

RELIGION

Richard Smoley - Week One

From Wikipedia:

A **religion** is an organized approach to human spirituality which usually encompasses a set of narratives, symbols, beliefs and practices, often with a supernatural or transcendent quality, that give meaning to the practitioner's experiences of life through reference to a higher power, God or gods, or ultimate truth.^[1] It may be expressed through prayer, ritual, meditation, music and art, among other things. It may focus on specific supernatural, metaphysical, and moral claims about reality (the cosmos and human nature) which may yield a set of religious laws, ethics, and a particular lifestyle. Religion also encompasses ancestral or cultural traditions, writings, history, and mythology, as well as personal faith and religious experience.

The term "religion" refers to both the personal practices related to communal faith and to group rituals and communication stemming from shared conviction. "Religion" is sometimes used interchangeably with "faith" or "belief system,"^[2] but it is more socially defined than personal convictions, and it entails specific behaviors, respectively. The development of religion has taken many forms in various cultures. It considers psychological and social roots, along with origins and historical development.

In the frame of western religious thought,^[3] religions present a common quality, the "hallmark of patriarchal religious thought": the division of the world in two comprehensive domains, one sacred, the other profane.^[4] Religion is often described as a communal system for the coherence of belief focusing on a system of thought, unseen being, person, or object, that is considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine, or of the highest truth. Moral codes, practices, values, institutions, tradition, rituals, and scriptures are often traditionally associated with the core belief, and these may have some overlap with concepts in secular philosophy. Religion is also often described as a "way of life" or a life stance.

Religious scholars generally agree that writing a single definition that applies to all religions is difficult or even impossible, because all people examine religion with some kind of critical eye, and the term is therefore fraught with ideological consequences for anyone who might want to construct a universal definition. Talal Asad writes that "there cannot be a universal definition of religion ... because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes"^[5]; Thomas A. Tweed, while defending the idea of religion in general, writes that "it would be foolish to set up an abstract definition of religion's essence, and then proceed to defend that definition from all comers."^[6]

The earliest definition of religion is from Johnson's *Dictionary*, which simply calls it "a system of faith and worship". Friedrich Schleiermacher in the late 18th century defined religion as *das schlechthinnige Abhängigkeitsgefühl*, commonly translated as "a feeling of absolute dependence".^[7] His contemporary Hegel disagreed thoroughly, defining religion as "the Divine Spirit becoming conscious of Himself through the finite spirit."^[8]

Clifford Geertz's definition of religion as a "cultural system" was dominant for most of the 20th century and continues to be widely accepted today.

Sociologists and anthropologists tend to see religion as an abstract set of ideas, values, or experiences developed as part of a cultural matrix. For example, in Lindbeck's *Nature of Doctrine*, religion does not refer to belief in "God" or a transcendent Absolute. Instead, Lindbeck defines religion as, "a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought... it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, the formulation of beliefs, and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings, and sentiments."^[9] According to this definition, religion refers to one's primary worldview and how this dictates one's thoughts and actions. Thus religion is considered by some sources to extend to causes, principles, or activities believed in with zeal or conscientious devotion concerning points or matters of ethics or conscience, and not necessarily including belief in the supernatural.^[10]

The English word *religion* has been in use since the 13th century, loaned from Anglo-French *religiun* (11th century), ultimately from the Latin *religio*, "reverence for God or the gods, careful pondering of divine things, piety, the *res divinae*".^[11]

The ultimate origins of Latin *religiō* are obscure. It is usually accepted to derive from *ligare* "bind, connect"; probably from a prefixed *re-ligare*, i.e. *re* (again) + *ligare* or "to reconnect." This interpretation is favoured by modern scholars such as Tom Harpur and Joseph Campbell, but was made prominent by St. Augustine, following the interpretation of Lactantius. Another possibility is derivation from a reduplicated **le-ligare*. A historical interpretation due to Cicero on the other hand connects *lego* "read", i.e. *re* (again) + *lego* in the sense of "choose", "go over again" or "consider carefully".^[12]

Specific religious movements

Main article: Major religious groups

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the academic practice of comparative religion divided religious belief into philosophically-defined categories called "world religions." However, some recent scholarship has argued that not all types of religion are necessarily separated by mutually exclusive philosophies, and furthermore that the utility of ascribing a practice to a certain philosophy, or even calling a given practice religious, rather than cultural, political, or social in nature, is limited.^{[13][14][15]} The list of religious movements given here is an attempt to summarize the most important regional and philosophical influences, but it is by no means a complete description of every religious community.

