

The Word God

A fundamental principle of the polydox religious community is the Covenant of Freedom. This Covenant states: Every member of the polydox community pledges to affirm the religious freedom of all other members in return for their pledges to affirm his or her own. Included in the Covenant of Freedom is its corollary: Every member's freedom ends where the other members' freedom begins. At first glance, the Covenant of Freedom might appear to be an idle abstraction, offering little guidance to a religious community in pursuing the concrete activities that make up the religious life. Such an evaluation would be quite inaccurate, however, as is shown by an examination of the manner in which a polydox community, governed by the Covenant of Freedom, is required to deal with the word God.

The critical issue that underlies all discussion of the use of the word God in a religious community is this: Who possesses the primary authority to determine the rightful or correct religious contents of the minds of the members of the community? ("Religious contents of the mind" here refers to such psychic entities pertaining to religion as beliefs, desires, and feelings.) Does the individual member possess the primary authority to determine what the religious contents of his or her mind should be, or does the community? On this issue, the polydox and orthodox religious communities take diametrically opposite positions.

In accordance with the Covenant of Freedom, Polydoxy's position is that its individual members possess an absolute right to determine the contents of their own minds. The Covenant of Freedom affirms self-authority or autonomy, which means the individual members own their own minds and possess the ultimate authority, therefore, to affirm only those beliefs, desires and feelings they find compelling. A person's belief with respect to the word God being part of the mind's contents, every member of the polydox community has the right to affirm the meaning of the word God that he or she finds to be true.

In an orthodoxy, the position regarding the religious contents of the mind is that the community owns its individual members' consciousness, with the ultimate right, therefore, to determine what their beliefs, desires, and feelings should be. This means that in an orthodoxy, the community possesses the right to dictate to its members what they must believe respecting the word God. Note the point is not that members of orthodox communities, within the privacy of their personal consciousness, cannot believe, desire, or feel in ways of which their communities disapprove. They can, but they have no moral right to do so, and such behavior is regarded as sinful.

Is a Person's Sense of Reality a Matter of Arbitrary Choice?

A profound consequence of the orthodox community's stand that it possesses the authority to determine the rightful contents of its members' minds is the corresponding position that the orthodox community must take with respect to the sense of reality. The sense of reality is the capacity present in humans by means of which they arrive at beliefs concerning what is "reality" and what is "unreality." Unreality includes such experiences as dreams, fantasies, illusions, and hallucinations. Although persons distinguish between reality and unreality in different ways, so that some include experiences in the realm of reality that others assign to unreality, all persons, aside from the severely incapacitated, do make reality and unreality distinctions. The sense of

reality plays a central role in a discussion of the word God in that the position a person takes on the word God is a fundamental part of that person's view of ultimate (or metaphysical) reality. Statements such as: "The word God refers to a real being who created the universe"; or, "There is no real being to which the word God refers"; both constitute beliefs about ultimate reality.

A basic question arises with respect to the sense of reality: Is the sense of reality independent of a person's conscious will, or can it be controlled by a conscious act of choice? The sense of sight can serve as an example to help illustrate the point. Sight, it may generally be agreed, is independent of a person's conscious control. Regardless of our conscious choices respecting that which we might wish to see, the sense of sight reports to us that which it perceives. We may wish to see a landscape, but if we are looking at the ocean, the sensations we receive will be of a seascape. Is the sense of reality like the sense of sight, autonomous, or can we, through a conscious act of choice, determine what reality is? The answer given traditionally by orthodox religion to this question is that so far as the meaning of the word God, or ultimate reality, is concerned, we can control the sense of reality. If we desire to have the word God refer to a real being of a certain kind, all we need do is consciously choose to accept that meaning. Accordingly, in orthodox religious communities it has historically been the position that a person who does not accept the meaning of the word God prescribed by the community commits a moral rather than an intellectual error.

The following distinction exists between moral and intellectual error. Moral error occurs when a person freely and deliberately chooses to act in an evil manner. Intellectual error is morally neutral. It occurs involuntarily and is due to a lack of ability or information. Thus a person who takes the word tree to refer to an animal makes an intellectual error. In the orthodox community, for the normal member exposed to its teachings, there can be no intellectual errors with respect to the meaning of the word God. Since the meaning of the word God, or ultimate reality, is voluntarily determined by a conscious act of choice, there can be no honest, innocent, morally neutral mistakes or disagreements respecting the word God, where persons, following the evidence as they see it, and their individual experiences, sincerely arrive at a view of the word God different from that of the community. Rejection of the community's view in an orthodoxy is ipso facto bad faith and evil. For no matter the evidence or the member's experience, if the member genuinely wished to accept the community's meaning of the word God, he or she by a simple act of choice could do so.

