

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to undertake a comparative scientific analysis of religions on the basis of the well-known theoretical foundation developed by Jean Piaget. The special feature of his approach is its logical and mathematical underpinnings. We use them to resolve disputes among religious systems. In this case we are obliged to refer to that level of reality which can be disclosed to us only by means of corresponding logical and mathematical tools. Such an apparatus and its accompanying map of reality is a necessary component in the study of what is at essence an evolutionary biological and social process, which is what we are namely dealing with in terms of the analytic study of religions.

This fundamental proposition regarding the connection between logical-mathematical coordination and the morphogenesis of life ought to provide the basis for ongoing progress in unifying the religious worldviews within the framework of the most highly developed and universal among them. My overall thesis is founded on the overwhelmingly universal character of Christianity, encompassing within its embrace all the other religious methodological approaches in the form of partial and particular instances, though not their entire religious teachings.

Keywords: science, religions, logical and mathematical tools, society, comparison.

Science, which studies the world, attempts to describe reality using objective means, owing simply to the fact that the world exists. Science tries to exclude the element of human subjectivity, the passions and bias of the human being, his interests and prejudices, in order that the world can stand before us in scientific terms authentically as it is in and of itself. Only after fixating and establishing a certain fact as scientific knowledge, which must be independently and in parallel manner accessible and verifiable to other scientific observers, then the human being can re-engage and participate in this world which has been described and constructed as reality. On the other hand, they label as unscientific, philosophical or religious, such knowledge which is registered on the basis of a single and solitary subject, who

in fact desires to be saved within such a world. Religion sets about to provide the human being with help in that very world which science describes. Operating upon that knowledge, religion strives to prescribe those rules and norms of behavior, which can save the human being within this world. For example, seeing the harshness and cruelty of the forces threatening him, the person seeks to understand how he can behave in order to survive, to protect his property, family, and his own dignity. Seeing how unstable the circumstances of life are, how one situation inevitably changes into another, the human being needs some finite set of rules which encompass both aspects of his existence – the truth as we know it, and how to conduct ourselves in the context of that reality.

If the world is scientifically conceptualized as being an integral unity composed of polar opposites, indissolubly bound by mutually interactive forces, in which any action evokes counter-reaction and struggle, which leads often to the suppression of such action, then correct and proper behavior ought to consist only in those actions which do not generate any kind of resistance or opposition. Different religions offer different types of advice regarding rules of conduct stemming logically from this conceptualization. At the same time, various religions do not recognize such a conceptualization of reality at all, but rather see the world in other terms. Buddhism, for example, advises one not to identify at all with either side in such bipolar interactions. Confucianism on the other hand calls one to seek a third position, i.e., to "observe the power struggle from the hilltop".

Christianity, for its part, recommends that one stirs up the incentive to action. The type of action which can draw others to oneself is that action which is characterized by love for others. The one who acts should forget about himself, not being motivated by his own interests, ambitions or vanity, but exclusively by deeds and relationships which bring about his unity with others or the benefit of others.

As it is well known, any scientific discovery needs to be evaluated in terms of human situation which will ultimately be brought about through its implementation. The application of any such technological innovation takes place against a background of certain values, faith perspectives, and religious assumptions. If these two sides can be effectively synthesized, this gives the advantage to those who can effectively put into practice such a synthesis, whether it consists of formulation of a new set of rules, or an overall plan of action which is capable of taking into account such new scientific knowledge and convey-

ing it to others in the form of a ready-made method or formula.

So, we may state that, when there is syncretic action from the outset, through time this becomes splintered into two increasingly divergent forms of mental activity on the part of human beings, namely that of science and religion respectively, then inevitably there takes place a process of cognition and evaluation of reality.

It is highly possible that even pagan priests and shamans themselves had once been inquisitive scientists who intently observed the world of human beings. Then, as they came to realize that certain truths simply could not be conveyed to people, being distant from intellectual understanding and not inclined to self-reflection, thus these wise men took instead to packaging their knowledge and discoveries in a form which could be received by people – namely in parables, wisdom sayings, tales and exhortations.

