth. Thus the utterances in religion must be understood as moves in 'religious language games'. If they are isolated from the content, they make no sense. In lectures Wittgenstein makes it explicit by contrasting the religious beliefs with the scientific hypothe-

sis. Both the subjects deal in altogether different fields. The confusion arises out of the 'bewitchment' of our intelligence by means of our language. That is to say we try to understand or analyse the different sentences in the same way without considering their 'depth-grammar'. For example as Wittgensten says- I suppose someone were a believer and said: "I believe in a last judgement", and I said: "Well, I'm not sure. Possibly." ²⁰ and ^{II} If he said, "There is a German aeroplane overhead", and I said "Possibly, I am not so sure". To treat these expressions on the same level is to commit a mistake. Because though the sentences in I and II are of apparently same pattern but are not really same kind. II is an empirical fact and can be confirmed. The question of confirmation is easy. We know that there is an aeroplane overhead and need to confirm only whether it is a German aeroplane or not. Where as the case in expression I is totally different. The question of Aeroplane is a contemporaneous with the speakers, while refering to lost judgement is not. The question about last judgement' is belonging to a different language game from language of material objects. "What ever believing in 'God' may be, it can't be believing in something

we contest, or find means of testing."

Some people reject the religious language and religious beliefs on the ground that the expressions of religious beliefs are selfcontradictory. For example "suppose someone, before going to China, when he might never see me again, said to me: "we might see one another after death". or " God's eye sees everything" Wittgenstein says that these statements express the use of pictures and are unverifiable or verifiable in quite a different way than the scientific statements or common sense statements. For example 'if'I shall survive death' means 'I cannot evade this responsibility.²¹ And when we say 'God's' eye sees everything.

The entailments drawn are not that God's eye brows, there shape etc but that God's eye sees not only the external world but also what we think and do. He asks- "Are eye brows going to be talked of in connection with the eye of God?".²² What one has to discover is the 'technique' of using the pictures. A believer does not draw the conclusions that since God has an eye, he must have eyebrows.

Further, a believer's use of pictures is commissive. He regulates his life according to these

pictures which are always forefront in his Judgements and actions. He risks things for the sake of them. For example he takes the pains and losses as punishment for his may be bad deeds. In briefs he understands his whole life in this particular content.

Lastly, the language used in Religion is ordinary day to day language. "When religious believers speak of the dead meeting in heaven, they must mean by 'dead' what we all mean at least to a degree which justifies their use of this word rather than any other".²³

As Wittgenstein said that any believer who claimed to have his own private idea of death must be told that if this has nothing in common with the public idea, i.e. "the game played with 'death' which we all know and understand", then it is of no interest. It must 'become part of our game' and once it does so, it must confirm, to some degree at least, to the rules of that public game. So, the language of religion is not a totally idiosyncratic language. The central idea of justification and intelligibility can be expressed in the following quotation:-

"There are grounds for claiming that religious belief is one such 'given' form of life. There is, so to

speak, an ultimacy of intelligibility and justification in religious utterances. There comes a point at which to the questions 'why do you say this?' or 'why do you argue this way?' the only reply which the religious believe can give is 'This is what we do? Attempts to make sense of religious beliefs into non-religious terms is inevitably to take away their meaning. To base religious claims on non-religious grounds is inevitably to surrender them".²⁴

Now, coming back to the objections raised by logical positivists against the untenability of religious language. Firstly, the statements using the words like 'God' etc are not verifiable as they do not refer to any public object or observable object. These objections can be repudiated. First of all as seen above we must put these utterances to their original inhabitat and see that they are meaningful. Secondly, since the religious language is not an idiosyncratic language. The words used in it are the words of the normal language. What, I mean to say is - the people sharing 'religious form' of life can well understand each other and also can be corrected and guided by each other- that is what happens in 'religious gatherings'. But, not only the people sharing this

form of life understand each other but also the people those who are against religion understand it though their understanding is not of the same nature, for example - a religious believer is commisive where as a non-believer is not

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JUSTIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

So far I have been talking only about the meaningfulness of various kinds of utterances. We have seen that following Wittgenstein's general theory of language games, we can separate meaningfulness of religious language from the meaningfulness of scientific and aesthetic judgements.

