

John H. Hick. *Philosophy of Religion* (4<sup>th</sup> ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990) 109-19.

## CHAPTER 9

# The Conflicting Truth Claims of Different Religions

### MANY FAITHS, ALL CLAIMING TO BE TRUE

Until comparatively recently each of the different religions of the world had developed in substantial ignorance of the others. There have been, it is true, great movements of expansion which have brought two faiths into contact: above all, the expansion of Buddhism during the last three centuries B.C.E. and the early centuries of the Christian era, carrying its message throughout India and Southeast Asia and into China, Tibet, and Japan, and then, the resurgence of the Hindu religion at the expense of Buddhism, with the result that today Buddhism is rarely to be found on the Indian subcontinent; next, the first Christian expansion into the Roman Empire; then the expansion of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries C.E. into the Middle East, Europe, and later India; and finally, the second expansion of Christianity in the missionary movement of the nineteenth century. These interactions, however, in the cases of Christianity and Islam, were conflicts rather than dialogues; they did not engender any deep or sympathetic understanding of one faith by the adherents of another. It is only during the last hundred years or so that the scholarly study of world religions has made possible an accurate appreciation of the faiths of other people and so has brought home to an increasing number of us the problem of the conflicting truth claims made by different religious traditions. This issue now emerges as a major topic demanding a prominent place on the agenda of the philosopher of religion.

The problem can be posed very concretely in this way. If I had been born in India, I would probably be a Hindu; if in Egypt, probably a Muslim; if in Sri Lanka, probably a Buddhist; but I was born in England and am, predictably, a Christian. (Of course, a different "I" would have developed in each case.) These different religions seem to say

different and incompatible things about the nature of ultimate reality, about the modes of divine activity, and about the nature and destiny of the human race. Is the divine nature personal or nonpersonal? Does deity become incarnate in the world? Are human beings reborn again and again on earth? Is the empirical self the real self, destined for eternal life in fellowship with God, or is it only a temporary and illusory manifestation of an eternal higher self? Is the Bible, or the Qur'an, or the Bhagavad Gita the Word of God? If what Christianity says in answer to such questions is true, must not what Hinduism says be to a large extent false? If what Buddhism says is true, must not what Islam says be largely false?

The skeptical thrust of these questions goes very deep; for it is a short step from the thought that the different religions cannot all be true, although they each claim to be, to the thought that in all probability none of them is true. Thus Hume laid down the principle “that, in matters of religion whatever is different is contrary; and that it is impossible the religions of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China should, all of them, be established on any solid foundation.” Accordingly, regarding miracles as evidence for the truth of a particular faith, “Every miracle, therefore, pretended to have been wrought in any of these religions (and all of them abound in miracles), as its direct scope is to establish the particular religion to which it is attributed; so has it the same force, though more indirectly, to overthrow every other system.”<sup>1</sup> By the same reasoning, any ground for believing a particular religion to be true must operate as a ground for believing every other religion to be false; accordingly, for any particular religion there will always be far more reason for believing it to be false than for believing it to be true. This is the skeptical argument that arises from the conflicting truth claims of the various world faiths.

#### CRITIQUE OF THE CONCEPT OF “A RELIGION”

In his important book *The Meaning and End of Religion*,<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith challenges the familiar concept of “a religion,” upon which much of the traditional problem of conflicting religious truth claims rests. He emphasizes that what we call a religion—an empirical entity that can be traced historically and mapped geographically—is a human phenomenon. Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and so on are human creations whose history is part of the wider history of human culture. Cantwell Smith traces the development of the concept of a religion as a clear and bounded historical phenomenon and shows that the notion, far from being universal and self-evident is a distinctively western invention which has been exported to the rest of the world. “It is,” he says, summarizing the outcome of his detailed historical argument, “a surprisingly modern aberration for anyone to think that Christianity is true or that Islam is—since the Enlightenment, basically, when Europe began to postulate religions as intellectualistic systems, patterns of doctrine, so that they could for the first time be labeled ‘Christianity’ and

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<sup>1</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 1748, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), para. 95, p.121.

