

The Inseparability of Religious Truth and Belief: An Epistemological Inquiry

Yash Jain

Abstract: Before we go to explain what determines the problem of religious truth we have to understand what religious truth is. The most universal concept of religion that holds true in every case is the inseparable nature of truth and religious belief. Each religion views itself as the only path to truth. Religious truth, therefore, is never relative, always absolute. A question arises that what are religious truths. The fundamental truths are: 1. The Bible is the inspired words of God. 2. There is one God. 3. The Lord Jesus is fully God. 4. The Fall of Mankind. 5. The salvation of Mankind. 6. The ordinances of the Church. 7. The Baptism of the Holy spirit. 8. The initial Physical Evidence of the Baptism is the Holy Spirit.

Keywords: Religious truth, belief systems, comparative religion, religious doctrines, myths.

1. Research Methods

The study employs a comparative analysis of religious texts and doctrines from major world religion using a structural approach to understand the underlying similarities and differences in how religious truths are perceived and communicated.

2. Source of Religious Truth

One source of Divine Truth is Holy Scripture (for the Bible) is the collection of books accepted as definitive by the Catholic church. Sacred scriptures is the authentic inspired record of the revelations made to mankind by God about himself and about his will for men. True religion here is identified with religious truth understood as knowledge oriented towards the ultimate deepest really 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 really exists. The most universal concept of religion that holds in every case is the inseparable nature of truth and religious belief. Every religion sees itself as the only path to truth. Religious truth is never relative, always absolute.

I give here the largest groups of religion in a tabular form –

Religion	Followers	Cultural (Billions) (Tradition)
Christianity	2.4	Abrahamic religions
Islam	1.9	- do -
Hinduism	1.2	Indian religions
Buddhism	0.5	- do -

Which religion came first on Earth

Adherents hold that Hinduism one of the principal faiths in the modern world is about one billion followers – is the world's oldest religion, which complete scriptural texts dating 3000.

Truth is God

Truth is God Gandhiji had stated initially that God is Truth. Later he reversed his statement that Truth is God sometime in 1929. Gandhiji evolves as a thinker when he moves from God is Truth to Truth is God. He explains that it is a culmination of his relentless search for Truth "All Truth is God's truth" is probably the most familiar and famous

quote from St. Augustine (AD 354-430) Those five words express confidence in God, truth, the Bible, science and the ultimate alignment of all enquiry and discovery (20.3.1915) though what has been spoken above about religion in a tabular form may not be cent percent correct because there is no concrete proof of surveying from door to door to arrive at the conclusion.

Religion is nothing but a mass of false ideas and superstitious of which the ultimate source is wishful thinking. I quote here three passages from T.S. Eliot's play "The Cocktail party".¹ They come from different parts of the play, but it is noteworthy they are all three put into the mouth of the same character, whose utterances, in some sense, carry the main message of the drama. Whatever else there is in the play, it certainly teaches that there are two possible ways of life between which we have to make a choice. Says the character Reilly concerning human life. The best of a bad job is all that any of us make of it except of course, the saints.

In a later context he says :

There is another way, if you have the courage. The first I could describe in familiar terms

Because you have seen it, as well as we all have seen it, Illustrated, more or less in the lives of three about us.

The second is unknown, and so requires faith – The kind of faith that issues from despair.

The destination cannot be described;

You will know very little until you get there,

You will journey blind. But the way leads towards possession. Of what you have sought for in the wrong place.

In the third passage, quoted from later page Reilly says But such experience can only be hinted at

In myths and images. To speak about it we talk of darkness, labyrinths, Minotaur terrors. There is then a "way" and an experience and it is the way of the saints-Nevertheless it is "unknown". And it is only for those who have the courage. The destination cannot be described.

In every religion there is a way or path, and there is a destination or experience to which they leads. I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Jesus of St. John's Gospel.