A classic formulation of an orthodox community's position appears in the following passage taken from the Pentateuch (Deut. 13:2-12). In this passage the law is laid down that, in the orthodox pentateuchal community, the person who proposes a different meaning for the word God from that of the Yahvism prescribed by the community is to be summarily put to death. Even though the person offers evidence for his different viewpoint, he is not to be taken as someone who might conceivably be innocently and honestly in intellectual disagreement with the pentateuchal community's Yahvism (there are other Jewish concepts of Yahvism than that of the Pentateuch), but as a person who is consciously and deliberately wicked.

"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams appears among you, and he gives you a sign or portent [as evidence that you should follow other Gods, and the sign or portent comes true in connection with which he said to you, 'Let us go after other Gods, whom you have

not known, and let us serve them,' you must not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for Yahveh your God is testing you to find out whether you really love Yahveh your God with all your mind and heart. It is Yahveh your God that you must follow ... And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death ... So shall you put away the evil person from your midst."

"If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son, or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as precious as your own life, entices you in secret, saying: 'Let us serve other Gods,' which you have not known . . ., you must not consent to him, nor listen to him; you must not show him any mercy, nor spare him, nor conceal him; but you must be sure to kill him; your own hand shall be the first against him to put him to death, and then the hands of all the people. You must stone him to death ... And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this in the midst of thee."

The orthodox community's view that human persons can control their sense of reality, and thereby determine what they will believe about the word God by a free act of choice, and that it is sin to make knowingly the wrong choice, is clearly the result of orthodox adherence to two principles. The first, that the orthodox community is the rightful owner of the God belief in their members' minds; and the second, that the community's meaning of the word God is the only correct one, and this meaning must be accepted by all members of the community. Only if it is the case that humans have absolute control over their sense of reality, and consequently, can choose their God belief arbitrarily and at will, regardless of their life circumstances, can it be expected that a religious community made up of diverse individuals with differing intellectual, libidinal, and emotional endowments, as well as varied educational, social, and cultural backgrounds, will arrive at the same view of the word God. For the notion that persons can control the sense of reality at will is certainly not borne out by common experience and ordinary introspection. Indeed, experience and introspection reveal the reverse is true. Past and contemporary history are replete with stories of persons, generally raised in orthodox communities and indoctrinated with their communities' particular view of God, who find as they advance through life's stages that their sense of reality undergoes change and compels them to reject their native orthodox communities' God view. Their agonized conflict as they seek to retain their past belief, a conflict intensified by the orthodox teaching that it is sin not to believe as the community dictates, is tragic.

Polydoxy, by rejecting the two orthodox principles cited in the preceding paragraph, brings an end to needless human suffering and agonizing, and allows for a reasonable understanding of the sense of reality. In a polydox community, the individual member is the rightful owner of his or her own consciousness, with the ultimate authority to determine what his or her own view of the word God will be. Consequently, from the viewpoint of the polydox community as a whole, there is no such thing as the "right" or "correct" view of the word God, only the different views of individual members. Thus there are no "erroneous" views of the word God in a polydox community, only differing views. Certainly one member of a polydox community may regard another's God belief as incorrect; but that would be simply one member's opinion, not community dogma, and in no way affects the other member's belief or status in the community. Perhaps most important from the standpoint of human health and happiness, the choice of a

meaning for the word God in the polydox community is morally neutral. It is neither moral nor immoral, good nor bad, whether a person takes one view or another with respect to the word God.

