

## 1: Religion and Truth | Issue 47 | Philosophy Now

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Did the one good God create it? Why does he permit it? Faced with the actual existence of both good and evil, some religious traditions have posited the existence of two opposing gods. This is the most distinctive theological belief in Zoroastrianism, which began in Persia in the sixth or fifth century BCE and which influenced Mediterranean thought in several ways. Judaism probably owes to Zoroastrianism the idea that an evil power opposes God. Christianity, in turn, inherited the idea from Judaism. Judaism remained true to monotheism and did not grant that there was an opposing god, but it accepted some aspects of Persian dualism, such as the conflict between God and the forces of evil. My tentative conclusion was that a certain amount of suffering is good for us. People in the slums of Mumbai may be psychologically healthier than people in the first world. Natural processes give rise to both life and death. Right there, in nature, you have a common cause of life and death, of good and bad. There is no good and evil, no light and dark; there is only God. When I came out of religion, I suddenly felt like I could see the world in colour again. Plus the fact that you cannot create goodness by banning bad things. And even in places and situations that we might easily write off as bad, there is beauty and goodness. Plus everything is interdependent. Everyone has a reason for behaving the way they do. If you go far enough back, there are reasons for everything. The point is that we maybe point fingers too much, and imagine God pointing fingers, and that maybe with a fuller understanding, judgment becomes impossible. Perfection, for him, was mercy. And the thing about mercy is that it lets us off the hook – which allows us just to be what we are. It allows us to lose our egos, and be real and goodness only starts from a position of realness. The more radical and perhaps effective idea would be that there is no need for change. We will always act in a way that reflects what we most want, and unless we are real and honest with ourselves to begin with, we will not be able to be clear with ourselves about what we really want. This is a total for me. Throughout last year I assumed there was an absolute good, and that it was our responsibility to strive towards that.

### 2: Monism vs Dualism | Meaning and Truth

*The fire for spiritualityâ€™for deeper meaning, direction and truthâ€™is inherent in all people. For some of us, it is drowned by cynicism, skepticism, and scientific materialism; for others, it is expressed in limiting ways through a blind religious faith.*

Living faith is shown by service and obedience to God. But just what is faith as described in the Bible, and does it really work? Faith confidence, belief, trust is also our evidence of that which is not seenâ€™the invisible spiritual things. Faith comes before a prayer is answered or before an individual has received what he or she has requested from God. If we have received what we asked for, then faith is not needed. Our bimonthly Discern magazine covers issues like this regularly. Digital subscriptions are available worldwide; print subscriptions are currently available in the United States, Canada and much of Europe. A New Testament example An example of this definition is found in Matthew 9: It also gave them the evidence or trust that they would receive what they asked for. They believed; that is, they had faith in advance that it would be done. Those who refused to bow to the image were threatened with being thrown into a fiery pit alive. They did not know in advance how God would deliver them from the fiery furnace, whether at that time by saving their physical lives or later in the resurrection. Their faith or trust was the substance of what they hoped for, and it was the evidence of that which was not yet seen or received. Their faith or trust was built on serving God and obeying His commandments. They believed God would deliver them because they obeyed His commandments and did not bow down to worship any others gods. Faith without works is dead The apostle James, who was the half-brother of Jesus Christ, wrote in his epistle about what he called dead faith. Dead faith is when one believes in God, but does not obey His commandments. Even the demons believeâ€™and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? James went on to use the example of Abraham, who had both faith and works because he believed God and he obeyed what God commanded him to do. Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? Real faith is more than just believing in God alone. Faith is increased by drawing closer to God through prayer and the study of His Word, the Bible. That is not the case. Paul clearly understood and wrote that no one could earn salvation and that faith itself is a gift from God. Like James, Paul knew living faith would be accompanied by service and obedience to God and His laws. Paul wrote in Romans 3: On the contrary, we establish the law. Another way faith is increased is by reading or hearing examples of faith in the Bible publicly expounded. This is mentioned in Romans When we read the Bible, our faith confidence and assurance in God and Jesus Christ to answer our prayers and bring us through impossible situations increases. To summarize, faith is trust, assurance and confidence in God and Jesus Christ. Living faith is not just believing that God exists. God will increase our faith if we fervently ask Him for it and seek to draw closer to Him in prayer and the reading of His Word. Learn more by downloading our free booklet Change Your Life!

## 3: Religious Truth

*There is no standard meaning or absolute truth in religions. Rather, individuals and communities apprehend, appreciate, adjust, and advance religious ideas, symbols, doctrines, and practices in a variety of ways.*

