

# Lost Trails of Polytheism

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Polytheism reigns in the history of mankind, not monotheism. Both archeology and history have given us ample evidence that our ancestors worshipped a variety of gods. They knew that the world we are living in is the work of imperfect beings. Having failed to reach perfection in the higher spheres of heaven, they settled here, in the sphere of dense matter. They gave us life, unfortunately very imperfect. Therefore, the problem of evil and suffering cannot be explained away otherwise than by acknowledging the imperfection of this creation.

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## **From the author**

For many years I was a seeker of truth. It seemed to me at one time that I had finally found that only and ultimate truth through the Bible. Many times I drew encouragement and teaching from this book on how to live to please God. But that container ran out after a certain time. My prayers to Yahweh, the god of the Bible, ceased to work. After a while I realized the bitter truth that this god was jealous and vindictive, and Israel, which this book elevates and presents many times as the chosen people, are for the world an example not to be followed, both politically and morally. Therefore, I gave up this source. But I am not angry at Jesus and Yahweh for having failed me in my life. These gods simply don't matter in my life any longer.

Living in multiethnic and multicultural Canada, a country that is like a big tree to which birds fly in from different parts of the world to nestle in its branches, opened my eyes to many life's issues. I understood better how this world is arranged. I deeply regret that in Poland, the country of my origin, Catholicism dominates instead of ideological pluralism.

It is an ideological work, not scientific, the fruit of my meditations and mystical experiences during writing and reading various sources. Yet, I have tried to remain faithful to the scientific facts known to me. In fact, this is not my own ideology and teaching, but a renewed by me ideology of people who had lived in ancient times. They came to life, stood by me, and helped me in writing. Without their helping hands I wouldn't be able to write all this. Therefore, my reasoning and argumentation is simpler and much more

logical than many religious and scientific studies. I hope that it will speak to the hearts of the readers.

I do not delve too far into the history of ancient religions and civilizations; historians have done it for me. I have also tried to reduce the number of quotations from supplementary sources to the minimum, because I know that frequent quoting thinkers and scholars bores the readers and distracts their attention from essential issues. Scholars often pretend to know the answers to many issues concerning our existence, but when we take a closer look at their studies we see that they know only a little bit more than ordinary, uneducated people. They try to mask their ignorance with a thin coat of scholarship.

The book "The Power of Myth" has inspired me a lot, though did not give me answers to many questions. It is a publication of a series of interviews that the American journalist Bill Moyers had conducted with the mythologist and anthropologist Joseph Campbell. Thanks to this reading, I realized for the first time, how beautiful and diverse the world of religion is, and why polytheism had reigned in the world for so many centuries. It is just the diversity of religions that has a positive charm, not a gloomy religious monolith, like, for example, Iran, and largely Poland.

Also, studying the history of the North American Indians I came to the conclusion that their religions were better, more tailored to the spiritual needs of man, because they put him in accord with the voice of nature – a source vitally important for our physical and spiritual health. But in the Christian tradition, nature is condemned, destroyed and exploited; and the animals are treated like merchandise,

like objects without any feelings. It has its justification in the Bible. Didn't Yahweh say to the first people to have dominion over everything? To this theme I will return more than once later. So my long search for truth was not in vain. The truth I had been looking for, turned out to be a collection of truths about the world. This complexity of cults and beliefs is like the walls of a diamond that make up a single, logical and whole unit. Such is the life and the world around us. Having discovered this truth, I discovered myself, my own truth. Now I know at last who I am, and can follow my bliss, live an authentic life, as Campbell said.

After all, this applies not only to me, but to everyone, regardless of their religion. Even an atheist has his own truth, determining his fate and destiny. Therefore, each one of us should try to find it and live in it, because everyone is a unique vessel. Whether that vessel is filled with pure or muddy water, depends only on ourselves.

When I converted to polytheism, my views changed considerably. Having found this treasure after years of searching, I am now trying to encourage others to follow this way. I am doing it with enthusiasm, although I do realize how strong are the bonds of religious tradition in which someone was brought up. I don't name the gods to which one must pray, so as not to be accused of trying to launch a missionary activity among monotheists.

I am a supra-religious person. I have not been identifying myself with any religion for a long time. You simply grow out of religion, like of baby's clothes. The more a person matures, the more fastidious he becomes intellectually. The stories about a stable, Noah's ark, Adam

and Eve, the sages from the East, etc., cease to interest him. It is just the sages from the East, i.e. Oriental gurus, who say to Christians today: "What does it matter if someone rose from the dead two thousand years ago? Are you rising from the dead today? Are you pulling your spiritual, your human consciousness out of your animal base and letting the animal base become spiritualized in your life experience?"[3] And they're right.

Someone may say to me: "OK., But no one has ever yet fathomed and solved the mystery of life and death." It's not true. The ancients had fathomed it to a great extent, and explained it through their myths, legends and folk tales, or paintings on the walls of their temples and palaces. Therefore, it is worthwhile to study their works. Campbell, for example, recommends the works of Plato and Goethe.

