

In the name of God



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Epistemic Evaluation of Particular Religious Experiences or Spiritual States

Hamidreza Ayatollahy¹

Many people have given reports of having special religious experiences, especially at a particular time and place. Do these experiences have cognitive value? What should be said about the truth and falsity of these claims? And do the contents of those experiences create authority for the person or other people? What reasonable conclusions can be drawn from these reports? There are many cases of those experiences that were experienced under the influence of biological, psychological, and cultural factors or were of the type of fantasies and illusions. That is, some of those experiences are such that non-religious reasons can be given for receiving such experiences. But can it be considered false or meaningless because some of the reported cases can be influenced by the mentioned factors? It will be shown that the mere possibility of some biological and psychological reasons cannot be a reason to reject them like the approach of naturalists. Rather, for many epistemological reasons, many of them should be considered correct. Then, the reasons for this claim will be presented by looking at some views in contemporary epistemology. After that, the epistemological authorities obtained from those cases are discussed to show that even if these particular religious experiences are true, it is not possible to draw many epistemological and religious conclusions from them, but some reasonable conclusions are the necessity of such religious experiences and cannot be avoided. Then it will be examined to what extent these epistemological conclusions can be obtained and to what extent religious duties can be concluded from them. This issue has been raised similarly in the philosophy of religion in topics such as miracles, revelations, or reports of divine grace. Hume's analyses in this field have been the source of philosophical discussion about this. Since religious lives are full of such reports, the philosophical and epistemological examination of such cases will play an important role in explaining religious claims.

Keywords: Particular Religious Experiences, Authority, Cognitive Value.

¹ Professor of Philosophy, Allameh Tabatabaai University, Iran (hamidayat@gmail.com)

**Religious experience and Alternative Explanation: A reply to
James Kraft
Jalal Abdollahi¹**

According to reductionists (Conciliations') argumentations in epistemology of disagreement, the epistemic peer disagreement reduces the confidence in the justification because the opponents share the equal evidences and have the epistemic symmetry. But many religious believers do not want to take the epistemic peer disagreement as a serious challenge to the justification of their beliefs. They think that have different evidence for justifying their religious beliefs and, hence, are not really epistemic peers with their opponents. They present private evidence especially religious experience as a symmetry breaker. In reply, paying attention to private evidence and religious experiences, James Kraft (2012) has argued to defend the reductionist position. In this regard, he adds an "alternative explanation or story" to the conditions of epistemic peer, and claims that the true epistemic peer under full disclosure should takes into account private evidences or experiences, and gives a good story or explanation about why such experiences aren't as efficacious as the religious person might think. If the peer hasn't done these things, demotion is easy. In the following, he claims that, in religious disagreement, the opposing party can propound the "alternative explanation", and concludes that the parties are epistemic peers. In this article, I want to know whether the "alternative explanation" is accessible for any disagreements in which one of parties consider religious experiences. I try to show that the "alternative explanation" presented by Kraft is not readily available and the examples proposed for this purpose, although seem plausible, are not generalizable in all of the religious disagreements. I explain that, in the most case of religious disagreements, it is much more difficult to provide an "alternative explanation" than what Kraft displays (or imagines) in his examples. Relying on incommensurable disagreements, I make it clear that basically the alternative explanation that Kraft talked about is not, easily, available for opposing side of religious believer. Because, most of the explanations depend on the intellectual background and the parties do not accept each other's backgrounds. Therefore, I conclude that if we consider religious experience as an epistemological evidence, we can't assess religious disagreement as epistemic peer disagreement.

Key Words: disagreement, epistemic peer, epistemic symmetry, private evidences, religious experience, alternative explanation.

¹ Master in Philosophy of Science, Sharif University of Technology, Iran
(jalaljalal13721372@gmail.com)

Can I See God with my Body?