The reasonable view of the sense of reality that the polydox position allows for may be summarized as follows:

1. The sense of reality is first of all constituted of experiences from a person's entire being: the senses, reason, desires, and emotions; both the conscious and unconscious.
2. Thus the sense of reality cannot be controlled by some individual act of conscious will or choice; and is, therefore, for all practical purposes independent or autonomous.
3. It may be taken as true that the sense of reality can be decisively influenced to accept the reality of some being or thing by objective and compelling evidence. There does not exist, however, in any liberal religion, which includes Polydox Judaism and Reform Judaism (as historically understood), objective and compelling evidence for some one particular view of the word God. The reason is that historically the only objective and compelling proofs for a meaning of the word God have been based upon the infallibility of the Bible, and upon various philosophic proofs that appeared in Greek and medieval philosophy. The infallibility of the Bible has been disproved by higher criticism or scientific biblical study; and since Hume and Kant, all philosophic proofs for the truth of some particular view of God have generally been rejected as invalid.
4. Accordingly, since there is no objective and compelling evidence that persons can bring to convince their sense of reality that some particular concept of deity is true, and the sense of reality without such convincing evidence cannot be persuaded by conscious acts of will, persons have no conscious control over what they believe about the word God. The belief is fashioned subjectively out of the person's total psychic being, a complex of differing modes of awareness and attitudes, conscious and unconscious.
5. Inasmuch as a person's belief regarding the word God is involuntary, beyond his or her conscious control, persons deserve neither praise nor blame for such beliefs. Thus it is immoral for a person or community to punish persons for their God beliefs.
6. The sense of reality, and the belief regarding the word God at which it arrives, are both constituent parts of a person's being. Humans are constituted of their fundamental beliefs regarding reality, as well as of their abiding desires and emotions. We are, in substantial measure, what we believe.
7. Accordingly, if a person, through moral condemnation or physical force, is compelled by an orthodox community to deny the view of the word God that his or her sense of reality gives, the person must then deny himself or herself, who he or she is. Such community compulsion can only lead to destructive conflict that produces inauthenticity or self-deception. Moreover, no authentic resolution of the conflict can occur, no matter how much force is brought to bear by the community on the person, because the sense of

reality is outside the individual's conscious control. In a polydox community, of course, no such community compulsion can occur.

8. Inasmuch as the sense of reality and its perception of ultimate reality are constituents of the human being, they will reflect the individuality of which they are parts. If it is the case, therefore, that humans are all unique individuals, each of whom differs from the others, then it will be the case that the views of the word God or ultimate reality of every person will to some degree, small or large, differ from those of every other. The latest results of biological research indicate that such uniqueness is in fact the case. Accordingly, the ideal of the orthodox community that every member accept the same concept of God is vain, and contrary to our natural endowment. The uniqueness of the individual human being is described this way by a leading biologist, Ernst Mayr, ("Evolution," Scientific American, September 1978, pp. 49 and 52.)

"Living organisms are characterized by uniqueness: every population of organisms consists of uniquely distinct individuals. In 'population thinking' the mean values are the abstractions; only the variant individual has reality...No two cells within an organism are precisely identical; each individual is unique ..."

Needless to say, only the polydox religious community, committed as it is to the autonomy of every individual member, is qualified to serve the uniqueness of every person that is rooted in our very genes.

The Word God Viewed Historically

We come then to the word God itself. Views about the word God (or its equivalent in other languages) that have been subscribed to historically may be divided into four major categories, which will be referred to by the following names: theopanism; theosupernaturalism; theonaturalism; and atheonomatism.

Theopanism

In theopanism, the meaning given the word God is of an entity that is not separate from the universe. Theopanism includes among its major concepts pantheism and panentheism. Pantheism is the belief that the universe as a whole is identical with God; God is nothing other than the integrated complex of beings, forces, and laws that constitute the universe. Mystical versions of pantheism, particularly when God is intuited as a perfect simplicity, are also referred to as theopantism. Panentheism differs from pantheism in that in panentheism the universe as a whole, while inseparable from God, is understood to be only a part rather than the whole of God, as is the case in pantheism. In panentheism, God includes the world in his being, but his being extends beyond the universe as well.

Theosupernaturalism

In theosupernaturalism, the meaning given the word God is of an entity who is separate from the universe, and who has the power to interrupt through miracles the ordinary or natural course of the universe. Theosupernaturalism includes such concepts as polytheism; henotheism, and monotheism. Polytheism is the belief that there are many Gods. In henotheism, there is also an admission that there are many Gods, but one God alone is considered supreme, or one God alone is considered the proper object to obey and worship. Monotheism is the belief that there is one God only, and the existence of other Gods is denied. God is generally viewed in monotheism as a person, the sole creator of the universe, who is conscious of the universe and reveals his will to humankind, and who governs the universe through the exercise of supernatural providence.