Science, on the one hand, seeks regularity and conformity to laws and principles, describes tendencies, calculates various courses of development of events, and predicts the future condition of the world around us. Religion on the other hand endows people with purpose and meaning to their ongoing existence in light of the knowledge uncovered by science. Religion gives us meaning and value to things and ways of behaving, in case we so desire, in order that these may facilitate our salvation in the face of such a cold and heartless world. Scientific knowledge reinforces the sense of the ruthlessness of this world; but religion directs us toward potential avenues of salvation. As long as these paths do not become the subject of systematic study and research, they will continue to remain in the realm of religion. However, even the scientific study of these ways of salvation, which would in any case be possible only through many generations of unbroken labor and investment, considering that

the path of salvation may well be a cycle which takes an entire millennium to complete one round – such scientific study itself will give birth to new religious illumination, which will likewise in turn permeate into the realm of scientific knowledge...

Furthermore, such knowledge, once uncovered, will reach those who had taken on the role of preserving and transmitting it as a heritage to posterity, that is, the priests, the medicine men, the spiritual elite. The passing down of education and knowledge has facilitated the participation of the people as a whole, and has also spared them time and effort by substituting for them in the search for appropriate ways of behaving through wise counsel upheld by tradition. Yet it is this same handing down of knowledge which has served to convert the scientific into the religious. Thus that which was at one time scientific has had to be accepted as a matter of faith. In such a way, what is considered by some to be scientific knowledge became religion for others.

But the world is one, and likewise the rules of salvation in this world ought to be one. Then why is it that there are so many diverse religious teachings and practices?

The world is indeed one, yet the breadth and depth of its cognition are limitless. In the face of such an infinite Reality, finite humans are far from having perfected their paths of understanding and wisdom. Our thinking proceeds in a halting fashion, by notches and increments, then levels off following periods of steady growth. Stopping to look around, it takes time to translate the realm of soul from something inexpressible into a medium accessible to our concrete faculties. From a certain height, the world presents itself in a certain way, but ascending higher, the scientist recognizes that the contours of observable reality have somewhat changed. Hidden in the background of each religious movement

there is a certain worldview, a particular construct of reality, which had been discovered by science at one time. And there are so many different views of reality, and there are likewise so many attempts to describe it!

Various peoples and societies, as they have made their debut on the face of this earth in the course of history, have gone through the process of assimilating reality on various levels. Some of them have already well-established laws and traditions which are passed on by the priests of their society, and other societies and peoples are only in the nascent phases of such an inevitable occupation, that of formulating their religious realm based on their scientific conceptions. And then there is a third group, those who, not having either the one nor the other, knowingly succumb to the deceptions of their former path which they have already recognized as being inadequate, and this leads to their demise. In such a way the forms of religious belief, practice and teachings have continued to multiply, and along with it their mutual confrontation.

Yet science does not stop in its progress toward ever deeper layers of fathomable reality. At the same time, it does not begin from a blank page, but from a preexisting body of knowledge. If this knowledge had been transmuted into religious dogma under the title of Christianity, then science as such might be strictly a Christian category. If instead the knowledge attained had been transformed into the teachings of Buddhism or Confucianism, then likewise science itself could not be extricated or abstracted from the garb of one of those religious milieus. If it would be removed or distilled in such a way, then it would risk losing all and once again have to begin its long process of ascent all over again from the very start. Namely, in that case, science itself would of necessity be "Confucian", "Buddhist", or whatever other religious form it would assume.

We make the statement that every science is the extension and development of a certain religion.

New strata of reality uncovered by science enable religion to correct, update or reformulate its rules and canons. If however this does not take place, this indicates that the level of scientific thought has not yet been able to transcend or surpass the former conception of the world, which had served as the basis of the religion of that civilization or culture. At the same time, science, as it commences its investigation, in fact operates upon the basis of the implicit system of religious values and norms, as well as upon the system of axioms and hypotheses of the science itself as such. As an example of this, systematic investigations of the mental life of the human being were conducted in the medieval era, within the realm of Christian thought, which eventually gave rise to the secular science of psychology.

Two principles operate in science – the principle of cause and effect, and the generalization of particular phenomena. In general we can say in regard to many scientific concepts, that not only do they fixate various facets of one world as a whole; but at the same time one class of concepts reflects a wide array of concrete observations, whereas the other class of concepts describes a pattern of general manifestation of simple universal laws. Then how does this apply to religion?

We can speak of several different angles of approach in considering this question. On the one hand, as we have established, the basis of any religion is a scientifically studied or conceptually cognized worldview. Consequently, it is possible to compare these images of the world by previewing them on one's own in advance, analyzing them to see if they complement one another or if they are subsumed under one another, and to disclose in what ways their terminology and the

basis of their origin may be divergent from one another.

