
UNIT 1 DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Philosophy as a Community Project
- 1.3 Philosophy and Science
- 1.4 Understanding Religion
- 1.5 Philosophy of Religion: Towards a Definition
- 1.6 Necessity of organized Religion
- 1.7 A Timely Qualification
- 1.8 The Three 'C's of organized Religion
- 1.9 Let us Sum Up
- 1.10 Key Words
- 1.11 Further Readings and References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To initiate the students to the issues related to the philosophy of religion.
- To have a general understanding of religion and its philosophical studies.
- To understand the different ways of understanding religion and philosophy of religion.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

What is philosophy of religion? How do we define it? What is its scope? These are some of the issues we will be taking up in this unit. This unit attempts to introduce the students to some of the issues of philosophy of religion, including the definition of religion. Then it seeks to study the scope of religion.

1.2 PHILOSOPHY AS A COMMUNITY PROJECT

Etymologically, the word philosophy comes from two Greek words – *philos*, lover (or friend) and *Sophia*, wisdom. Philosophy then is “a love of wisdom” and the philosopher is a friend or a lover of it. Some important conclusion can already be drawn this fact. Philosophy is not the *possession* of wisdom, a philosopher is NOT a proud Mr Know-It-All, who has all of the answers to everyone’s question. He is a quester after truth, profoundly in love with *Sophia*, pursuing her, but never quite able to comprehend her elusive person. At most he touches her with his finger- tips, but she soon escapes his grasp. (I apologize for the sexiest-sounding implications of my words: it would seem that I am implying only males can be philosophers – as I have reserved the pronoun “he” to indicate the philosopher. My only excuse is that I want to see the image of

lever and the beloved frequently in this text and Sophia, besides being feminine in Greek, is a very common girls' name in many languages.)

From this we could emphasize that humanity would be the first necessary qualification of any philosopher worth his/her salt. A philosopher is one who treks a weary, but ever so existing and adventure, way along paths less trod to an ever receding horizon. The truth is there, but is always, tantalizingly, just beyond his/her reach. A good philosopher leads us but one step nearer to the truth but is never so smug as to claim that we have ensured Dame Sophia once and for all in the meshes of human finite intelligence (Desbruslais 2000).

We might even go on add that philosophy must be a community project. There is only so much that an individual human mind can grasp. Reality is far too rich, far too complex to be stuffed into the slender limits of one individual brain, bet it that of Madame Curie or Professor Einstein. Besides, each of us approaches persons and things from our particular perspective (some have called this the "pre-understanding"), which comprises, among other things, our individual culture, our mother-tongue, family upbringing, religious background (even if we think we have rejected it long ago). All these, somehow or the other, influence (if not prejudice) our perceptions. It is impossible to take a totally natural, unbiased view of things: at best we can try to become progressively more aware of our "pre-understating" and give up native assumption about objectivity; I am, rather asking us to be on guard against hasty and presumptions assertions that we have come to plain, unvarnished and objective visions of reality. Whatever, it should be quite clear that none of us deliberately and willfully admits prejudices, into our perceptual make-up. People hold prejudices unconsciously, as a rule: once they become conscious of the fact that they have been nourishing prejudices, they give them up (assuming they have the honesty and courage to do so). But how can we become aware if our prejudices? Only by dialoguing with people of other backgrounds (other nations, other cultures, other creeds). If I isolate myself with people who think exactly as I do and never venture to meet people with other worldviews, I and my gang will simply confirm each other in way favorite prejudices and narrow-mindedness (Panikkar 1970).

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1. "Philosopher is not in possession of wisdom." Comment.

.....
.....
.....
.....

- 2. How can we be aware of our own prejudices?

.....
.....
.....
.....

1.3 PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

For quite some time, especially since the advent of the scientific age, philosophy has had a bad press. In fact, many philosophers themselves (including the “father of modern philosophy, Rene Descartes (1596–1650) lamented because philosophy lacked the precision and certainty of themselves. At the turn of the last century Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938) was still dreaming of a philosophy that would be an “exact science”, yielding unquestionable certainty based on indubitable evidence and proofs. And it does look as if philosophy is a kind of third rate disciple, since – as we have said above – it cannot give us guaranteed “once and for all” exact answers. But is this really such a blemish? Let us take a closer look at the issue (Desbruslais 2000).