Theonaturalism

In theonaturalism, the meaning given the word God is of an entity that is separate from the universe, and that either creates the natural universe, or is an essential part of the processes that give rise to the natural universe. There are no miraculous interruptions of the processes of nature in theonaturalism; and natural laws and forces entirely govern human and all existence. In theonaturalism, God may be conceived of as a person or impersonally. Theonaturalism includes certain forms of deism and hylotheism. The form of deism that is included is the belief that God is a person who created the universe, imparted to it motion, and who then took no further interest in it, exerted no influence on natural events, exercised no supernatural providence over humankind, and communicated no supernatural revelation. Hylotheism, the view of the author, is the belief that the word God refers to "the enduring possibility of being," which is the permanent ongoing potentiality from which the actual universe is continually being realized.

Atheonomatism

Atheonomatism is the view of the word God that it has no reality meaning, that is, the word God refers to no actual being or reality of any kind. Atheonomatism includes atheism (narrowly defined) and agnosticism. Narrowly defined, atheism is simply the position that there does not exist a supreme, conscious and intelligent being. In other words, atheism is merely a negative belief that primarily denies theosupernaturalism; and in itself, it does not necessarily deny all forms of theopanism or of theonaturalism. Often, however, atheists will insist that the word God may be used only to refer to a theosupernatural deity, and if there is no such entity then the word is not to be used at all. Accordingly, atheism of this kind, that denies a reality meaning to theosupernaturalism, and will not permit the use of the word God to refer to anything else, is a form of atheonomatism. Agnosticism is also of more than one kind. The form of agnosticism that falls under atheonomatism is the belief that denies the possibility of knowing whether there is a God of the theosupernaturalistic kind. Accordingly, since a being of whose existence there is no knowledge cannot be said to exist, -at the minimum one must suspend judgment, -the term God has no reality reference. It should be pointed out that while atheonomatism is the position that the word God cannot be taken to refer to any real being, because it maintains that there is nothing in reality that corresponds to the name, this does not mean that the word God cannot be used by atheonomatists for other, non-referential linguistic purposes. Thus there are atheonomatists who claim the word God can serve such very important functions as expressing and exciting emotion,

or evaluating and dramatizing the positive aspects of life. For such atheonomatists, these non-referential functions of the word God are those served by its use in liturgy.

Having enumerated the four major categories of views relating to the word God, we turn now to the Jewish religious enterprise. (The Jewish religious enterprise refers to the religious belief and thought of the long series of related communities that includes the Hebrews, Israelites, and Jews.) For convenience sake, the members of all these communities will be referred to as Jews.) The question presents itself: to which of the four aforementioned categories of views on the word God have the Jews subscribed? The answer will probably surprise those who would judge the Jewish religious enterprise from present-day appearances, namely, the official or formal services, ritual, and educational curricula of almost all contemporary Jewish religious institutions. For the answer is that Jews, over the ages and including the present, have subscribed to all four categories of views on the word God. It is not the case that there is some one meaning of the word God or "essence of Judaism" to which every Jewish religious thinker, or every Jewish religious community has in the past and does now subscribe. It is true the notion is widespread that this "essence of Judaism" is belief in "one God," by which is meant that which has been referred to above more precisely as theosupernatural monotheism. This notion that "belief in theosupernatural monotheism" is the essence of all Jewish religious systems, as will be seen, is as untrue of antiquity and the Middle Ages as it is of the present. Yet it is a carefully cultivated myth or fantasy of the contemporary Jewish religious establishment, which not only misstates the past, but by claiming theosupernatural monotheism is a universal traditional Jewish dogma, and therefore obligatory upon all Jews, attempts in addition to control the present.

To illustrate concretely the rich variety of Jewish views respecting the word God, examples will be given of Jewish thinkers or religious systems that fall under each of the four major categories enumerated earlier: theopanism; theosupernaturalism; theonaturalism; and atheonomatism.