I discuss some of the problems of the application of the notion of truth to religion. After introductory remarks on the problem called truth and religion to show the peculiarity and the actuality of the problem discussed, I examine the different meanings of the notions of truth and religion, in order to formulate some comments on the different concepts of the truth of religion. I name the main types of religious truth, and consider the competencies of the diverse types of the study of religion to determine the truth of religion, and to analyze how to understand the truth of distinct types of religion. I conclude with some remarks on the appropriate approach to the question of the truth of religion. The considerations show that there is no simple answer to the question of the truth of religion in general or in particular. As it turns out the answer requires some relativizations, among others to the notion of truth and of religion. The notions of true religion and credibility of religion, though at first sight distinct, seem to condition each other. The notion of the truth of religion can be a valuable instrument of interpretation of religious phenomena not only in philosophy and theology of religion, but in the social sciences of religion too. Introductory remarks Justification of a religious point of view usually consists in attempts to prove that some particular religion is true. In my paper I will discuss some problems arising when the notion of truth is applied to religion. I first focus on analyzing complexity and conditions of the question about truth of religion in order to determine various meanings which could be ascribed to the expression "truth of religion". I am especially interested in possibilities and limitations which various kinds of studies of religion science of religion, M. In the past the study of religion was used both to criticize and to defend a particular religion usually Christianity. I do not however aim at providing arguments that a certain religion e. Christianity or religion in general is true. I hope, however, that my analysis will contribute to the solution of the problem of truth of religion in general and of religions other than Christianity and will do this from a neutral point of view, not from that of the Christian religion. At the very beginning we face the problem of the multitude of expressions: Which of them should then be used in discussing our issue? Treating language as an active instrument of cognition and notions as useful tools I claim that each of them, even if it has a slightly different meaning, can be employed. However, one needs carefully to determine the following issues: The question of truth of religion was vehemently discussed at the dawn of the comparative studies of religion history of religions. Nowadays, since the emotions have subsided, scientists are more reserved in their opinions and are interested in the structure and functions of religions as well as in those features which religions have in common rather than in what divides them. One does not believe any more in easy discrimination between a "false" myth and a "true" logos, especially because the European culture which binds truth with religion has no counterparts in non-European religions which are interested in morality and religious practices rather than in the religious doctrine. There are a number of reasons for diminishing interest in the problem of truth of religion. One is a deteriorated sensibility towards religious aspects of life in general and recognition of positive facets in the cultural plurality of religions. Another reason is the fact that empirical studies of religion accept the ideal of positivistic descriptivism according to which any study of religion should limit its interest to presuppositionless description of religious phenomena. It is believed that the proper analyses of religion requires the researcher to keep neutral atheistic? Like the linguist who does not evaluate languages as inferior or superior, she should abstain from making statements concerning truth and falsity of any religion. In our time the question of truth of religion has increased its significance in a new cultural context constituted by the plurality of religions we find today. Existing pluralistic cultures are torn by competing claims of religious orthodoxy. Previously for an European there were only two questions concerning truth of religion: It was somehow known in advance that other religions are false. Today one faces the multitude of religions and each of them comes with the claim to being true. Thus, a person now needs not only to decide whether it is worthwhile to be religious at all but she has a choice between various competing religions. This peculiar situation opens the old issue of truth of religion anew. Those scholars who see the

necessity of studying that issue accuse those who neglect it of reductionism: There is no doubt that individual religions formulate competitive claims to truth and make strong assertions concerning God and his relation to the world. The believers, especially those in the main religious traditions, attribute truth to their religious statements and this truth is for them so important that they choose rather to die than to deny it. The question of truth of religion involves a difficult problem of relations between reason and belief, science and religion and between natural knowledge and revelation which have been discussed from the beginning of Christianity. I take for granted the empirical fact that when believers use different names for the transcendent reality they thereby understand that reality in a different way. The question of truth of religion has also axiological dimension: As the relevant literature shows theses of scholars working in religious studies were presented in such a way as if they referred to truth in religion in general. However, their interest is in fact mostly if not exclusively restricted to the great religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism which all have well developed doctrines. The approach to the problem was additionally determined by the western concept of truth and the Christian view of religion. Earlier Occidental scholars retained the doctrinal model of religion and so they commonly assumed that the religious doctrine was the essence of Christian life. Consequently, beliefs were considered to be the defining core of any religion. Religions, however, entail also liturgical, contemplative and moral practices. The notions of truth, religion and truth of religion If the question of truth of religion is to refer to any type of religion and not only for instance monotheistic ones, it must be considered on a broad basis. First, if such a broad basis is to be developed at least four categories must be correlated: None of them is unambiguous or obvious and this fact makes it practically impossible to discuss all possible combinations of their meanings. Even if in everyday life people in the western culture have no significant problems in using competently the term "religion" and at the bottom of their use there is common human experience of the world, we seem to have no satisfactory, scientific or philosophical, definition of religion which would cover all situations and ways of speaking about religion and religious phenomena. When sociologically considered, religion is a complicated cultural state of affairs constituted by cult rite, worship, a doctrine and an institutional organization. The doctrinal aspect of a given religion is equally difficult to determine for it consists of a complex and extensive system of beliefs developed throughout the ages by generations of believers. The whole issue is further complicated by the fact that debates on truth of religion and on the way in which religious truths must be interpreted are going on not only between different religions but also within some particular religion: The philosophical nature of truth is equally difficult to explain. When asking about the truth of religion the researcher has a choice between many competing philosophical theories and definition of truth, both classical and non-classical. According to the classical correspondence theory, truth consists in adequacy between things and intellect. According to the coherence theory a proposition is true if it coheres with a system of propositions. According to the pragmatic theory truth is what fulfills our practical interests and human praxis is the criterion of truth. Today there are more popular alternative theories of truth, generally labelled "deflationary", which challenge the classical theory and claim that truth is a theoretically insignificant concept. All those definitions of truth can find in various degrees applications in studying of religion and each of them gives rise to specific problems. The issue is to find such a definition of truth of religion which could be applicable to any religion. Let us notice at the beginning the following ways of speaking: Each of them presents difficulties. In the domain of religions "truth" can mean very different things. Religious truth can be treated a feature of religion in general or of a definite religion. In the case of religious truth one deals with a propositional truth, i. Thus, the problem here arises: In the study of religion we find a distinction between intra-religious and extra-religious truth of religion. The extra-religious truth concerns historical events whose truth can be determined from outside also by a person who is not a believer of that particular religion, e. The truth about God in Christ is not a statement of a historical fact but the article of faith. The question of truth of religion acquires different meanings which depend on religion under consideration. That is its meaning depends on whether we consider religion in general or a specific type of religion such as religions of tribal culture, non-literate religions worship of ancestors, Animism, Manism, Fetishism, Totemism, etc. It is relatively easy to apply the notion of truth to monotheistic religions. How can one however apply that notion to ancient religious myths? And how can one apply the notion of truth to