I realize that I am dealing with the issues of great importance. Therefore, I will skip such topics as socialism, feudalism, or fascism. The very sound of these words evokes negative associations, and diverts attention from essential issues. I'll make an exception only in the case of communism, because I lived in that system for many years. I agree with those who say that the main problem of the Marxist ideology was anthropological. Communists rejected all the ideologies except their own, based largely on faith in man himself. Therefore, this system could not exist long. Man cannot be the alpha and omega, the master of the world and his destiny. There are higher powers, whose existence the Communists refused to acknowledge, despite the fact that humanity has believed in them since the dawn of history.



The need to believe in something lies in human nature. People need to believe in something, it is easier for people to live if they believe in something. In other words, man needs a god or gods. But when he has only one, and is disappointed in him, then he feels lost or becomes an atheist. But we should not give up. Instead of falling into apathy or depression, we should look for another god. The main cause of spiritual dilemmas and anxieties of people who have lost their faith, is that they were brought up in a monotheistic faith, had only one boat and anchor. Having lost their myth, they became ship-wrecked on the sea of life, exposed to mercy or cruelty of different waves.

There are also cults and religions that are bad, harmful and dangerous, where sexual orgies and ritual murders take place, but these are rather marginal phenomena in the world today, and the topic itself is not edifying, that's why it is not worthwhile to go into this. My primary goal is to call the reader's attention to what had been abandoned, deemed as paganism, and forced out of our Western civilization by the shortsighted Judeo-Christian tradition.

Knowing that Christianity set man at odds with the history and nature, I wish to help Christians to rid themselves of the cultural ties of their religion. And if I manage to perform this mission, at least in part, I will deem it as my personal success.

Of course, I realize that I will disappoint many a Protestant, for whom Jesus and the Bible are everything, and many a Catholic, for whom the Church and the Blessed Virgin are everything. But the bigots and sectarians criticize faster than they think. This is best evidenced by the comments they write on the websites where there are

discussions about religion. Especially the Catholic apologists, often call their opponents names in the absence of sound arguments or pry into their private lives. One of the victims of such brainless, pseudo-patriotic, pompous, self-righteous, religious circles, that are still numerous in Poland, was Julian Tuwim, a great Polish poet of Jewish descent. They tried to make a communist of him, disregarding even the fact that he had written quite a few religious poems.

## Introduction

Polytheism reigns in the history of mankind, not monotheism. For thousands of years our ancestors walked different paths; lived in a world where there was room for many gods. Archeology, which made tremendous progress in the XX century, provided ample evidence that the ancients had worshipped a variety of gods. History also confirms this fact. Egyptian pyramids, the temples of Machu Picchu in Peru, the stones of Stonehenge in England, as well as many other objects – the remnants of the ancient pagan temples – are positioned at a special angle to the sky. Hence we know how much various ancient civilizations, distant from each other in space and time, were fascinated with the order of the sky and the stellar constellations. In short, the ancients knew how much we are affiliated with the cosmos, and thus strongly dependent on the heavenly powers, which establish their rule on Earth. They also knew that they themselves came from there and would return there one day. In the Arabic book of Job, erroneously regarded by many people as Hebrew, we read: "Do you know the order of heaven? Can you establish its reign on Earth?"[1]

And suddenly a Christianity appears with its doctrine, and proclaims to the world: "It was all a worthless paganism." Dorothy M. Murdock vel Acharya S, a well-known American writer,[2] said in a press interview: "I do believe that Christianity will be viewed in the future – if a future there be – as a destructive interloper that disconnected humanity from its natural world and caused tremendous turmoil. As prejudiced as the Christian ideology has been against the so-called Pagan world, that's

at least as badly as the future populace will view Christianity. In other words, Christianity is the Paganism of the future, or vice versa. In any event, it will be realized that the "faith" is a terrible hoax played upon the masses in order to make them believe that the Almighty power behind the cosmos was a particular person of a particular ethnicity during a particular period, to the exclusion of all other cultures, eras and individuals."

As we know, the ancients had their own gods – for example, the Greeks had Zeus, the Egyptians – Osiris, the Romans – Jupiter, and treated them at least as seriously as the Christians treat Jesus and Yahweh today, and the Muslims their Muhammad and Allah. In any case, religion played in their lives equally important role, or even a greater one. Scholars of the history of ancient cultures and civilizations are often fascinated by their greatness and magnificence. But those who read only the Bible and religious publications, know nothing of it. Ancient peoples had their priests and priestesses, their temples, their festivals, statues and altars on which they sacrificed animals, foods, and sometimes even people. Many of their beliefs and practices, were not much different from today's. For example, Mithraism – religion dominant in Rome before the Christian era – was not much different from Christianity. Acharya S, gives in her works quite detailed lists of the similarities between Christianity and other, older religions.

Why is the animal sacrifice viewed today as something quite normal, but human sacrifice as something very bad? I don't approve both rituals, but I can't see too much difference between them, ever since I rejected the doctrine that

animals have no souls and learned from the Indians that some of them are the beings superior to humans.

