



Life-World and Religious Consciousness

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Abstract

The present article consists of four parts, and the first part examines the concept of life-world from the phenomenological perspective and argues that the characteristic features of the life-world would be through inspection, analysis and description of the life as we encounter it devoid of scientific explanations. The second part of the paper develops the idea that religion finds its meaning and significance only in the domain of life-world because the phenomena that one experiences in the religious acts take place primarily in a pre-theoretical way. Thus, it is argued that the operative dimension of phenomenology of religious consciousness involves a new understanding of subjectivity—a passive plane of subjectivity—whose locus is differently conceived by Husserl, Scheler and Heidegger. The third part of the paper draws attention to the religious phenomena whose intended structures and meanings go beyond mediation and suggests that symbols form a realm between objectively given things and subjectively intended meanings. In other words, religious symbols serve as indispensable mediating bridges. The final part of the paper proposes that religious experiences like all other experiences, though are rooted in life-world, yet it transcends its worldly contents.

Keywords Life-world · Religious consciousness · Constitution · Intentionality · Symbols · Transcendence

Introduction

The integrated concept of Life-world, as conceived by Husserl, shows the inalienable connection between our lives and the world that we inhabit. It is the *Lebensphilosophie of Dilthey* who played a significant role in Husserl's formulation of the content of life-world. It undergirds the idea that we cannot conceive of our life apart from the world; it also implies the suggestion that one cannot think about the world without the living beings and that one's experiences have its location only in the world.

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It is the world of immediate experiences. Thus, in *Crisis*, Husserl describes it as the pre-predicative world and its experiences are pre-predicative in spirit. It is often described again as ‘pre-given’, or ‘already there’ or ‘pre-theoretical’ which suggests that the life-world is prior to all theories. Thus, in the *Formal and Transcendental Logic* of 1929, Husserl insisted upon what he called the life-world as the fundamental order of existence. This is to suggest that life-world is the world wherein we pursue our goals and objectives; it is the world of our human activities and praxes. These reflections suggest that only by returning to this world of immediacies, one can overcome the dogmatic positions of science and scientific world. Hence, Husserl says, it is by a return to the *Lebenswelt*, we will overthrow the dogmatic positions of ‘standpoint philosophies, like empiricism, realism, naturalism, idealism, etc.; which are prejudiced by an interpretation of experience antecedent to experience itself’ (Husserl 1969).

Life-World: The Cultural-Human World

Husserl called his philosophy an archaeology of human experience, a search for the ultimate, constitutive functions of experience of the world as the world of human consciousness. The function of phenomenology truly becomes an archaeology of human experience in the most radical sense and an uncovering of the pre-predicative and pre-conscious structures of experience which are the essence of consciousness. Therefore, life-world is also called as ‘cultural world’—the basic human world, the communal world, where the community lives. In Husserl’s words: ‘... the life-world, for us who wakingly live in it, is always already there, existing in advance for us, the “ground” of all praxis whether theoretical or extra-theoretical. The world is pre-given to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon. To live is always to-live-in-certainty-of-the-world. Waking life is being awake to the world, being constantly and directly ‘conscious’ of the world and of oneself as living in the world, actually experiencing {erleben} and actually effecting the ontic certainty of the world’ (Husserl 1970). Another significant feature of the concept of life-world in *Crisis* is that it is an actual world of human beings, of embodied consciousness in which the psychical and physical aspects are fully integrated. This is to advocate that life-world is strictly a human world characterized by its specific spiritual and human character. Such a line of thinking signifies a difference from Descartes, for Descartes a subject may be disembodied existence and hence a disengaged agent; it is able to attain knowledge of reality without any practical engagement with the world. Thus, knowledge is the resultant activity of the transaction between an independently given subject (knower) and object (known). Such a conception of knowledge has provided an ontological gap between the subject and object. The transaction between the subject and the object is carried out under certain epistemic regulations, and if one correctly applies these regulations, then one shall be able to achieve knowledge. In short, the Cartesian epistemological subject privileges a theoretical point of view and lacks practical engagement.