<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 1962 (New York: Harper & Row and London: Sheldon Press, 1978).

‘Buddhism,’ and could be called true or false.<sup>3</sup> The names by which we know the various “religions” today were in fact (with the exception of “Islam”) invented in the eighteenth century, and before they were imposed by the influence of the West upon the peoples of the world no one had thought of himself or herself as belonging to one of a set of competing systems of belief concerning which it is possible to ask, “Which of these systems is the true one?” This notion of religions as mutually exclusive entities with their own characteristics and histories—although it now tends to operate as a habitual category of our thinking—may well be an example of the illicit reification, the turning of good adjectives into bad substantives, to which the western mind is prone and against which contemporary philosophy has warned us. In this case a powerful but distorting conceptuality has helped to create phenomena answering to it, namely the religions of the world seeing themselves and each other as rival ideological communities.

Perhaps, however, instead of thinking of religion as existing in mutually exclusive systems, we should see the religious life of humanity as a dynamic continuum within which certain major disturbances have from time to time set up new fields of force, of greater or lesser power, displaying complex relationships of attraction and repulsion, absorption, resistance, and reinforcement. These major disturbances are the great creative religious moments of human history from which the distinguishable religious traditions have stemmed. Theologically, such moments are seen as intersections of divine grace, divine initiative, divine truth, with human faith, human response human enlightenment. They have made their impact upon the stream of human life so as to affect the development of cultures; and what we call Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, are among the resulting historical cultural phenomena. It is clear, for example, that Christianity has developed through a complex interaction between religious and nonreligious factors. Christian ideas have been formed within the intellectual framework provided by Greek philosophy; the Christian church was molded as an institution by the Roman Empire and its system of laws; the Catholic mind reflects something of Latin Mediterranean and the Protestant mind something of northern Germanic culture, and so on. It is not hard to appreciate the connections between historical Christianity and the continuing life of humanity in the western hemisphere, and of course the same is true, in their own ways, of all the other religions of the world.

This means that it is not appropriate to speak of a religion as being true or false, any more than it is to speak of a civilization as being true or false. For the religions, in the sense of distinguishable religiocultural streams within human history, are expressions of the diversities of human types and temperaments and thought forms. The same differences between the eastern and western mentality that are revealed in characteristically different conceptual and linguistic, social, political, and artistic forms presumably also underlie the contrasts between eastern and western religion.

In *The Meaning and End of Religion* Cantwell Smith examines the development from the original religious event or idea—whether it be the insight of the Buddha, the life of Christ, or the career of Mohammed—to a religion in the sense of a vast living organism with its own credal backbone and its institutional skin. He shows in each case that this development stands in a questionable relationship to that original event or idea. Religions as

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<sup>3</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Questions of Religious Truth* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1967), p. 73.

institutions, with the theological doctrines and the codes of behavior that form their boundaries, did not come about because the religious reality required this, but because such a development was historically inevitable in the days of undeveloped communication between the different cultural groups. Now that the world has become a communicational unity, we are moving into a new situation in which it becomes both possible and appropriate for religious thinking to transcend these cultural-historical boundaries. But what form might such new thinking, take, and how would it affect the problem of, conflicting truth claims?

## TOWARD A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

To see the historical inevitability of the plurality of religions in the past and its noninevitability in the future, we must note the broad course that has been taken by the religious life of humanity. Humanity has been described as a naturally religious animal, displaying an innate tendency to experience the environment as being religiously as well as naturally significant and to feel required to live in it as such. This tendency is universally expressed in the cultures of early peoples, with their belief in sacred objects, endowed with *mana*, and in a multitude of spirits needing to be carefully propitiated. The divine reality is here apprehended as a plurality of quasi-animal forces. The next stage seems to have come with the coalescence of tribes into larger groups. The tribal gods were then ranked in hierarchies (some being lost by amalgamation in the process) dominated, in the Middle East, by great national gods such as the Sumerian Ishtar, Amon of Thebes, Jahweh of Israel, Marduk of Babylon, the Greek Zeus, and in India by the Vedic high gods such as Dyaus (the sky god), Varuna (god of heaven), and Agni (the fire god). The world of such national and nature gods, often martial and cruel and sometimes requiring human sacrifices, reflected the state of humanity's awareness of the divine at the dawn of documentary history, some three thousand years ago.