If I may borrow an insight from the contemporary French existentialist thinker, Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973), we should make a clear distinction between problems and mysteries (even though, in popular speech we use them almost interchangeably): a problem is a question of which I am not a part, whereas a mystery is a question of which I am a part. For example, take the question, “What is the chemical composition of table salt?” I am not part of that question, so it is a problem. However, the question, “Is there such a thing as true love?” or “Is there life after death?”- these are mystery-questions because they concern me, personally. True love and life after death are issues with which my life is intimately bound up. Even the question, “Does God exist?” or even, “What is God like?” are mystery-questions - not because I am trying to say that I am part of God, but because if God exists then I would somehow be very intimately linked with the divinity So far we’ve noted how problem and mystery differ from the point of view of the kind of question they ask. Let us move on to their answers.

Precisely because I am not part of a problem-question, I can detach myself from it, observe it objectively, submit it to experiments in the laboratory or elsewhere and, given enough time and equipment, work out a final, exhaustive, once-and-for-all answer. But I cannot do that with a mystery-question; inasmuch as I am part of it, I cannot detach myself from it any more than I can detach myself from myself. That is why I cannot, in principle, ever work out that kind of answer for a mystery. Science is busy with problems: that is why science can attain a high level of certainty and demonstration or proof (though even scientists, nowadays, are not so cocksure about their “certainties). Philosophy (like theology and religion) is busy with mysteries and that is why it can, at best, throw some more light on the complexities of the issue; no more, It should be clear, critical and coherent (Panikkar 1979).

But this does not mean that philosophy (or theology, or religion) are irresponsible and whimsical subjects to be pursued by dilettantes according to their fads and fancies. Even if its responses cannot partake of that level of absolute certainty that the positive sciences (allegedly) claim, it has to be orderly, painstaking and observant as any other study. It has to be critical of its presuppositions and pre-understanding, submit all its reasoning to the strict canons of logic and so on. Philosophy is not a science, but it is a systematic scientific discipline (Desbruslais 2000).

1.4 UNDERSTANDING RELIGION

Religion is one of those words that dictionaries tell us have an unknown or doubtful etymology. There is a Latin word ‘religare’ (to tie up again) which is

the closest contender for its source, but that is highly doubtful. Is this meant to tell us that religion is a set of rules and regulations that bind us up again, after the civil code has finished enmeshing us? This would imply a very legalistic and uninspiring understanding of religion, indeed - one that would hardly inspire much commitment from most of us. Theology is a kind of close relative of it and it means, literally, God-talk. In practice, however, theology is usually associated with the study of some allegedly revealed book. Thus, Christian theology takes off from the Bible, Jewish theology starts from the Torah, Islamic theology studies the Quran, Hindu theology delves into, say, the Gita and so on. However, it would not be quite correct to link all religions with some scripture claimed to be divinely revealed, for there are many tribal religions without a “holy book” — other than the Great Book of Nature in which God stands revealed to His people. Indeed, not all religions even accept the notion of God. At least two religions, Jainism and one school of Buddhism reject the whole idea of God (i.e. they are aesthetic).

What, then, is the most basic idea common to all religions? It is the idea of the sacred. Various authors have tried to give a rough summary definition of this as the wholly other (*Ganz Andere*), the highly powerful (and hence dangerous - high voltage, do not touch.) and so on. In general, there seems to come a time when we suddenly become convinced that there is more to life than all that we can merely see or hear or touch or smell or feel. This can happen when one is caught up in the mystery of child-birth: when a young mother holds in her exhausted arms the first babe she is ever given birth to or when the proud and humbled father holds in his trembling arms his tiny firstborn; or when one stands on the seashore and contemplates the mighty ocean rolling back and forth; or when one is hushed by the panorama of natural and serene beauty that life exposed from lofty mountain-top; or ... in so many other cases where powerful emotions of love or anger or joy or resolve overwhelm us. Out of this arises the experience of the Sacred which some of us interpret merely as an aspect of ourselves (“the human shadow writ large”) and others remind equally convinced that it is a genuine experience of the divine (Desbruslais 2000).