- **Abrahamic religions** are practiced throughout the world. They share in common the Jewish patriarch Abraham and the Torah as an initial sacred text, although the degree to which the Torah is incorporated into religious beliefs varies between traditions.
 - **Judaism** accepts only the prophets of the Torah, but also relies on the authority of rabbis. It is practiced by the Jewish people, an ethnic group

currently centered in Israel but also scattered throughout the Jewish diaspora. Today, Jews are outnumbered by Christians and Muslims.

- **Christianity** is centered on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as presented in the Gospels and the writings of the apostle Paul (1st century CE). The Christian faith is essentially faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and as Savior and Lord. As the religion of Western Europe during the time of colonization, Christianity has been propagated throughout the world. However, Christianity is not practiced as a single orthodoxy but as a mixture of Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, and many forms of Protestantism. In the United States, for example, African-Americans^[16] and Korean-Americans^[17] usually attend separate churches from Americans of European descent. Many European countries as well as Argentina have established a specific church as the state religion, but this is not the case in the United States nor in many other majority Christian areas.
- **Islam** refers to the religion taught by the Islamic prophet Muhammad, a major political and religious figure of the 7th century CE. Islam is the dominant religion of northern Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. As with Christianity, there is no single orthodoxy in Islam but a multitude of traditions which are generally categorized as Sunni and Shia, although there are other minor groups as well. Wahhabi Islam is the established religion of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. There are also several Islamic republics, including Iran which is run by a Shia Supreme Leader.
- The **Bahá'í Faith** was founded in the 19th century in Iran and since then has spread worldwide. It teaches unity of all religious philosophies and accepts all of the prophets of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as additional prophets including its founder Bahá'u'lláh.
- Smaller Abrahamic groups that are not heterodox versions of the four major groupings include Mandaëism, Samaritanism, the Druze, and the Rastafari movement.
- **Indian religions** are practiced or were founded in the Indian subcontinent. Concepts most of them share in common include karma, caste, reincarnation, mantras, yantras, and darśana. Islam in India has also been influenced by Indian religious practices.
 - **Hinduism** is a term introduced by British scholars to describe the similar philosophies of Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and related groups.^[13] Today, proponents of Hindu nationalism sometimes include Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs under the category of Hinduism, but the Dalit Buddhist movement is excluded because of their denial of the caste system.^[18] Hinduism is not a monolithic religion in and of itself but a religious category containing dozens of separate philosophies.
 - **Sikhism** is a monotheistic religion founded on the teachings of Guru Nanak and ten successive Sikh Gurus in 15th century Punjab. Sikhs are found mostly in India.
 - **Jainism**, taught primarily by Parsva (9th century BCE) and Mahavira (6th century BCE), is an ancient Indian religion that prescribes a path of non-

violence for all forms of living beings in this world. Jains are found mostly in India.

