

Reflection paper for philosophy of religion essay



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Religion has been as portion of society every bit far as its beginnings. All ancient human civilisation had some kind of belief in a God or the transcendent. Beliefs have ever been an issue within any human society. The belief of the transcendent gives humans a opportunity or hope for ageless felicity for people who abide their beliefs.

But through out history. different faiths and beliefs emerged which gives rise to the incompatibility. There are legion differences between faiths: one versus many Gods. personal versus impersonal Gods. personal endurance of trusters versus no endurance of trusters. moral codifications. spiritual life. etc. As discernible in human history. though faiths frequently offer some kind heaven it frequently paradoxically entails struggles and contentions. And despite the fact that faiths purportedly gives people a sense of what's right or incorrect. atrociousnesss have been committed in the name of faith ; the hundred old ages war. the Inquisition. jehad. cultural cleanings etc... And amidst the assortment of beliefs that populate modern-day society. one can non assist to believe how to take in manus the surfeit of truths that sometimes overlaps. dissent. and finally oppose each other.

There are three stances one can take. First is to (1) dainty all faiths as valid and true (pluralism) . Another manner is to (2) position beliefs in manner that some are right and some are incorrect (exclusivism) . Finally. one can besides (3) think about all faiths as false (godlessness) .

Let me take into consideration the 3rd stance foremost. By reasoning that all spiritual beliefs are false. it besides means reasoning that God or any signifier of the transcendent does non be. And by reasoning this. means

rejecting all of the theistic theses that were formulated in the history of adult male. And this is the portion where the Catholic philosopher's shear my caput away. as infinite theologians in history were besides philosophers.

With godlessness in manus. the inquiry God's Being is besides raised. Paul Tillich argues that God is Being. where " Being" represented the ultimate world that underlies all being. whether natural or supernatural. In fact. Being doesn't needfully pertain to a personal God at all. Tillich wanted to do Being stand for the ultimate concern of all worlds. conceived in the broadest sense. Furthermore. any effort to specify what Being is. by giving it the name of a peculiar God. fails to capture the true Being. Tillich thinks that all peculiar constructs of Bing that we are familiar with in the West constitute devotion. When we give spiritual symbols excessively much importance. so we have fallen into mere devotion.

It might be credibly argued that a faith must possess spiritual symbols and rites to measure up as a religion-but. if this is true. so all faiths must in a manner be idolatrous. This is rather a strong and pathetic thing to claim. But on the other manus it can besides be claimed that godlessness is truly theism because it possesses infinite concern. The unknowable " God behind God" symbols mediate our relationship with God. God is beyond being and non-existence.

This leads us to the more theistic attack on the assortment of human belief. First is the thought of pluralism which is spearheaded by John Hick. Hick's theory holds that all faiths are looks of the same ultimate world. However. how is it possible for all faiths to be true images of the same ultimate world?

They can't all be right because this would be a misdemeanor of the jurisprudence of non-contradiction (the thesis that something can non possess a belongings and deficiency it at the same clip and in the same manner) . For illustration. to reason that God is personal from my religion's position and non personal from another religion's position and therefore avoid the misdemeanor of the jurisprudence of non-contradiction is to state that God is non finally personal. Since it has merely been accepted that some other faith has an every bit valid position of God which contradicts my ain religion's position. this decision one time once more dents the justification for believing in the specific theories of God by my peculiar faith (in fact. many faiths will reject this via media for this really ground ; viz. . because the religion's positions are non truly believed to be wholly true) .

At one point. Hick argues that the ultimate world of God has no belongings or properties by itself. but merely in relation to trusters. So the belongings we attribute to God are relational belongings. which don't exist or pertain to God if we don't exist to delegate those belongings to God. Yet. this theory still implies that each religion's position of that ultimate world is non wholly true since there exist other. contradictory and every bit right comparative positions of God. And this undermines the importance of that peculiar religion's beliefs. Besides. a being that has no belongings or properties in itself seems incoherent. because. one time once more. the jurisprudence of non-contradiction does non look to use to that being in the absence of any trusters. Besides. a being that has no belongings is about indistinguishable to nil.

On the other hand, one can besides take the way of an Exclusivist.

Exclusivism states that one's own faith is true, all the others are false. Which yet once more sets it in struggle with every other thought out at that place: Which faith is the true faith? For the exclusivist, redemption comes from religion in that one true faith. But, there are exclusions that present several jobs. Examples of these are people who didn't hear the religion's message. Besides there are those virtuous and good people who did hear the religion's message but rejected it. One manner to work out these jobs is to accept a position that still accepts that there is one true faith (and all the others are false) . but who is included in that faith is increased to include all of the people covered in the aforesaid illustrations (" Inclusivism") .

In add-on, the same trouble mentioned above, of finding which faith is the one true faith, this theory besides suffers in that it seems to sabotage the importance of being one of the people who basically hears and follows the message of that one faith. Since simply being a virtuous individual is adequate to acquire into Eden, it no longer seems to be all that of import to hear any religion's message, and this weakens the motive for following that faith.

Another manner is to cover with the assortment of belief is to handle them as some are more right than others. Although all beliefs may keep some truth in them as what a pluralist might state, there is besides the impression of some beliefs keeping more reasonable, plausible, and appealing facets than others. Treating beliefs that some are more right than others will enforce some kind of hierarchy among them. Being so, there is no sense to take what is less than the optimum way or any belief other than the belief on

the top of the ladder. This might be attributed to a sense of reason or a mental module for make up one's mind what people should keep is true or a sense of epistemological responsibility. Since belief holds such importance in a person's personal and societal life as was mentioned before. it can non be helped to seek confirmation of what is true and what is non.

Then once more. an statement can originate from here inquiring what footing of rightness or inappropriateness of a certain belief is in the aforesaid hierarchy. Surely. we can non take an nonsubjective position here due to nature of the topic as argued in countable articles about belief (belief can non be grounded through empirical observation) . This so leaves me with no agencies to mensurate the rightness or inappropriateness of a certain belief. If this is so. it can be said so that the affair of belief can be left to the personal sentiments and values of the truster. or merely set. belief is wholly subjective.

Merely like understanding any other major term in doctrine of faith. wholly understanding the being of assortment of human beliefs in this instance would be every bit difficult as traping gelatin to a wall. Merely as one thinks one has held the whole thing in one point. the remainder of it slips off and falls apart. And in the terminal we are back to land nothing. stuck in a standstill struggle of being either an atheist. pluralist or an exclusivist ; a kind of struggle between two extremes of lawlessness and dictatorship. Pluralism in its purest signifier can take to anarchy of beliefs due to the equal interventions of all beliefs as in manner true and valid. Exclusivism taken to the extreme may is tyranny in sense that merely one or some beliefs are the

plausible 1s to take. And the purportedly safe reply of godlessness which every other theistic statement reproofs.

Alluding to the thought of the other that can non be consumed by the I in Hegelian mode of the thesis and the anti-thesis holding a via media in the signifier of the synthesis. faiths can neither be equalized by a common denominator nor taken individually and treated with prejudice. Hick. Plantinga. and Tillich tried nobly to make stable evidences by making bases for beliefs by gestating the whole thought of faiths and beliefs. Yet with the contradictions to every statement presented. loose or dead terminals appear due to the boundlessly huge world (and paradoxically equivocal) of spiritual beliefs. therefore one can non firmly keep his belief in every land. Therefore. it can be said that there is no safe reply. A hazard so of doing a error is non evitable merely as every immorality is inevitable in the universe. And merely every bit unsure the issue of human belief is as every philosophical paradox goes. it is left in the conundrum of pick.