contemporary atheistic "religions" which lack any transcendent object of devotion and to those which only function as religions Scientology, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy? The problem of truth of religion becomes even more complicated in the case of esoteric religions Buddhism, Vedanta, Christian Gnosis which assume the existence of two kinds of truth: The latter kind includes truth which cannot be expressed in any discursive language and is accessible only for the initiated. Articulation of supernatural religious truth also presents difficulties because of its transcendent object of reference that may need the language of analogy. Main types of truth of religion The question of truth of religion, especially of Christianity, involves numerous presuppositions: It can also acquire different meanings: In what follow I explain these meanings but I do not determine their mutual relations. Each of the past and contemporary religions is true in the trivial sense that it came historically into being and has a history. More specifically, historical truthfulness is understood as genesis, identity and institutional and doctrinal continuity of a given especially oral religious tradition determined by the historicity of its founder and its Holy Scriptures. At the beginning of religious community we usually find a charismatic leader, like Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Zarathustra, Jesus Christ, Mani, Muhammad, gathering disciples who then strive to keep faithfully to the teaching of the master. This kind of historical truth of religion concerns only a limited group of traditions with well determined origins and well documented history. What is often meant by truth of religion is the doctrinal dimension of religion: Every religion is a confession of faith for in each of them its believers foster some hopes about the hereafter world. Truth of religion is here identified with religious truth understood as knowledge orientated towards the ultimate deepest reality called by various names: God, Dharma, Tao, the Sacred, etc. A religion is true in the sense that it states that the transcendent, supernatural, sacred reality exists. Moreover, the object of beliefs consists of religious truths considered as infallible and eternal and hence fundamentally different from hypothetical scientific statements, truths that promise something that can be fulfilled only in the supernatural life to come. There is also a problem of orthodoxy heterodoxy and its criteria. Orthodoxy with respect to religious life means the correct beliefs coming from a sacred, more or less institutional authority. All main religious traditions know the idea of orthodoxy although it is expressed in various terms. Each tradition is interested in its own orthodoxy and has established its own criteria for acceptance of orthodoxy and rejection of heterodoxy. It is usually the Scripture that serves to delineate what is acceptable and unacceptable in a religious tradition: There are such religious traditions which employ very strict criteria of purity and conformity. On the other hand there are religious traditions which have no officially established creed Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam and also such traditions which stress not orthodoxy but morality and ritual.

### 4: William A. Christian: Meaning and Truth in Religion (PDF) - ebook download - english

*Although any religious story, especially in their more sophisticated versions, could be true, religious answers to the question of life's meaning are suspect because the truth of religion and its usefulness are suspect.*

Therefore, they are called noble truths. The truth that suffering exists Dukkha. The truth that suffering exists with a root cause craving. The truth that suffering can be eliminated Nirvana. The truth that there is a way to eliminate suffering known as the Noble Eightfold Path. Two Truths Doctrine[ edit ] Main article: Two truths doctrine The two truths doctrine in Buddhism differentiates between two levels of truth in Buddhist discourse , a "relative", or commonsense truth Tibetan: Stated differently, the Two Truths Doctrine holds that truth exists in conventional and ultimate forms, and that both forms are co-existent. Other schools, such as Dzogchen , hold that the Two Truths Doctrine are ultimately resolved into nonduality as a lived experience and are non-different. Christian philosopher William Lane Craig notes that the Bible typically uses the words true or truth in non-philosophical senses to indicate such qualities as fidelity, moral rectitude, and reality. However, it does sometimes use the word in the philosophical sense of veracity. Catholics believe that the Pope is infallible when pronouncing on certain, rather specific, matters of church doctrine. Biblical inerrancy , Biblical infallibility , and Biblical literalism Biblical inerrancy, as formulated in the " Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy ", is the doctrine that the Protestant Bible "is without error or fault in all its teaching"; [11] or, at least, that "Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact". Other interpretations hold that the Bible is always true on important matters of faith , while other interpretations hold that the Bible is true but must be specifically interpreted in the context of the language , culture and time that relevant passages were written. In this usage, the term truth is used to refer to not merely a derived quality "true rather than false", but the true state of being, truth as what really is there. This is described by Ramana Maharshi: Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. July Learn how and when to remove this template message Although, historically, Jain authors have adopted different views on truth, the most prevalent is the system of anekantavada or "not-one-sidedness". This idea of truth is rooted in the notion that there is one truth, but only enlightened beings can perceive it in its entirety; unenlightened beings perceive only one side of the truth ekanta. Anekantavada works around the limitations of a one-sided view of truth by proposing multiple vantage points nayas from which truth can be viewed cf. Recognizing that there are multiple possible truths about any particular thing, even mutually exclusive truths, Jain philosophers developed a system for synthesizing these various claims, known as syadvada. Within the system of syadvada, each truth is qualified to its particular view-point; that is "in a certain way", one claim or another or both may be true. Judaism[ edit ] There is no unilateral agreement among the different denominations of Judaism concerning truth. In Orthodox Judaism , truth is the revealed word of God, as found in the Hebrew Bible , and to a lesser extent, in the words of the sages of the Talmud. For Hasidic Jews truth is also found in the pronouncements of their rebbe , or spiritual leader, who is believed to possess divine inspiration. In Conservative Judaism , truth is not defined as literally as it is among the Orthodox. While Conservative Judaism acknowledges the truth of the Tanakh , generally, it does not accord that status to every single statement or word contained therein, as do the Orthodox. Moreover, unlike Orthodox Judaism, Conservative Judaism believes that the nature of truth can vary from generation to generation, depending on circumstances. For instance, with respect to halakha , or Jewish law, Conservative Judaism believes that it can be modified or adapted depending on the needs of the people. In Orthodox Judaism, by contrast, the halakha is fixed by the sages of the Talmud and later authorities ; the present-day task, therefore, is to interpret the halakha, but not to change it. Reform Judaism takes a much more liberal approach to truth. It does not hold that truth is found only in the Tanakh; rather, there are kernels of truth to be found in practically every religious tradition. Moreover, its attitude towards the Tanakh is, at best, a document parts of which may have been inspired, but with no particular monopoly on truth, or in any way legally binding. Retrieved 19 May

### 5: Religion - Wikipedia

*This course will take a phenomenological approach to understand how symbols and rituals, along with verbal language, communicate belief and prescribe behavior—and also open doors to challenge, revision, conversion, and de-conversion.*