The two world's largest monotheist religions – Christianity and Islam – are divided into many sects and fractions, especially Christianity. The number of followers of both religions is now more than half of the world's population. And yet, they both have failed to change man for better. But still we hear that Christianity has civilized man, made the world less barbarous. Certainly not. The past twentieth century was full of terrible events. The Christian nations of Europe were most deeply immersed in the two World Wars. Although these wars were not strictly religious, but the very fact that Christians were killing Christians *en masse*, gives something to reflect upon. German soldiers had "Got mit uns" written on their belts, Americans "In God we trust" on their coins, and the Poles swore their allegiance to God and the country before going to war. Thus, it often happened that the enemies shooting at one another on both sides of the front lines prayed to the same Jesus, Mary or the saints.

Modern civilization has drained man mentally, has not taught him the skill of metaphorical, abstract thinking – an art so popular in ancient times. No wonder that the moderns take religious symbolism for facts. Especially biblical mythology has settled in our culture so deeply that the stories about Israelites crossing the Red Sea on dry land, or putting the pairs of all land animals in a small ark of Noah, many people accept as historical facts. Many even believe that the devil has horns and a tail, angels have wings, the hell is below us, the heaven above us, etc. etc. I myself

have met some seemingly intelligent people, who believed in hell, where the fire and brimstone are burning forever.

The modern world is materialistic, people are chasing after money, they work hard to buy the latest computers, iPods, houses, cars, etc., think about mortgage repayments, results of hockey and football matches – in short, their heads are filled with so many things that they lack time to study the works of the ancient philosophers and sages. These works are not even advertised by modern media. Television plays mainly a commercial role; its world is governed by advertising. In a word, almost all the ancient wisdom has been abandoned. No wonder that the more we can buy, the more empty we become. Modern young generation is largely lost, doesn't even know why it lives. Christian promises of the rewards in heaven somehow do not appeal to young people.

In a culture dominated by business and the religion based on the simple biblical cosmology, paradoxically strange superstitions, absurd theories and legends arise and abound. Many of them are turned into movies and books, especially those from the literary genre called science-fiction. Cults, beliefs in witchcraft, charms and divination also abound. The moderns quite commonly believe, more or less consciously, in the Santas, goblins, gremlins, and other good and bad entities. As if they subconsciously sensed that this planet is influenced by the extraterrestrials.

### 3 Other sages and thinkers

An anonymous thinker said: "How do you know if this life is not a hell of another world?"

Considering the variety of shapes and forms in the world of plants and animals (e.g., there are more than a hundred varieties of sharks), we conclude that Charles Darwin's theory of "natural selection" is based on flimsy foundations. All that diversity in the natural world, just like the diversity of religions – stems from the fact that this world is not the work of one, perfect god, but many imperfect. And the resultant of these forces is often negative, evil suppresses good, overpowers it. Therefore, sorting the species and tabulating them, the way Darwin and the exponents of his theory did, has no real sense. Even Darwin himself, widely regarded as a sage, was not quite sure if his theories were true. He said: "I cannot pretend to throw the least light on such abstruse problem. The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us, and I, for one, must be content to remain an agnostic."

Then, Stephen Hawking, quite commonly considered the greatest modern scientist, said in a scientific television program: "If you're not dreaming, not searching, then what is the meaning of life?"

Next, Carl Sagan, a famous American astronomer, author of the popular television series "Cosmos" and the book with the same title, was an atheist, but believed in the existence of life on other planets. He said: "It is a height human arrogance to imagine that this planet is the only habitable world." [5] Moreover, he called our planet: "a mote of dust on the outskirts of our solar system." So we

live on the mote of dust, yet we should know that the gods created many other habitable worlds. However, he overestimated the role of science, considered it the best tool for solving the mysteries and riddles of the cosmos. Unfortunately, this tool is still so limited that we do not even know well the planets belonging to our little solar system. He also said: "No nation, no religion, no economic system, no body of knowledge, is likely to have all the answers for our survival. There must be many social systems that would work far better than any now in existence. In the scientific tradition, our task is to find them... Through technological advances in communication our planet is in the final stages of being bound up at breakneck pace into a single global society. If we can accomplish the integration of the Earth without obliterating cultural differences or destroying ourselves, we will have accomplished a great thing... Thanks to the courage and intelligence, we found only some sections of roads which our ancestors walked." [6]

I also agree with that, but I think that answers to "many important questions related to our survival," should be searched, as I have said, primarily in the works of the ancient writers, rather than in the deficient domain of science. The gods are able to give us answers to many questions. It is easier to make contact with them, than to reach other planets on the spacecrafts. Traces of their presence on this planet can be found in a variety of places.

In any event, science should interact with religion, rather than replace it. These two domains should overlap to some extent, complement each other. This is at least what Albert Einstein thought. He did not let himself be drawn into this debate: "Science versus religion." He said: "I don't think we



must treat these domains as hostile. In fact, I believe that there is a very close relationship between them. What's more, I think that science without religion is lame, and religion without science is blind."

Confucius, regarded as the greatest Chinese philosopher, suspiciously referred to any religion, because he saw a dangerous superstition in it. He rightly noted that the moral sense in man is a reflection of the cosmic order of nature.

