

God and Religion

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God is the unified name we give, as if “IT” is a person with immense capability to directly affect our lives, to our awareness of and experience of our selves as being related to, influenced by and participating in the infinite immaterial, energetic, subjective, “spiritual” dimension of reality.

Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals that circumscribe, attempt to “explain” and provide access to the experience of ourselves as participating in the infinite, interconnected, eternal “spiritual” dimension of reality.

Religion can be relatively simple like an animistic view of one’s self as participating in a material reality where all entities are interconnected and have a sacred, mysterious aspect, which demands respectful relations among all. On the other hand, religion can be very complex, exclusive, and tied to and confirming a specific, hierarchical social system. The more complex the religion, generally the more remote and circumscribed the underlying core experience of the subjective is for the average believer. In most complex religions, the core experience of the spiritual, subjective, immaterial is “captured” by and transformed into concrete embodiments or representations – spirits, gods, profits, priests, sorcerers, saviors – that humans are encouraged to believe in “by faith.”

Instead of humans benefiting from direct experience of their selves as participating in the subjective, complex religions most often require humans to access the spiritual, subjective through engaging in particular rituals while holding absolutely to specific, literal beliefs. Then, if through religious belief and ritual, an individual experiences the subjective, that experience is interpreted as confirming the “correctness” of the ritual/belief system itself that carried the individual to that expansive experience of the self. The expansive or spiritual experience of self is thereby confined to supporting the religious belief system itself – and the social system to which it is very often tied. The potentially liberating experience of the expansive, immaterial dimension of reality is thus reduced to confirming the belief system and its allied social system that provided access. Example: the “born again” experience in Christian fundamentalism is reduced to confirming for the individual emerging from this experience that belief in Jesus is the “true” [and only] way to gain access to God and eternal life.

The immaterial, subjective, spiritual dimension of reality is real and very important for all of humanity. Humans have access to this dimension of reality through their intuitive faculty when it is adequately developed and properly utilized. God is a way humans anthropomorphize the infinite immaterial and its importance to suggest answers to questions about how life is to be engaged [respectfully] so as to participate ultimately in the infinite for eternity. Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals that define and confine to greater or lesser degrees access to the subjective and capture how it is to be understood – usually confirming religion itself and the society to which it is attached.