Betül Akdemir Süleyman¹

The mystical experience is an experience of uniting or encountering with the Ultimate Reality in a pure and unmediated way. When we consider the literature on mysticism, we can see that philosophical debates about human nature have altered the explanations and interpretations of mystical experience. By the end of the Middle Ages, when soul-body dualism was dominant by the influence of Plato and Plotinos, the mystical experience had been understood, especially in the context of religion, as a union with God or the Absolute by the soul, which is identical with Reality, and an intellectual apprehension above of sense-perception. In this interpretation, the corruptible body connected with sense-perception, desire, and feelings was the main obstacle between God and the immortal soul. With the criticism of the idea of the soul as an immaterial substance, and of dualism the body/consciousness/brain became a prominent theme after Descartes. The explanation of mysticism has evolved in this framework, and it has been explained considering bodily power like perception, consciousness, etc. In this presentation, I will subject the mystical experience's interpretation based on the body, which was humiliated by comparison with the glorified soul in the classical In this research, I will discuss how a body-based explanation differs from a classical one and what points it is stronger or weaker than it, in the center of William James' thoughts. Therefore, I will follow two ways. First, I will discuss the subject in philosophical discussions on the concepts of sensation, perception, mind, and consciousness concerning the body. Secondly, I will investigate whether mystical experience records support this interpretation. As a result, I will argue that on the one hand, the idea of a body-dependent mystical experience is faced with problems related to perception; on the other hand, phenomenologically, experience narratives, like Harith bin Asad al-Muhasibi's, do not support the idea that experience is a spiritual experience, and these interpretations are more likely to arise from the influence of philosophy. Despite supporting reports, it will appear impossible to go beyond the secular interpretation of mystical experience without investigating the relationship of the experience of perception with transcendence.

Keywords: Mystical experience, soul-body, body, consciousness, perception.

¹ postdoctoral researcher, TÜBİTAK program at Marmara University, Türkiye (beakdemir@gmail.com)

Experiential Theism and the Problem of Evil: A Note on a Debate Seyyed Mohsen Eslami¹

To have faith and be rational, one needs positive reasons for faith. However, much more is required for the belief to be rational. For one, I may have evidence for all sorts of beliefs while believing them to be objectionable due to many other reasons in the opposite direction. In addition to positive reasons, addressing the objections, i.e., (apparent) defeaters, is needed. This line of thought brings us to the debate about the relationship between experiential theism and the problem of evil, where the problem of evil functions as a defeater (rather than a positive argument). Alvin Plantinga (2000) considers how “the experiential theist” can deal with the problem of evil in this context – someone who believes based on religious experiences of a specific form, i.e., those that are proper results of *sensus divinitatis*. Plantinga argues for rationality of the experiential theist. In response, while David Silver (2002) allows Plantinga’s attempt to work in some cases, he challenges its success in others. Silver presents the challenge for (as he calls it) “the sufficiently informed pure experiential theist” – someone aware of the more theoretical aspects of the issue, which better illustrates the situation philosophers are in. Silver’s primary challenge is that the way the theist deals with the problem of evil as a defeater needs to be independent of theism. More recently, Eric Snider (2008) has responded to Silver, followed by a further comment by Silver (2008). Throughout this debate, an epistemic principle, independence constraint, plays a central role. Drawing on this debate, I wish to explore more general issues about the problem of evil and the rationality of faith. More specifically, I ask whether there can be more than one way that the problem of evil challenges theism.

Key Words: experiential theism; the problem of evil; epistemic defeaters.

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tarbiat Modares University, Iran (s.eslami@modares.ac.ir)

Religious Experiences and Cognitive Neuroscience

Mona Jahangiri¹

This project comprises interdisciplinary research on consciousness, Islamic thought, and neuroscience. A detailed consideration of mystical experiences and related issues will be presented by examining the human expansion of consciousness in Islamic mysticism based on an event depicted in the Qur'an: Moses' desire to talk to or see God, his unconsciousness due to awe of God, and his subsequent attainment of a new consciousness. This examination of the case of Moses aims to investigate states of consciousness during mystical experiences. An attempt will be made to trace and prove a connection between neuroscience and the mystical state of the feeling of union with God. In doing so, particular attention will be paid to the state of Moses in his encounter with God. Is it possible to measure these spiritual experiences neuropsychologically? If yes, what kind of different consciousness models could be applicable within this framework? I argue that Andrew Newberg's approach is a stepping stone toward a model for understanding Moses's mystical experience in Surah 7 and later mystical experiences, and could be applicable within the neuropsychological frame. He calls this annihilation (of the self), which is similar to all mystical experiences across different faiths, the feeling of Absolute Unitary Being (AUB), which is comparable to the experience of *fanā*' in Islamic mysticism.