Religion and Truth Richard Taylor on the proper role of myths and mysteries. The best way into our subject is through a look at ancient mythology. Consider, for example, the familiar story of Sisyphus, whom the gods condemned to move a rock to the top of a hill, whereupon it would roll back down, this appalling sequence to be repeated over and over through eternity. Thinkers for generations have sensed in this myth a meaning, possibly a profound truth only dimly seen. Perhaps it is the image of an indomitable will. Or of the tenacity of the human spirit in the face of endless failure. Or it could be an image of justice. It has also been thought to symbolize the meaninglessness of human existence. In any case, what gives the story depth and importance is that it is thought to contain a truth behind the banality of the imagery. Now suppose a professor of classics were to insist that this story has to be historically correct. He maintains that this myth, like so many others contained in ancient texts, must be considered true as it stands and not properly subject to interpretation or any search for hidden meanings. He thinks that he must take this position in order to uphold the worth and dignity of the classics and their venerable authors. Otherwise, he thinks, people will want to dismiss mythology as a mere collection of fairy tales, unworthy of serious consideration. Concerning such a misguided classicist we could say, first, that he has completely missed the point; second, that far from upholding the worth and dignity of the classics, he has trivialized them; and third, that he has made a fool of himself. And this brings us to the nature of myths generally and how the understanding of them has changed over time. The change represents a great loss. It is as if a curtain of darkness has fallen over a vast treasure of truth, and all because of an unnecessarily narrow conception of truth. Thus, we think now of myths as nothing but widely believed falsehoods, like the myth of racial superiority, or of inevitable progress. The belief that sudden fright on the part of a pregnant woman can injure her unborn child is dismissed as a myth, that is, a groundless falsehood. That is not at all how myths were thought of in antiquity. They were an important part of Greek civilization and other cultures. They were not, as we think of them now, popular errors, but fabulous tales, sometimes of great complexity, usually involving gods in their relationships with men. But what is distinctive about the more lasting ones is that instead of being simply false, they were thought to embody truth. Thus a myth was an account which, while literally false and even absurd, was true on a deeper level. Moreover, it was thought that these truths could not be expressed in any other way. They could not, for example, be formulated in straightforward declarative sentences without being reduced to banality. Myths were thus once cultural treasures, and the modern failure to understand them, to the extent that even the meaning of the word has been corrupted, is a severe loss. Plato, the paradigmatic product of Greek culture, understood the role of myths. He never thought it necessary to explain them. Thus, usually after plumbing some philosophical question as deeply as he could by rational dialectic, Plato sometimes culminated the discussion with a myth. He saw that reason can grasp only so much of a great truth and insight. The rest he incorporated into myth. His Republic, for example, is an expression of precise and rational thought at its best, and yet this great work culminates in the myth of Er, to make the point that our understanding of our ultimate good can be conveyed in no other way. In the same work he invents a tale of men imprisoned in a cave and thus limited to shadows and echoes until liberated and compelled to look at things as they really are, and at the sun that illuminates everything. Final truth, the story suggests, cannot be discovered by unaided intelligence. Protagoras, in this dialogue that bears his name, is asked to render an account of how virtue is taught. He offers to do this in either of two ways, by straightforward exposition, or by myth. It is thus understood that these are two quite different paths to one and the same truth, and Socrates does not question this presupposition. Protagoras then complies, by inventing an elaborate and instructive myth. The concept of a myth, as thus understood, is essential for understanding religion, and the Christian religion in particular. Without this understanding it is impossible to see the power of a religion and how it can endure for generation after generation. The power of a religion lies

in its stories, not simply as stories, but as vehicles of truth and, sometimes, profound truth. It is superficial to say, on whatever grounds, that scriptural accounts of events long past are false, and it is no less superficial to say that they are, as they stand, true. Some, at least, have a deeper meaning, overwhelmingly important to human understanding, and the task should be to try finding those meanings. Viewed this way, we can see that secularists, who dismiss religion as simply false, and fundamentalists, who insist on literal truth, both miss the point. This is in some cases perfectly obvious. Consider, for example, the story of the prodigal son. The meaning here is not particularly obscure, and will be grasped by any parent, or any brother in the kind of situation described. Insight is needed here, but not great insight, and when you understand the meaning of the story you are wiser. Equally important, that meaning cannot be expressed otherwise than by story or myth, without being reduced to banality. You need not only to see the meaning, in a general way, but to feel it. The same can be said of the story of the Samaritan. It drives home perfectly the meanings of neighbor and love, meanings that could not possibly be captured by definitions. Or think of the story of Job, which has had such a profound effect upon the generations. It will perhaps be the task of theologians forever to ferret it out, and we shall meanwhile see some of it dimly and remain content with what we can sense of it. Meanwhile, no one will be able to say, in a straightforward way, what that meaning is, even to the extent that it is found, for this can be conveyed only by myth. Here it is important to remind ourselves, again, of the irrelevance of literal truth. Thus, it makes not the slightest difference to the story of the prodigal son whether the family described actually existed. That is not the point. Nor is it of any importance whether the Samaritan and the Levite referred to in that story actually had the encounter described. Jesus was not offering instruction in history. He was, by myth, conveying, perfectly and beautifully, the meaning of love. As for the story of Job, we might or might not believe that such a suffering man existed. It is about all of us. The power and endurance of religion cannot be understood independently of myths. The Christian religion, for example, does not rest just on a belief in God, even though many unreflective adherents seem to think so, nor does it rest upon belief in the divine nature of its founder. Christianity rests upon the story of the resurrection. What, indeed, is belief in God? Many assume that this means simply a belief in the existence of a god. That, by itself, however, has no more significance to religion than a belief that there is life on Mars. It is only an opinion about what happens to exist. What a Christian professes is not merely that there is a god, but rather, belief in God, which is a vastly stronger statement. And this is something not easily comprehended. It can be seen through story or myth, but it cannot be stated. The story of Abraham gives us a sense of its meaning, as does the story of Job, or, above all, the manner in which Jesus dealt with his suffering on the cross. Here a Christian sees, dimly, what it means to believe in God, but not even the wisest theologian or philosopher can say what it is. They should not even try. As for the divinity of Christ, we are again confronted by incomprehension. There is no rational way to express it. Some suppose that it is attested by the moral sublimity of his teachings. Such a notion, however, would enable us to bestow divinity on other historical figures – Socrates, for example, whose teachings, and whose death at the hands of his persecutors, will forever inspire. The veneration of Socrates does not, however, constitute a religion. Wizardry can evoke amazement and wonder, perhaps fear and awe, but it evokes no sense of religious veneration. What is essential to the Christian religion, then, is not just a belief in God, nor any miraculous powers of its founder, but the story of the resurrection. Without this there is no such thing as the Christian religion. There may be all sorts of pieties, fellowships, good works, professions of love, all the things that have come to be associated with being a Christian, but the religion is simply diluted into nothingness. Of course this presents an overwhelming problem for thoughtful and sophisticated persons, for the doctrine of the resurrection, literally understood, is an absurdity. That a man, three days dead, might be revived, to mingle again with the living, talk to them, and move about much as if nothing had happened to him, violates the most basic certainties of reason and common knowledge. The dead become dust and ashes. They do not rise. Does this mean that the Christian religion should be discarded as false? That is what many conclude. Humanists take just this stand. They embrace, more or less, the basic ethical value associated with liberal Christianity, but dismiss the religion as resting on an absurdity – as indeed it does, if one considers its foundation a literal description of fact. Christians have tried to meet this challenge in two ways. On the one hand are those who find the doctrine of the resurrection difficult or impossible to swallow. They tend, then, to