Maria Szyszkowska, Polish professor of philosophy, argues that the tendency to do good and evil is something that is in our nature, but can also be acquired by the religious training or reading certain publications. She says: "We have a figure of Socrates, or a wonderful example of Pyrrho, the founder of the school of skepticism. In order to build a proper attitude to life, it was not necessary to wait for the coming of Christianity." [7]

Scientific circles are largely atheistic. But many prominent atheist scientists did not promote atheism, did not try to make a sort of religion of it, as some arrogant pseudo-scientists do, whose texts are published in some atheistic magazines and websites. Only when they were asked directly by their students or fans whether they believe in god, they replied that there is no place for him in their world. As we see, wisdom does not necessarily have to go hand in hand with religion.

## **15 Other myths of modern civilization**

As I have mentioned, myths taken literally make an impression of fairy tales and legends. However, they are important stories that act as the signposts to the transcendent zone. In other words, they are just grains of truth, and as we know, grains cannot be eaten, until they are ground into flour and made into bread.

And yet, many myths have settled in our culture and tradition for good. What is worse, they are often spread by seemingly intelligent people, regarded as scientific or moral authorities. This is of course the fault of priests, who, as I have said, have mastered the art of spreading myths to perfection. Let me give you some other examples.

Not only Jerusalem does not deserve to be called the holy city, but also all its surrounding country, called Israel. Each one of us, hearing the words "Holy Land," knows right away what it means. But I think that those who know the history of Palestine a little bit, will agree with me that it would be difficult to find on this planet, a piece of land more unholy than the one that was given such name. It has passed from hands to hands over the centuries, has been occupied by the Romans, Arabs, Christians (the Crusades), Turks, British, and others.

Campbell says that it is absurd to believe that the Promised Land is in today's Israel. People from whom we can learn where it really is, are the gurus from the East. But these wise men flee away (i.e. from the West) with all the chickens, so alien to their spirit are the Western religions.

When Christianity prevailed in Europe, a terrible ignorance in the field of cosmology prevailed as well. It is

an irony that the Catholic Church which had promised people heaven and frightened them with hell for centuries, did not even know the position and the role of our planet in the universe.

Next, the word "Pharisee" is commonly associated with pride and hypocrisy, undoubtedly because the biblical Jesus frequently harshly condemned the servants of this Jewish order. The Jews, however, associate it with everything that is most precious and sacred to them. It was the Pharisees who came up with the idea of building the synagogues in other countries, and thanks to that the Jewish people survived as a nation throughout the Diaspora period that lasted from the second century AD until 1948.

Then, Christians believe that the Hebrew Bible is the Old Testament and Jesus is the founder of Christianity. Nothing could be further from the truth. From the Dead Sea Scrolls we know that the Essenes, like Jesus and his disciples, also entered into the New Covenant. But it was not a covenant replacing the old one, or invalidating somehow the law of Moses, in whole or in part. Just the opposite. It meant renewing the old one, and even more motivating those who had entered into it to respect and observe its principles.

And as to Jesus, the New Testament presents him as a reformer of Judaism, not the founder of Christianity. Why, after all, should he want to found a new religion, when he preached that the kingdom of God would come shortly, even before his generation had died out?

It's high time we began to distinguish mythology from history. The world should finally understand that the Hebrew Bible is not the Old Testament, Israel is not a part of the "Holy Land" because nothing holy has been happening there for centuries, Jerusalem is not a holy city, but the city torn for centuries by religious and political wars, Jesus is not the founder of Christianity, Pharisees were not the hypocrites and religious pests, and the Christmas holiday has nothing to do with the real date of Jesus' birth, but a lot to do with the pagan festival of the birth of the Sun god.

## **20 The problem of religion**

Religion is a power that does a lot of good and evil. So it has two completely different faces. On one hand, it teaches to do well and help others, but on the other, instills in believers an arrogant superior attitude.

An atheist wrote on a discussion forum that religion is the cancer of civilization. I would not agree with such a bad opinion, if only because there are Christian missions bringing help to the poor and sick in some countries. Nevertheless, it is a force doing more harm than good in the life of an average person, but he usually doesn't seem to realize it.

And yet, somehow, many people cannot live without religion. Why? There is no simple answer to that. The reasons are many. Undoubtedly, a blinding factor is at work here, though not in every religion it is equally strong, as well as other factors, such as the attachment to tradition,

pressure of the community and an inborn need to believe in something. A man once "incorporated" into a given kingdom through baptism, especially in his childhood, has a very hard time freeing himself from its bonds later, as an adult. In any event, it is a great power, both unifying and dividing the world and people, making divisions even in families. So don't play with it, or you can get into serious trouble. Many a man prefers to marry a woman professing the same religion as he, and vice versa, to avoid potential problems caused by contradiction of religious views and beliefs. Until recently, the Catholic priests refused to marry couples, unless they both agreed to raise their children Catholics.

It is a great power also because it is the kingdom of the cosmic and earthly forces, rather than an ordinary man-made system. In other words, these are the domains controlled and guarded by the groups of various gods. The cosmic powers weaved their nests on this planet and put up their sign-boards in front of them. Let's look at it this way to better understand this problem. Therefore, religious wars are even worse than political ones, and religious disputes are even worse than non-religious. It is easier to conquer a country politically than to liquidate its dominant religion. The ancients knew this. That's why the Romans did not interfere too much with the religions of the conquered nations. In this regard they were more tolerant than the Communists and the Christian conquerors of the New World.

