

The Philosophy of Religion

By Nola MacDonald

For a long time, well into the nineteenth century, theology and philosophy were very closely linked. They studied the same concerns, and philosophy was even thought to be pointless. Today, however, there are basically three theological questions studied by philosophers.

The first question is "Can we prove that God or gods exist?". There have been several attempts to prove the existence of a supreme being. One philosopher, St. Anselm, defined God as something that can have nothing greater than it. If we suppose that there is no God, then there must be something greater than God -- which contradicts the definition that there is nothing greater than God. Therefore there must be a God. Another attempt to prove the existence of God is that when you look at the universe, you see order and design. Although it is possible that this could have just occurred, it is much more likely that there is an "orderer", i.e. someone to arrange things. Therefore, it is probable that there is a God.

The second question dealt with in the philosophy of religion is that of phenomenology, existentialism and hermeneutics. Soren Kierkegaard, a nineteenth century Danish philosopher was an existentialist. He believed in the personalization of religion. He felt that religion in a private matter of faith that comes out of the anxiety of being in the world. He said that there is truth in the Bible, but not the kind of truth that you get in organized religion.

Hermeneutics is interpretation. Similar to literary interpretation, it is a way of reaching understanding. Hermeneutics arose out of Biblical interpretation. It is basically a matter of literal versus metaphorical interpretation.

The third question is "Does morality have a religious supposition?". Some philosophers say that if there was no God, everything would be permitted, and that all ethics come from God. They maintain that Atheists have no morality. These philosophers would say that without God as objectivity, ethics boils down to a shouting match between people; that humans amongst themselves cannot answer moral questions. On the other hand, some would say that founding morality of religion is founding the more clear on the less clear -- it is easier to say whether something is morally right or wrong than it is to say that God exists and that what is right or wrong is so because of the existence of God.

Wicca Craft

By W. Nicholson

Wiccan is a pagan or nature based religion, with an emphasis on brotherly love and harmony between people and nature. The term witch can be used to describe the members of a coven, but many members are offended by this term as it is usually followed by misconceptions and incorrect images.

Wiccans do not practice black magic, or any other kind of evil, nor do they try to convert members on the basis that they are superior. Wiccans respect other religions, and feel that a person must hear the call of the Goddess before joining the religion.

The members form groups called coven, which may be up to 13 people, each coven had a high priestess and the group members are called coveners. They gather to worship the Goddess, perform ceremonies and work white magik.

Wiccans celebrate 8 Sabbats each year, at the changing of the seasons. There are 4 major Sabbats and 4 minor Sabbats. The 4 major ones are; Candlemas, Beltane, Lammas and Samhain. The 4 minor ones are; Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumn Equinox, and Winter Solstice. A coven meeting (Esbat) is a monthly coven meeting held on each full moon. Here they discuss problems, swap ideas, and have ceremonies praising the Goddess and the Horned God (the male aspect).

The Christian church has perverted many wiccan concepts over the centuries, for example, they made an attempt to eradicate the pagan worship of the Horned God by making him their symbol of evil and calling him the devil. Wicca had also been misrepresented right here on the pages of the X-Press, by the infamous Joseph Murphy (Nov. 28, 1991 issue), who takes it upon himself to discredit an ancient religion with a few out of context (but well documented) quotes.

The Baha'i Faith

The Baha'i Faith was founded by Mirza Husayn Ali, known as Bahau'llah or "splendor of God", during the middle of the 19th century in Persia.

The essential tenets of the Baha'i Faith as revealed by Bahau'llah are: -the oneness of God is unknowable, but his will is expressed through Manifestations or the prophets; -the spiritual oneness of the prophets; -the progressive character of revelation; -the unity of mankind; -the equality of men and women; -the essential harmony of science and religion; -the assurance of immortality for the human soul