

### Journal #28

Scope & Applications / Concepts & Language

**What makes religion a religion? Do religious knowledge systems provide knowledge in the same way as other AoKs?**

### Journal #28 – CR

Scope & Applications / Concepts & Language

**What is the difference between religious feelings, religious beliefs, and religious faith?**

### Journal #29

Concepts & Language / Methodology

**- How do you distinguish between spirituality and religion? From what sources are spiritual & religious knowledge developed?**

### For Discussion—Religion 101

Let's talk terminology...

Theology	Religious Studies
Doctrine	Practice
Sacred/Divine	Profane
Metaphysical	Transcendent
Purity	Impurity
Ritual	Prayer/Meditation
Morality	Ethics
Revelation	Mystical Experience

## Further Considerations

Methodology

- Is faith purely emotional, or is it possible to provide a rational justification for religious belief?
- Is emotion the primary source for spiritual and/or religious knowledge? If not, then what ways of knowing might be?

## Further Considerations

Methodology & Scope

- Could it be that atheism as much a matter of faith as religious belief?
- Can you think of any evidence which would convince you that divinity (God) does not exist?

**Intellect**



Scholars, drunk on words and obscure meanings,  
Weave a tangled web of concordances.  
Simple practice never occurs to them.  
Give up education, and the world will be better.

There are many who seek Tao through the intellect. They revel in thousands of concordances, seek similarities in all the world's religions, conduct learned discourses for enthralled audiences. But they would reach the truth faster if they tied their thoughts to experience.

The intellect is inherently dualistic. It makes distinctions and creates new connections between concepts and calls that "meaning." This type of analytical thinking is extremely limited in the face of Tao, which is not fully rational, not fully quantitative, not fully describable. Though most followers of Tao are learned, they also realize that the intellect is but one aspect in what must be a multifaceted approach to Tao.

It is said one must give up education, not because we should be dumb, but because we must seek a level of consciousness beyond the intellect. We must study, but not to the point that emphasis on experience and meditation is lost. If we can combine the intellect and direct experience with our meditative mind, then there will be no barrier to the wordless perception of reality.

**Scholasticism**



Ocean inside a skull-cup.  
Seeking the universal code in letters.  
The mind is like a flower on icy water.  
An eye within the petals.

The intellect is one of the thorniest problems for a spiritual aspirant. One cannot do without it—indeed, it is essential—and yet one cannot allow it to remain totally dominant. The intellect must be fully developed before it is brought to a point of neutrality. Unless this is done, it will act as a block, and there will not be any ultimate spiritual success.

Scholarship is thus an important first step. Education is a means of gaining access to the conventional world, of satisfying our curiosity, and of avoiding superstitious tendencies. There can be no talk of delving into philosophical mysteries if one has not even satisfied one's curiosity about nature, civilization, mathematics, and language. But once mental cultivation is achieved, one must focus increasingly on a part of the mind that is far beyond the scholarly.

The intellect uses discrimination, categorization, and dualistic distinctions in highly sophisticated ways. By contrast, spiritual contemplation involves no discrimination, no categorization, and no dualism, so it has very little need for scholasticism. It is pure action that requires the totality of our inner beings. It needs pure involvement, not mere study. The proper use of the intellect is to give it free play, develop it to an extraordinary degree, and yet to leave it behind when spiritual action is required. A sage knows how to balance and combine both.

### Religions of the World

*In their philosophies and practices, religions all over the world essentially address the same "Stuff," but in different ways...*

*Taoism: Stuff Happens.*

*Hinduism: This Stuff Has Happened Before.*

*Islam: If Stuff Happens, It Is The Will of Allah.*

*Buddhism: When Stuff Happens, Is It Really Stuff?*

*Zen: What Is The Sound Of Stuff Happening?*

*Confucianism: Confucius Say, "Stuff Happens."*

*7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist: Stuff Happens on Saturdays.*

*Protestantism: Stuff Won't Happen If I Work Harder.*

*Catholicism: If Stuff Happens, I Deserve It.*

*Judaism: Why Does This Stuff Always Happen To Me?*

*Jehovah's Witness: Knock, Knock, "Stuff Happens."*

*Rastafarianism: Let's Smoke This Stuff.*

*\* Agnosticism (Yes, NOT a religion): We Can't Know This Stuff!*

## Journal #30

Historical Development & Links to Personal Knowledge

How do we decide  
between the competing  
claims of different  
religious knowledge  
systems?

### Four Broad Categories of Evidence

for deciding between competing claims...

- 1) **Empirical:** based on observation; experimentation
- 2) **Statistical:** based on assigning value & quantified information
- 3) **Anecdotal:** based on personal accounts & relevant examples
- 4) **Testimonial:** based on the expressed views of authorities

### What Constitutes Sufficient Evidence?

Again, for deciding between competing claims, that is...

- 1) Evidence is sufficient when it permits a judgment to be made with **certainty** (where there is no good reason for doubt)  
*Certainty is often difficult to attain, so...*
- 1) If certainty is unattainable, evidence is sufficient if one view of the issue has been shown to have the force of **probability** (more reasonable).

**Journal #30 – CR**  
 Historical Development & Links to Personal Knowledge

# Why does learning about religious knowledge systems matter for an IB/ToK student?

