

Religion as Worldview

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WHAT'S COVERED

This is a tutorial on Religion as Worldview. With this tutorial, you're going to explore the idea that one's religious orientation can have the effect of influencing every aspect of his or her life. Often, the commitment to a religious path includes essential truths that cannot be compartmentalized and parsed out from one situation or another. Instead, some viewpoint is held as a guide for being in the world. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Religious vs. Non-Religious Worldview
2. Divine and Human Agency

1. Religious vs. Non-Religious Worldview

How do you see it? You might ask your friend a question like that when there's some ethical or moral issue on the table. Your friend will probably have an opinion, based on their religious or non-religious **worldview**.

Say this friend loves animals but is not religious. He or she is against animal testing and might act accordingly, perhaps signing a petition or making phone calls. He or she also becomes a vegetarian to avoid harming or killing animals.

On the other hand, if your friend is religious, he or she might be a vegetarian because his or her religion prohibits killing and harming animals. All of these examples might play a part in a person's worldview.



BIG IDEA

The underlying principle of respect and non-cruelty will not just inform the person's decision to buy soy protein and seaweed instead of chicken. It's likely to extend into other areas of life such as the treatment of friends, family, and other people.

To look at an example from Islam, many Muslims believe in the Supreme sovereignty of Allah. In the Qur'an it says, none can command except Allah. Only a special advocate inspired by the divine truth of Allah is given the power to rule. The Qur'an says, "Oh Allah, Lord of power and rule, thou givest power to whom thou pleasest."



TERM TO KNOW

Worldview

A wide, and usually all-encompassing, understanding of the nature of the world, divinity, truth, and/or humanity.

2. Divine and Human Agency

When faced with various obstacles and challenges in life, any person with a religious worldview is going to express faith in the process of divine providence.

IN CONTEXT

There's a saying in Arabic: "Insha'Allah" or "God willing." It could be said that this reflects the complete belief and trust in Allah. It shows Allah guides, controls, and governs every aspect of life. All of causality is Allah. This leaves human agency at a relative loss.

Someone with a non-religious worldview may have an optimistic or pessimistic view of things. This person might not doubt the efficacy of human agency in terms of cause-and-effect relationships.



THINK ABOUT IT

How might having a religious worldview promote hope or fatalism?



It's interesting to consider how the idea of divine agency might place more or less emphasis on trust and acceptance of fate. The phrase "God willing" might be interpreted as a sound of hope or as an expression of resignation or fatalism. It also might be viewed as neither.

From some perspectives or worldviews, it might seem that Buddhist and Hindu approaches to suffering reveal a sort of passive fatalism, given the profound acceptance of suffering as a core truth of existence. Suffering is seen as something that dominates reality. This is part of the worldview of Buddhism, and suffering is the first Noble Truth.

There is also a fatalistic approach to evil. Evil is present because of this problem of suffering. There is nothing a person can really do about it. The subtleties of activity and passivity that this suggests are best explored from within the particular worldviews or religious worldviews.



SUMMARY

A worldview is a wide and usually all-encompassing understanding of the nature of the world, divinity, truth, and/or humanity. This view most likely affects every action, every decision, every aspect of one's

life. Having a **religious vs. non-religious worldview** can lead to different decisions. This is because these different worldviews can lead to different beliefs regarding **divine and human agency**.

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