For example, as we can state that the Greek construct of a static world is in contrast to the Chinese conception of a dynamic world, so we would expect that the rules of existence in a static world would differ from those rules relevant to a world of dynamic events.

But it is also possible to analyze the most varied religious teachings, and come up with a harmony and unity of their basic postulates. For example, Buddhism teaches that one can avoid suffering only by severing one's connections with this world and freeing oneself from all attachments with it. Christianity likewise maintains the necessity of suffering and sees it as beneficial for the next life. Then upon what criteria could we evaluate these two positions? Both have been in existence for over a thousand years, and it would seem that we could draw a final conclusion based on many generations of experience. Yet this has not come about, so there emerges a desire to pinpoint the reason – that is, to study this issue in a scientific manner.

A third approach to analysis would be to lay out not only the basic scientific tenets lying at the basis of a given religion, but to describe the mutual connections and relationships of various religions, in terms of the ways in which they balance and stabilize one another. When the scientific method is used to describe the world, as if it were guided by a kind of self-seeking ambition, it encounters the most vociferous reproaches and demands for its neutrality. For example, in the USA, where the general atmosphere in society is permeated by the profit motive, there is by far the highest percentage of voluntary and public service without pay. And where the level of aggression and militarism has threatened the very existence of the society, the most humane phi-

osophy of all has emerged, namely European humanism.

The world seeks its own equilibrium through oppositely directed tendencies. Consequently, the measure of the depth and level of advancement of a given doctrine is not the degree to which its concepts have become diversified, but the level and position of such dichotomies, constituting pairs of competing understandings which describe the ontology of its given sphere. We can readily ascertain this level by examining the topic of debates going on among intellectuals in different countries. Some have already overcome the problem of division of science and religion, and, conserving their intellectual and social resources, are already working on the basis of a unified worldview. Others, still in the darkness of night, are groping like the proverbial blind men to feel the elephant, and continue to insist on adamantly refuting one another.

The basic goal of this presentation is to undertake a comparative scientific analysis of religions, basing this project upon the well-known theoretical foundation developed by Jean Piaget. The special feature of his approach is its logical and mathematical underpinnings. My overall thesis is founded on the overwhelmingly universal character of Christianity, encompassing within its embrace all the other religious methodological approaches in the form of partial and particular instances, though not their entire religious teachings.

CHRISTIANITY AS SCIENCE

Let us examine Christianity, which is part of the deep mental make-up of the majority of us of European background, and attempt to compare it with scientific knowledge. In speaking of "Christianity", we mean not its manifestations, such as the "Christian" spheres of East and West, nor the myths, dogmas, rites and liturgy – but the

knowledge hidden in the biblical texts, which can be revealed by means of specialized, detailed, refined scientific surveys. If Christianity is indeed true knowledge, as its followers claim, then it should endow those who possess it with superior strength and authority. If it empowers one in such a way, then surely it must contain certain definable elements of truth. However, if such is the case, then may we warn that this part of the teaching ought not to be freely disseminated. Truth is objective, and should manifest itself on its own. And, like any powerful weapon, it should be screened from uninitiated and incompetent people. It should be the secret weapon of its possessors. What scientific knowledge does Christianity purvey?

It houses the maximum space for all possible types of human beings and phenomena in all their manifestations. Accept all and understand all. The biologist who studies the behavior of mice takes into consideration all mice, not just the laboratory breed. Coming to understand the motivation of a person, one can forecast his destiny. Thus, giving people free rein to act, the observer seeks to comprehend the world around him as it is. The biologist is a kind of "god" for the mice. A Christian, confronting those who present an incompatible lifestyle, does not involve himself in social struggle down to the level of all possible criticisms and reproaches. Rather, he appeals to God as the only resort which will help him to see the meaning of all events. In fact, the scientific conception of the biologist, sociologist, physicist, and so on is not the one and only screen which is capable of portraying reality as it is. Numerous sociological theories insist on the relative character of the world. They exclude the very conception of "truth" from the lexicon of educated people. Yet, in so doing, have they enhanced our comprehension of the social world? Could, in this way, the scientific dogma have be-

come even more all-embracing than God's own conception?