- There are dozens of new Indian religions and Hindu reform movements, such as Ayyavazhi and Swaminarayan Faith.
- **Buddhism** was founded by Siddhattha Gotama in the 6th century BCE. Buddhists generally agree that Gotama aimed to help sentient beings end their suffering by understanding the true nature of phenomena, thereby escaping the cycle of suffering and rebirth (saṃsāra), that is, achieving Nirvana.
 - **Theravada Buddhism**, which is practiced mainly in Southeast Asia alongside folk religion, shares some characteristics of Indian religions. It is based in a large collection of texts called the Pali Canon.
 - Under the heading of **Mahayana** (the "Great Vehicle") fall a multitude of doctrines which began their development in China and are still relevant in Vietnam, in Korea, in Japan, and to a lesser extent in Europe and the United States. Mahayana Buddhism includes such disparate teachings as Zen, Pure Land, and Soka Gakkai.
 - **Vajrayana Buddhism**, sometimes considered a form of Mahayana, was developed in Tibet and is still most prominent there and in surrounding regions.
 - Two notable new Buddhist sects are Hòa Hảo and the Dalit Buddhist movement, which were developed separately in the 20th century.
- **Yazdânism** is a non-Abrahamic monotheistic category including the traditional beliefs of the Yazidi, Alevi, and Ahl-e Haqq.
- **Religious movements centered in the United States** are often derived from Christian tradition. They include the Latter Day Saint movement, Christian evangelicalism, and Unitarian Universalism among hundreds of smaller groups.
- **Folk religion** is a term applied loosely and vaguely to disorganized local practices. It is also called paganism, shamanism, animism, ancestor worship, and totemism, although not all of these elements are necessarily present in local belief systems. The category of "folk religion" can generally include anything that is not part of an organization. The modern neopagan movement draws on folk religion for inspiration.
 - **African traditional religion** is a category including any type of religion practiced in Africa before the arrival of Islam and Christianity, such as Yoruba religion or San religion. There are many varieties of religions developed by Africans in the Americas derived from African beliefs, including Santería, Candomblé, Umbanda, Vodou, and Oyotunji.
 - **Folk religions of the Americas** include Aztec religion, Inca religion, Maya religion, and modern Catholic beliefs such as the Virgin of Guadalupe. Native American religion is practiced across the continent of North America.
 - **Australian Aboriginal culture** contains a mythology and sacred practices characteristic of folk religion.
 - **Chinese folk religion**, practiced by Chinese people around the world, is a primarily social practice including popular elements of Confucianism and Taoism, with some remnants of Mahayana Buddhism. Most Chinese do

- not identify as religious due to the strong Maoist influence on the country in recent history, but adherence to religious ceremonies remains common. New religious movements include Falun Gong and I-Kuan Tao.
- Traditional **Korean religion** was a syncretic mixture of Mahayana Buddhism and Korean shamanism. Unlike Japanese Shinto, Korean shamanism was never codified and Buddhism was never made a social necessity. In some areas these traditions remain prevalent, but Korean-influenced Christianity is far more influential in society and politics.
 - Traditional **Japanese religion** is a mixture of Mahayana Buddhism and ancient indigenous practices which were codified as Shinto in the 19th century. Japanese people retain nominal attachment to both Buddhism and Shinto through social ceremonies, but irreligion is common.
 - A variety of **new religious movements** still practiced today have been founded in many other countries besides the United States and Japan, including Cao Đài in Vietnam.
 - **Shinshūkyō** is a general category for a wide variety of religious movements founded in Japan since the 19th century. These movements share almost nothing in common except the place of their founding. The largest religious movements centered in Japan include Soka Gakkai, Tenrikyo, and Seicho-No-Ie among hundreds of smaller groups.

Sociological classifications of religious movements suggest that within any given religious group, a community can resemble various types of structures, including "churches", "denominations", "sects", "cults", and "institutions".

Religion and superstition

Further information: Superstition, Magical thinking, and Magic and religion

While superstitions and magical thinking refer to nonscientific causal reasoning, applied to specific things or actions, a religion is a more complex system about general or ultimate things, involving morality, history and community. Because religions may include and exploit certain superstitions or make use of magical thinking, while mixing them with broader considerations, the division between superstition and religious faith is hard to specify and subjective. Religious believers have often seen other religions as superstition.^[19] Likewise, some atheists, agnostics, deists, and skeptics regard religious belief as superstition. Religious practices are most likely to be labeled "superstitious" by outsiders when they include belief in extraordinary events (miracles), an afterlife, supernatural interventions, apparitions or the efficacy of prayer, charms, incantations, the meaningfulness of omens, and prognostications.

Greek and Roman pagans, who modeled their relations with the gods on political and social terms scorned the man who constantly trembled with fear at the thought of the gods, as a slave feared a cruel and capricious master. Such fear of the gods (*deisidaimonia*) was what the Romans meant by *superstitio* (Veyne 1987, p 211). Early

Christianity was outlawed as a *superstitio Iudaica*, a "Jewish superstition", by Domitian in the 80s AD, and by AD 425, Theodosius II outlawed pagan traditions as superstitious.

The Roman Catholic Church considers superstition to be sinful in the sense that it denotes a lack of trust in the divine providence of God and, as such, is a violation of the first of the Ten Commandments. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states superstition "in some sense represents a perverse excess of religion" (para. #2110)

Superstition is a deviation of religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes. It can even affect the worship we offer the true God, e.g., when one attributes an importance in some way magical to certain practices otherwise lawful or necessary. To attribute the efficacy of prayers or of sacramental signs to their mere external performance, apart from the interior dispositions that they demand is to fall into superstition. Cf. Matthew 23:16-22 (para. #2111)

History

Detail from *Religion*, Charles Sprague Pearce (1896). Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, D.C.