So far, the whole development can be described as the growth of natural religion. That is to say, primal spirit worship expressing fear of the unknown forces of nature, and later the worship of regional deities—depicting either aspects of nature (sun, sky, etc.) or the collective personality of a nation—represent the extent of humanity's religious life prior to any special intrusions of divine revelation or illumination.

But sometime after 1000 B.C.E. a golden age of religious creativity, named by Jaspers the Axial Period,<sup>4</sup> dawned. This consisted of a series of revelatory experiences occurring in different parts of the world that deepened and purified people's conceptions of the divine, and that religious faith can only attribute to the pressure of the divine reality upon the human spirit. To quote A. C. Bouquet, "It is a commonplace with specialists in the history of religion that somewhere within the region of 800 B.C. there passed over the populations of this planet a stirring of the mind, which, while it left large tracts of humanity comparatively uninfluenced, produced in a number of different spots on the earth's surface prophetic individuals who created a series of new starting points for human living and

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<sup>4</sup> Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, 1949 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), Chap.1.

thinking.”<sup>5</sup> At the threshold of this period some prophets appeared (Elijah in the ninth century; Amos, Hosea and the first Isaiah in the eighth century; and then Jeremiah in the seventh), declaring that they had heard the word of the Lord claiming their obedience and demanding a new level of righteousness and justice in the life of Israel. During the next five centuries, between about 800 and 300 B.C.E., the prophet Zoroaster appeared in Persia; Greece produced Pythagoras, and then Socrates and Plato, and Aristotle; in China there was Confucius, and the author or authors of the Taoist scriptures, and in India this creative period saw the formation of the Upanishads and the lives of Gotama the Buddha, and Mahavira, founder of the Jain religion, and around the end of this period, the writing of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Even Christianity, beginning later, and then Islam, both have their roots in the Hebrew religion of the Axial Age and both can hardly be understood except in relation to it.

It is important to observe the situation within which all three revelatory moments occurred. Communication between the different groups of humanity was then so limited that for all practical purposes human beings inhabited a series of different worlds. For the most part people living in China, in India, in Arabia, in Persia, were unaware of the others’ existence. There was thus, inevitably, a multiplicity of local religions that were also local civilizations. Accordingly the great creative moments of revelation and illumination occurred separately within the different cultures and influenced their development, giving them the coherence and confidence to expand into larger units, thus producing the vast religiocultural entities that we now call the world religions. So it is that until recently the different streams of religious experience and belief have flowed through different cultures, each forming and being formed by its own separate environment. There has, of course, been contact between different religions at certain points in history, and an influence—sometimes an important influence—of one upon another; nevertheless, the broad picture is one of religions developing separately within their different historical and cultural settings.

In addition to noting these historical circumstances, we need to make use of the important distinction between, on the one hand, human encounters with the divine reality in the various forms of religious experience, and on the other hand, theological theories or doctrines that men and women have developed to conceptualize the meaning of these encounters: These two components of religion, although distinguishable, are not separable. It is as hard to say which came first, as in the celebrated case of the hen and the egg; they continually react upon one another in a joint process of development, experience providing the ground of our beliefs, but these in turn influencing the forms taken by our experience. The different religions are different streams of religious experience, each having started at a different point within human history and each having formed its own conceptual self-consciousness within a different cultural milieu.