Now and then we can hear people say in a condescending way that the Bible in a very naive way anticipated the modern ideas of social justice and progress. Then don't they overly esteem the modern conceptions? The history of European culture confirms that all these ideas are directly connected by descent to the Bible. But, unfortunately, they have adopted only its transient outer casing.

Meanwhile all the basic principles of human relations explicated in the Bible remain authentic only when linked with their source. If not, then they turn into their antitheses. We can take, as a striking example, the freedom granted us by God. It was reduced to some ersatz – market relationships which can enslave and can never set free.

The same takes place in jurisprudence. The self-conceit of European civilization, which establishes the Supreme Court and in so doing pretends to replace God, could lead to another catastrophe on a global scale.

In other words, the degradation of the social thought of western societies in our times has ended up reversing the progress of scientific thought itself. Today, there is more scientific data in the Bible than in scientific treatises. We broke our own rule, which states that science is to be religious and is thus to elaborate and amplify the regulations given by God.

For instance, based on Christian principles, it is absolutely out of the question to impose any kind of compulsion or constraint in spiritual matters – for the direction of human energy was endowed by God to human beings thousands of years ago. And the more firm is the tradition of enabling and facilitating this energy for all human beings, the more rapidly the subject, the human being, can grow in his development of the mental and physical space and resources available, and

at the same time the more difficult it would be to lead him astray. Yet the fact is that, up until now, no one has ever had the opportunity to assimilate those nations and cultures with rich traditions, before those traditions were obliterated by "modern civilization". That process is now taking place throughout the world. Christianity contains the implicit mandate obliging each and every human being to objectively acknowledge everyone and everything, and to study life on his own independently. This directive resembles the corresponding fundamental postulate of science, and this basic tenet was not adopted by Christianity from science. Rather, Christianity introduced this to us from a very long time ago. According to the Bible, each person is to study life as a scientist, independently deciphering the symbols of God for himself. This rule applies equally to both scientific and religious behavior.

GOD AND SCIENCE

Let us return to a thorough analysis of God, religion and scientific theory. Their main role is in the interpretation and explanation of events. Each scientific event receives the imprint of those facts or laws upon which is based the conception of the world as formulated. All in all, this is very complex work, for it requires careful and exact reproduction of the basic facts surrounding each event or action, however incidental. What is necessary? What is needed is to take note of the patterns of habit in every gesture, the formation of character through such habits, and the schematic of destiny being worked out through such a character.

For such a situation, religion appeals to God. God gives the interpretation and explanation of all things, all phenomena, all events. God is the basic foundation which attributes significance to everything and event and imbues in them the hope of salvation. But it is the underlying science

itself which assimilated such a repertoire of concrete theses and facts as its basic foundation.

At our present day there is no significant difference between the methodology of scientific research and religious behavior. Both methods of cognition require a Supreme Judge, which is namely some specific idea. Let us now consider the idea of God in detail. God is unknowable, transcendent and immanent to every living being. Thus, any deeper scientific cognition of reality and the universe draws us closer to God, Who is but the ultimate, unattainable end goal of the universe, and the only possible final deciphering of this world. "All things speak of God, but none of them betells enough. All things testify to Him, but none of them reveal Him." (Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagus) Any final, definitive interpretation of the event, any decision made on this basis, must be a deception and false; the concept of God is beyond our comprehension. "And whatever can be said about God may and is to be denied, for nothing is commensurable to Him, and He stands above everything. But He stands above not only affirmations but above denials as well, for He is the fullness of everything. And though He bears all names, nevertheless He bears none. And being everything in everything, yet He is nothing in nothing." (Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagus)

But if so, then how can we reach a proper decision? Based upon science, we shall begin by searching for highly effective technologies of behavior, efficient or subtle psychological methods of interaction. And over and over again we shall feel dissatisfied, tormenting ourselves over the mistakes made in the process, and cursing our destiny. Where is He, our Lord? Won't He help the wealthy, successful humanity of modern society, to say nothing of outcasts, to rid them of unbearable sufferings, which rend the soul to pieces? Using scientific terminology, God through such sufferings, refutes all the hypotheses and

thought systems accepted by human beings as guidelines for their lives. God demands the revision of these theories. And He demands this with such insistence that a person cannot do neither think of anything else any longer. He scans and checks his life with impassioned frenzy, recognizes his mistakes, and then tries to begin everything over again from the beginning, yet making ever new mistakes, until, finally, he either gives up or annuls his very life, or else gives himself up to God in submission, humility and obedience. But the question is whether God could be gentler, whether He could perhaps disprove human beings' wrong decisions through means other than through suffering? Do indeed these tortures really lead us closer to God and to a realization of His existence? Is not all this suffering nothing but a blind alley which freezes the thought and action and destroys both personality and society? Yes, it does so happen in such a way, generally, if this suffering is not followed by intent and deliberate scientific reflection upon the key reasons and causes. Only in such a case does suffering ennoble the human being.