Religion is also a force that is often helpful in your personal life, but harmful in politics. Politicians know this,

that's why most governments of the world opt for separation of religion from state. In today's Poland, the constitutional provision of separation of religion and state is not respected. The entire political class is submissive to the Catholic Church and satisfies its wishes.

In other words, religion and politics is a bad mixture. History provides ample evidence for that. This is due to differences in the characters of both systems. In the democratic countries, the principle of tolerance applies to practically all faiths and beliefs, but religions are closed, hermetic systems, thereby they turn out to be useless, even harmful, when attempts are made to integrate them into the global system. Say something in the media against this or that politician, and hardly anybody will protest. But say something against Muhammad, Jesus, Mary, or any other god, and you will bring down on yourself a holy wrath, hostility and indignation of a great mass of their worshippers. We remember the reaction of the Islamic world to the book "Satanic Verses" by Samuel Rushdie. The poor man had to stay in hiding for a long time, because the fanatical Muslims issued a death sentence on him in absentia, and promised a big reward for his capture. Also, the caricatures of Muhammad published a few years ago in several western magazines outraged the Islamic world. Poland was not much better in this regard. Almost all the media were afraid to criticize Pope John Paul II during his life and pontificate. President Kwaśniewski had to apologize to the nation for having criticized his custom of kissing the ground. For many years he was an object of idolatrous, unreasonable worship in Poland. Only just now,

seven years after his death, the first critical voices about him appear in the Polish media.

In any case, religion cannot be a motor of social life, driving force of political power. Every nation too firmly attached to one religion, no matter which one, will get in trouble sooner or later. Clericalism is a serious problem in some countries. The effects of this are sometimes lamentable. The spiritual terror of the dominant religion can be seen in some Arab countries; and in Poland there is a fairly widespread fear of the Church. People brainwashed by the clergy or some intolerant religious community, often thoughtlessly condemn unbelievers or followers of other religions, unaware of how ignorant and blind they are. They are firmly convinced that their faith is right and all the others are wrong; they shamelessly exalt themselves over others – Christian sects teach prejudice against followers of other religions, Muslim fundamentalists against "infidels," and Orthodox Jews against the Goyim.

What's more, all those who don't belong to their tribe, i.e. "those from the outside," they view as the lost souls, and themselves as the God's chosen people. That pride instills in them the god with whom they commune. It is often the same "fella" who claims to be the "boss" of the entire cosmos, an all-powerful sovereign.

But the followers of other religions must be accepted, not humiliated or discriminated. They are same human beings like us, not better, not worse, only living under a different spiritual authority. There are plenty of authorities and principalities in the air, which even Paul admits in his letters. How do you know that "those from the outside" don't serve God in the right way? Maybe they serve him

better than you. A certain Christian woman, biblical fundamentalist, sent me by post a religious book titled: "The torn veil" on the cover of which there was a picture of a Muslim woman whose head was covered with burqa, i.e. the scarf covering her entire face, except the eyes. Only a person with blinders on his eyes is bothered by a burqa, turban or skullcap. I didn't even start reading that book, because the very cover was disgusting to me.

Do you really have to go to church to be a religious person? Campbell says that it is a Western custom. You can make contact with a god, or gods, in the silence of your home or heart. Churches are only the sources from which you can possibly draw strength to go on. In the monotheistic religions there has to be plenty of them, because monotheistic sources are scarce and they quickly run out. But a polytheist has enough resources, within himself and up there.

People seduced by evil gods, commune with evil spirits, and oppose the good people. They are often those who shut themselves up in sects or monasteries, and thus shut themselves off from the positive energies of life. They call a sin something that is no sin at all, like going to the theater or listening to pop music, while things such as a lie, gossip, envy or greed of material things they view as normal human weaknesses to which they don't pay special attention. But the positive energies often work through the pop music and other forms of the so-called "worldly entertainment." So we must be tolerant and healthy spiritually, learn to choose the good things in life and reject the bad ones. After all, it was a god or gods who gave inspiration to poets, composers, painters, writers, sculptors,



and others. Thus, isolating ourselves from their works, we isolate ourselves from the positive energies, and then we get in trouble.

In any event, before making judgment about followers of other religions, you must first get familiar with their world a little bit. The main source of silly criticism and intolerance of other religions is the fear of unknown. Some Catholics are afraid that when they enter a mosque, synagogue or pagoda, the floor will collapse under them or something heavy will fall on their head. I myself have met a few bigots who openly expressed such fears in conversation with me. Thus, the knowledge of other religions is particularly needed for people living in a country that is almost monolithic religiously, like for example Poland.

Moreover, religion is a thorny subject. When you criticize someone's religion, you hit a sensitive point. You may unnecessarily provoke an aggression or even hostility towards you. It is very difficult, as I have mentioned, to break free from the bonds of religion. A classic example of this are highly suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of John Paul I. Somehow it did not prompt the Catholics to stop and wonder if, by any chance, they put their trust in an unholy institution.

Besides, religions block transcendence. Carl Jung probably knew this, saying that religion is a form of defense against getting the knowledge of God. I think that not so much against the knowledge of God, as truth. The better we understand the reality, the nearer we get to the truth, the less we understand it, the farther we get from it.