Prime exponents of theopanism among the Jews are Baruch Spinoza and Martin Buber. Spinoza was a pantheist, and Buber a panentheist. It is significant to note that theopanism is radically different from theosupernatural monotheism even though both use the word God. Theosupernatural monotheists regard theopanism as heretical, but even more, as blasphemous. Not only does theopanism deny the existence of a miracle-working deity; but since the universe is considered part of God, brings into the Godhead itself all the evil and defects of humans and the world. Spinoza and Buber, consequently, were both attacked by the Orthodox Jewish community, and Spinoza, of course, was excommunicated. As theopanism, neither Spinoza nor Buber believed in miracles, and both consequently rejected supernatural redemption. Yet it is important to recognize that each was a religious thinker nonetheless, and theopanism is a religious belief, providing humans with a way, although not supernatural, to attain [soteria](#) (salvation). For Spinoza, it was the contemplation of deity, understanding the divine determinism or necessity behind all events, and resigning oneself to their inevitability. For Buber, soteria was obtained through I-Thou encounters, which could take place with objects, such as trees or persons. For inasmuch as all things are in the Godhead, every authentic meeting with another being brings one into special relation with God or the Eternal Thou. I-Thou encounters also take

place directly with the Eternal Thou. Such encounters are existential relationships, not supernatural verbal communications.

The concepts of God that have been most widespread among the Jews are those that come under the category of theosupernaturalism. Careful examination of the theosupernaturalistic concepts to which the Jews have subscribed, however, put decisively to rest the notion that the essence of all Jewish religious systems is belief in one God. On the contrary, scientific biblical research indicates that, until approximately the 8th century B.C.E., all Jews believed in the existence of many Gods. This means, if we date the origins of the Jewish religious enterprise from c. 2000-1800 B.C.E., the commonly accepted time of the early patriarchal period, all Jews believed in the existence of more than one God for at least a period of some one thousand years. It appears likely that basically four different theosupernaturalistic concepts of deity were subscribed to at various times in the biblical period. One is polytheism, in which different Gods were considered to possess different powers, with one God overseeing agriculture, for example, and another war. Different Gods were worshipped as the occasion required. The second concept is henotheism in the form of each nation possessing its own national God. Under henotheism, the national God of the Jews was Yahveh whom alone they worshipped, but the Gods of other nations were acknowledged. The third concept was an advanced henotheism or pre-monotheism, in which Yahveh was seen as more powerful than any other Gods, but the existence of other Gods was not denied. The fourth concept was a pure monotheism in which other Gods besides Yahveh were declared non-existent. Although the 8th century B.C.E. prophets appeared to have arrived at Yahvistic monotheism, the notion of "one God" does not seem to have been accepted generally by the Jews until after the return from the Babylonian exile in the 5th century B.C.E. The most significant change in monotheism that occurred subsequent to the biblical period was made by the Pharisees in perhaps the 2nd century B.C.E. Generally, according to biblical religion, there is no life after death. (Although a meaningless existence in Sheol after death is occasionally mentioned in the Bible.) The Pharisees introduced the belief that the deity does provide an afterlife; with the righteous, after a miraculous resurrection, enjoying a life of eternal bliss. It is important to note that there is a significant difference between the manner in which soteria is attained in theosupernaturalism and its attainment generally in the other three categories of God views. In theosupernaturalism it is believed that humans cannot attain soteria without supernatural assistance from and a special relationship with a miracle-working personal God.

Theonaturalism is widespread among modern Jews, rabbis and laypersons alike, although exact numbers are unavailable. Moses Maimonides was the leading exponent of theonaturalism in the Middle Ages. Among contemporary Jewish religious communities, Reconstructionism openly professes theonaturalism. As an illustration of theonaturalism, we may refer to the following quotation from Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism, whose version of theonaturalism is based upon the philosophy of pragmatism: "But most rational people today ... prefer to identify God with that aspect of reality which elicits the most serviceable human traits, the traits that enhance individual human worth and further social unity.... Only pedantic literalists would insist that the God-idea can have meaning only in religion based on the acceptance of supernaturalism and otherworldliness.... Religion conceived in terms of supernatural origin is the astrology and alchemy stage of religion. The religion which is about to emerge is the astronomy and chemistry stage of religion. Instead of resorting to belief in miracles, theophanies and external authority as the sanction for its teachings, religion will, henceforth, resort to the study of

the needs of human nature ... Men attributed to God their own highest desires and aspirations. They called him creator, protector, helper, sovereign and redeemer.... We can no longer believe that God is a mighty sovereign, or that the universe is the work of his hands." (Judaism as a Civilization, pp. 397-400, excerpts; New York, MacMillan, 1934.)