Keywords: Moses, Consciousness, *fanā*'-state.

¹ Faculty of Philosophy, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Munich, Germany
(m.jahangiri@lmu.de)

The Presumptive Foundations of Criticisms of Religious Experience in The Case of J. L. Mackie

Asim Kaya¹

J. L. Mackie is one of the most influential philosophers of religion in the last century whose works mainly focus on the critics of the theistic perspective. Especially in his famous book *The Miracle of Theism*, he critically analyzes the main subjects of the philosophy of religion in favour of the atheistic view. Religious experience is one of these subjects with an important place within the philosophy of religion debates. For Mackie, every claim of religious experience could reduce to natural phenomena such as hallucination, delusions, or depression and should be seen merely as psychopathic or social phenomena. Accordingly, through understanding the human origins of religions, claims of religious experiences will become straightforward and understandable in the light of natural phenomena. Thus, we no longer need to reference supernatural powers to explain religious experiences. This approach might seem highly plausible and well-justified at first glance. A detailed evaluation, however, would show an implicit assumption behind this approach that postulates the whole reality as a result of natural powers by excluding any supernatural power from the beginning. In other words, since supernatural explanations would not even be an alternative, the only plausible explanation for any claim of religious experiences should be understood by referring to merely natural powers or explanations. Hence, explaining seemingly religious experiences through supernatural power will be necessarily excluded if we are restricted to natural phenomena. Nevertheless, it is hard to rule out this argumentation's "postulational" structure and its presumptive roots, i.e., everything should be addressed through natural phenomena, not the supernatural, or the hypothesis that "any supernatural explanation is forbidden from the beginning" should be accepted as an a priori assumption. Therefore, it is possible to infer that Mackie's explanation of religious experiences in favour of atheism is based chiefly on kind of these assumptions. This approach is known in the philosophy of science as methodological naturalism. Methodological naturalism usually explains physical facts in positive sciences such as physics,

¹ Ph.D. Student at Theology Faculty, Istanbul University, Türkiye (asmkaya95@gmail.com)

biology, and chemistry. Although there is a consensus on using methodological naturalism for positive sciences, using the same methodology for social sciences is highly controversial. Appealing to the historical, sociological and psychological explanations of religious experiences is the primary approach in Mackie's critics and is mainly based on methodological naturalism. Thus, this makes Mackie's approach controversial and presumptive too. On the other hand, it seems that some philosophical principles, such as Yaran's principle of criticality, can potentially eliminate the probability of naturalistic explanations of religious experiences in favour of the theistic perspective. In other words, if it can be shown that there is a low probability of pure natural explaining of some religious experiences, then it follows that the supernatural explanation of some religious experiences also could be rational. Thus, it would be possible that supernatural explanation of some religious experiences, unlike Mackie's approach, is rational too. The main aim of this paper is to examine Mackie's religious experience criticisms and the presumptive postulations behind his argumentation and show how it affects the criticisms of religious experience by analyzing the postulations in question.

Key Words: Religious Experience, Natural Phenomena, Principle of Criticality.

God, His People and Non-Aristotelian Virtues

Franco Manni¹

Christian faith holds that the ‘body of Christ’, that is the Church, is really the main interlocutor of God’s action, which is addressed to his ‘people’ and not primarily to the individual ‘souls’ of you and me. Why? It is true that, according to Aristotle, courage, practical wisdom, generosity, justice and temperateness are presented as effective means for the flourishing of human life. However, a Christian philosopher cannot help noticing that Jesus was not concerned with directly praising the virtues, but, rather, said to the good thief, prostitutes and tax collectors that they would be saved before the supposedly virtuous. He prophesied happiness for the poor and the persecuted rather than redemption for the temperate and the wise. He maintained that in human life sin, pain, decline and death are integral to all. There are agents for whom a full virtue may be unobtainable; they cannot flourish in the Aristotelian sense. It is true that within our species intelligence/reason is essential, but is just one among many of our characteristics, and it acts just in some ‘organs/limbs’ of the ‘body’, not in all of them. People endowed with Reason, and, therefore, with moral and intellectual virtues fight enemies, fix problems, organize institutions and companies, and invent laws and technologies. All these things are essential for a ‘good community’ (a healthy body), and can be provided only by means of virtues, ruled by Reason, as Aristotle justly maintained. However, there are other ‘limbs’ in the body and they accomplish other roles. The lives of babies, mentally disabled persons and very older persons are precious to the community, regardless of intelligence and virtues. Precious because we do not just give to them but we also receive from them: they induce in us virtues otherwise unattainable, such as empathy, compassion and humility. The just God is the God of a people

Key Words: Aristotelian ethics; Abrahamic God; Community.