Christianity has obscured the truth about the world, and even the truth about man; it has instilled in him a sense of guilt and sin, and the sins it divided into certain categories. Some great Christian sinners are whitewashed and exonerated, as long as they act in the name of the so-called "higher interest." Such was the goal that guided and motivated, among others, the Christian crusaders, inquisitors and conquerors of the New World.

In any case, the shutting oneself up in a sect or a monastery is, as I have said, tantamount to shutting oneself off from the zone of transcendence. Religions have no right to identify themselves with the transcendence, because they have never reached that zone, and never will. If they reached it, they would see the world in much broader horizons, they would not teach dogmas or consider themselves the guardians of the only and ultimate truth. And this is what they do all the time. Anything that is only rudimentary and has little practical use, has virtually nothing to do with the transcendence.

We hear sometimes that the greatest enemy of every religion is time. Time will kill every religion. It is true. To my statement on a discussion forum, that "the need to believe in something lies in human nature," an atheist answered: "Five thousand years ago humanity professed various religions. Where is it all today?" Well, almost all of this, i.e. those ancient religions and their gods, still exist today, but under different names and forms. Religions are only kingdoms or principalities that are, to be true, more durable and stronger than political systems, but they are not indestructible. They die, but the gods live on.

We were created by the gods, therefore, the need to believe in something lies in our nature. It is evidenced by the fact that 95 percent of the inhabitants of this planet believe in a god or gods in one form or another. Since this need is in our nature, then atheism seems to be something rather strange, unnatural.

Of course, there are religions older than Christianity, like Buddhism, Hinduism or Judaism. But time will kill Christianity as well. I agree with John Lennon that "Christianity will go, shrink and disappear forever." It will meet exactly the same fate as other religions. Anyway, the process of its shrinking has already begun, which cannot be said about Islam.

As we know, there is a lot of friction and disagreement between religions. It testifies to the fact that the gods are selfish, envious, ruthless and cruel. It is confirmed by the Bible itself. Yahweh says of himself that he is a merciful god, gives the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," but sometimes he turns into a monster, tells his servants, like Saul and Joshua for example, to act with an unimaginable cruelty.

When I was a Christian and thought in monotheistic terms, I often asked myself: "If God is merciful, then how come religion creates so many problems in the world, so many divisions between people?" Now I know that it was not a god, but my wrong concept of god that made it all so complicated for me. From Yahweh in whom I believed, I couldn't expect much, he is imperfect and inconsistent, just like many other gods.

Religions have made a powerful impact on our way of thinking, our manners and style of dress. Here is the text that shows the differences between the followers of the Eastern and Western religions. It was composed by the students of an American university:[32]

### **East**

We live in time  
We are always at rest  
We are passive  
We like to contemplate  
We accept the world as it is  
  
We live in peace with nature  
Religion is our first love  
We delight to think about the meaning of life  
We believe in freedom of silence  
We lapse into meditation  
We marry first, then love  
Our marriage is the beginning of a love affair  
It is an indissoluble bond  
Our love is mute

### **West**

We live in space  
We are always on the move  
We are aggressive  
We like to act  
We try to change it according to our blueprint  
We try to impose our will on her  
Technology is our passion  
We delight in physics  
  
We believe in freedom of speech  
We strive for articulation  
We love first, then marry  
Our marriage is the happy end of a romance  
It is a contract  
Our love is vocal

We try to conceal it from  
the world

Self-denial is a secret to  
our survival

We are taught from the cra-  
dle to want less and less

We glorify austerity and  
renunciation

Poverty is to us a badge  
of spiritual salvation

In the sunset years of life  
we renounce the world and  
prepare for the hereafter

We delight in showing it  
to others

Self-assertiveness is the  
key to our success

We are urged every day  
to want more and more

We emphasize gracious  
living and enjoyment

Poverty is to us a sign  
of degradation

We retire to enjoy the  
fruits of our labour

## **31 Contradictions between religions**

And now let us look at the list that I found on the web:[23] It presents the approach of the five world's major religions to the selected topics. Adding other religions, such as Shintoism, Taoism, religions of Africa, Oceania and the American Indians, would reveal even more contradictions. The basis of this study are the widely available holy books and the texts and interpretations of the religious organizations published in various publications.

The names of the selected religions have been abbreviated as follows:

- (Ch) Christianity
- (I) Islam
- (H) Hinduism
- (B) Buddhism
- (K) Confucianism

### **I. Number of the gods**

- (Ch) One in three persons
- (I) One
- (H) A few thousand
- (B) Unimportant
- (K) None

### **II. The name of god(s)**

- (Ch) Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- (I) Allah
- (H) The most important is Indra, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva

- (B) Unimportant
- (K) None

### **III. Attributes of god(s)**

- (Ch) Omnipresent, omnipotent, merciful
- (I) Unapproachable
- (H) E.g. Vishnu keeps the world; Shiva destroys the world, he is terrible and benevolent.
- (B) Unimportant
- (K) Not applicable

### **IV. Appearance of the gods**

- (Ch) Images, e.g. icons represent ideas of the artists
- (I) Unknown, cannot be represented by any image
- (H) E.g. Brahma has four faces and four arms
- (B) Unimportant
- (K) Not applicable

