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Chapter 7: God's Eye Point of View!

Who Goes To Heaven Dad?

Leo was the Member of Parliament in my area in Sydney. One day we had a friendly chat and he told me how stunned he was when his 10 year old daughter asked him; "Dad! Who goes to heaven?"

After a long pause I said: "what I'm sure about my sweet heart is that the politicians are the last to go to heaven, but as a Christian, I suppose, those who have faith in Jesus would go to heaven."

I was more puzzled when she asked me: "Dad! If you were not born Christian, would you give the same answer?"

"Well, maybe not", I answered while lifting up my shoulder. She again continued: "Dad! Since God owns the heaven and the hell, we need to know God's point of view, but how?"

Religious Pluralism

The Oxford dictionary defines pluralism as 'the principle that different groups can live together in peace in one society.' Pluralism also refers to the acceptance of many groups in society, or many schools of thought in an intellectual or cultural discipline. In philosophy however, it means that reality is composed of many parts and that no single explanation or view of reality can account for all aspects of life (*Encarta*).

The definition of pluralism becomes more ambiguous when the term is used to express 'religious pluralism', because, in this sense, religious pluralism depends, in part at least, upon what is meant by 'religious'.

If 'religious' is identified with Abrahamic religions or a belief in God, then our conception of religious pluralism includes only those individuals and communities that fit under the umbrella of Judaism, Christianity and/or Islam, or Theism.

If, on the other hand, what is 'religious' is identified with the human quest for meaning, purpose, and identity, then our understanding of religious pluralism includes all such quests, whether traditionally religious or not.

The Central Core Of Religious Pluralism

The most widely recognised meaning of religious pluralism is the recognition of all different, even seemingly contradictive, religious experiences. In other words, according to 'religious pluralism', religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism etc, are, although different, all true and their followers are all on Right Paths.

They all believe in 'an absolute transcendence', even though they share different experiences in obtaining that goal. According to this meaning of religious pluralism, everyone should be content with any philosophy that he holds, whether he believes in God or not, or one God or many Gods, whether what he believes in is an absolute transcendence or not. Regardless of what one believes, he is on the right path and he has a share of the truth.

Fundamentals Of Religious Pluralism

- 1. Differentiating between the pearl and the shell of the religions
- 2. Language-Game Theory
- 3. Different Perspectives of one Object
- 4. Limits of Knowledge
- 5. Universal Mercy

Major Problems Of Pluralism

- 1. Self-refuting
- 2. The claim is more general than the proof

Problems That Lead To Religious Pluralism

- 1. Different schools of thought
- 2. Judgment between truth and falsehood

Peaceful co-existence

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