But, what then becomes of the Question of justification of truths of religion? we may understand a religious claim by knowing the context, by sharing the form of life to which it belongs, but, does it automatically mean that it is also true. Well, the answer is 'No'. There is a difference between 'meaningfulness' and truthfulness of a statement. Because a statement may be meaningful but it may not be true. So, the Question arises as to the nature of justification in case of religious beliefs?

We have seen that what counts as justification in science or other fields cannot work over here. Science has the limited aim of understanding of a phenomenon in a limited framework of observable. This is approached in an objective way. This shows that the concepts used in the objective or the control-

model in Science are determinable and the statements in question are verifiable. But, the situation in religious beliefs is totally different. "Religion has comprehensive aim which consists in the attainment of knowledge of Supreme Reality and the promotion of a way of life. The knowledge, which is of the comprehensive being, is itself comprehensive and has a practical character. The method that religion adopts, by nature of the case, cannot operate within a limited framework, as it is one of transcendence. The control object model cannot operate in the case of religion. What it enquires into is not an object or a thing but the mystery which can be gradually disclosed, and that in indeterminate way. This means that the concepts employed in religious language are not clearly determinable, and that the statements in question do not admit of ordinary empirical verification. The being that is approached is that in which the subject concerned has an essential involvement. This explains the practical character of the knowledge that religion seeks. Religion for believer is not merely a way of knowledge or truth, but also a way of life."

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The central contents of religious beliefs are 'God', Prayer, confession, praise, love etc. The

question of justification arises as to the intelligibility of these terms. How these terms are intelligible? Here to call a remark of Wittgenstein, "What people accept as a justification, is shown by how they think and live." And if it is true, then we have to look for the justification of religious beliefs within the framework of religious form of life. We have to look to the way of life of the believers. We cannot call for any justification of religious beliefs outside the Religious framework. "The demand for reasons why I should say what I say reaches 'bed rock' and my spade is turned. When I come, in the last analysis, to certain forms of life. All I can say is 'This is simply what I do. Our belief in the uniformity of nature is a case in point. Our whole way of thinking about, and living within nature rests upon it. 'Nothing could induce me to put my hand into a flame-although after all only in the past that I have burnt myself. The idea that I can meaningfully discuss whether I am, or am not justified in believing in the uniformity of nature is ludicrous. I have no concept of 'nature' apart from the uniformity of 'nature'. Another example of a form of life which is embedded in our minds in an ultimate way is the belief that men have 'souls' i.e. are aware of themselves, act as free agents, know good from evil

and beauty from ugliness etc. ... It is not that we are 'of the opinion' that human beings have souls: the agreement is not ... in opinion but in forms of life." ³ Now, as to the questions - why nature is uniform or why human beings have souls and what justifications can be given to this effect? The answer is we can only understand these concepts in this way and cannot put them in some other higher logical order. We cannot appeal to other grounds of reason for their justification. Coming back to the same idea of justification which Wittgenstein highlights, 'why do you say that?' or 'why do you argue that?' must be, 'This is simply what I do? This does not mean, of course, that the individual speaker has the right to claim that when he uses a word it signifies whatever he wants it to signify. The point is rather... no concept of nature apart from the uniformity of nature, or of human beings without souls. So if asked ' why do you think, speak or act, on the tacit presupposition that nature is uniform, or that human beings have souls?' the answer is simply that this is what we do. There is no higher logical order to which we can take the questions. 'Does it make sense to speak of them that way?' or 'Are we justified in arguing as if nature is uniform, or human beings have souls?' we must speak and argue in these

ways, in the sense that unless we do, it is not nature or human beings of which we shall be speaking, or about which we shall be arguing."⁴

So, if this thesis is true, what it shows is that the criteria for truth of religious claims must come from 'religious form of life itself, that is truth and falsity of religious claims is a matter internal to the use of religious language. Perhaps this is explicable with the help of an example from non-religious language'. If someone remarks that 'John is very depressed these days and we ask how do you know. He will reply by referring to the way John has been behaving lately. He may say for example, he has not been interested in his meals and generally keeps to himself in his room, is not been taking interest in life, he looks sad etc. Now in the language of mind this will be taken as sufficient criterion for the truth of the claim that 'John is depressed these days'. Similarly, with the claims of religion we donot have to appeal to another secular court and have to look within the religious sphere only.