There is also the idea of salvation or liberation which is common to all religions, though it may be understood very differently. Don't we all feel, when we read the papers or watch TV that the time is really bad or that something has gone wrong, horribly wrong, with the world? Don't we all dream of a world of justice and love and peace, where all people will live in harmony as brothers and sisters and not bully or terrorise various groups on the basis of ethnic or other differences, just as Anna Hazare's team dream of a corruption-free India? And do not even the best of us recognise within ourselves what psychologists call a “shadow side”, a strange inner urge to cheat and steal, to take the line of least resistance, to lie and exploit others. Very often we fight against these mysterious promptings (“temptations”, as some prefer to call them)? Oftentimes we give in, due to pressure of circumstances, to peer influence or plain and simple cowardice and laziness. All religions offer us various ways and means to overcome these unpleasant tendencies: they offer us guidance and advise us to try' meditation, prayer and other ways to control our passions and less healthy drives.

Finally, all religions are communitarian expressions. Indeed, 'religions emerge when people come together, share their experiences and, somehow or the other, arrive at certain helpful structures which bind them to each other and facilitate the expression and celebration of their common vision. Thus religions,

as communitarian expressions of shared Convictions, become structured or institutionalised. But this is what makes many serious-minded and sincerely re-ligious people suspicious of religion, or to put it more precisely, at the highly organised and formal religious set-ups (or structures) that they are confronted with. Is it really necessary to pray and worship according to these strict and impersonal structures? Wouldn't it be more fulfilling, spontaneous and meaningful to do it quietly at home? And do we need to be bossed about by "religious leaders" who may be themselves self-centred?

1.5 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: TOWARDS A DEFINITION

According to some people, the very idea of philosophising about religion is blasphemy. Isn't it a form of the most crass arrogance and irreligiosity to submit the notion of the Sacred, of God and of holy writ to the critical probings of finite, limited human intelligence? Would not the only appropriate human response - to the experience of the Sacred be humble - silent and respectful sub-mission and adoration?. In the West, Martin Luther (1483-1546), the fiery German reformer, spear-headed this approach, fulminating against reason as "the devil's greatest whore", averring that it "can do nothing but shame and dis-grace all that god says and does". For him there was a mortal enmity between faith and reasons "Faith strikes dead this reason, and kills this beast, which heaven and earth and all creatures cannot destroy." Among Eastern think-ers who have championed such a view, perhaps the most out spoken was the medi-eval Islamic scholar and mystic Al-Ghazali (1059 - 1111) who, in his *Destruction of Philosophers* tells us, in no uncertain terms, what he thought of those who used reason in the course of their search for God. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), later canonized by the Catholic Church, was more pos-itive in his attitude towards reason and philosophy in the context of religion though he was no "crass rationalist". The same, too, could be said of Ibn Sina (980 - 1036), whose name was Latinised into Avicenna by the Scholastics and whom Al-Ghazali saw as his arch-enemy, co-religionist of' his though he was (Desbruslais 2000).

Extreme polarisations are seldom productive and this is quite true of the "pure reason" vs "blind faith" clash over religion. The "faith alone" approach opens the door to uncritical, self-deluded psychotics and fanatics. But "reason alone" is no improvement. Absolute rationalism ("I'll only accept what can stand up to a rigorous proof.) is both impractical and irrational. Among other things it would exclude any possibility of inter-personal relationships, like love and friendship and not only religions faith. An absolute rationalist, were he or she to act consistently, would be condemned to a, lonely, loveless and friendless (and not just religious faithless) life. And, just for the record, it is interesting to note that the Catholic Church has officially condemned, as heresies, both of these attitudes: "fideism" (faith alone) and "exaggera-ated rationalism" (reason alone). From the preceding, we may conclude that the most appropriate response would be balanced "mid-point-between-the-two extremes" approach, which-I would venture to designate as "reasonable risk". Indeed, what we do to validate any inter-personal commitment, including love and friendship and not only religious faith. We establish some demonstrable ground to justify our commitment. However, since we are dealing with free persons and their invisible interior lives, there can never be fool-proof guarantee as to the certainty and security of the commitment one is making. There is a solid basis of

reasonableness, but not absolute rationality. The commitment is not grounded on blind risk: there is some evidence in favour of one’s personal commitment: it can stand up to considerable critical Inquisition. Yet the possibility of being mistaken is not totally rule out: hence, there is an element of risk. It is neither unfounded risk nor indubitable argument, but halfway between both, drawing upon the strengths of each to avoid the excesses of either (Desbruslais 2000).