In our opinion, it is this very schism between science and religion which is what has multiplied the suffering of modern society. Scientific theory has served as a substitute for God, while not attaining to the height of His unattainability in the context of our human existence. This unreachable quality of God has shackled religious thinking and has immortalized suffering as one of God's attributes. Yet it is in fact Christian teachings which implicitly contain science within them. The motive to self-development in science not only enables us to approach God, it also ultimately casts light on the limited contours of Christian science itself.

God is One for all religions, yet the scientific ways of comprehending Him are many. He is the Subject for religion, and the object of science.

Nevertheless, in each religion God possesses more or less concrete features. Upon the long path of development of each religion, in one way or another, these two, the religious perspective and the scientific perspective of God, have frequently exchanged positions. These positions are objective to about the same degree as the world as a whole, in such a perspective. Often they have intersected or repelled one another. Often they have expressed their content in similar or in different terms. Yet at all times they have had some form or other of method and path of scientific investigation. For example, Hinduism fairly clearly formulated the scientific conceptions of Raja Yoga and Jinyana Yoga (Vivekananda, Patanjali). The Western conception of science, which is also dominant in Russia, is actually a simplified and debilitated form of yoga. Islam also has its own similar traditions, scientific disciplines, and corresponding methodology. And then the nontheistic religions, such as Buddhism, in no less fashion, likewise contain a certain understanding of Absolute Being as a transcendental, all-powerful and systematic spirituality. Again, in analogy, those ideas as presented in Buddhist thinking, if translated into theistic terms, can be interpreted, on the one side, as a scientific method (the thought of Buddha), and on the other side, as liberation (Nirvana), in other words, as the object of science.

The obligation of the world religions in the present epoch is to make use of their philosophy and practical science, which is so unique to each religion, as well as their teaching itself, in order to reach God, for the purpose of healing, to give rebirth to the wilting civilizations of the world, and to offer to the world the word and power of God which is capable of saving this world.

RELIGION AND MATHEMATICS

How is it possible to make a comparison of contents of different religions? Would it be possible to approach this problem from the point of view of mathematics? What brings mathematics and religion into some kind of relationship one to another?

We might state that the world of mathematics exists in an eternal "now", in which "future" and "past" have no meaning whatsoever. There is no question in mathematics of what went before or what will happen afterward. A mathematical function may vary along the time axis, but for mathematics this change of the function does not take place in real time, but in fact in an infinite realm beyond time.

However, in mathematics there is no meaning to the question of cause. There is no meaning to asking what causes something or what generates a particular relationship. There is no sense to seeking a "cause" which precedes it; however, there can be a quest for the connections and the order of an internal system, which exists in a so-to-speak extended present. Consequently, the question of causality cannot exist within the inner world of mathematics, just as we cannot speak of something which will happen in the future.

Now recalling religious conceptions, we note that their axioms, for example, eternal salvation or life after death, are built into these conceptions in such a manner that they cannot be considered as realities in the world, but as parts of a system which exists in a continuous Present, which transcendently and continuously exerts its influence upon man, seeking to protect him from ruinous actions.

If one leaves behind one religious system, right away a person winds up in another, where an array of different understandings very substantially seize hold of him. It is impossible to leave from religion altogether, just as with math-

ematics – one can only stumble into a plethora of errors.

On the other hand, all religious concepts strive for the status of timeless ordinances of God, eternal and unchanging. This is that which unites mathematics and religion. Religion as a system takes hold of a person and claims the entire domain of his life from that point on, in which causality is removed, as in mathematics, and a new system is set up with a reverse connection governed by a set of rules, transforming the world according to the breath of God's word.

Then mathematics, having itself these types of qualities, becomes as it were a canon or model for the construction of religion. Religion for its part strives to introduce into its system these qualities. Most important of all is that it be just as true and irrefutable by experience as mathematics. The declarations or judgments of religion are likewise true in an eternal dimension beyond time itself.