¹ Professor, Department of Philosophy, Liceo Scientifico Leonardo, Brescia Italy (endorester@gmail.com)

The Effect of Conflicting Claims on the Evidential Force of Religious Experiences

Mohammadmahdi Morvarid¹

One argument for the existence of God as conceived of in Abrahamic religions is the argument from religious experience. The argument is based on reports of religious experiences. These experiences allegedly evidence the existence of their object (i.e. God). The epistemic credibility of such experiences depends on the principles of credulity and testimony, absent any defeaters. According to these principles, such experiences are epistemologically innocent unless proven guilty. A powerful objection to the argument from religious experience comes from conflicting experience reports. It is claimed that if some religious experiences are inconsistent with one another, then the epistemological value of all religious experiences will be undermined. In the present paper, I provide a classification of reports of religious experiences that puts us in a position in which we can consider conflicts or discrepancies among religious experiences. Within this structure, I argue that reports of less intrinsically religious experiences or vague experiences are not at stake. Thus, possible conflicts of such experiences do not matter for the issue at hand. And I show that there are admittedly five classes of reports of religious experience some of which are conflicting. However, I argue that conflicts among such reports can be traced back to conflicts among pre-experiential doctrines and post experiential interpretations attached to reports of religious experiences by their subjects. This is to say that there are no conflicts among experiences in and of themselves. Therefore, the epistemic credibility of such experiences remains intact. Moreover, I deploy Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysical framework so as to provide a novel account of differences among religious experiences.

Key Words: religious experience, epistemological value of religious experience, argument from religious experience, the challenge of conflicting claims, Mullā Ṣadrā.

¹ Master in Philosophy, Concordia University, Canada
(m.mahdi.morvarid@gmail.com)

Religious Experience in the Islamic Philosophy; a Critical Assessment

Seyyed Jaaber Mousavirad ¹

Religious experience, in its broad sense, could be divided into two groups: revelations of prophets, and religious experiences of the people other than prophets. There is no doubt about the validity of the prophets' revelations, because if the prophets' revelations were not true, people would be misled, and this is in conflict with divine wisdom. However, regarding the religious experiences of other people, Muslim philosophers hold that these religious experiences are understood by immediate knowledge (*al-`Ilm al-Huduri*) and that there is no mistake in these mystical revelations, but the mistake occurs in the next stage (the stage of interpretation and adaption). This article seeks to criticize this point of view, showing that although the feeling of religious experience is understood by immediate knowledge (*al-`Ilm al-Huduri*), the object of religious experiences is not understood by immediate knowledge. Considering the above point, religious experiences are divided into two categories: A: Experiences that are against reason or revelation: these experiences lack any validity. B: Experiences that are not in contrast with reason or revelation: Although there is a possibility that they be correct, there is no strong evidence for their validity and objectivity. Muslim philosophers explained the objectivity of this sort of experiences on the basis of immediate knowledge (*al-`Ilm al-Huduri*), while not only is there no evidence for the immediate knowledge, but numerous mistakes in the mystical experiences themselves (not in their interpretation) indicate that these experiences are not based on immediate knowledge.

Keywords: Religious Experience, Immediate Knowledge, Revelation.