Ideally, a history of religion could include all human religious practices, but archaeological study of religion is a relatively new and undeveloped field.^[20] Therefore, the history of religion is largely limited to those practices which have been described in writing.

Development of religion

Main articles: Evolutionary origin of religions, Development of religion, Anthropology of religion, and Prehistoric religion

Like the definition of religion, the construction of religious history is a task fraught with ideological implications. Early studies of religions were often written to imply that the author's own religion was the most accurate. Even in a secular history, to imply that religion "progresses" towards better understanding of reality makes a value judgment about past religions; likewise, to consider religion an essentially social construction with no transcendent meaning denies the claims of every religious authority.

There is no time or place in human history where religious movements are not being founded, and religious practice is not merely a matter of founding prophets but also of local traditions and reforms. There is not even a single era when the Abrahamic religions were developed; the Jewish prophets lived some centuries before Jesus, Muhammad came six centuries after him, and Bahá'u'lláh founded the Bahá'í Faith over a millennium later.

Middle Ages

A rare Tanjore style painting from the late 19th century depicting the ten gurus of Sikhism with Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana.

The Middle Ages (800 AD-1500 AD) was a time of philosophical development for several major religions. As Christianity became the focus of scholarship throughout Europe, Buddhist missions were sent to East Asia, and Islam was spread throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, North Africa and parts of Europe and India. Meanwhile, the decline of Buddhism in India led to the flourishing of folk religion there.

Many medieval religious movements emphasized mysticism, such as the Cathars and related movements in the West, the Bhakti movement in India and Sufism in Islam. Monotheism was articulated distinctly in Christian Christology and in Islamic Tawhid. Hindu monotheist notions of Brahman likewise reached their classical form with the teaching of Adi Shankara.

Religion was the dominant ideology behind many conflicts of the Middle Ages. Muslims were in conflict with Zoroastrians during the Islamic conquest of Persia; Christians were in conflict with Muslims during the Byzantine-Arab Wars, Crusades, Spanish Reconquista and Ottoman wars in Europe; Christians were in conflict with Jews during the Crusades, Reconquista and Inquisition; Shamans were in conflict with Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims and Christians during the Mongol invasions; and Muslims were in conflict with Hindus during Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent.

Modern period

European colonization during the 15th to 19th centuries resulted in the spread of Christianity to Sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, Australia and the Philippines. The 18th century saw the beginning of secularization in Europe, rising to notability in the wake of the French Revolution. By the 20th century, religion was no longer the dominant ideological force behind international wars, but had generally been unseated by political ideals such as democracy and communism.

In the 20th century, the regimes of Communist Eastern Europe and Communist China were explicitly anti-religious. A great variety of new religious movements originated in the 20th century, many proposing syncretism of elements of established religions. Adherence to such new movements is limited, however, remaining below 2% worldwide in the 2000s. Adherents of the classical world religions account for more than 75% of the world's population, while self-reported allegiance to indigenous folk religions has fallen to 4%. As of 2005, an estimated 14% of the world's population identifies as nonreligious.

Religious belief

Central Asian (Tocharian) and East-Asian Buddhist monks, Bezeklik, Eastern Tarim Basin, 9th-10th century.

Main article: Religious belief

Religious belief usually relates to the existence, nature and worship of a deity or deities and divine involvement in the universe and human life. Alternately, it may also relate to values and practices transmitted by a spiritual leader. Unlike other belief systems, which may be passed on orally, religious belief tends to be codified in literate societies (religion in non-literate societies is still largely passed on orally^[21]). In some religions, like the Abrahamic religions, it is held that most of the core beliefs have been divinely revealed.

Religious belief can also involve causes, principles or activities believed in with zeal or conscientious devotion concerning points or matters of ethics or conscience, not necessarily limited to organized religions.^[22]

Related forms of thought

Religion and science

Main article: Relationship between religion and science

Religious knowledge, according to religious practitioners, may be gained from religious leaders, sacred texts (scriptures), and/or personal revelation. Some religions view such knowledge as unlimited in scope and suitable to answer any question; others see religious knowledge as playing a more restricted role, often as a complement to knowledge gained through physical observation. Some religious people maintain that religious knowledge obtained in this way is absolute and infallible (religious cosmology).