According to Husserl, life-world is much more than the sum total of the physical objects. It is the horizon of meaning without which objects cannot exist, understood or interpreted. It is in the life-world in which I find food as a means to nutrition, or I find coal as a heating material, a hammer for driving a nail in etc. These objects have meaning as objects of use in the life-world. In the life-world, we speak of water and not of H_2O , we see color red and not a particular wave length, we see coal as a heating material and not as combustible and so on. Following Aron Gurwitsch, we should admit that in order to find access to the life-world, our experience of the world must be stripped of the reference to possible scientific explanation, of the component sense of virtue of which the world is apperceived and apprehended as lending itself to scientific interpretation, whatever that interpretation might be in detail. Another way of expressing it is to say that the reference to an ideal mathematical order must be eliminated from our experience of the world and that the latter must no longer be seen under the perspective of that order (Gurwitsch 1970). One can rest assure that in so far as life-world is understood as the concrete world of human experience, Husserl maintains unquestioningly that it is relative to a specific intersubjective community. One may not participate in the life-world of another, but this does not suggest that he cannot understand the goings-on in the life-world of others.

II

Life-World and Religious Phenomena

The second part of the paper attempts to develop the idea that religion finds its significance only in the domain of life-world because the phenomena that one experiences in the religious acts take place primarily in a pre-theoretical way and not susceptible to the criteria of objectivity. This is to suggest that the operative dimension of phenomenology of religious consciousness demands a passive plane of subjectivity. Thus, Bernard G. Prusak argues that ‘in contrast to Husserl’s focus on the active, constitutive role played by the ego, this phenomenology probes radically passive levels of subjectivity. The primacy of the ego’s intentional activity is challenged in favour of an analysis of passive states, that is, the subject’s non-intentional immanence (the auto affectivity of life or the body in Henry) or a reversed intentionality where the ego finds itself subject to, not the subject of, a gaze (the givenness of the saturated phenomena in Marion). The I no longer precedes the phenomena that it constitutes, but is instead called into being or born as the one who receives or suffers this intentionality...Whether or not a new understanding of subjectivity can be developed phenomenologically therefore seems essential to the future elaboration a phenomenology of religion. And inversely, the consideration of religious phenomena seems to lead to new possibilities for probing the depths of subjectivity’ (Janicaud 2000). Hence, the question arises as to what are these new possibilities of the depths of subjectivity.

The new possibilities of the depth of subjectivity are given in the acts of consciousness such as thinking of God, feeling of God, loving God, remembering God,

etc. This is to indicate that God as a reality appears within a stream of immanent experiences of pure, intentional acts. What is indispensable is that religious experiences though provide meaning while objects pertinent to such meaning remain transcendent. The locus of this experience, subjectivity, is differently conceived by Husserl, Scheler and Heidegger. As far as Husserl is concerned, this primary experience of consciousness is a doxic-theoretical experience of the real world in its object-being. It is the doxic-theoretical experience of sense data which is the ground for reaching out to beings themselves. As Manfred S. Frings says, 'Beings (das Seiende) are present (vorgegeben) in doxic experience and provide a 'substrate' for cognition, valuations, and actions...Being is therefore, object-being and it is this notion of being against which Heidegger's analysis in *Sein Und Zeit* are directed. While for Husserl, the doxic-theoretical experience is fundamental to all emotional experience (e.g., that of value-feeling) and all willing, in *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* Scheler asserted the opposite, viz. that all acts of consciousness are grounded in the act of love, as an act of pure-taking-interest-in. Hence, neither simple, perceptive acts nor theoretical acts of thinking are at the bottom of Scheler's subjectivity (Frings and Scheler 1970). What is significant is the suggestion that 'doxic' experience, 'emotional' experience' and 'practical instrumentality' are primary types of the constitution of subjectivity for Husserl, Scheler and Heidegger, respectively. Following the lines of argument put forward by Frings, we would say that these are the primary types of the constitution of subjectivity by these three thinkers. For Husserl, this is mutatis mutandis his conception of '*Lebenswelt*', for Scheler it is '*natürliche Weltanschauung*' and for Heidegger it is '*Umwelt*', 'inauthentic existence' or '*Alltaglichkeit*' (Frings and Scheler 1970).