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Iran (mousavirad@atu.ac.ir)

Mystical Contemplation or Rational Reflection? A Mystico-Philosophical Examination of Shabistārī's *Rose Garden of Mystery*
Rasoul RAHBARI GHAZANI¹

I aim to answer the following three questions: (1) In *The Rose Garden of Mystery* (*Gulshan-i Rāz*), how does the distinguished 7th-century Iranian Sufi, Maḥmūd Shabistārī, distinguish the “mystical contemplation” and “rational reflection” in pursuing divine knowledge? (2) Was Shabistārī an anti-rationalist? (3) How does Shabistārī’s position fit into the ancient Greek, Neoplatonist, medieval Islamic and Christian metaphysics? I examine *Gulshan-i Rāz* in the context of Shabistārī’s other works, commentaries, secondary sources, and Islamic thought—Sufism and philosophy. Existing literature on *Gulshan-i Rāz* primarily focuses on its *literary* aspects, neglecting its *philosophical* and *mystical concepts*. Therefore, a thorough understanding requires examining these concepts in the context of Islamic thought, which will inspire further research. Moreover, a subtle yet significant problem in scholarly literature involves interpreting texts based on personal opinions or the works of *other* scholars without establishing a reliable link to the original source. For an interpretation to be credible, it must be supported by the original text or the author’s related works, irrespective of any perceived resemblance to the works of other scholars. This study adopts such a text-to-text interpretation method to ensure an accurate analysis. The rationale behind this research is rooted in the religious obligation for believers to know God, with “thinking” being the means to acquire such knowledge. This is why the first question Herawī poses to Shabistārī pertains to the *nature of thought*—justifying my research’s focus. Contemporary opposition to religion often stems from its perceived incongruity with the rational frameworks offered by positivism, materialism, or scientific inquiry. By differentiating between mystical and rational modes of thought that Shabistārī presents, this study shows the contemporary person that intellectual inquiry extends beyond rationalism and encompasses mysticism. Consequently, both rational and mystical perspectives should be pursued in the quest for the divine. Furthermore, this study contends that Shabistārī should not be regarded as an anti-rationalist; instead, his critique is directed towards the constraints inherent in rational thinking.

Key Words: Mystical experience; Sufism; Philosophy; Shabistari

¹ Ph.D. Student of Philosophy of Religion, Istanbul University, Türkiye
(r1.rahbari@gmail.com)

The Varieties of the Sense of the Sacred

Rasoul Rasoulipour¹

What is the essence of the sense of the sacred? How might the experience of the sacred serve as common ground for people across and outside of spiritual traditions? How do people experience a sense of the sacred? How could deepening a sense of the sacred contribute to building the spiritual foundation for a loving world? How do different traditions, culture, and languages understand and articulate the experience of the sacred? In my view, the essence of spirituality is the sense of the sacred, and in this paper, I will try to answer these questions from a general stance towards spirituality, which I have learned through my existential experiences with religious and non-religious people. From one side, we would describe sacred as something that stirs a profound sense of reverence and a special quality of love, an almost overwhelming love that is not directed toward anything or person but just is. What is the feeling of reverence but the expression of this expansive love. That which is sacred touches a deep part of us, beyond the waking consciousness, beyond the mind and mental concepts and thus the difficulty in confining it to words. The experience of the sacred takes us beyond the narrow boundaries of the personality and the ego and puts us in touch with something far grander. It is this experience that connects us to the universe, and to what we may call the Source of all that is. From the other side, however, it seems that the sacred has to be experienced, has to be felt, in openness, in stillness, in mutuality, and that it has to be nurtured. It needs to become part of who we are, part of the everyday, part of all we do. This means acknowledging “the sacred” and not hiding it away for fear the words might be an embarrassment. As soon as we do that we have given ground to those who would rather we didn’t speak about it at all—and see where that has got us. It also means consciously and responsively developing sacred living and working practices both privately and publicly. Re-learning the sacred.

Key Words: Source of All, Connectedness, Presence, Openness, Mutuality, Stillness, Responsibility, Loving.

¹ Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran (rasouli@khu.ac.ir)

How Important Is Religious Experience for Islamic Philosophical Theology?