hold to what they can, falling back upon the broad, uncontroversial pieties – belief in God, the divine nature of Jesus variously interpreted, the sanctity of human life, the dignity and worth of all persons, the value of prayer, and so on. Little is said about the resurrection except, perhaps, at Easter, when they rejoice at the rebirth of nature, this being obvious to all and vaguely suggestive of a kind of resurrection. The image of resurrection is deemed inspiring, the stuff of hymns, poetry and art.

## 6: Religious views on truth - Wikipedia

*In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: CHAPTER VII Judgments <sup>1</sup>. Introduction In the past two chapters we have been considering the logic of religious inquiry. In the chapters following this one we shift our focus to the logic of religious discourse, to see what can.*

The Field and its Significance The philosophical exploration of religious beliefs and practices is evident in the earliest recorded philosophy, east and west. This intermingling of philosophical inquiry with religious themes and the broader enterprises of philosophy e. Only gradually do we find texts devoted exclusively to religious themes. Cudworth and his Cambridge University colleague Henry More produced philosophical work with a specific focus on religion and so, if one insisted on dating the beginning of philosophy of religion as a field, there are good reasons for claiming that it began gradually in the mid- 17th century see Taliaferro Today philosophy of religion is a robust, intensely active area of philosophy. Almost without exception, any introduction to philosophy text in the Anglophone world includes some philosophy of religion. The importance of philosophy of religion is chiefly due to its subject matter: A philosophical exploration of these topics involves fundamental questions about our place in the cosmos and about our relationship to what may transcend the cosmos. Such philosophical work requires an investigation into the nature and limit of human thought. Alongside these complex, ambitious projects, philosophy of religion has at least three factors that contribute to its importance for the overall enterprise of philosophy. Philosophy of religion addresses embedded social and personal practices. Philosophy of religion is therefore relevant to practical concerns; its subject matter is not all abstract theory. A chief point of reference in much philosophy of religion is the shape and content of living traditions. In this way, philosophy of religion may be informed by the other disciplines that study religious life. Another reason behind the importance of the field is its breadth. There are few areas of philosophy that are shorn of religious implications. Religious traditions are so comprehensive and all-encompassing in their claims that almost every domain of philosophy may be drawn upon in the philosophical investigation of their coherence, justification, and value. A third reason is historical. Most philosophers throughout the history of ideas, east and west, have addressed religious topics. One cannot undertake a credible history of philosophy without taking philosophy of religion seriously. While this field is vital for philosophy, philosophy of religion may also make a pivotal contribution to religious studies and theology. Religious studies often involve important methodological assumptions about history and about the nature and limits of religious experience. These invite philosophical assessment and debate. Theology may also benefit from philosophy of religion in at least two areas. Historically, theology has often drawn upon, or been influenced by, philosophy. Platonism and Aristotelianism have had a major influence on the articulation of classical Christian doctrine, and in the modern era theologians have often drawn on work by philosophers from Hegel to Heidegger and Derrida. The evaluation has at times been highly critical and dismissive, but there are abundant periods in the history of ideas when philosophy has positively contributed to the flourishing of religious life. This constructive interplay is not limited to the west. The role of philosophy in distinctive Buddhist views of knowledge and the self has been of great importance. At the beginning of the 21st century, a more general rationale for philosophy of religion should be cited: Philosophers of religion now often seek out common as well as distinguishing features of religious belief and practice. This study can enhance communication between traditions, and between religions and secular institutions. The Meaningfulness of Religious Language A significant amount of work on the meaningfulness of religious language was carried out in the medieval period, with major contributions made by Maimonides <sup>2</sup>, Thomas Aquinas <sup>3</sup>, Duns Scotus <sup>4</sup>, and William of Ockham <sup>5</sup> In the modern era, the greatest concentration on religious language has taken place in response to logical positivism and to the latter work of Wittgenstein <sup>6</sup> This section and the next highlights these two more recent movements. Logical positivism promoted an empiricist principle of meaning which was deemed lethal for religious belief. The following empiricist principle is representative: The stronger version of positivism is that claims about the world must be verifiable at least in principle. Both the weaker view with its more open ended reference to evidence and the strict view in principle confirmation