Intentionality Thesis and Religious Phenomena

Coming back to the intentionality thesis of consciousness, the important query may be put thus: would consciousness which identifies, describes and interprets the meaning of religious phenomena are questionable? As long as there is diverse opinion among the phenomenologists of religion with regard to the notion of intentionality and religious phenomena, we need to appropriate the fact that there are diverse ways to apprehend the intended 'object' in religion. As Ricoeur says, 'Feelings and dispositions that can be called "religious" do indeed exist, and they can transgress the sway of representation and, in this sense, mark the subject's being overthrown from its ascendancy in the realm of meaning. Names have been given to these feelings: the feeling of absolute dependence (Schleiermacher); the feeling of utter confidence, in spite of everything, in spite of suffering and evil (Barth and Bultmann); the feeling of ultimate concern (Paul Tillich); the feeling of belonging to an economy of gift, with its logic of overabundance, irreducible to the logic of equivalence, as I suggest in my essay *Amour et Justice*; the feeling of being proceeded in the order of speech, love and existence (Rosenzweig). These are so many absolute feelings, absolute, in the sense of detached from the relation by which the subject would preserve its mastery over the object called religious, over the meaning of this presumed object. These feelings, consisting in ways of being absolutely affected, are

test cases that bear witness to phenomenology's inability to open the intentionality of consciousness onto something completely other. To these feelings and these absolute affections correspond fundamental dispositions that can be placed under the general heading "prayer" and that range from complaints to praise, passing through supplication and demands. Prayer actively turns toward this Other by which consciousness is affected on the level of feeling. In return, this Other who affects it is apperceived as the source of the call to which the prayer responds (Ricoeur 2000). Ricoeur's lines of argument is also indicative to structures of transcendence in which human subject intends a transcendent referent which is culturally, historically and linguistically situated. It is also true that religious phenomena always point toward the intended structures and meanings in a given language which goes beyond mediation. This certainly must have been the point when Descartes discovered a God beyond the I and the cogito in and through the reflective analysis of the idea of infinity in him. In fact, the meaning of intentionality thesis is the turning back of the ego cogito and discovers that its immanent acts and processes (Erleblisse) are correlative with the worldly contents to which they are ordered. It entails that there is no pre-world, contentless cogito over against the world. What is emphasized here is that the general nature of the relation between the intending or noetic pole and the worldly pole is that of meaning. In his 1997 book *Personne et Sujet selon Husserl*, Emmanuel Housset argues that in Husserl's later thought (especially in his unpublished manuscripts), God is no longer (understood) merely a 'limit-concept' expressing the teleology of reason, but plays a constitutive role in opening the subject to its vocation' (Prusak 2000). That is why, religious expressions are very often allegorical, mythical, analogical and metaphorical. Thus, we can say that reductive explanations destroy the intentional structure of religious meanings.

Religious Phenomena and Symbols

In order to analyze the content of religious meaning, the transcendent referent needs to be mediated and hence must be brought into our cultural, spatial and temporal world. That is why symbolism in its diverse structures has a place to communicate the religious phenomena and its intended meanings. Symbols form a realm between objectively given things and subjectively intended meanings. In other words, religious symbols serve as indispensable mediating bridges. The transcendent referent that one experiences becomes explicitly an immanent aspect of experience of the 'thou' and discloses meanings that are existentially significant. Such specific religious experiences also reveal that interpretation of the intended 'object' remains elusive and open-textured. John Oman's reference to the Hebrew Prophets is worth quoted here: 'What determines their faith is not a theory of the Supernatural, but an attitude toward the natural, as a sphere in which a victory of deeper meaning than the visible and of more abiding purpose than the fleeting can be won' (Oman 1931). This is to suggest that religious phenomena point beyond themselves to structures of transcendence. That is how religious symbols, images and categories provide the framework for uncovering the religious world and imply certain aspects of signifiatory values. That is why though our experience involves perception of significance,

yet we do not apprehend significance as such. Rather, we apprehend significant objects or situations. It suggests that a religious symbol becomes significant when it enters into a relation to consciousness; that is to say that symbols and situations are significant to consciousness as they are intentional.

In view of the above, we are forced to make a distinction between what is really sought in religion and the concrete form in which it is sought, between the real object of religion and the symbolic constructs of religion. A common mistake is identifying the reality that is actually sought with the concrete form in which it is sought. Martin Buber points to this common fallacy in discussing the individual's relationship to God in relation to Judaism, when he states, 'whenever we, both Christian and Jew, care more for God himself than for our images of God, we are united in the feeling that our Father's house is differently constructed than our human models take it to be' (Horosz 1971). Following Buber, we need to acknowledge that God as reality is far greater than our projections of his nature.