The scientific method gains knowledge by testing hypotheses to develop theories through elucidation of facts or evaluation by experiments and thus only answers cosmological questions about the physical universe. It develops theories of the world which best fit physically observed evidence. All scientific knowledge is subject to later refinement in the face of additional evidence. Scientific theories that have an overwhelming preponderance of favorable evidence are often treated as facts (such as the theories of gravity or evolution).

Early science such as geometry and astronomy was connected to the divine for most medieval scholars. The compass in this 13th century manuscript is a symbol of God's act of creation.

Many scientists have held strong religious beliefs (see List of Christian thinkers in science) and have worked to harmonize science and religion. Isaac Newton, for example, believed that gravity caused the planets to revolve about the Sun, and credited God with the design. In the concluding General Scholium to the *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, he wrote: "This most beautiful System of the Sun, Planets and Comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being." Nevertheless, conflict has repeatedly arisen between religious organizations and individuals who propagated scientific theories that were deemed unacceptable by the organizations. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, has in the past^[23] reserved to itself the right to decide which scientific theories were acceptable and which were

unacceptable. In the 17th century, Galileo was tried and forced to recant the heliocentric theory based on the church's stance that the Greek Hellenistic system of astronomy was the correct one.^{[24][25]}

Many theories exist as to why religions sometimes seem to conflict with scientific knowledge. In the case of Christianity, a relevant factor may be that it was among Christians that science in the modern sense was developed. Unlike other religious groups, as early as the 17th century the Christian churches had to deal directly with this new way to investigate nature and seek truth.

The perceived conflict between science and Christianity may also be partially explained by a literal interpretation of the Bible adhered to by many Christians, both currently and historically. The Catholic Church has always held with Augustine of Hippo who explicitly opposed a literal interpretation of the Bible whenever the Bible conflicted with Science. The literal way to read the sacred texts became especially prevalent after the rise of the Protestant reformation, with its emphasis on the Bible as the only authoritative source concerning the ultimate reality.^[26] This view is often shunned by both religious leaders (who regard literally believing it as petty and look for greater meaning instead) and scientists who regard it as impossibility.

Some Christians have disagreed or are still disagreeing with scientists in areas such as the validity of Keplerian astronomy, the theory of evolution, the method of creation of the universe and the Earth, and the origins of life. On the other hand, scholars such as Stanley Jaki have suggested that Christianity and its particular worldview was a crucial factor for the emergence of modern science. In fact, most of today's historians are moving away from the view of the relationship between Christianity and science as one of "conflict" — a perspective commonly called the conflict thesis.^{[27][28]} Gary Ferngren in his historical volume about Science & Religion states:

While some historians had always regarded the [conflict] thesis as oversimplifying and distorting a complex relationship, in the late twentieth century it underwent a more systematic reevaluation. The result is the growing recognition among historians of science that the relationship of religion and science has been much more positive than is sometimes thought. Although popular images of controversy continue to exemplify the supposed hostility of Christianity to new scientific theories, studies have shown that Christianity has often nurtured and encouraged scientific endeavor, while at other times the two have co-existed without either tension or attempts at harmonization. If Galileo and the Scopes trial come to mind as examples of conflict, they were the exceptions rather than the rule.^[29]

In the Bahá'í Faith, the harmony of science and religion is a central tenet.^[30] The principle states that that truth is one, and therefore true science and true religion must be in harmony, thus rejecting the view that science and religion are in conflict.^[30] `Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the founder of the religion, asserted that science and religion cannot be opposed because they are aspects of the same truth; he also affirmed that reasoning powers are required to understand the truths of religion and that religious teachings which

are at variance with science should not be accepted; he explained that religion has to be reasonable since God endowed humankind with reason so that they can discover truth.^[31] Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, described science and religion as "the two most potent forces in human life."^[32]

Proponents of Hinduism claim that Hinduism is not afraid of scientific explorations, nor of the technological progress of mankind. According to them, there is a comprehensive scope and opportunity for Hinduism to mold itself according to the demands and aspirations of the modern world; it has the ability to align itself with both science and spiritualism. This religion uses some modern examples to explain its ancient theories and reinforce its own beliefs. For example, some Hindu thinkers have used the terminology of quantum physics to explain some basic concepts of Hinduism such as Maya or the illusory and impermanent nature of our existence.