In the light of this it is possible to consider the hypothesis that the great religions are all, at their experiential roots, in contact with the same ultimate divine reality but that their differing experiences of that reality, interacting over the centuries with the differing thought forms of differing cultures, have led to increasing differentiation and contrasting

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<sup>5</sup> A. C. Bouquet, *Comparative Religion* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1941), pp. 77-78.

elaboration—so that Hinduism, for example, is a very different phenomenon from Christianity, and very different ways of experiencing and conceiving the divine occur within them. However, in the “one world” of today the religious traditions are consciously interacting with each other in mutual observation and dialogue, and it is possible that their future developments may move on gradually converging courses. During the next centuries each group will presumably continue to change, and it may be that they will grow closer together, so that one day such names as “Christianity,” “Buddhism,” “Islam,” and “Hinduism” will no longer adequately describe the then current configurations of religious experience and belief. I am not thinking here of the extinction of human religiousness in a universal secularization. That is of course a possible future, and indeed many think it the most likely future to come about. But if the human creature is an indelibly religious animal, he or she will always, even amidst secularization, experience a sense of the transcendent that both troubles and uplifts. The future I am envisaging is accordingly one in which the presently existing religions will constitute the past history of different emphases and variations, which will then be more like, for example, the different denominations of Christianity in North America or Europe today than like radically exclusive totalities.

If the nature of religion, and the history of religion, is indeed such that a development of this kind begins to take place during the twenty-first century, what would this imply concerning the problem of the conflicting truth claims of the different religions?

We may distinguish three aspects of this question: differences in modes of experiencing the divine reality; differences of philosophical and theological theory concerning that reality or concerning the implications of religious experience; and differences in the key or revelatory experiences that unify a stream of religious life.

The most prominent example of the first kind of difference is probably that between the experience of the divine as personal and as nonpersonal. In Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the theistic strand of Hinduism, the Ultimate is apprehended as personal goodness, will, and purpose under the different names of Jahweh, God, Allah, Vishnu, Shiva. On the other hand, in Hinduism as interpreted by the Advaita Vedānta school, and in Theravada Buddhism, ultimate reality is apprehended as nonpersonal. Mahayana Buddhism is a more complex tradition, including both nontheistic Zen and quasi-theistic Pure Land Buddhism. There is, perhaps, in principle no difficulty in holding that these personal and nonpersonal experiences of the Ultimate can be understood as complementary rather than incompatible. For if, as every profound form of religion has affirmed, the Ultimate Reality is infinite and exceeds the scope of our finite human categories, that reality may be both personal Lord and nonpersonal Ground of being. At any rate, there is a program for thought in the exploration of what Aurobindo called “the logic or the infinite”<sup>6</sup> and the question of the extent to which predicates that are incompatible when attributed to a finite reality may no longer be incompatible when referred to infinite reality.

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<sup>6</sup> Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1949, and N.Y.: Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, Inc, 1980), Book II, Chap. 2.

The second type of difference is in philosophical and theological theory or doctrine. Such differences, and indeed conflicts, are not merely apparent, but are part of the still developing history of human thought; it may be that in time they will be transcended, for they belong to the historical, culturally conditioned aspect of Religion, which is subject to change. When one considers, for example, the immense changes that have come about within Christian thought during the last hundred years, in response to the development of modern biblical scholarship and the modern physical and biological sciences, one can set no limit to the further developments that may take place in the future. A book of contemporary Christian theology (post-Darwin, post-Einstein, post-Freud), using modern biblical criticism and taking for granted a considerable demythologization of the New Testament world view, would have been quite unrecognizable as Christian theology two centuries ago. Comparable responses to modern science are yet to occur in many of the other religions of the world, but they must inevitably come, sooner or later. When all the main religious traditions have been through their own encounter with modern science, they will probably have undergone as considerable an internal development as has Christianity. In addition, there will be an increasing influence of each faith upon every other as they meet and interact more freely within the "one world" of today. In the light of all this, the future that I have speculatively projected does not seem impossible.