Mohammad Saeedimehr¹

The topic of religious experience has gained a prominent status in the contemporary philosophy of religion. The possible function of religious experience in providing epistemic justification for religious beliefs and putting forth new arguments for the existence of God reveals some aspects of this importance. In addition, this topic has a two-way interaction with other important issues of philosophy of religion including religious language, religious pluralism, religious disagreement, and the origin of religion. Consequently, the topic of religious experience is related to some disciplines outside philosophy of religion, such as sociology of religion, psychology of religion, and mysticism. Now, the principal question of this article is why the topic of religious experience lacks a similar status and significance in what we may call "Islamic Philosophical Theology." In response, we may mention some points. First, the fields that existed in Western philosophy and Christian theology for the emergence of the topic of religious experience have largely been absent in the discourse of Islamic philosophy and theology. Second, the most important (or one of the most important) possible functions for the experience of religion is the epistemological justification of religious beliefs. Such an approach to religious experience requires a more comprehensive look at the ways of justifying beliefs. In Islamic theology, a kind of epistemological fundamentalism is generally defended, according to which religious beliefs, which are generally outside the realm of basic beliefs, need to be justified by means of basic beliefs and through the use of reasoning. It seems that in order for religious experiences to find a significant place in Islamic philosophical theology, fundamental issues should be developed in the field of religious epistemology. Furthermore, it is necessary to deal more seriously with some recently emerged issues such as religious pluralism and religious disagreement, as well as some close disciplines such as sociology of religion and psychology of religion. To be sure, Islamic philosophical theology possesses some special capacities that can be seen as an opportunity. For example, the issue of human primordial nature (*Fitrah*) may open new horizons for philosophical discussion on religious experiences.

Keywords: Religious Experience, Islamic Philosophical Theology, Religious Pluralism, Religious Disagreement, *Fitrah*

¹ Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy and Logic, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran (saeedi@modares.ac.ir)

A Comparative Study of the Visual Symbols of Birds in the Holy Qur'an and the Attar's Mantiq al-Tair, about the Character of the Queen of Sheba

Atie Shamszade¹ & Parisa Shad Qazvini²

A symbol is an image and speech that has an ironic and hidden meaning in addition to its explicit meaning. The Holy Qur'an is full of signs, symbols and visual codes to help to talk about a great whole, within the limits of verses, words and letters and encourage the intellectual human to contemplate and explore it. Thus, the symbol has been widely used among Sufis, mystics and painters of the same time (especially in Iranian paintings that are derived from rich mystical-Islamic concepts). Farīd ud-Dīn Aṭṭār of Nishapur, an Iranian poet and mystic, specifically refers to the symbol of a bird in his mystical work called *Mantiq al-Tair* (The Conference of the Birds) which is indeed derived from the Holy Qur'an. This comparative study was done due to the fact that this bird (hoopoe) has a close connection with the story of the Queen of Sheba in the Quran. This research seeks to express Hoopoe as the concept of perfect intellect, one of the characteristics of the Queen of Sheba in the Qur'an and the research question is, how does this symbol show this feature in the existence of the Queen of Sheba as the chosen woman? And the symbol of the Simurgh bird, which is the goal and purpose of Hoopoe and a perfect intellect, reveals the secrets of which existence? How has this symbol been manifested in Iranian works of art? What was obtained from this parallelism is the manifestation of the power of reason that guides man to perfection. Simurgh the manifestation of a perfect human being and the goal of Hoopoe, is the concept of perfect intellect, both of which have appeared in the centrality of women's existence - Hazrat Zahra, peace be upon her, and the Queen of Sheba. Simurgh is the manifestation of a perfect human being and the goal of Hoopoe is the concept of perfect intellect, both of which have appeared in the centrality of women's existence - Hazrat Zahra.

Key Words: Qur'an, Hazrat Zahra (PBUH), Queen of Sheba, *Mantiq al-Tair*, Woman, Hoopoe, Simurgh.

1 M.A, Department of Painting, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran (atie.shamszade@gmail.com)

2 Associate Professor, Department of Painting, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran (shad@alzahra.ac.ir)