The philosophical approach known as pragmatism, as propounded by the American philosopher and psychologist William James, has been used to reconcile scientific with religious knowledge. Pragmatism, simplistically, holds that the truth of a set of beliefs can be indicated by its usefulness in helping people cope with a particular context of life. Thus, the fact that scientific beliefs are useful in predicting observations in the physical world can indicate a certain truth for scientific theories; the fact that religious beliefs can be useful in helping people cope with difficult emotions or moral decisions can indicate a certain truth for those beliefs. (For a similar postmodern view, see grand narrative).

Religion, metaphysics, and cosmology

Being both forms of belief system, religion and philosophy meet in several areas - notably in the study of metaphysics and cosmology. In particular, a distinct set of religious beliefs will often entail a specific metaphysics and cosmology. That is, a religion will generally have answers to metaphysical and cosmological questions about the nature of being, of the universe, humanity, and the divine.

Mysticism and esotericism

Mysticism focuses on methods other than logic, but (in the case of esoteric mysticism) not necessarily excluding it, for gaining enlightenment. Rather, meditative and contemplative practices such as Vipassanā and yoga, physical disciplines such as stringent fasting and whirling (in the case of the Sufi dervishes), or the use of psychoactive drugs such as LSD, lead to altered states of consciousness that logic can never hope to grasp. However, regarding the latter topic, mysticism prevalent in the 'great' religions (monotheisms, henotheisms, which are perhaps relatively recent, and which the word 'mysticism' is more recent than,) includes systems of discipline that forbid drugs that can damage the body, including the nervous system.

Mysticism (to initiate) is the pursuit of communion with, or conscious awareness of ultimate reality, the divine, spiritual truth, or Deity through direct, personal experience (intuition or insight) rather than rational thought. Mystics speak of the existence of

realities behind external perception or intellectual apprehension that are central to being and directly accessible through personal experience. They say that such experience is a genuine and important source of knowledge.

Esotericism is often spiritual (thus religious) but can be non-religious/-spiritual, and it uses intellectual understanding and reasoning, intuition and inspiration (higher noetic and spiritual reasoning,) but not necessarily faith (except often as a virtue,) and it is philosophical in its emphasis on techniques of psycho-spiritual transformation (esoteric cosmology). Esotericism refers to "hidden" knowledge available only to the advanced, privileged, or initiated, as opposed to exoteric knowledge, which is public. All religions are probably somewhat exoteric, but most ones of ancient civilizations such as Yoga of India, and the mystery religions of ancient Egypt, Israel (Kabbalah,) and Greece are examples of ones that are also esoteric.

Spirituality

Main article: Spirituality

Members of an organized religion may not see any significant difference between religion and spirituality. Or they may see a distinction between the mundane, earthly aspects of their religion and its spiritual dimension.

Some individuals draw a strong distinction between religion and spirituality. They may see spirituality as a belief in ideas of religious significance (such as God, the Soul, or Heaven), but not feel bound to the bureaucratic structure and creeds of a particular organized religion. They choose the term *spirituality* rather than religion to describe their form of belief, perhaps reflecting a disillusionment with organized religion (see Major religious groups), and a movement towards a more "modern" — more tolerant, and more intuitive — form of religion. These individuals may reject organized religion because of historical acts by religious organizations, such as Christian Crusades and Islamic Jihad, the marginalization and persecution of various minorities or the Spanish Inquisition. The basic precept of the ancient spiritual tradition of India, the Vedas, is the *inner reality* of existence, which is essentially a spiritual approach to being.

Notes

1. ^ While religion is difficult to define, the standard model of religion as used in religious studies was defined by Clifford Geertz (*Religion as a Cultural System*, 1973). For an influential critique of Geertz's model see Talal Asad's *The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category* (1982).
2. ^ The words "belief system" may not necessarily refer to a religion, though a religion may be referred to as "belief system."
3. ^ Jack Goody as cited in "Sacred and Profane - Durkheim's Critics".
<http://science.jrank.org/pages/11183/Sacred-Profane-Durkheim-s-Critics.html>. Retrieved 2007-07-10.