This methodological similarity gives us a basis to apply a method of comparative analysis to religions, namely, one of the most profound scientific theories, encompassing within its system the achievements of such diverse fields as biology, mathematics, psychology, epistemology, and so on. This is Jean Piaget's theory of the intellectual development of mankind – a scientific approach elaborated upon the foundation of Christian tradition. And this theoretical system has as its evolutionary dynamic a mathematical and logical construct.

RESULTS OF COMPARISON

One of the foundational ideas of the majority of religions is that of sacrifice, giving without receiving in return, investing for the sake of God or others, and that this is catalytic in the process of self-perfection. The phase of compensation for one's investment, though it generally exists in the

theoretical system, is usually extremely remote, and may be even beyond the life of a person. In any case, this time parameter "t" has different significance in different religions. In some religions such as Judaism and Islam, the time stipulated for compensation may be too short, or even immediate ("an eye for an eye"). In others, for example, in Christianity, the cycle itself may be compared to the cycles of the celestial spheres, where a change may become noticeable only after many generations. Therefore in Christianity a person's activities may be regarded rather as an obligation, with no expectation of any short-term compensation at all.

The duration of the period of investment or sacrifice is a good indicator of the depth and fundamental quality of activity as defined within a given religion. During the whole period during which sacrifice "resonates", or during which a person may not expect any compensation from God, he continues to invest positive efforts in the society, even over a span of many generations. Since religion constitutes a system of incentives to strive for the eternal, all that which extends the correctness of behavior and actions leads one closer to God. And, at the same time, this "correctness" of actions itself also becomes quite mathematical in nature. Multiple repeated application of this principle will lead to the flourishing of the society, which is an indirect compensation to all of its members. In this way, the mathematical dimension of time may be included as an objective working parameter for comparison between religions.

The predominant idea of Islam and Judaism is balanced effect, "an eye for an eye". The phase of compensation ought to directly follow the phase of disruption of balance. This stage ought not to allow a prolonged asymmetry of balance, which would lead to the accumulation of pressure. Incidentally we may note that such pressure

of imbalance tends to induce creative innovation. In light of its reiteration, the mandate for immediate restoration of equilibrium gives rise to the scenario which is all too well illustrated by history. Systemic stagnation is inevitable, as well as what in thermodynamics is known as "heat death". The aggregate potential energy, as the reservoir of creative energy, is approximately equal to zero. The idea of these religions is highly reactive. Such an idea cannot initiate investment without return. Rather, it seeks to pursue and liquidate any violation of the balance in living processes, emphasizing speedy restoration of balance. Since they assume such a viewpoint centered on balance, what Islam and Judaism need in order to realize the goal of development for the future is to have that balance artificially disrupted, which would stimulate the religious devotees to seek a path to effect neutralization. In history the comment has been frequently made of Islam, "It will burst if it does not unleash a war."

The leading concept of Buddhism is the refusal to identify with either side in a given action, since any such identification can violate the balance of motion and evoke consequent suffering. Total decentralization, that is, denial of satisfaction of one's own needs and desires, with no concept of "sacrifice" for the sake of some end, makes any kind of activity senseless, and tends to arrest all activity. The extreme form of decentralization is negative egocentrism, that is, the desire not to cause oneself any stress or affliction. A logical step would be renunciation of life itself, since its prolongation contradicts the prescribed ideal state of mind. Whereas a Christian tries to realize the maximal result for a given expenditure, then the Buddhist in his actions is concerned to realize the minimum loss. The Buddhist does not set up a positive goal; he only seeks to protect himself from loss. Yet, closing the door

against all the negative eventualities, do we not risk missing the positive too? Strictly speaking, the Buddhist has a hard time understanding the Christian who plants the seeds of a tree whose fruits he will never see.

But in fact the idea of complete decentralization exists in Christianity too, for example, in the Lamentations of the Ecclesiast. Nevertheless, such an idea cannot become dominant, for then the active nature of Christianity would be impeded. Christianity overcame this idea by the rationale that, without action centering on love, a new cycle of life could not come about.

Here again we use the mathematical Game Theory for comparing the parameters, for example, in determining the strategy of maximum winning or minimal loss. Thus we see that, whereas in Christianity the emphasis is on the former, although it does not altogether deny the latter, in Buddhism we find that the latter is of greater utility.