Religious Experience as a Final Value Experience

Yury Tikhonravov¹

There is a correspondence between different religions and final values [final goals, human life ends]. Every final value is unique and is something you can experience one way or another. Each final value constitutes its own particular type of experience. The experience of a final value is one of the most important sources of a particular religion, and often the reason for conversion. Final values are experienced as the full or partial realization of an ideal, at least in the imagination or in a dream. Final value remains so regardless of the circumstances. If you were pursuing some final value, but at some point circumstances changed so that it was either no longer final or no longer a value at all, it means that it has demonstrated its limitations. If you have spent your life on such a value, and at the end of your life circumstances change dramatically, your whole life is in vain. You bet on the wrong value. It is impossible to stop on a dependent value. If a value can cease to be final due to a change in some circumstances, this may mean that it is a particular case of another final value, its form for these circumstances. Independence from circumstances means that a final value retains its significance in all possible worlds. For example, monotheism or nirvana does not depend on this or that arrangement of the universe. No matter how the world works, dignity and kinship will still be important to you. Because final values have metaphysical autonomy, the adoption of this or that world picture can follow the experience of the final value and not vice versa. Quite often, if not most often, one or another final value is chosen as a supreme value precisely because by virtue of some experience you consider it the key to the realization of other values. For example, you see someone else's example or experience in your own life, or at least in a dream, that the exercise of love necessarily leads to the realization of control, health, good relations with others, and so on. Keywords: Final values, Religions and Values, Human Life Ends

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¹ Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religious Studies, Center for Study and Development of Intercultural Relations, Russia (yury.tikhonravov@gmail.com)

**Philosophical Theism and the Argument from Religious
Experience: A Case for a Complementary Approach Based on
Truth-Maker Theory**

Tugay Taşçı¹ & Adem İrmak²

This paper argues that although there are multiple arguments for the existence of God (e.g., ontological, cosmological), and that they manage to give an account of how the universe came to be, or why the idea of a perfect being is necessarily needed to anticipate the existence of contingent entities, they nevertheless fell short in providing an overarching picture of how a theist should make sense of such arguments, and in extension, the relationship between God and himself. Methodologically, this paper tackles with the mentioned problem by using truth-maker theory. I argue that to have a complete and air-tight case for philosophical theism, argument from religious experience (ARE) shall function as the truth-maker for a cumulative case for the existence of God. In other words, it shall introduce a way in which presupposed relationship between God and persons can correspond to each other by drawing on religious experience that would provide a concrete ontological stage for abstract entities proven by former arguments. Contrary to J. L. Mackie, I defend the truth maker maximalism and argue that religious utterances have rational and factual truth bearers. The same logic applies to the intra-relations between such arguments for the existence of God and ARE. However, the authenticity of religious experience is at question here since the problem begs the question whether that which is the truth maker of a proposition (e.g., religious experience as evidence) is itself in need of another truth maker. To avoid a circular reasoning and to establish a plausible case, I will employ R. Swinburne's principle of credulity and show that religious experience is both authentic and trustworthy unless there are special considerations against an agent's cognitive faculties. In conclusion, I believe it is highly likely to develop a more nuanced argument for the existence of God based on religious experience if construed through truth maker theory.

Keywords: Existence of God, Religious Experience, Truth Maker Theory, Theism, Cumulative Case.

1 Ph.D. Student of Philosophy of religion, Istanbul University, Türkiye (tugaytaschi@istanbul.edu.tr)

2 Ph.D. in Philosophy of religion, Istanbul University, Türkiye (ademirmak@istanbul.edu.tr)

New Atheist Approach to Religious Experience

Sümeýra Turan¹

The problem of the existence of God is one of the most important problems in the history of philosophy. Atheism, which has existed in various forms and forms throughout history, has gained a new face with the modern age. The modern and “New” version of this atheism is expressed by a group of thinkers and these thinkers support their views with various articles and works. Labeled as New Atheists, these names have written books promoting atheism in the early 21st century. These authors include Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens. New atheism is a philosophical and ideological movement that emerged in the early 21st century, characterized by its advocacy of scientific skepticism, rationalism, and secularism. One of the key criticisms of new atheism is its rejection of religious experience, which has traditionally been considered a source of knowledge and belief for many religious adherents. This presentation explores the new atheist approach to religious experience, examining its criticisms of religious experiences as well as its proposed alternative explanations. The new atheist approach to religious experience challenges traditional religious beliefs and practices, and proposes alternative naturalistic explanations for experiences that were once thought to be supernatural in origin. While this approach has been criticized for its reductionist and dismissive view of religion, it nevertheless highlights the importance of scientific inquiry and critical thinking in understanding the world around us. Our presentation consists of two parts and a conclusion. In the first part, theist and atheist approaches to religious experience will be discussed. In the second chapter, which consists of four sub-titles, first a general framework of the new atheism movement and its representatives will be drawn, and then each new atheist's handling of the issue of religious experience will be evaluated. In the conclusion part, a general evaluation will be made based on the findings of the study, and answers to the criticisms of new atheists will be sought.