Between these two extremes of fideism and exaggerated rationalism comes philosophy of religion, which holds that religion can be critically examined. So philosophy of religion is an attempt based on reason, to criticize, evaluate and deepen religion. It may explain it, elaborate on it and even propose new theoretical concepts. Thus the American Philosopher, William P Alston (1921-2009), define Philosophy of religion as “a branch of philosophy concerned with questions regarding religion, including the nature and existence of God, the examination of religious experience, analysis of religious language and texts, and the relationship of religion and science” (Alston 1967).

In short, philosophy of religion is a critical response to religion, where the faith of the seeker is bracketed out.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1. What is religion? Define.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Describe what is philosophy of religion?

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.6 NECESSITY OF ORGANIZED RELIGION

The scope of philosophy is any critical appraisal of religion. It is an ancient discipline, being found in the earliest known manuscripts concerning philosophy, and relates to many other branches of philosophy and general thought, including Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic, and History. Let us briefly raise some pertinent questions related to the scope and relevance of philosophy of religion in the following pages.

Let us begin by admitting the fact that, historically, no organized religion Can stand up to honest criticism and come’ out of it with an unblemished re-port card. None of the mainline religions has proved itself to have been al-ways and everywhere a reliable friend of ‘people struggling for liberation and emancipation. Often religions have added to the oppression, discrimina-tion and blood-letting that have plagued the world since time began. The sub-jugation of women has often been given religious sanction. The most cruel and bloodthirsty wars have

been inspired by religious differences, with each side proclaiming an exclusive *Gott mit uns* (God with us), while hailing all opponents as hirelings of Satan incarnate. Religion has often opposed scientific research and sided with obscurantism and superstition, against trends of enlightenment. And politicians, especially in Third World countries, have learned that religion is the easiest handle with which to manipulate impoverished and oppressed masses, stirring up all kinds of mob violence and building up their “vote banks”. Indeed, religious leadership seems to be the last bastion of male exclusivism, determined to holdout against “female incursions” by all manner of pseudo-theological, philosophical and sociological argument, so as to preserve power in the hands of men only. The priestly Conquerors Club is a very powerful and jealously guarded coterie of old men who, with bulldog tenacity, clings with alarm to its ever shrinking list of “privileges and prerogatives.”

Above all, it stands ready to flash its magic wand of “God’s will” and “the divinely established scheme of things” to justify and protect the status quo (heavily loaded in its favour) and block any attempt at reform which just might among other things, help towards a more authentic encounter with God (Desbruslais 2000).

On the other hand (there always is another hand, isn’t it?) religions have also inspired many to selfless service of the downtrodden, have given the human race a rich legacy of art and beauty as well as played a not insignificant role in opening our eyes to the essential dignity of the human person, irrespective of race, colour or sex; Some religious personalities - Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, Mahatma Gandhi, Oscar Romero, Desmond Tutu - have been true friends to liberation movements.

Yet, when all is said and done, it would appear that some kind of institutionalization or organisation of religion is inevitable - unless we are quite prepared to accept the consequences of reducing it to some sort of private, abstract and “spiritual” preoccupation. In fact, we can cite at least three major reasons why some kind of organization in religion is not merely to be tolerated an unavoidable, but even accepted as inevitable.

First, inasmuch as we are embodied beings, we cannot be satisfied with an intangible something, which remains at that level. Anything that we take seriously must be embodied, “tangibilised” in some way, through some manner of institutionalization, just as our love for our country has to be given tangible expression in flag-hosting and march pasts and our love for our family and friends has to be rendered incarnate in birthday parties and family gatherings. Anything less would but touch us lightly and leave us with a profound sense of frustration. Secondly, if religion is to have some social significance, if it is to have some transformative, reformative impact upon society - inspiring people to work for justice and peace, or in support of the environment - it requires some kind of communitarian expression. Finally, if it is not to become a fleeting, fly-by-night sort of thing, here today, and gone tomorrow, coming to birth and dying with each individual’s alleged encounter with the powers that be, it must have some concrete form to ensure the sharing, preservation and development of its tradition.

Actually, if we look a bit more closely at the objections against organized religion, it would probably become clear that these objections are not so much aimed at the very fact that religions are organized but at rigid authoritarian way in which they have been organized. That is the real villain.

