

The issue that concerns me here is how to understand my theory of religion in the light of my more recent reflections on the concept of explicit primal source of authority and thus of all that is existentially authorized.

Essential to my theory of religion is that a religion is not only faith, but also a certain understanding of human existence expressed in concepts and symbols, and thus in certain beliefs, rites, and forms of social organization. Because a religion in this sense exists in order to solve the problem that basic faith in the meaning of life makes possible so as to reaffirm that basic faith, it can be said to embody a claim to decisive existential authority, in that its concepts and symbols serve to authorize the understanding of human existence that alone is true and therefore the faith or self-understanding that alone is authentic. But also essential to my theory of religion is that any religion is constituted as such by, on the one hand, "an occasion of insight" (i.e., a "hierophany" or "revelation") and, on the other hand, by "a particular form of faith," which provides the basis for the religion's whole conceptual and symbolic structure of beliefs, rites, and social organization.

But now what is here called "an occasion of insight" is evidently one and the same with what I should now speak of as "the explicit primal *ontic* source of all existential authority," even as what I have previously called "a particular form of faith" is evidently a way of talking about the *noetic* counterpart thereof. Both of these are expressly distinguished from the religion that is their authorized expression as well as from the basic faith of which they are an understanding, and with which they claim an identity—or, rather, which the religion claims for them, insofar as it lies in its very nature to claim that its sources, ontic and noetic, are the explicit primal source of all that is originally authorized existentially, if only implicitly. The point is that the explicit primal ontic source authorizes, first of all, the particular form of faith for which it is the occasion of insight. The primal authorizing source authorizes a certain faith or self-understanding and only indirectly, through such authorization, does it also authorize the system of concepts and symbols essential to the religion. These concepts and symbols, on the contrary, directly express the particular form of faith for which this source is the primal