Thomas Aquinas claimed a similar truth when he insisted that God as the object of man's faith is infinitely more than the propositional understanding of his nature. Martin Luther gives credence to the same conviction in a hidden God, who is 'something more' than our images of him. This is to suggest that there is a sharp distinction between man's symbolic understanding of the ultimate reality and the ultimate reality itself. It means that the idea of God of the mythologies is merely a symbol for something else. Even the supposition of God as the necessary being or as the highest being is symbolic. We may also add here that the God of the theologians too is symbolic because they think about Him in terms of an object independent of the religious act.

III

Religious Experience and Human Condition

It is universally accepted that religion is intimately related to man's inner life, so to say, his anxieties, fears, impulses, needs, endowments, propensities, capacities, limitations and so forth. Therefore, one can say that what religion and religious consciousness has to do with man's inner life and inner experiences. Accordingly, some identified religion with the apprehension of the absolute, others identified with the sense of the sacred and still others with the feeling of absolute dependance. The experience central to religious consciousness is man's quest for transcendence. As Abraham Maslow puts it, 'the experience of transcendence is the dynamic source of all great religions, the very beginning, the intrinsic core, the essence, the universal nucleus of every known high religion' (Maslow 1964). Phenomenologically understood, religious experience proceeds from an introspective analysis of man's subjective states. Thus St. Augustine has alluded to it in his *Confessions*, when he referred to the restlessness of the heart that finds fulfillment in God alone. St. Thomas Aquinas too, in his treatment of will and morality takes note of a 'native restlessness' or an urge within all creatures and especially in man to 'perfect their being by operating'. According to Aquinas, all activities of a creature is a striving on its part to

imitate as fully as possible its creator who is pure act. Thus, phenomenologically religion becomes relevant to human condition and existence and is to be understood in terms of our experiences of the consciousness of the Absolute.

We may also take note of the referent of the term ‘God’ here. God refers to the ‘object’ we address in our prayers, supplications and worship. In the words of Tillich, the referent ‘God’ is that which we are ultimately concerned about. It becomes immediately evident that there is no specific reality in the empirical world that can be identified as the object of our ultimate concern. For, man has conceived as ultimate and worshipped everything on earth including himself. He has also worshipped everything he could think of beneath the earth—minerals, caves, metals, serpents and the underworld ghosts. He has all the more worshipped everything that goes beyond even heavens such as mist, mind, the stars, the moon and even the sky itself. History, then, bears witness to the fact that a variety of objects can be made the objects of man’s worship.

Object of Religion and Religious Consciousness

Phenomenologists are wary of using the term God for the object of religious concern. The term God will not be a proper substitute for such religious objects and the spirits of animistic religion, the mana of the Malanesians, the Brahman of the Vedantins, or the non-self of Buddhism. Their terms ‘sacred’ and ‘holy’ have come to serve as generic names for the object of religion. Two classic works in phenomenology of religion—Gearardus Van der Leeuw’s *Religion in Essence and Manifestation: A Study in Phenomenology* (1933) and Rudolf Otto’s *The Idea of the Holy* (1917)—are primarily devoted to the clarification of the ‘object’ of religion.

The object of religion can be classified under three headings. First, there is the God of the philosophical speculation, the first cause of everything that is. This, we must admit, is a theoretical entity, that lacks any personal appeal and leaves the devotee unmoved. He can believe in it and yet ignore it as a reality that has no apparent consequences in his life. This is the God of scientific speculations which has nothing to do with one’s life-world. Scientific experience transcends the natural experience and there are scientific facts and natural facts as different facts of consciousness. The scientist goes far beyond the natural objects because his concern is the analysis of ‘states of affairs’. As Frings says ‘facts of science are “states of affairs” and their substrates are objects meant symbolically. Since their degree of relevancy to human life is less felt than the degree of natural experience, the latter exercises a much stronger effect on a human being, an experience which the scientist has as soon as he leaves his laboratory to find himself back in the world of natural facts, the milieu from which he cannot escape: the *natürliche Weltanschauung, or the Lebenswelt*’ (Frings and Scheler 1970). On the other hand, religious consciousness is often wary of speculation and based on faith and experience. This is especially the case with mystics. The mystic as a devotee is not moved by speculation but rather ignited by an internal existential dynamism that prompts him to seek the fulfillment of his life and his being in an entity which is outside of him. His God is personal, experiential and special.