4. ^ Durkheim 1976, p.36
5. ^ Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Johns Hopkins University Press.)
6. ^ Thomas A. Tweed. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. New York: Harvard University Press, 2006. p.35.
7. ^ Hueston A. Finlay. "‘Feeling of absolute dependence’ or ‘absolute feeling of dependence’? A question revisited". *Religious Studies* 41.1 (2005), pp.81-94.
8. ^ Max Müller. "Lectures on the origin and growth of religion."
9. ^ George A. Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1984), 33.
10. ^ from unabridged dictionaries on <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/religion?r=75> and also the Oxford English Dictionary
11. ^ Lewis & Short, *A Latin Dictionary*[1]
12. ^ qui omnia, quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent, diligenter retractarent et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi ex relegendo, ut elegantes ex elegendo, tamquam a diligendo diligentes, ex intellegendo intellegentes: his enim in verbis omnibus inest vis legendi eadem, quae in religioso, Cic. N. D. 2, 28, 72
13. ^ ^{a b} Brian Kemble Pennington *Was Hinduism Invented?* New York: Oxford University Press US, 2005. ISBN 0195166558
14. ^ Russell T. McCutcheon. *Critics Not Caretakers: Redescribing the Public Study of Religion*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001.
15. ^ Nicholas Lash. *The beginning and the end of 'religion'*. Cambridge University Press, 1996. ISBN 0521566355
16. ^ Charles Eric Lincoln. *Race, religion, and the continuing American dilemma*. Macmillan, 1999. ISBN 0809016230
17. ^ Won Moo Hurh. *The Korean Americans*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998.
18. ^ Koenraad Elst. *Who Is a Hindu?* New Delhi: Voice of India, 2001.
19. ^ Boyer (2001). "Why Belief". *Religion Explained*.
20. ^ Renfrew, C. 1994. "The Archaeology of Religion." In Renfrew, C. and Zubrow, E. (eds.) *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 47-54
21. ^ *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*, Pascal Boyer, Basic Books (2001)
22. ^ see several dictionaries on <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/religion?r=75> and also Oxford's English Language Dictionary
23. ^ Quotation: "*The Second Vatican Council affirmed academic freedom for natural science and other secular disciplines*". From the essay of Ted Peters about Science and Religion at "Lindsay Jones (editor in chief). *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition. Thomson Gale. 2005. p.8185"
24. ^ By Dr Paul Murdin, Lesley Murdin Photographs by Paul New. *Supernovae Astronomy* Murdin Published 1985, Cambridge University Press Science, 256 pages, ISBN 052130038X page 18.
25. ^ Godfrey-Smith, Peter. 2003. *Theory and reality: an introduction to the philosophy of science. Science and its conceptual foundations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Page 14.
26. ^ Stanley Jaki. *Bible and Science*, Christendom Press, 1996 (pages 110-111)

27. ^ Spitz, Lewis (1987). (*The Rise of modern Europe*) *The protestant Reformation 1517-1559*. Harper Torchbooks. pp. 383. ISBN 0-06-132069-2 The historian of early modern Europe Lewis Spitz says "To set up a 'warfare of science and theology' is an exercise in futility and a reflection of a nineteenth century materialism now happily transcended".
28. ^ Quotation: "*The conflict thesis, at least in its simple form, is now widely perceived as a wholly inadequate intellectual framework within which to construct a sensible and realistic historiography of Western science.*" (p. 7), from the essay by Colin A. Russell "The Conflict Thesis" on "Gary Ferngren (editor). *Science & Religion: A Historical Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8018-7038-0".
29. ^ Gary Ferngren (editor). *Science & Religion: A Historical Introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8018-7038-0. (Introduction, p. ix)
30. ^ ^{a b} Esslemont, J.E. (1980). *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* (5th ed.). Wilmette, Illinois, USA: Bahá'í Publishing Trust. ISBN 0-87743-160-4.
31. ^ `Abdu'l-Bahá (1982) [1912]. *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* (Hardcover ed.). Wilmette, Illinois, USA: Bahá'í Publishing Trust. ISBN 0-87743-172-8. <http://reference.bahai.org/en/t/ab/PUP/>.
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