### **V. Intermediaries between god and man**

- (Ch) Priests, pastors, popes
- (I) Does not allow any
- (H) Guru – a spiritual guide
- (B) None
- (K) None

### **VI. Saints, the cult of saints, prophets**

- (Ch) Saintry people acting in accordance with the principles of faith (most Protestants reject this cult)
- (I) Muhammad
- (H) E.g. the Ganges – sacred river, sacred cows

- (B) The Buddha
- (K) The cult of ancestors

## **VII. Creation of the world**

- (Ch) Seven-day act of creation
- (I) Creation
- (H) Creation by Brahma, each caste was made from another part of his body
- (B) Does not specify
- (K) Does not specify

## **VIII. Principles of faith, the source of ethical values**

(Ch) The Bible, the Ten Commandments:

- 1 I am your God, you shall have no other gods before me
- 2 Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain
- 3 Remember the Sabbath, holy day
- 4 Honor thy father and thy mother
- 5 Thou shalt not kill
- 6 Do not commit adultery
- 7 Do not steal
- 8 Do not bear false witness against your neighbor
- 9 Do not covet thy neighbour's wife
- 10 Nor any thing that his (thy neighbour's) is

(I) The Koran, five pillars:

- 1 Confession of faith
- 2 Canonical prayer
- 3 Alms



4 Fast of Ramadan

5 Pilgrimage to Mecca

(H) All deeds are holy; holidays and pilgrimages bring closer to the chosen God and make for a better reincarnation.

(B) The four truths:

1 Everything is suffering.

2 Suffering stems from attachment to life.

3 Release from suffering by annihilation of desire.

4 Exemplary life alleviates suffering and leads to nirvana.

(C) Absolute obedience to the father and to the authority

### **IX. Afterlife**

(Ch) The soul goes for eternity to heaven, purgatory or hell

(I) The soul goes for eternity to paradise

(H) Reincarnation according to the law of Karma, transition to life in another form

(B) Reincarnation, nirvana

(K) The spirit of the deceased maintains relationship with the living descendants

### **X. Attitudes to enemies**

(Ch) Love

(I) Hostility

### **XI. Attitude to the followers of other religions**

- (Ch) Converting them, mostly through evangelization
- (I) Hostile – jihad, holy war

## **XII. Polygamy**

- (Ch) Prohibited
- (I) Permitted

## **XIII. Period of foundation**

- (Ch) I century CE
- (I) VII century CE
- (H) XX century BC
- (B) V century BC
- (K) VI century BC

## **XIV. Founder**

- (Ch) Paul of Tarsus
- (I) Muhammad
- (H) Unknown
- (B) Buddha
- (K) Confucius

## **XV. Number of the followers in millions**

- (Ch) 2000
- (I) 1100 (Sunnis and Shiites together)
- (H) 700
- (B) 350 (mainstream of Mahayana and Hinayana together)
- (K) 225

Final remark of the authors of this list for the believers:

"Please think for a moment: why does God, if he exists and gives people the knowledge on the aforementioned topics, make such confusion, give completely contradicting truths? Does he want to set believers against one another, or mislead them? Or perhaps he simply mocks his followers? Why do you think that your faith is the only right and true one? If you were born within the range of another religion, you would believe in someone or something completely different."

Do we need more evidence that this world is not ruled by one god, but by many? Doesn't that omnipotent and indivisible Yahweh have too many rivals? Do hundreds of millions of inhabitants of this planet, who pray to Vishnu, Viracocha and other deities, pray to the false pagan idols?

## **44 Evil and suffering**

There is probably no other subject that is raised in conversations and discussions about faith so frequently as the subject of evil and suffering. It is, in fact, the most serious and the most painful problem plaguing humanity for millennia. Largely to be blamed for that is the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has instilled in the world the idea of a god as a highest, sovereign and merciful being. The more the idea of such a god is promoted, the more this issue gets complicated.

A variety of theories have been published on this subject, telling about God's battle with Satan, temporariness of evil and suffering, man's free will, etc. etc. But none of them has gained, so far, a large number of supporters, which is proven by the fact that it still keeps coming back in the discussions, like a boomerang. Each one of them contains many logical errors, contradictions and ambiguities. We have even seen on the bookstore shelves the book with a puzzling title: "God in the dock" by Clive Lewis.

I myself once believed that evil would be prevailing and triumphant in the world for a time only, i.e. until the coming of the Lord Jesus, who will put an end to it and establish his kingdom on Earth, headquartered in Jerusalem, of course. Many Christians believe so to this day, despite the fact that Jesus has not returned for two thousand years, and evil is omnipresent in the world and cannot be uprooted in any way. Weeds keep destroying good plants in the garden of the world. And there is no balance in this struggle of good and evil, evil still has the advantage.

But unless we stop believing in the existence of only one, merciful God, we will never stop struggling with this issue. Only a cruel god would tolerate that enormity of evil and suffering in the world, only a cruel god could look indifferently at the millions of children going hungry every day. And who is responsible for the suffering of those innocent people who have lost their families, health and homes in the natural disasters such as fires, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions? So the evil lies not only in human nature, but also in the very creation, in the cosmos, in the forces of nature that are the same as certain celestial powers. So don't let us pin all the blame for all the disasters and miseries of the world on the devil and evil people.