delimit meaningful discourse about the world. Ostensibly factual claims that have no implications for our empirical experience are empty of content. In line with this form of positivism, A. Ayer and others claimed that religious beliefs were meaningless. How might one empirically confirm that God is omnipresent or loving or that Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu? In an important debate in the 1950s and 60s, philosophical arguments about God were likened to debates about the existence and habits of an unobservable gardener, based on a parable by John Wisdom in 1956. The idea of a gardener who is not just invisible but who also cannot be detected by any sensory faculty seemed nonsense. It seemed like nonsense because they said there was no difference between an imperceptible gardener and no gardener at all. Using this garden analogy and others crafted with the same design, Antony Flew in his essay in Mitchell made the case that religious claims do not pass the empirical test of meaning. The field of philosophy of religion in the 1950s and 60s was largely an intellectual battlefield where the debates centered on whether religious beliefs were meaningful or conceptually absurd. Empirical verificationism is by no means dead. Some critics of the belief in an incorporeal God continue to advance the same critique as that of Flew and Ayer, albeit with further refinements. Michael Martin and Kai Nielsen are representatives of this approach. And yet despite these efforts, empiricist challenges to the meaningfulness of religious belief are now deemed less impressive than they once were. In the history of the debate over positivism, the most radical charge was that positivism is self-refuting. The empiricist criterion of meaning itself does not seem to be a statement that expresses the formal relation of ideas, nor does it appear to be empirically verifiable. How might one empirically verify the principle? At best, the principle of verification seems to be a recommendation as to how to describe those statements that positivists are prepared to accept as meaningful. But then, how might a dispute about which other statements are meaningful be settled in a non-arbitrary fashion? If the positivist principle is tightened up too far, it seems to threaten various propositions that at least appear to be highly respectable, such as scientific claims about physical processes and events that are not publicly observable. For example, what are we to think of states of the universe prior to all observation of physical strata of the cosmos that cannot be observed directly or indirectly but only inferred as part of an overriding scientific theory? Or what about the mental states of other persons, which may ordinarily be reliably judged, but which, some argue, are under-determined by external, public observation? Also worrisome was the wholesale rejection by positivists of ethics as a cognitive, normative practice. The dismissal of ethics as non-cognitive had some embarrassing *ad hominem* force against an empiricist like Ayer, who regarded ethical claims as lacking any truth value and yet at the same time he construed empirical knowledge in terms of having the right to certain beliefs. Can an ethics of belief be preserved if one dispenses with the normativity of ethics? The strict empiricist account of meaning was also charged as meaningless on the grounds that there is no coherent, clear, basic level of experience with which to test propositional claims. A mystic might well claim to experience the unity of a timeless spirit everywhere present. Ayer allowed that in principle mystical experience might give meaning to religious terms. Those who concede this appeared to be on a slippery slope leading from empirical verificationism to mystical verificationism.

Alston A growing number of philosophers in the 1950s and 60s were led to conclude that the empiricist challenge was not decisive. Critical assessments of positivism can be found in work by, among others, Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swinburne, and John Foster. One of the most sustained lessons from the encounter between positivism and the philosophy of religion is the importance of assessing the meaning of individual beliefs in comprehensive terms. Carl Hempel developed the following critique of positivism, pointing the way to a more comprehensive analysis of the meaning of ostensible propositional claims. But no matter how one might reasonably delimit the class of sentences qualified to introduce empirically significant terms, this new approach [by the positivists] seems to me to lead to the realization that cognitive significance cannot well be construed as a characteristic of individual sentences, but only of more or less comprehensive systems of sentences corresponding roughly to scientific theories. A closer study of this point suggests strongly that the idea of cognitive significance, with its suggestion of a sharp distinction between significant and non-significant sentences or systems of such, has lost its promise and fertility and that it had better be replaced by certain concepts which admit of differences in degree, such as the formal simplicity of a system; its explanatory and predictive power; and its degree of conformation relative to the available evidence.

The analysis and theoretical reconstruction of these concepts seems to offer the most promising way of advancing further the clarification of the issues implicit in the idea of cognitive significance. Hempel, If Hempel is right, the project initiated by Ayer had to be qualified, taking into account larger theoretical frameworks. Religious claims could not be ruled out at the start but should be allowed a hearing with competing views of cognitive significance. Ayer himself later conceded that the positivist account of meaning was unsatisfactory. With the retreat of positivism in the 1950s, philosophers of religion re-introduced concepts of God, competing views of the sacred, and the like, which were backed by arguments that appealed not to narrow scientific confirmation but to broad considerations of coherence, breadth of explanation, simplicity, religious experience, and other factors. But before turning to this material, it is important to consider a debate within philosophy of religion that was largely inspired by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Religious Forms of Life and Practices Wittgenstein launched an attack on what has been called the picture theory of meaning, according to which statements may be judged true or false depending upon whether reality matches the picture represented by the belief. It gives rise to insoluble philosophical problems and it misses the whole point of having religious beliefs, which is that the meaning is to be found in the life in which they are employed. By shifting attention away from the referential meaning of words to their use, Wittgenstein promoted the idea that we should attend to what he called forms of life. As this move was applied to religious matters, a number of philosophers either denied or at least played down the extent to which religious forms of life involve metaphysical claims. Phillips have all promoted this approach to religion. It may be considered non-realist in the sense that it does not treat religious beliefs as straightforward metaphysical claims that can be adjudicated philosophically as either true or false concerning an objective reality. By their lights, the traditional metaphysics of theism got what it deserved when it came under attack in the mid-twentieth century by positivists. This Wittgensteinian challenge, then, appears to place in check much of the way philosophers in the west have approached religion. When, for example, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Berkeley, and Hume argued for and against the justification of belief in God, metaphysics was at the forefront. The same preoccupation with the truth or falsehood of religious belief is also central to ancient and medieval philosophical reflection about the Divine. At least two reasons may support recent non-realism. First, it has some credibility based on the sociology of religion. Religion seems pre-eminently to be focused upon how we live. A second reason that might be offered is that the classical and contemporary arguments for specific views of God have seemed unsuccessful to many philosophers though not to all, as observed in section 4. Non-realist views have their critics from the vantage point both of atheists such as Michael Martin and theists such as Roger Trigg. By way of a preliminary response it may be pointed out that even if a non-realist approach is adopted this would not mean altogether jettisoning the more traditional approach to religious beliefs. If one of the reasons advanced on behalf of non-realism is that the traditional project fails, then ongoing philosophy of religion will still require investigating to determine whether in fact the tradition does fail. As John Dewey once observed, philosophical ideas not only never die, they never fade away. A more substantial reply to Wittgensteinian non-realism has been the charge that it does not preserve but instead undermines the very intelligibility of religious practice. Let us concede that religious practice is antecedent to philosophical theories that justify the practice—a concession not shared by all.

