

I have argued that "all religions have to do with the constitution of human existence," and that this means that "the 'basic supposition' of all religions is that human existence is constituted *somehow*, while the 'basic question' all religions answer is the question of *how* human existence is really constituted" (Notebooks, 4 November 1989; rev. 13 April 2001; italics added). But if this is so, even the most recent of my earlier formulations of the "basic supposition" of religion, etc., requires to be revised.

Specifically, the "basic supposition" of religion, or the content of our "basic faith" in the meaning of ultimate reality for us, is threefold:

(1) that human existence is constituted somehow, so that *not* everything is permitted and there is a true and authentic, because realistic, way to understand oneself and others as parts of the all-encompassing whole;

(2) that to understand oneself in this way and to lead one's life accordingly are both really possible and, like everything else, unconditionally significant; and

(3) that the structure of ultimate reality in itself is such as to determine its meaning for us, which is to say, to determine that human existence is so constituted that not everything is permitted and there is a true and authentic, because realistic, way of understanding oneself and others in relation to the whole; and that this self-understanding and the life-praxis expressing it are both really possible and, like everything else, of unconditional significance.

Given this "basic supposition," or this "basic faith" in the ultimate meaning of life, one already supposes, or believes, what any religion necessarily presupposes and, therefore, is able to ask the "basic question" to which every religion re-presents an answer as well as to make the "open commitment" to accept the true answer to the question as and when some religion re-presents it.

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Should my earlier formulations of the "basic supposition" of religion, or the content of our "basic faith" in the meaning of ultimate reality for us, be revised as follows?

The "basic supposition" of religion, or the content of our "basic faith" in the meaning of ultimate reality for us, is threefold:

(1) that there is an authentic, because realistic, way to understand oneself and others as parts of the all-encompassing whole;

(2) that to understand oneself in this way and to lead one's life accordingly is both really possible and, like everything else, unconditionally significant; and

(3) that the structure of ultimate reality in itself is such as to explain its meaning for us, which is to say, to explain why there is an authentic, because realistic, way to understand oneself and others as parts of the whole and why understanding oneself and others in this way and living accordingly is both really possible and, like everything else, unconditionally significant.

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What is the "basic supposition" of religion? Alternatively, what is the content of the "basic faith" that is necessarily presupposed by religion as well as by all that we think, say, and do as human beings?

The "basic supposition" of religion, or the content of our "basic faith," and so the basic presupposition of all of our culture and praxis, including religion, is threefold:

(1) there is an authentic, because realistic, way to understand oneself and all others as parts of the encompassing whole ;

(2) to understand oneself in this way and to lead one's life accordingly is, like everything else, unconditionally significant; and

(3) the structure of ultimate reality in itself is such as to explain its meaning for us, which is to say, to explain both why there is an authentic, because realistic, way to understand oneself and others as parts of the whole and why understanding oneself in this way and living accordingly is, like everything else, unconditionally significant.

Given this basic faith, one already supposes what any religion presupposes and, therefore, is able both to ask the basic question to which every religion represents an answer and to make an open commitment to accept the true answer to the question as and when some religion represents it.

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