Second, there is an inner impulse in the human subject to seek for some thing as an object of his devotion. As Karl Gustav Jung has pointed out, when a reality is so universal as the idea of God and worship, it can come only from an inner dynamism of man's nature. Within his nature, man must have the need to seek something that functions as an object of his devotions. The God of the devotee is something that satisfies that need in man, not the theoretical ground of all the existents. The God of the devotee is a reality that evokes his feelings of devotion, hope and trust and fills him with the feeling of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. It is concrete object like the sun, and other heavenly bodies and also like trees and rocks of the earthly bodies. The underlying idea is that even when man is making these objects as the objects of worship, he is in fact, seeking an intangible reality that goes beyond the tangible objects. Thus, we have two types of entities that can be qualified as the object of religion—those concrete objects that are apparently worshipped and the unmanifested reality that breaks through the concrete objects which evoke religious responses.

Third, there is an experience of God which is based on natural everyday occurrence, i.e., *natürliche Weltanschauung*. The objects of everyday experience are neither constructed nor abstracted; they are part of one's everyday sensibilities. Let us use an example. In the usual Indian philosophical plane, we employ two terms loosely for the world: Jagat and Samsar. Both these terms apparently employ the same meaning, so to say, the world. But, a clear analyses of these terms indicate that the meaning of these terms are different. As for example, the meaning of the term Jagat stands for an objective world and the term Samsar points to our subjective worlds wherein most of our ambiguities, anxieties and meaning contents (of inner life) are derived from and wherein they represent to us as real facts. It is here that we live and experience the totality of our life; it is here that we realize our life as most real and proper. This mediacy and symbolism of natural facts of everyday life amounts to what Scheler calls 'transcendence'. The point is that there is more in this experience than that is present in the acts of consciousness. It also suggests that every human being has a lived world apart from the objective world in which he/she is situated. It is this lived world which is filled with passion and it is beyond all kinds of ratiocination. Following Scheler, we can state that it is prior to all forms of perception. In fact, most of our religious activities are not guided and controlled by reason; therefore, the world of religion cannot be considered as another world alongside the 'real world' of experience. The religious world is the world of events and things as experienced by religious consciousness. As Durkheim insists, the sacred character of objects is not intrinsic to them, but something added by the religious consciousness. According to Durkheim, 'the world of religious things is not one particular aspect of empirical nature; it is imposed upon it' (Durkheim 1961).

Life-World as an Action Space

If our reflections so far are convincing, we would like to further argue that the life-world is an action space, where our cognitive, conative and affective capacities and all other aspects of human activities provide meaning including religious meaning. What is significant is that apart from the abstract space of geometry, so to say,

the ‘Euclidean space’, there is an action space that unravels one’s religious experiences. We would like to take recourse to an observation by David Melling where he explains that all experienced space is action space, but there are various kinds of actions like, looking at things, listening to sounds, going for a walk, dancing, which when we look at them analytically, disclose to us a variety of forms of spatiality in our experience (Melling 1982). Following the argument of Melling, we would say that there is an understanding of experienced space more than the Cartesian account of it which is purely based on bodily movement and empiricist psychology. What is central to the argument is the understanding of the lived moments in one’s life which is an action space rather than a mere motion. As Melling states, lived moment has a wide range of spatial qualities which can disclose to us the various forms of spatiality which characterize our self-experience as a living body (Melling 1982). In this connection, let us take into consideration a particular dance form, Kathakali in Kerala, India. The performer artist of Kathakali expects that the people who watch the Kathakali know the Mudras without which one cannot understand the story that the artist performs. The experience of enjoying Kathakali requires having certain knowledge of the Mudras. In fact, knowing the Mudras is a pre-requisite to experience Kathakali as an art form. This is to suggest that the experience of enjoying Kathakali is an entirely different kind of experience where the sense of experience is pre-predicative in character and is a lived moment in one’s life. It indicates that apart from the sense experience that is explicit in enjoying Kathakali, there is an implicit knowledge of knowing the Mudras which is an equal aspect of delight in watching Kathakali. Following Melling, we would argue that the spaces in which we live and move and experience have characteristics correlative with the varied patterns of our bodily capacities to perceive the world around us, to our capacities for movement and activity. Thus, the experience of watching Kathakali implicitly engages an action space wherein the enjoyer inhabits a space with the performer. The forms of spatiality in terms of which the world of our experience articulates disclose to us fundamentally different ways in which we become aware of and interact with the things present in that world (Melling 1982). This is to suggest that the forms of spatiality are aspects of our being as well as characteristics of our capacities to act and experience.