However, it is the third kind of difference that constitutes the largest difficulty in the way of religious agreement. Each religion has its holy founder or scripture, or both, in which the divine reality has been revealed—the Vedas, the Torah, the Buddha, Christ and the Bible, the Qur'an. Wherever the Holy is revealed, it claims an absolute response of faith and worship, which thus seems incompatible with a like response to any other claimed disclosure of the Holy. Within Christianity, for example, this absoluteness and exclusiveness of response has strongly developed in the doctrine that Christ was uniquely divine, the only Son of God, of one substance with the Father, the only mediator between God and man. But this traditional doctrine, formed in an age of substantial ignorance of the wider religious life of humanity, gives rise today to an acute tension. On the one hand, Christianity traditionally teaches that God is the Creator and Lord of all humanity and seeks humanity's final good and salvation; and on the other hand that only by responding in faith to God in Christ can we be saved. This means that infinite love has ordained that human beings can be saved only in a way that in fact excludes the large majority of them; for the greater part of all the human beings who have been born have lived either before Christ or outside the borders of Christendom. In an attempt to meet this glaring paradox, Christian theology has developed a doctrine according to which those outside the circle of Christian faith may nevertheless be saved. For example, the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church, 1963-1965, declared that "Those who through no fault of their own are still ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church yet sincerely seek God and, with the help of divine Grace, strive to do his will as known to them through the voice of their conscience, those men can attain to eternal salvation."<sup>7</sup> This represents a real movement in response to a real problem; nevertheless it is only an epicycle of theory, complicating the existing dogmatic system rather than going to the heart of the problem. The epicycle is designed to cover theists ("those who sincerely seek God") who have had no contact with the Christian gospel. But what of the

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<sup>7</sup> *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, Art. 16.

nontheistic Buddhists and nontheistic Hindus? And what of those Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Parsees, etc., both theists and nontheists, who have heard the Christian gospel but have preferred to adhere to the faith of their fathers?

Thus it seems that if the tension at the heart of the traditional Christian attitude to non-Christian faiths is to be resolved, Christian thinkers must give even more radical attention to the problem than they have as yet done. It is, however, not within the scope of this book to suggest a plan for the reconstruction of Christian or other religious doctrines.

#### PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Among the great religious traditions, and particularly within their more mystical strands, a distinction is widely recognized between the Real or Ultimate or Divine *an sich* (in him/her/its-self) and the Real as conceptualized and experienced by human beings. The widespread assumption is that the Ultimate Reality is infinite and as such exceeds the grasp of human thought and language, so that the describable and experienceable objects of worship and contemplation are not the Ultimate in its limitless reality but the Ultimate in its relation to finite perceivers. One form of this distinction is that between *nirguna* Brahman, Brahman without attributes, beyond the scope of *saguna* Brahman, Brahman with attributes, encountered within human experience as Ishvara, the personal creator and governor of the universe. In the West the Christian mystic Meister Eckhart drew a parallel distinction between the Godhead (*Deitas*) and God (*Deus*). The Taoist scripture, the *Tao Te Ching*, begins by affirming that “The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao.” The Jewish Kabbalist mystics distinguished between En Soph, the absolute divine reality beyond all human description and the God of the Bible; and among the Muslim Sufis, Al Haqq, the Real, seems to be a similar concept to En Soph, as the abyss of Godhead underlying the self-revealing Allah. More recently Paul Tillich has spoken of “the God above the God of theism”<sup>8</sup> and Gordon Kaufman has recently distinguished between the “real God” and the “available God.”<sup>9</sup> These all seem to be somewhat similar (though not identical) distinctions. If we suppose that the Real is one, but that our human perceptions of the Real are plural and various, we have a basis for the hypothesis that the different streams of religious experience represent diverse awarenesses of the same limitless transcendent reality which is perceived in characteristically different ways by different mentalities, forming and formed by different cultural histories.

Immanuel Kant has provided (without intending to do so) a philosophical framework within which such a hypothesis can be developed. He distinguished between the world as it is *an sich*, which he called the noumenal world and the world as it appears to human consciousness, which he called the phenomenal world. His writings can be interpreted in various ways, but according to one interpretation the phenomenal world is the noumenal world as humanly experienced. The innumerable diverse sensory clues are brought together in human consciousness, according to Kant, by means of a system of relational concepts or categories (such as “thing” and “cause”) in terms of which we are aware of our environment. Thus our environment as we perceive it is a joint product of the world itself and the selecting,

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p.190.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon Kaufman, *God the Problem* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 86.



