

1. A religion makes or implies a claim to decisive existential authority for its particular concepts and symbols.

2. More exactly, a religion makes or implies such a claim for the particular concepts and symbols that it takes to be authoritative—whether merely substantially authoritative or also formally authoritative.

3. It takes particular concepts and symbols to be *formally* authoritative if, in addition to being substantially authoritative, they are the particular concepts and symbols by which all others must be authorized if they, too, are to be taken as *substantially* authoritative.

4. A religion's formally authoritative concepts and symbols thus have *primary* authority for it, while the authority of all of its other merely substantially authoritative concepts and symbols is *secondary*.

5. Whether primary or secondary, however, the authority of all of its authoritative concepts and symbols is derived from a source or sources beyond itself, and thus is an *authorized* (as well as a *to be authorized*) authority.

6. Although every authority, primary or secondary, is also a source of authority, the converse does not hold: not every *source* of authority is itself also *an* authority, properly so-called.

7. The particular concepts and symbols that are formally authoritative, and thus have primary authority for a religion, differ from all of its other concepts and symbols that are merely substantially authoritative, and thus have only secondary authority for it, in that they are authorized, not by any other authority, properly so-called, but by what the religion confesses to be its explicit primal source of authority.

8. A religion's explicit primal source of authority is thus the *historical*, as distinct from the *transcendental*, source authorizing its claim to decisive existential authority.

9. Thus, for example, in the case of the kind of Mahayana Buddhism represented by the Lotus Sutra, its explicit primal source of authority is the enlightenment of Sakyamuni, and thus the appearance in history of Sakyamuni Buddha, which, in its ontic aspect, was the dharma to whose truth Sakyamuni awakened and, in its noetic aspect, his experience of awakening to this truth.

10. For this kind of Buddhism, then, what is taken to be formally authoritative, and thus has primary authority for it, are the concepts and symbols constituting Sakyamuni Buddha's teaching of the dharma, while all of its other concepts and symbols are taken to be at best substantially authoritative, and thus have only secondary authority.

11. In the case of the kind of Protestant Christianity represented by the writings of Luther, by contrast, the explicit primal source of authority is the faith experience of the apostles, and thus the appearance in history of Jesus Christ, which, in its ontic aspect, was the man Jesus in whose truth the apostles were brought to believe and, in its noetic aspect, their experience of believing in him as this truth.

12. For this kind of Christianity, then, what is taken to be formally authoritative, and thus has primary authority for it, are the concepts and symbols constituting the apostles' witness to Jesus, while all of its other concepts and symbols are taken to be at best substantially authoritative, and thus have only secondary authority.

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