

Why do I hold that a religion can claim unique or decisive authority "only because it also claims to be true—and true not in some utterly different sense from that in which anything else is true, but in essentially the same sense, in that it, too, can be verified in some way or other by common human experience and reason" ("The Enlightenment Is Not Over": 326)?

I hold this position, above all, because the counterposition would be contrary to the essential logical structure and problematic of any axial religion, including the Christian religion.

Essential to such structure and problematic, on my analysis, is identification of *the* existential problem as arising from a fundamental self-misunderstanding on the part of each and every individual person, which results, not from the person's finitude or fragmentariness, i.e., from her or his ignorance, but rather from her or his free and responsible suppression of the truth about her or his existence as a human being. But if *the* human problem is this self-misunderstanding for which every human being is individually responsible, the truth about human existence suppressed by her or his self-understanding must always already have been disclosed to her or him. Therefore, to deny that it is so disclosed, and disclosed precisely as everything else is originally disclosed, through her or his own experience and reason, is to deny the necessary condition of her or his personal responsibility for the self-misunderstanding that is her or his deepest and most intractable problem as a human being.

So, whatever my critics may allege to the contrary, I hold this position not only, or even primarily, because of considerations having to do with its credibility, or the incredibility of the counterposition, but also, and first of all, because of considerations of its appropriateness, and the inappropriateness of the counterposition, to the essential logical structure and problematic of the Christian religion itself, as attested by Christian witness in all its forms, implicit as well as explicit.