From the above discussion it is clear that the language of religion is 'autonomous' in the sense

that religious beliefs can only be approached from within in the sphere of religious language. But, here the question arises - Is religious language 'simple' or 'complex'? Here we can take two positions- If it is simple like the word 'Red', the consequences are- we cannot talk of asking for any justification or the question of asking for justification of religious belief is misconceived and is out of place. Because the meaning of simple terms like 'red' is understood in terms of ostensive definition and the matter ends. But, if the language and religious belief is a complex term like the term 'game'-then we can ask for its justification in secular terms. For example, as Wittgenstein says that it is not possible to give an exhaustive definition of the word game. If someone does not know what the word game means, we can make him understand by explaining him some of the features of the games. But, 'red' cannot be explained like that. It is nothing more than 'red' and we can only point to the 'redness'.

But, if this view of religious terms is true then the consequence of it is that, religious beliefs are the beliefs which only can be understood by the people who are trained in that form of life and an outsider has no approach to them. But, if again

this is true it will not be accepted by the religious believes themselves as it may be anything but religion. Because in general, religious people try to convert 'others'. The assumption is that the 'other', who is so far a secular person would understand the religious beliefs to which he is supposed to adopt. But, he cannot so far understand it purely in religious terms. Because ex-hypothesis he does not belong to that form of life. So, it is expected that he will understand it in terms of his own secular meanings of these terms. If this is so, then religious terms are complex like the word 'game' and the question of their truth in any particular use can be raised. So, the question is how far religious language is amenable to non-religious interpretations. This can be more clearly stated with the help of an argument from the debate between Hanfling and Brown. Hanfling says "...I donot want to say that what Wittgenstein says about autonomy is less true of religious language than of other kinds of language. But I'd like to make a distinction here between what we might call 'simple' and 'complex' terms. Let us take 'red' as an example of a simple term. Now, red is simple in the sense that the only feature that a thing must have in order for you to call it red is just its being red. By contrast, take the word 'game'. Now, as Wittgen-

stein showed, it isn't possible to give an exhaustive definition of a word like 'game'. Nevertheless, there are a number of features that an activity has on account of which you call it a game. These features could be named and given as reasons, or as a justification, for calling something a game. Again, if someone didn't know what a game is, you could explain it to him by mentioning these features. And this sort of thing doesn't make sense with the word 'red'. There aren't any features I could name on account of which I could call something red, except just its redness.

Well now, are religious terms like the word 'game' or are they like 'red'? If one says that they are like 'red', then I think one could argue that the demand for justification is misguided. On this view the non-religious person would be someone who literally doesn't know what he is talking about. He'd be rather like a blindman - a man born blind, that is - arguing about the word 'red'. In this case religious scepticism could not really get a foot hold. But I doubt that religious believers would want to think of their language as being like that."

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It is true that some of the terms in religious language are complex and can be translated in non-

religious language but this is not true of the fundamental terms. For example how can one explain the term 'Holy' in non-religious language. This again is explicable from the Brown's position in the above said debate, "I think I would agree with you that what gives the sceptic about religious language a foothold, if anything does, is the connection between that language and non-religious language. To the extent that religious terms can be explained in non-religious terms, the application of religious terms will be open to assessment in non-religious terms for instance, on one account of the term 'miracle', a miracle involves an event which is contrary to laws of nature - an event which, if you like, is 'naturally impossible'. Particular claims to the effect that some event is a 'miracle' could, in this use of the word, be shown to be false by an explanation of that event in terms of natural causes. Furthermore, any basis there may be for belief that no event occurs which is contrary to the laws of nature must also be a basis for scepticism about miracles in this sense of the term 'miracle'. To the extent then religious terms do permit an explanation in terms of familiar to the un believer, this is the way in which the sceptic might raise his doubt whether those terms do indeed apply to anything.