### 7: What Is Faith? - Life, Hope & Truth

*'Meaning and Truth in Religion' by William A. Christian is a digital PDF ebook for direct download to PC, Mac, Notebook, Tablet, iPad, iPhone, Smartphone, eReader - but not for Kindle. A DRM capable reader equipment is required.*

Religio Religion from O. One possible interpretation traced to Cicero , connects lego read, i. The definition of religio by Cicero is cultum deorum, "the proper performance of rites in veneration of the gods. Augustine , following the interpretation given by Lactantius in Divinae institutiones, IV, The term was sparsely used in classical Greece but became more frequently used in the writings of Josephus in the first century CE. It was used in mundane contexts and could mean multiple things from respectful fear to excessive or harmfully distracting practices of others; to cultic practices. It was often contrasted with the Greek word deisidaimonia which meant too much fear. Throughout classical South Asia , the study of law consisted of concepts such as penance through piety and ceremonial as well as practical traditions. Medieval Japan at first had a similar union between imperial law and universal or Buddha law, but these later became independent sources of power. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the terms Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, and world religions first entered the English language. What is called ancient religion today, they would have only called law. There are however two general definition systems: The very attempt to define religion, to find some distinctive or possibly unique essence or set of qualities that distinguish the religious from the remainder of human life, is primarily a Western concern. The attempt is a natural consequence of the Western speculative, intellectualistic, and scientific disposition. It is also the product of the dominant Western religious mode, what is called the Judeo-Christian climate or, more accurately, the theistic inheritance from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The theistic form of belief in this tradition, even when downgraded culturally, is formative of the dichotomous Western view of religion. That is, the basic structure of theism is essentially a distinction between a transcendent deity and all else, between the creator and his creation, between God and man. We just know that it is done, annually, weekly, daily, for some people almost hourly; and we have an enormous ethnographic literature to demonstrate it. He also emphasized the cultural reality of religion, which he defined as [â€] the entirety of the linguistic expressions, emotions and, actions and signs that refer to a supernatural being or supernatural beings. When more or less distinct patterns of behavior are built around this depth dimension in a culture, this structure constitutes religion in its historically recognizable form. Religion is the organization of life around the depth dimensions of experienceâ€”varied in form, completeness, and clarity in accordance with the environing culture. He also argued that the belief in spiritual beings exists in all known societies. In his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* , the psychologist William James defined religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine". Sacred things are not, however, limited to gods or spirits. Religious beliefs Traditionally, faith , in addition to reason, has been considered a source of religious beliefs. The interplay between faith and reason, and their use as perceived support for religious beliefs, have been a subject of interest to philosophers and theologians. Mythology The word myth has several meanings. A traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon; A person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence; or A metaphor for the spiritual potentiality in the human being. Religions of pre-industrial peoples, or cultures in development, are similarly called myths in the anthropology of religion. The term myth can be used pejoratively by both religious and non-religious people. There, myth is defined as a story that is important for the group whether or not it is objectively or provably true. But from a mythological outlook, whether or not the event actually occurred is unimportant. Instead, the symbolism of the death of an old life and the start of a new life is what is most significant. Religious believers may or may not accept such symbolic interpretations. Worldview Religions have sacred histories , narratives , and mythologies which may be preserved in sacred scriptures , and symbols and holy places , that aim to explain the meaning of life , the origin of life , or the Universe.

### 8: BBC - GCSE Bitesize: Truth

*While this meaning of truth is involved in Scripture, it is not the primary meaning anywhere, save in a practical religious application, as in Ephesians ; 1 John , (3) Moral Moral truth is correspondence of expression with inner conception.*

Meaning, Nature , Role and other details Words Article shared by: Religion is an almost universal institution in human society. It is found in all societies, past and present. All the preliterate societies known to us have religion. Religion goes back to the beginning of the culture itself. It is a very ancient institution. There is no primitive society without religion. Like other social institutions, religion also arose from the intellectual power of man in response to certain felt needs of men. While most people consider religion as universal and therefore, a significant institution of societies. It is the foundation on which the normative structure of society stands. It is the social institution that deals with sacred things, that lie beyond our knowledge and control. It has influenced other institutions. It has been exerting tremendous influence upon political and economic aspects of life. It is said that man from the earliest times has been incurably religious. Religion is concerned with the shared beliefs and practices of human beings. It is the human response to those elements in the life and environment of mankind which are beyond their ordinary comprehension. Religion is pre-eminently social and is found in nearly all societies. Majumdar and Madan explain that the word religion has its origin in the Latin word *Religio*. This is derived from two root words. The second root refers to the carrying out those activities which link human beings with the supernatural powers. Thus, we find that the word religion basically represents beliefs and practices which are generally the main characteristics of all religions. Central to all religions is the concept of faith. Religion in this sense is the organisation of faith which binds human beings to their temporal and transcendental foundation. By faith man is distinguished from other beings. It is essentially a subjective and private matter. Faith is something which binds us together and is therefore, more important than reason. As a matter of fact the forms in which religion expresses itself vary so much that it is difficult to agree upon a definition. Some maintain that religion includes a belief in supernatural or mysterious powers and that it expresses itself in overt activities designed to deal with those powers. Others regard religion as something very earthly and materialistic, designed to achieve practical ends. While it is possible to define religion as belief in God or some super-natural powers, it is well to remember that there can also be a Godless religion as Buddhism. In sociology, the word religion is used in a wider sense than that used in religious books. A common characteristic found among all religions is that they represent a complex of emotional feelings and attitudes towards mysterious and perplexities of life. According to Radin it consists of two parts: The physiological part expresses itself in such acts as kneeling, closing the eyes, touching the feet. The psychological part consists of supernormal sensitivity to certain traditions and beliefs. If we analyse the great religions of the world, we shall find that each of them contains, five basic elements: Belief in Supernatural Powers: The first basic element of religion is the belief that there are supernatural powers. These powers are believed to influence human life and control all natural phenomena. Some call these supernatural forces God, other call them Gods. There are even others who do not call them by any name. They simply consider them as forces in their universe. Thus, belief in the non-sensory, super-empirical world is the first element of religion. Belief in the Holy: There are certain holy or sacred elements of religion. These constitute the heart of the religion. There are certain things which are regarded as holy or sacred. But a thing is holy or sacred not because of a peculiar quality of thing. An attitude makes a thing holy. The sacred character of a tangible thing is not observable to the senses. Sacred things are symbols. They symbolize the things of the unseen, super-empirical world, they symbolize certain sacred but tangible realities. When a Hindu worships a cow, he worships it not because of the kind of animal the cow is, but because of a host of super-empirical characteristics which this animal is imagined to represent. It includes any kind of behavior such as the wearing of special clothing and the immersion in certain rivers, in the Ganga for instance , prayers, hymns, creedal recitations, and other forms of reverence, usually performed with other people and in public. It can include singing, dancing, weeping, crawling, starving, feasting, etc. Failure to perform these acts is considered a sin. Acts defined as Sinful: Each religion defines certain acts as sinful and profane unholy. They are certain moral