Key Words: New Atheism, Religious Experience, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins.

¹ Ph.D. Student in Philosophy of Religion, Istanbul University, Türkiye (skoksal@nku.edu.tr)

J.S. Erigena and Ibn Arabi on Mystical Experience

Aydin Topalođlu¹

John Scotus Erigena (815-877) and Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) are not only two of the finest and most profound personalities of the Middle Ages but also pioneers of mystical thought of modern times. They tried to explain the whole existence in a single system with all its aspects, and both drew attention with their dialectic and synthesizing characters. Erigena, with his translations, carried the ancient world to the Scholastic period, ensured the spread of Neoplatonic thought in the West and tried to reconcile philosophy and religion (reason and authority) in its holistic system. In his famous work *On the Division of Nature*, Erigena wanted to give us a complete explanation of being as God, the first causes, the universe (world and man) and nothingness (God), claiming that everything would derive from God, the source of existence, and would eventually return to Him. God is not only the first but also the goal. Created beings try to resemble Him in their development and perfection processes. In addition to his mystical thoughts, Erigena's knowledge of the ancient Greek and Latin world and his acquaintance with early Christian thinkers, especially Augustine, gave him a privileged position in his lifetime. His admiration for Neoplatonic thinkers, especially Pseudo-Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor, also greatly affected his thoughts. The rational ideas he put forward at the expense of conflict with the church about destiny, free will and hellfire, his interpretations of sin and salvation contradicting the tradition, and the idea that nothingness is another dimension of absolute existence are our topics examined in this paper. The understanding of being, or rather the understanding of unity and integrity of being, found its best expression in the East in Ibn Arabi. Erigena and Ibn Arabi have a lot in common. However, Ibn Arabi's God-centered holistic approach to existence was embellished with Islamic motifs and highlighted the concept of Muhammadian Truth versus the figure of Jesus in the West.

Keywords: John Scotus Erigena, Ibn Arabi, Mystical Experience, Muhammadian Truth.

¹ Professor at Department of Philosophy of Religion, Istanbul University., Türkiye (aydin.t@istanbul.edu.tr)

Out-of-Body Experiences in Muslims

Saliha Uysal¹

Human nature is based on body and soul (rūḥ). The soul plays an important role in human behavior. Human beings have regarded the soul as a source of life since ancient times, but they have been unable to comprehend its nature, so they have put forward various theories to explain it; some even have attempted to explain the nature of the soul based on religion. Among many topics that raise human curiosity about the soul are soul-body relations and the soul's fate after death or during out-of-body experiences (OBEs). According to the Islamic tradition, the soul is one of the least understood subjects and one of the divine mysteries. Since the soul is eternal and affects behavior, Islam places it in a significant place. Thus, it is imperative to address OBEs among Muslims from this perspective. OBEs may be defined as the experience in which a person sees the world outside his body. It is a form of 'seeing self.' They are rare experiences that can be investigated in the context of soul-body relations. Hopefully, this study will contribute to the current scientific field since Muslim experiences are rare in the literature. This study examines out-of-body experiences related to the soul and the soul-body relationship concerning Muslims from an Islamic point of view. The definition of the soul, its relationship with the body, and how Islam approaches the concept of the soul are briefly discussed in the research. The qualitative interview technique is used in this study. The study provides a descriptive analysis of the data from interviews with the participants, who were reached using the snowball method. The data identifies some components, like dissociation, speed, timelessness, spacelessness, silence and dialogue, love and peace, and returning and ineffability. The findings of OBEs in Muslim participants are found to be coherent with the Islamic approach to the soul-body relation. OBEs positively affected the participants' lives psychologically and religiously.

Key Words: Out-of-body experience, Muslim OBEs, soul(rūḥ), soul-body relation.

¹ Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies/Psychology of Religion, Istanbul University Theology Faculty, Türkiye (saliha.uysal@istanbul.edu.tr)