1.7 A TIMELY QUALIFICATION

I have maintained that organized religion is somehow inevitable and; even more, that it is not a bad thing. Indeed, there is no reason why we can not envisage institutionalized religions being organized in a more “user-friendly”, democratic and less authoritarian way. Religions should encourage us to respect other traditions, religious or otherwise, learn from their insights and promote unity in diversity in lieu of upholding a soul less, monotonous uniformity.

In other words, my recognition of the necessity of organized religion does not, by any means, imply that I give my whole-hearted’ and uncritical support to the actual way in which contemporary institutionalized religions are, in fact, organized: Par from it. And when, later, I use terms like “oppressive” and “liberative” when speaking of concrete religious set-ups in today’s world, I will not be insinuating that any one particular religion and its structures are liberative and to be encouraged, while that of all others is simply oppressive and to be resisted. My contention is that every organized religion is susceptible of a liberative and an oppressive interpretation. Indeed, there is even such a thing as oppressive and liberative: atheism (Desbruslais 2000): It is all a question as to whether the atheist or believer is ultimately seeking the enhancement and development of the entire human person or not. It’s this that makes all the difference.

1.8 THE THREE ‘C’S OF ORGANIZED RELIGION

The basis of authentic religion is a personal and mystical encounter with God, the *ganz Andere* or ‘whatever be ones preferred description of whatever is experienced in religious activity. Nor is this “mystical experience” as esoter-ic and unattainable as many people think. All that it requires, on our part, is a pre-disposing attitude of humility, of openness, “the heart of a little child.” And this *is* difficult because it is so easy. The More we consider ourselves “religiously learned”, the more meticulous we are in performing our “religious duties”, the bigger is the occupational hazard of mistaking the pointing finger for the moon, not to mention the hazards of falling into spiritual pride or intolerance.

In fact, it is the religious fanatic - whose mind and heart is too far removed from that of a little child to be open to any genuine encounter with the *ganz Andere*- who invariably becomes the self-appointed, overzealous and merciless enforcer of the rigid observance of the unholy trinity of code-creed-cult which is his (deliberate choice of the masculine) tyrannical substitute div-inity. And the religious fanatic is basically unsure of his convictions: that *is* why he has to burn, maim or blow up those who don’t reduplicate his approach. The existence of people who see or think differently from him is a threat to bin own insecure vision.

Creed *is* a kind of summary list of the particular doctrines to which all would be followers of a specific religion are required to give their unqualified assent. In a very tightly organized religion, failure to do so would invite unpleasant repercussions. To begin with, one would be hailed a “heretic”, “schismatic”, “infidel”, “gentile” or whatever be the current term of opprob-rium in the reigning fanatics’ vocabulary. Once upon a time, such qualifica-tion would have resulted in one’s death sentence: being kidnapped, carried away, stoned, hanged-drawn-and-quartered, removed from the land of the living by some form of ostracism, excommunication or, another ingenious and efficacious means of silencing dissent.

In our more “enlightened” times, the fanatic has to settle for more “civilised” and “un- bloody” devices: censure, withdrawal of one’s license to teach, banning and/ or burning of ones books... Of course, the believing community has every right to judge which: enunciations of faith-convictions authentically express the commonly held convictions of the general body of the faithful. But it should be the community, or a truly representative body of it, that sees, judges and acts - not an over-centralised, overaged, conservative and all-male select band of people with vested interests, closed to all other points of view or perspectives. Such executive-legislative-judiciary power should not be allowed to be monopolised by a small, inbreeding Conquerors’ Club, jealous of its power and position.

Code comprises all those moral rules and derived customs that followers of a particular organized religion are supposed to live by, day to day. These may include styles of dress, dietary prescriptions, allotted “holy days” for worship, “penitential times” for fasting and as on. Most religion seems to agree on basic moral principles as respect for elders, no stealing and the like. There is a difference of opinion, however, as regards certain issues on sex, such as birth-control and some other areas, as the use of violence, even in times of war and so on. There was a time when all religions were so intimately linked with State policy, that any contravention of the religious code was considered a treasonous act against the *State* and the cul-prit was turned over to the secular arm for punishment. Nowadays, most religions have - voluntarily or reluctantly - relinquished such links and have had to content themselves with merely issuing moral condemnations against offenders, warning “true believers” against consorting with such persons or listening to their views, wale appealing to the recalcitrant to mend their *ways*. One might mention that penal sanctions for infringements of the religious code, whenever enforceable, have tended to be -rather inhuman, cruel, and undignified (Desbruslais 2000).