principles which are explained to have a supernatural origin. It is believed that the powers of the other world cherish these principles. It may also bring upon him the disfavour of the supernatural powers. If the behaviour is not in accordance with the religions code, the behaviour or act is considered as sinful.

**Some Method of Salvation:** A method of salvation is the fifth basic element of religion. Man needs some method by which he can regain harmony with the Gods through removal of guilt. In Hindu religion Moksha or Salvation represents the end of life, the realisation of an inner spirituality in man. The Hindu seeks release from the bondage of Karma, which is the joy or suffering he undergoes as a result of his actions in his life. The ultimate end of life is to attain Moksha. The Buddhist hopes to attain Salvation by being absorbed in the Godhead and entering Nirvana. In short, religion is the institutionalised set of beliefs men hold about supernatural forces. It is more or less coherent system of beliefs and practices concerning a supernatural order of beings, forces, places or other entities.

**Role or Functions of Religion:** Religion is interwoven with all aspects of human life: It has shaped domestic, economic and political institutions. Hence, it is obvious that religion performs a number of functions both for the religious group and for the wider society. These functions of religion are discussed bellow.

**Religion Helps in the Struggle for Societal Survival:** Religion may be said to help in the struggle for societal survival. Rushton Coulborn has shown that religion played a crucial role in the formation and early development of seven primary civilisations: Religion in each of these societies gave its members the courage needed for survival in an unfavourable environment, by giving explanations to certain aspects of the human conditions which could not be explained in a rational manner. In present societies religion also performs this role. By relating the empirical world to the super-empirical world religion gives the individual a sense of security in this rapidly changing world. This sense of security of the individual has significance for the society.

**Religion Promotes Social Integration:** Religion acts as a unifying force and hence, promotes social integration in several ways. Religion plays an important part in crystallising, symbolising and reinforcing common values and norms. It thus provides support for social standards, socially accepted behaviour. Common faith, values and norms etc. As the individuals perform rituals collectively their devotion to group ends is enhanced. Through a ritual individual expresses common beliefs and sentiments. It thus helps him to identify himself more with his fellows, and to distinguish himself more from members of other groups, communities or nations. By distinguishing between holy and unholy things, religion creates sacred symbol for the values and this symbol becomes the rallying point for all persons who share the same values. The cow as a sacred symbol of the Hindus, for example, is a rallying point which gives cohesion to Hindu society. Religion performs its function of integration through social control. It regulates the conduct of individuals by enforcing moral principles on them and by prescribing powerful sanctions against them for violation. It is the ultimate source of social cohesion. The primary requirement of society is the common possession of social values by which individuals control the actions of self and others and through which society is perpetuated. These social values emanate from religious faith. Religion is the foundation upon which these values rest.

### 9: Truth in religion

*Truth is most often used to mean being in accord with fact or reality, or fidelity to an original or standard. Religious views on truth vary between religions. Contents.*

Subscribe to the CompellingTruth. Is there a difference between religion and spirituality? Religion and spirituality are two related yet distinct terms associated with faith. Religion denotes "a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, usually involving devotional and ritual observances and a moral code. Based on these definitions, the major difference between religion and spirituality is one of believing versus being. A religious person accepts a certain set of beliefs as true and observes a certain set of rituals. A person of the Muslim religion believes Allah is God and observes Ramadan and salat. In contrast, spirituality is the fact of being spiritual and is usually evidenced by the act of doing spiritual things. Praying, meditating, reading Scripture, and giving to a charity are all things that a "spiritual" person might do. Spirituality is more abstract than religion. Religion usually promotes a creed and has a defined code of ethics; it is tangible. Spirituality exists in the nebulous realm of the undefinable. Because of this, an increasing number of people in postmodern Western culture view spirituality as good and religion as bad. Ambiguity is "in" today; dogmatism is "out. The practice of religion may lead to good the founding of Christian hospitals or to evil the mass suicide in Jonestown. Likewise, one person may claim that feeding the poor is a spiritual act, while someone else claims that murder is a spiritual act. Biblically speaking, religion and spirituality should be united, and the end result should be good works to the glory of God Matthew 5: The verse also carries an implicit warning against false or empty religion. Since James specifies "pure" and "undefiled" religion, there must also exist "impure" and "defiled" religion. True religion is godly; empty religion only has "the appearance of godliness" 2 Timothy 3: Spirituality is also defined more clearly in Scripture. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" emphasis added. True Christian spirituality is to dedicate ourselves to the worship and service of God and to be supernaturally transformed.

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