The main concept of Confucianism consists in following natural processes and in acquiring skills in getting these processes to work for one's own benefit. The Confucian finds his position in what is called the "Golden Mean" among these processes, avoiding extremes in the direction of either pole in any situation. He tries always to control the counterbalance of two forces without interfering in either of these surging currents of movement. This third, neutral position in regard to the battling and surging sides receives the benefit of the acceleration and deceleration of these tides as they fend off one another. It plays the role of a social catalyst. As Confucianists say, "Observe a squabble among tigers from the hilltop."

Operating upon a Taoist conceptualization of the world, in terms of cycles of continuously transforming processes of yin and yang, Confucianism sets as its ideal and goal in pursuing the

Tao (the "Way") to bring victory in achieving a sustainable and durable order in all things. Such a thing as the linear, progressive or evolutionary development of the world would not be considered relevant to the worldview of Confucianism.

So, upholding such a standpoint could lead to the following: As is well known, within a closed system, according to the laws of thermodynamics, the sum of entropy grows ever larger. An analogous phenomenon may be observed in the declining complexity of social organization, in a society which assumes the position of simply flowing along with the flow of natural processes. In Christianity, the ideal of imitation of Christ, that is, taking the direction of self-perfection, runs counter to the natural degradation of humanity, which is the legacy of the original sin. Only the conscious struggle against the tendency to decline spiritually and morally, concomitant with the increasing complexity of one's behavior patterns, can enable a person to overcome the inertia of entropy.

In Christianity the human being exists as the hero of the natural world, and the only hope for progressive movement in the evolution of the human species is for man to become as God – the process of "deification". Here God is more concrete, and drawn up in lines of behavior which are compulsory for the human being. The measure of heroism of his behavior is in correlation to the stage of progression of humanity. Such struggle is particularly intense during periods of transition.

There is however an indication of warning in connection with cognitive activity. Christianity requires a certain duality in the evaluation of things. For each thing, whatever it may be, there are two parallel sets of characteristics, namely, its determination per se, and the determination as sized up by the one who is evaluating it. Thus it is necessary not only to evaluate a certain thing,

but, in order to present a complete description of that thing, it is also necessary to assess the one who is evaluating it. Both go together in order to present a true picture of a given object. Thus, in socially conjugated classes, for example, doctor and patient, policeman and criminal, teacher and student, and so forth, it is the client who attributes character to the company, which in turn determines its client through the marketing process. No evaluation or description can stand alone in isolation from the dual and coupled determination.

There are two series of attributes – "divine" and "human" which are woven together and invariably coexist in the figure of Christ. Moreover, any evaluation or determination is at the same time a task for the future. The divine "evaluation" of things as they stand becomes an assignment, not only in terms of "prototypes" but also "ideals". Therefore it is both possible and mandatory that there be an ongoing evolutionary movement in this world. The world reflects the heavenly prototype. This prototype is not only a paradigm or model; it is also the ultimate goal itself.

In spite of the dynamic construction of Confucianism, it does not see the world as an evolutionary system. Here again, applying the theory of Piaget, we are reminded that the cognition of an object depends not only upon its empirical characteristics as such, but also upon the battery of logical and mathematical operations with whose help the process of assimilation takes place, and by which the object along with its attributes and characteristics is transformed and systematized. These operations themselves constitute and convey first and foremost accessibility to thoughtful evaluation and consideration of the religious object.

The construction of something new proceeds in the form of recognition and communication based on those connections which already

exist as well as a reevaluation and reformation upon the foundation of all the implications emanating from that which was before, both new and old together. In such a manner we attain to an eventual equilibrium, which heralds the crossover from incommunicability to accessibility, for the latter is the criterion for any type of balance, just as for any intellectual achievement there must be the criteria of connectedness and internal consistency. The higher the level of thought, the more it must be accessible. Then accessibility itself means that there are certain operational transformations in the realm of thought, which enable us to translate from the prior realm, characterized by the partial and the occasional, to the newly opened up and general; and at the same time it facilitates our approach in the reverse sense from the latter to the former too. Alternatively, we may change our tack from that of trying to determine and describe the subject under scrutiny, to instead undertaking an analysis of the observer. To this point, in case of the lack of any observer or attention thereto, we revert to reflexive evaluation of what in fact amounts to our own determination. This then is what renders Confucianism a prisoner to the collective and unconscious norms, which sharply contrasts with the pattern of individual decision characteristic of Christianity. The fundamental Christian position is independent of any leader; it is the individual who assumes responsibility for the destiny of the entire world. In this prospectus, Christianity as a teaching attains the broadest cycle of accessibility.