The Buddhist speaks of "the noble eight paths. The destination, the experience which is hidden is variously described as "salvation", "heaven", "nirvana", "union with Brahman". The different religions seem to refer to different paths and different destinations. In all the great religions, there is in fact only one destination, one experience, even with some qualifications one path, but that is hinted at by means of different "myths and images" which constitute the differences between the religions.

Two central problems

The first problem is whether we are to accept the scientific view of the world as the sole truth, or whether the religious view is true or contains some truth which the scientific view leaves out, or whether the two can be in any way reconciled. The second problem concerns the foundation of morality, whether they are secular or religious, and if secular whether we are committed to a relatives tie view of morals. The sub-problem is have we any free will or are we mere cogs in a world machine, unable even in the smallest matters of our conduct, to alter by a hair's breadth the inevitable course of the world ? It is a sub-problem because it is subordinate to the problems of morals and really a part of it. For if there is no free will, there cannot be any morality.

Myths and Images

The myths and images by means of which we hint at the experience and the destination are the creeds and dogmas of different religions. These vary and contradict one another, and herein lie the differences between the religions. The unity between them lies, in the first instance, in the path and the destination, the way of life which is the way of the saints. There are three questions which we have to discuss –

- 1) The conception of religious dogmas and doctrines as myths and images.
- 2) The way of life, the destination, the experience.
- 3) Whether the experience implies any special view of the nature of the universe. That all religions, doctrines and dogmas are myths and images means that none of them is literally true. Practically all religious people hold that the doctrines which are special and peculiar to religions other than their own are false. The Christian does not accept the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation. The Buddhist does not accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. This is the doctrine that there exists a being, known as God, who is a mind, a person a consciousness, who formed a plan in his mind, and whok in accordance with his purpose created a world. This can be proved to be false. The first thing to say is that science has absolutely nothing to do with the matter. It does not make any difference to the doctrine of the existence of God whether the sun goes round the earth or the earth round the sun, whether the planets move in circles or ellipses, whether the laws of motion are what Galileo and Newton thought or not. The transition from the teachings of early science to a diminishing belief in God was a Psychological, not a logical transition. In other words it was mistake.

Most common belief

One of the most common beliefs has been that the world must have a first cause, which must be God. But why

should not the chains of causes and effects run beak into an infinite part with no beginning? This may be difficult to conceive and some philosophers have thought that the idea of infinite time involves contradictions. The main point, however is that there is not reason to suppose that there must have been a first cause, since the chain of causes might go infinitely backwards into infinite time, and that if there is difficulty in conceiving an infinite backward time containing only one infinitely prolonged cause, namely God. Many people believe that miracles occur but it is not a fact.

God does exist

If we admit that all the arguments for the existence of God, are invalid this does not prove that God does not exist. The fact that there is no evidence of the existence of a mountain thirty thousand feet high on the back of the moon does not prove that one does not exist. There might be such a mountain. In the same way there might be such a being as God, even thought there is no evidence of the fact that it is available to us. Let us suppose then that there is such a being. In all theological thought God is supposed to be infinite. The finite mind of man is contracted with the infinite mind of God. But the more we think of if it the more we see that we can attach no meaning at all to this language. Such a mind is a flow of changing conscious states, and change implies finites, an infinite, mind in contradiction in terms.

God is truly Infinite

God is truly infinite. But in that case no meaning can be given to his language. Either we have to give up his doctrine of the infinity of God, or he has to use language which has no meaning. Gods activity and creativity also contradict his infinity. If God is the ultimate source of everything, then he is the ultimate source of evil; and how is this consistent with his perfect goodness. Hume wrote.

'Epicurus' old questions are still unanswered. Is Deity willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil ?2 All attempts to solve the problem on the level of literal interpretation are obvious absurdities. Some have said that evil is not a positive but only a negative fact. It is only the absence of goodness. It is therefore nothing and God cannot be held responsible for creating a nothingness. But this is to assert that pain and evil do not really exist at all, which is absurd. Others have urged that we should perceive no evil in the world, if we could perceive the world as a whole. The appearance of evil is due to our limited and partial vision.

