



1. "Visions of," I say, rather than "Knowledge of": available to us is the perpetual interplay of images (my "psyche") and ideas (my "mind"), and I continually decide (my "spirit") how I shall act in the world (in my "body")--interstitial between "God" and "society" (these two completing the six sides of my "Reality Cube"). A philosophy is a way of seeing the world: a religion is a way of seeing and living in the world.

2. All claims to factitious knowledge of reality are, I believe, both fictitious and inherently imperialistic. Tribalisms (including totalitarianisms) and scribalisms (including determinisms) are instances we variously call "ideology," "dogmatism," "fundamentalism," "authoritarianism." My objections to these are, chiefly, what they do to TRUTH and what they do to PEOPLE.

a. First, PEOPLE. They fanaticize, narrow, inflame their converts. Enthusiasm is good, as may be even, temporarily, monomania. But these systems' and cults' control-devices tend to keep converts captive, applying negative sanctions (threats) against "deviationism," even "dis-sent," "free thinking," as well as positive sanctions (promises) for loyalty (in-skin support-satisfactions and out-skin group-reinforcements). In addition, conversion-prone individuals, passing from one idol to another, tend to become "burned over," despairing, cynical, drop-outs in the search for meaning: excessive truth-claims have given them IFD disease (idealism to frustration to despair): they despair of "truth," instead of (as I recommend in #1, above) becoming modest, human, about it. Finally, our species' survival on the earth will depend, among other things, on a transconfessional humility before "Reality," "Truth," "God," with (1) profound personal commitment to (my definition of religion) a specific way of seeing and living in the world, coupled with the modesty (2) appropriate to the human condition vis-a-vis Reality, Truth, God. Children, in and out of both private and public schools, can be taught this combination of reverence and respect, and should early be exposed to the world's options for seeing and living in the world--not just one or a few options (which would violate, among other things, in the American public school system, the separation of the state from sectarian promotion).

b. Second, TRUTH. Said the Jewish saint-philosopher Simone Weil, Jesus should be "desired as truth, only afterward as food" (ROOTS, 249). The dogmatic spirit makes impossible the virtue of intellectual probity, honesty, humility, openness to Truth. If we have discovered something (as the Eastern hemisphere prefers to say), or something has been revealed to us in history (as the Western hemisphere prefers to say), we should share that good news with others without hanging it on them or hanging them with it. The deeper one's apprehension (active or passive) of "truth," the more difficult is this combination of openness to Truth and non-imperial attitude toward others.

3. The rest of this thinksheet illustrates the problem-opportunity delineated above. Illustrative question: Can religious experience solve the ontic-numeric problem, the problem put in the question How many is Reality? (A one-sheet, two-page review of the options: "Principles of Philosophy" DATA-GUIDE QUICK CHART, Data-Guide, Flushing, NY 11355.) This diagram shows the main options: FOUR NUMERIC LEAPS OF FAITH:

A. Reality is MANY. Primitive: animism. Leibnitz's monads. Wm. James' theistically modified pluralism. Irwin C. Lieb's quadrism (THE FOUR FACES OF MAN, U. of Pa./71).

B. Reality is TWO FROM ONE. Bible: Creator/creation.

C. Reality is ONE. Eastern (esp. Hindu) mysticism, e.g., Transcendental Meditation with its double falsity (claiming both not to be a religion, and to be "science"--both, in spite of its advaita preaching). (See Otto, MYSTICISM E & W, Mac/32ff.) "Soul"?

D. TWO AT ONE. Western (Jewish, Christian, Islamic-Sufic) mysticism. Communion with God, but avoiding monism as hybridic blasphemy.