Our brief analysis had the purpose of demonstrating the universal and scientific character of the Christian conception, and imparting something about the approaches of various other religions in the form of particular instances. In exactly the same manner, the worldview which is at the foundation of the exhortations of Christi-

anity is characterized by an epistemology at an altogether deeper level.

To refer to an example, certain other religions such as Judaism or Islam do not portray the world as a struggle between two opposing tendencies which at the same time both generate one another and also supplement one another, and which are distinctly yet inseparably connected with one another. Therefore, in contrast to Christianity, their scientific thought allows struggle between classes and groups in society, as in Marxism for example, where the classes and social groups are presented as completely separate and contradictory entities.

When we reach a deeper level, equivalent to the growth of knowledge, we come to the perfection of thinking along a logical and mathematical schematic. In the process of this growth, through experience, necessarily cognition arises on the part of those who participate in the mediation of this process. In the same way that life itself in its course of development gives rise to biological forms, the human reason likewise generates the norms of its own functioning. There takes place an integrated genesis of these two currents of development and likewise there is a unified and universal mechanism.

However, in contrast to the spread of rules of verification of scientific truth-statements in Western philosophical circles through experiential tests or even by positing false hypotheses, in this case, disputes among religious systems cannot be solved by analogous procedures or by philosophical arguments. Rather, we are obliged to refer to that level of reality which can be disclosed to us only by means of corresponding logical and mathematical tools. Such an apparatus and its accompanying map of reality is a necessary component in the study of what is at essence an evolutionary biological and social pro-

cess, which is what we are namely dealing with in terms of the analytic study of religions.

"The logical and mathematical structure itself conveys the connection of the organism with its environment." (Jean Piaget) This implies the necessary correspondence and compatibility between the material structure of the living being with the material, physical and chemical structure of the environment and likewise with the cognitive structure of thought. This fundamental proposition regarding the connection between logical-mathematical coordination and the morphogenesis of life ought to provide the basis for ongoing progress in unifying the religious worldviews within the framework of the most highly developed and universal among them.

GLOBAL SOCIETY

In this manner, as the ideological basis of the global society, its point of emphasis can only be the unification of religions with the Christian conception as the basis and center. Christians possess the capacity, emanating from their mental characteristic, for embracing and encompassing all the most varied religious approaches and likewise for the creation of multinational communities or associations. It is not by chance that Christianity first and to the greatest degree propagated in the multinational milieu of the Roman Empire. In analogous manner, it is likewise not merely chance that the European Community was organized and assembled out of Christian nations.

Christianity of today differs radically from the ancient and authentic teaching of the first centuries of the Christian era. At that time, Christianity was a true science, philosophy and religion, and as such was the stage for the syncretic process, consuming and assimilating all existing knowledge. The approach laid out in our article, is a modern attempt to return to that former type

of Unified Knowledge, in which a harmonized compendium of science, religion and philosophy, together with the corresponding ontology, axiology (system of values), ethical system, and so forth, as further developed from such a fundamental scientific, religious and philosophical basis. This would indeed be capable of responding to the requirement for the global civilization of a universal, all-embracing conception which transcends the partiality and particularity of the various separate approaches which have existed up to the present time.

What appears to be especially promising and fruitful in this approach is the blend of different paths leading to God. These diverse religious teachings have been carefully studied and considered from the standpoint of absolute criteria for assessing values in light of the integral whole whose synthesis we are seeking. Namely, these center on God's love and God's truth, along with what would be called the fundamental law of the cosmos: All things, all people, exist not for themselves, but rather for the benefit of others and for God's sake. "All existence is for the sake of others."

This all-encompassing criterion of good and evil introduces a highly relevant category which is absolutely indispensable for our interdependent modern world. In spite of all the differences among religious, moral and social systems, nevertheless all together they present an integral structural whole, which determines for and by itself the tempos for the needed modification of the various religious identities of the constituent nations which take part in this process. We can readily foresee that certain nations will encounter systemic crises emerging from the inadequacy of their identification with the universal criteria of good and evil, as one of the decisive conditions of the global society.