Purpose of the article

The purpose of the article is to explore and analyze the inherent connection between religious truth and belief highlighting their role in shaping religious doctrines and practices across different faiths.

3. Observation

All what has been explained above is only a few skeptical arguments which can be used to destroy such a proposition as "There exists an infinity good and powerful mind which

created the word and runs it." Some of them may be more convincing, some less. It will always be possible to pick holes, to argue and dispute. But the total force of skeptical considerations of this kind whether it has been stated impeccably or not must at the end, believe irresistible to a mind which is both quite honest and quite impartial. This is not to say that all religious are false. There are two ways of life which most of us follow and which consists in making 'the best of a bad job, and the way of the saints' of any religion. Buddha said : "If remains a fact that the fixed and necessary constitution of being that all its constituents are misery"³ And it is said in only of the Upanishads : "In the infinite only is bliss".⁴ It is believed that what the saints say is true not merely that there is some truth in it, but that it is wholly true.

The essential truth of religion, of every religion, is that from the darkness of life there is a way out, a way into the light. It is generally supposed that the way of the saints consists in living a good life, that is to say, in morality. Is not a saint just a very good man ? To this view corresponds the suggestion that the essence of religion is ethics. It may be said then that the essence of Christianity is the sermon on the Mount. When we discount the dogmas, we are left with the ethics, for there is nothing else in religion besides its ethics and its dogmas. The view that religion is "morality tinged with emotion" also makes ethics the essence of religion.

Abstract

The article explores the intricate relationships between religious truth and belief across various religious traditions. It argues that religious truths are perceived as absolute within each faith, making them central to the belief system. The paper examines how these truths are communicated through religious doctrines, myths, and images and it addresses the challenges in reconciling religious and scientific perspectives on truth.

4. Summary

Judging from what has been said in the fore going paragraphs it is explicitly clear that whether you accept the existence of God, God exists and there can be no doubt about it. Whether you say God is truth or truth is God it matters little. The sources of Divine truth are the sacred books and the Holy Scriptures. We have also seen that out of the four important categories of religion, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, Hinduism with 1.2 billion followers is the oldest though we cannot safely say so because there is no categorical scientific proof which says so.

From the poem of T. S. Eliot's play 'The cocktails party' we have seen that religion is nothing but a mass of false ideas and superstitions of which the ultimate source is wishful thinking. In every religion there is a way or path and there is destination or experience to which it leads. I am the way, the truth and life says the Jesus of St. Johns Gospels whereas the Buddhists speak of the noble eight Fold Paths of Suffering. The destination and experience which is hidden is variously described as salvation, Heaven, Nirvana, Union with Brahman etc. The myths and legends

by which we hint are the creeds and dogmas of different religions vary and contradict each other and herein lie the differences between the religions.

5. Conclusion

The article has highlighted the crucial role that religious truths play in shaping belief systems across different faiths. By analyzing religious doctrines and myths the study emphasizes the absolute nature of these truths within each religion and their impact on the perception of reality among adherents. The findings suggest that while religious truths are often seen as immutable, they are deeply intertwined with the cultural and historical contexts of the religions they represent.

List of references provided at the end

The list is well supported and they directly support the claims and discussions as provided in the foregoing paragraphs.

References

- [1] T. S. Eliot – The Cocktail party. Quoted by permission of the Publishers – Harcourt, Bruce and company inc.
- [2] Dialogues concerning Natural Religion (New York): Hafner Publishing Co. 1951) Part X
- [3] Anngutara Nikaya – Quoted Buddhism in Translations H C Warren (Cambridge University Press 1896) P/XX
- [4] Chandogya Upanishads 7.23 in the Hindu Scriptures (Everyman ed)