IV

Life-World to Transcendence

In the preceding pages, we have been searching for a new depth of subjectivity wherein one can positively postulate a novel understanding of transcendence from the perspective of phenomenology. In the phenomenological tradition of philosophy, transcendence constitutes one of the characteristic properties of human existence which is said to reach out to an otherness. Looking toward the Indian tradition, a prominent thinker like Sankara provides a revolutionized meaning against the conventional, philological understanding of the concept of transcendence. Sankara shows that even in ordinary usage, to ‘transcend’ does not mean ‘to go beyond

indefinitely'; but 'to reach'. To reach means to grasp entirely, just as when we speak of a student having completely learned grammar. [Yatha vyakaranam tirna iti prapta ittucyate]. Here transcendence does not mean going further beyond [Na atikrantah]. The term *apnoti* with or without the prefix 'pra' is a verb used with a strong sense conveying the meaning of total identity of the attainer and the attained. Such an understanding of *prapnoti* revolutionizes the definition of the transcendent as that to which consciousness is structurally oriented. The 'beyond' in the meaning of the verb 'to transcend' does not remain forever elusive and indefinite but is grasped as the ground close at hand, that upon which we stand. Standing upon it, we can ponder the gulf that has separated it from consciousness, which still seeks to overcome it. The beyond is already at hand and it is what is called Brahman in Vedanta philosophy (Arapura 1986). This transcendent Brahman is that, which comprehends and encompasses what otherwise remains uncomprehended and unencompassed. These reflections suggest that religious experiences though are rooted in life-world, yet transcend the worldly contents. The distinction is not between the life-world and its referent or a transcendent reality; rather, it is based on two basic orientations.

By Way of Conclusion

Life-world and religious consciousness from a strictly phenomenological perspective means establishing a relation between religion thus experienced and its appearing to man as a phenomenon. The radical feature of the phenomenological investigation on religion is its change of emphasis to the realm of consciousness as the focal point of locating such phenomenon. Thus, we can say that phenomenological approach to religion consists of the following:

- It seeks to illuminate religion in terms of the dynamics of consciousness.
- It explores the possibility of maintaining an ultimate sense of mystery with regard to religion by detaining a sense of the holy or the sacred.
- It contains the idea of a transcendent either in an apophatic sense or in an apophatic way or in steresis mode as the reality.
- It seeks to establish a relation of the transcendent with a passive plane of subjectivity.

As far the phenomenological understanding of religion is concerned, consciousness itself has to be perceived and examined as the locus of that phenomenon. This is to suggest that religious phenomenon can be studied just as other phenomena, but with a difference in so far as they reveal something that is deeply subjective. That is why, we have earlier argued that forms of religious consciousness are possible only through the channels of the symbolic and symbols. However, when we look deeply into religious consciousness through the symbolic we will see that our self-knowledge too is symbolic. We do not see ourselves truly nor we can; we do not perceive the depth and the height of our being. We cannot know the terror of loneliness, suffering, anxiety, mortality, etc., we can know about these realities at their shallow levels, so to say, with the limits of human capacity to feel. Perhaps,

only the those revealers, those paradigmatic persons, who emerged through their lived experiences and have known the heights and the depths of reality as the rich cumulative expressions of human unfoldment of meaning are able to appropriate the religious phenomena without the mediation of symbols. It is embodied personally in a Buddha, a Jesus, a Mohammad, Ramakrishna or a Vivekananda; Aurobindo or a Sankara or a Ramanuja; a Narayana Guru or a Karunakara Guru or a Guru Nanak. Variously termed charismatic personalities, paradigmatic individuals or characters that meld role and personality in providing a cultural, epistemic, and moral ideal, they supersede mere historical facts. They are phenomenological facts. Their lived experiences are asymbolic and independent of natural and scientific experience. As concrete universals, they express the harmony and fullness of perfection, which is at once classical and historical, ideal and personal, uplifting and dynamizing; in a word, liberating.

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