Cult refers to the various rubrics that govern how Official (individual or communitarian) worship of a particular religion is to be carried out. This may include a host of minutiae, such as ‘who is authorized to conduct the form of prayer, what vestments the priests or officials are supposed to wear, what precise words and gestures are to be when, which symbolic objects are to be employed in what way and at what precise moment in the vent, and so on. The de-gree of meticulousness with which these are to be observed varies from re-ligion to religion. Quite frequently it is required that the service be conducted in the same ancient language that was current when the religion first saw the light of day - even if the language’s a dead one, -a foreign tongue, in most cases, unknown to the vast majority of the devotees. Invariably the ritual is considered “invalid” and inefficacious if some item of these de-tails has not been scrupulously observed.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1. Do we need structures in religion?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Differentiate between oppressive and liberative understandings of religion?
.....
.....
.....
.....

1.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have attempted to give a definition of philosophy of religion. Then we tried to see its scope. We hold that the scope of philosophy of religion is the whole of religion. Thus we discussed briefly on organized religion and on the three C’s that constitute religion. Then we noted that religion needs to be challenged and even purified by reason. It is these very concrete, very visible and obtrusive elements that most often irritate serious and sincere religious people. They want to encounter the divine in a community and express their devotion in words and gestures that rise spontaneously from themselves. But what happens when they enter a traditional place of worship? They are put into liturgical strait-jackets and told where they have to place themselves (far from *the* centre of activity), what passive roles they must play throughout (invariably, they are issued a handbook, with detailed instructions as to what pre-planned words and gestures they are permitted to use and at what’ moment). And, quite often, they are not permitted to address God in their own mother-tongue, the language of their hearts and most personal exchanges, but in some obscure discourse whose very alphabet (let alone meaning) is incomprehensible to them. As remote rituals, few can figure out what they are all about - save a handful of erudite archaic specialists. So much for cult.

What of the elements of creed and code? Many a time these are couched in a form that has remained impervious to the development of science and techno-logy. If people dare to voice their questions or doubts, they are often, met with reproach and a call to practice the virtue of blind faith. It is these shameless bits of obscurantism, not’ mention downright ignorance, that put off young people as well *as* religious seekers of *a* deeper, more personal conviction, driving them out of church, temple and other traditional places of worship (Desbruslais 2000).

This is borne out by the mushrooming of all manner of charismatic and “‘peoples’ communities”, where worship *is* more spontaneous and free, where leadership is shared by all the worshippers, who have a more active role to play, where clerical intervention is minimal, if not down to absolute zero. It’s not organized religion that is the real problem for most people, but the inhuman way it is organized. To call religion back to its original goal, we need discourse and criticism or philosophy of religion.

1.10 KEYWORDS

- Ganz Andere** : Rudolf Otto’s ganz andere means “wholly other,” or “of a different realm”.
- Fideism** : Reliance on faith alone rather than scientific reasoning or philosophy in questions of religion. Alvin Plantinga defines fideism as

an “exclusive or basic reliance upon faith alone, accompanied by a consequent disparagement of reason and utilized especially in the pursuit of philosophical or religious truth”

1.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Allen, Douglas. *Comparative Philosophy and Religion in Times of Terror*. Studies in Comparative Philosophy and Religion. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.

Alston, William P. “Problems of Philosophy of Religion.” *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967.

Cahn, Steven M., and David Shatz. *Contemporary Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Desbruslais, Cyril. *Guidelines for the Study of the Philosophy of Religion*. Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune: 2000.

Hull, David L., and Michael Ruse. *The Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of Biology*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Mann, William. *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Religion*. Blackwell Philosophy Guides. Oxford, UK ; Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.

Pandikattu, Kuruvilla. *Religious Dialogue as Hermeneutics: Bede Griffith's Advaitic Approach to Religions*. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change. Series Iiib, South Asia ; Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001.

Panikkar, Raimundo. *Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics: Cross-Cultural Studies*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

Panikkar, Raimundo. *The Trinity and World Religions; Icon-Person-Mystery*. Inter-Religious Dialogue Series,. Madras,: Published for The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1970.

Quinn, Philip L., and Charles Taliaferro. *A Companion to the Philosophy of Religion*. Blackwell Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997.

Taliaferro, Charles, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn. *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*. 2nd ed. Blackwell Companions to Philosophy. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.