interpreting, and unifying activity of the perceiver. Kant was concerned mainly with the psychological contribution to our awareness of the world, but the basic principle can also be seen at work on the physiological level. Our sensory equipment is capable of responding to only a minute proportion of the full range of sound and electromagnetic waves—light, radio, infrared, ultraviolet, X, and gamma—which are impinging upon us all the time. Consequently, the world as we experience it represents a particular selection—a distinctively human selection—from the immense complexity and richness of the world as it is *an sich*. We experience at a certain macro/micro level. What we experience and use as the solid, enduring table would be, to a micro-observer, a swirling universe of discharging energy, consisting of electrons, neutrons, and quarks in continuous rapid activity. We perceive the world as it appears specifically to beings with our particular physical and psychological equipment. Indeed, the way the world appears to us is the way the world is for us as we inhabit and interact with it. As Thomas Aquinas said long ago, “The thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower.”<sup>10</sup>

Is it possible to adopt the broad Kantian distinction between the world as it is in itself and the world as it appears to us with our particular cognitive machinery, and apply it to the relation between the Ultimate Reality and our different human awarenesses of that Reality? If so, we shall think in terms of a single divine noumenon and many diverse divine phenomena. We may form the hypothesis that the Real *an sich* is experienced by human beings in terms of one of two basic religious concepts. One is the concept of God, or of the Real experienced as personal, which presides over the theistic forms of religion. The other is the concept of the Absolute, or of the Real experienced as nonpersonal, which presides over the various nontheistic forms of religion. Each of these basic concepts is, however, made more concrete (in Kantian terminology, schematized) as a range of particular images of God or particular concepts of the Absolute. These images of God are formed within the different religious histories. Thus the Jahweh of the Hebrew Scriptures exists in interaction with the Jewish people. He is a part of their history and they are a part of his; he cannot be abstracted from this particular concrete historical nexus. On the other hand, Krishna is a quite different divine figure, existing in relation to a different faith-community with its own different and distinctive religious ethos. Given the basic hypothesis of the reality of the Divine, we may say that Jahweh and Krishna (and likewise, Shiva, and Allah, and the Father of Jesus Christ) are different *personae* in terms of which the divine Reality is experienced and thought within different streams of religious life. These different *personae* are thus partly projections of the divine Reality into human consciousness, and partly projections of the human consciousness itself as fit has been formed by particular historical cultures. From the human end they are our different images of God; from the divine end they are God’s *personae* in relation to the different human histories of faith.

A similar account will then have to be given of the forms of nonpersonal Absolute, or *impersonae*, experienced within the different strands of nontheistic religion—Brahman, Nirvana, Sunyata, the Dharma, the Dharmakaya, the Tao. Here, according to our hypothesis, the same limitless Ultimate Reality is being experienced and thought through different forms of the concept of the Real as nonpersonal.

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<sup>10</sup> *Summa Theologica*, II/II, Q.1, Art. 2.

It is characteristic of the more mystical forms of awareness of the Real that they seem to be direct, and not mediated—or therefore distorted—by the perceptual machinery of the human mind. However, our hypothesis will have to hold that even the apparently direct and unmediated awareness of the Real in the Hindu *moksha*, in the Buddhist *satori*, and in the unitive mysticism of the West, is still the conscious experience of a human subject and as such is influenced by the interpretative set of the cognizing mind. All human beings have been influenced by the culture of which they are a part and have received, or have developed in their appropriation of fit, certain deep interpretative tendencies which help to form their experience and are thus continually confirmed within it. We see evidence of such deep “sets” at work when we observe that mystics formed by Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religious cultures report distinctively different forms of experience. Thus, far from it being the case that they all undergo an identical experience but report it in different religious languages, it seems more probable that they undergo characteristically different unitive experiences (even though with important common features), the differences being due to the conceptual frameworks and meditational disciplines supplied by the religious traditions in which they participate.<sup>11</sup>

Thus it is a possible, and indeed an attractive, hypothesis—as an alternative to total skepticism—that the great religious traditions of the world represent different human perceptions of and response to the same infinite divine Reality.

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<sup>11</sup> Concerning this understanding of mysticism, see further Steven Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).