Every intelligent observer of life comes to the conclusion that there is no justice in this world. Many war criminals who had killed or caused deaths of thousands of innocent people, as well as many crooks and criminals, lived to an old age. Seeing such cases, many people have lost faith. They wouldn't have lost it if they'd known earlier what forces govern the Earth and the universe.

In any event, this is certainly not the world ruled by the righteous hand of God. And there is no universal medicine to heal it. Remedies that work in some cultures, prove to be useless, even harmful in others. It depends on the level of culture and consciousness of a society. Therefore, as I have mentioned earlier, the world arranged like that should not be mended by religious idealism, i.e. the way Pope John Paul II and other religious leaders tried to mend it. Condemnation of all abortion and divorce in the world created so imperfectly as ours, is a serious mistake.

Religious idealism is a useless medicine, downright harmful, perpetuating eternal diseases of humanity.

Buddha reportedly saw through the true nature of God and stood aghast at his cruelty. "If God," he said, "permits such misery to exist, he cannot be good, and if he is powerless to prevent it, he cannot be God." I have no problem with this any more; I don't stand aghast at the cruelty of god's nature, because I know that the blame for evil in this world bears, not one good god, but many evil ones.

I remember the days of my youth when we sang in church the song: "He's got the whole world in his hand." If so, then how can the all-merciful God stand by passively when the good people die together with the bad ones in wars, floods, earthquakes and other disasters?! Why won't he send his angel in time to slay the wicked and spare the good? If one good god held the world in his care, would he also let the thousands of people in China and African countries die due to drought? After all, such a god could only lift his finger, and the rain would immediately fall on the sun-scorched soil.

Sometimes we even hear the saying: "God's providence watches over all." If so, then why on the very Christmas Day of 2004, a powerful tsunami struck the poor Asian countries located at the Indian Ocean, killing 230,000 people and leaving millions of others homeless. Was it a gift from Jesus, whose birthday the Christian world was then celebrating? Why in 2010 a powerful earthquake hit poor Haiti, killing 316,000 people and leaving about one million homeless. Why do natural disasters particularly often hit poor Bangladesh? And when such disasters befall

innocent human beings, many Christians lightheartedly sing in churches the aforementioned song and listen to the sermons on how much their good God cares even for the sparrows. It is just due to the lack of answers to these questions that many people have lost their faith completely, or turned away from any religion.

As long as you believe in a good, almighty god, creator of all things, visible and invisible, you'll never understand why there is evil and suffering in the world. The answer to this question you will find only when you take into account the participation of many gods in this creation. In short, the omnipresence of evil and suffering in this world simply cannot be explained away otherwise than by acknowledging the imperfection of the very creation.

## **My faith**

Therefore, I don't identify myself with any religion known to me, because each one of them is only partially right, and each one is, as I have said, a distorted reflection in the mirror of things that are transcendent. I reject all dogmas, final truths, and "the only true religions," as false. The Vedas say: "The truth is One, but different sages call it by different names." Christianity is only one aspect of the truth, and no aspect can be taken alone, in isolation, as a complete truth. To grasp with our limited mind at least an outline of the truth, we must look into the ancient libraries. Even a person having a basic knowledge of the ancient cults and beliefs can conclude that they constitute, in fact, a fairly logical whole.

The history of the Catholic Church is a long record of the noble and shameful deeds. The same can be said about Islam. After reading the history of these two major world religions I admit that Campbell was right in saying that they belong to another time, another era. They both put blinders on the eyes of their followers, though they do have their good points as well. As I have said, evil does not stem from the fact of following this or that religion, but from the conviction that it is the only and ultimate truth. A polytheist, by contrast, is tolerant, diversity of religions is the normality for him, even has its charm and beauty, while a uniformity is an abnormality.

As I mentioned in chapter 5, the universe is governed by the laws and these laws must be observed. The cosmic powers and beings that once appeared in the form of humans, animals and monsters are not dead, they are dead only in the minds of the monotheists.



Who were the gods who created this world? I will not name them, because, as I have said, I don't want to be accused of launching a missionary activity among the monotheists. There are lots of myths, legends and stories on this subject, but certainly they were not the gods from the moon, if the Romans, for example, recognized their own gods in other countries. Campbell says: "When you have a nature religion – and by the way, this is a derogatory term that refers to all the religions of the world except this cluster I am talking about – you can say, for example, 'The deity whom you call Indra, we call Zeus.' When Caesar went into Gaul in the sixth book of his *Gallic Wars*, he describes the religions of the Celtic people of Gaul, but he uses the Latin names for the deities. This is called syncretism. Similarly, when Alexander the Great went into India, his officers immediately recognized the relationship of the Indian deities to their own. They identified Krishna with Heracles, and so forth. But, when your principal deity is the deity of your tribe, this can't be done. When your main deity is your tribal deity, you cannot say, 'He whom you call Ashur, we call Yahweh.' Rather you get a basic exclusivism, not only from nature, but also from your neighbours. There's a contention against the neighbours who are nature religion worshippers, who are worshipping wrong gods, false gods, and all that kind of thing. And this exclusivism is built right into us because it is fundamental to the Judeo-Christian tradition." [32]