However, it is not obvious to me that such an explanation of religious terms is always, or even characteristically, possible. Let's take another example. One of the fundamental distinctions of religion is between the 'sacred' or 'holy', on the one hand, and the 'profane' or 'secular', on the other. I don't see how one could explain that distinction in non-religious terms. On the contrary, I should be inclined to say that someone who has no appreciation of the distinction between the sacred and the profane has not begun to understand what religion is about. Perhaps this is a distinction in the language of religion which neither has nor needs justification".₆

Hanfling rightly points out that the religious people will be disinclined to claim autonomy for religious language at the cost of treating it as esoteric but as Brown points out that even if religious language is represented as esoteric it need not lose significance for the non-believer. The non-believer can imaginatively put himself in the situation of the believer and can acquire an understanding of religious concepts from the point of view of the believer himself. And this capacity has significance for non-believer's life. It would make a difference to his way of life if he

could appreciate religious concepts. We can compare it with the case of classical music, for example, at any given time only a few actually appreciate classical music and some people may never be able to appreciate. In this sense the language of classical music remains esoteric but the common man can and does come to understand it if he makes the right kind of effort. So, the existence of classical music has significance for every man's life even though in actual fact everyone does not and probably will not come to appreciate it.

So, lastly, I can say that though religious language and the nature of religious beliefs is such that some of them can be translated into the secular language or some non-religious language. It remains true that we cannot understand 'religious beliefs' by way of an outsider. In order to understand religious beliefs we have to practice the religious form of life so, no justification of religious beliefs in terms of non-religious language can be given. To justify religious belief in non-religious terms is to defeat the purpose we are defending.

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CONCLUSION

In order to reach at the general conclusion of this dissertation, it will be helpful if we give a brief summary of the chapters discussed.

In the first chapter, I have highlighted the problem at hand by way of introduction. At the place I have raised the question - In what sense is the faith of the believer justified? And the next question I have raised is - whether the non-believers stance is justified. Lastly, I have asked "Is the claim that 'asking for justification of religious belief is unjustified' itself justified?"

In the second chapter, I have discussed the general position of logical positivists with special reference to Sir, A.J.Ayer. Logical positivists have attempted to prove that the religious utterances or the utterances concerning the nature of 'God' are meaningless as they cannot be proved to be true or false as per their criterion of meaningfulness i.e. the 'criterion of verification'. In this chapter I have shown that the logical positivists' stance is not justified, because, they seem to confuse the 'truthfulness' if a claim with the 'sense' of the claim. I have shown that an utterance can make sense though it may not be verifiable.

Thus, I concluded there that verification is not a condition for the 'meaningfulness' of a claim as supposed by logical positivists.

In third chapter, I have discussed the 'Russel and Copleston' debate. Here I have discussed the attempts made by Copleston to justify the existence of 'God' on the basis of 'Cosmological proof' of God's existence. Since the debate ends up in an impasse. I have concluded, in this chapter, that not only that they didnot reach to any conclusion but it is not possible to reach at any conclusion in this sort of debates.

In the fourth chapter, I have dealt with the problem of 'meaning' with special refence to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language games. In this chapter I have shown as to how logical positivists were wrong in dealing with the problem of meaning of language in general and the religious language in particular. Also, I have shown by refering the view point of A.C. MacIntyre the 'interminable status of modern debates'. I have shown how the debates like one of 'Russel and Copleston' got to be inconclusive. Here, I have discussed at length the idea of 'language games' and 'forms

of life' in understanding the nature of 'religious language and religious beliefs'. I have shown how religious beliefs make sense in the religious form of life and become unintelligible when viewed out of that context and judged with some other criterion.

In the last chapter, which is the main focus of this dissertation, I have talked about the justification of religious beliefs. I have tried to view the problem from two different angles i.e. firstly, accepting the Wittgensteinian -thesis as it is and secondly drawing out some consequences if we accept the 'autonomy' and 'esoteric' nature of religious language. I have shown in both the cases we reach to the same conclusion that if we have to look at any justification of religious beliefs, we have to look it with in the 'frame-work' of religious or in the religious form of life. I have shown that though some of the terms of religious beliefs can be translated into non-religious language but not all can be so translated and hence the Question of justification if at all to be understood, it has to be understood by one as an insider to the 'religious belief' and not an outsider. Thus the Question " 'asking for justification of religious beliefs is unjustified' itself justified" in the sense that its answer lies with in the religious form of life.

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