Atheonomatism possesses relatively few professed advocates, although it is impossible to say how many Jews silently accept the position. Among modern Jewish communities, Humanistic Judaism openly professes atheonomatism. The leading interpreter of atheonomatism was the late noted Reform Jewish thinker and teacher, Abraham Cronbach. While in essential agreement with Humanistic Judaism that the term God does not refer to any real being, Cronbach was at the same time in sharp disagreement with Humanistic Judaism over the use that should be made of the term. Humanistic Judaism, which is an orthodoxy of the left, insists that the word God, since it does not refer to some supernatural being, may not be used at all. Cronbach, on the other hand, found significant uses for the word God other than as a term that refers to a real being, and argued vigorously for its retention, particularly in the liturgy. Key quotations from Cronbach include the following: "Designative usage (the use of language to refer to real beings) underlies the traditional emphasis upon 'believing.' To believe commonly denotes to regard a given proposition as informationally valid.... Correspondingly to 'believe' that God exists signifies that the proposition 'God exists' yields valid information. . . . As a consequence, the designative use of the word 'God' belongs to that aspect of religion which brings religion into conflict with science. When religion purveys information, it competes with science and, in that competition, religion has invariably come out the loser. . . . Informational usage is the usage of theology. Such however is not the usage predominant in worship, aspiration, and edification. . . . When the context is devotional, the word 'God' functions not designatively but evaluatively and dramatically. . . . It evaluates and dramatizes the redemptive aspects of experience. . . . We mean the good in a world otherwise gloomed with woe. . . . A society devoid of ideological conflicts would have no need of invoking the designative use of the word 'God.'" (The Realities of Religion, pp. 31-33, excerpts; New York, Bookman Associates, 1957.)

Final Thought

The preceding discussion reveals clearly the extraordinary richness and diversity of views regarding the word God that the Jews have produced over the millenia. The question that naturally arises is: Why the diversity? Certainly, the fact that different ages produce new intellectual, economic, and social conditions, and these in turn influence the ways in which the word God is viewed, does play some part in producing the theological diversity. Yet I do not feel this really provides the fundamental explanation. For the same major categories of views about the word God keep repeating themselves in every age.

The reason for the variety of theological views is, I believe, rooted in the history of the individual human's basic life experiences from their very origin. By the time persons have reached late childhood, they have lived in what may be understood as three different worlds, each of which may be taken by the sense of reality as representations of ultimate reality. The first world in which the child has lived is the womb. The second is a world governed by powerful parent figures who control the natural world and see to the child's wants. The third world of the child is that of the senses, the natural universe.

There is no absolute innate knowledge within the human person to guide the sense of reality so that it is able to know with certainty which of the three worlds is truly ultimate reality. Thus depending upon the nature of the person's sense of reality as it is formed by his or her individual genetic endowment and life experiences, one of the three worlds is eventually chosen as representing ultimate reality, and so provides the person's basic view about the word God. For when we examine the four major categories of views about the word God enumerated above, we find that they correspond in striking measure to the three worlds in which all humans have lived. Theopanism, in which the individual believes himself or herself to be part of God, is analogous to the experience of the person in the womb. Theosupernaturalism, in which the individual and the universe are ruled by a potent God or Gods, is analogous to a child in a world governed by powerful parent figures. Theonaturalism and atheonomatism both view the natural world of the senses, the child's third world, as either entirely ultimate reality, or as a fundamental part of it.

What are the consequences of this explanation for a religious community? They are simply that three different perspectives of ultimate reality present themselves to the members of every religious community. Depending upon individual variations in the sense of reality, some members will choose one perspective as determining their views about the word God, others will choose the other perspectives. In the normal course of history, then, in every religious community, there will in time develop a variety of views about the word God, falling generally under the four categories listed above.

The only way a religious community can attempt to avoid this all but inevitable diversity is to pronounce itself orthodox and authoritarian, and outlaw as evil and sinful all other God views than its own. In so doing, the orthodox community sets up a Procrustean bed on which it places its members and their ideas, cutting off persons and beliefs that do not meet its creedal standard, or stretching them until they do. History provides anguished testimony to the destructive consequences of orthodox religions and their Procrustean beds of dogma. In the polydox community, where all members have the right to accept the judgment of their own sense of reality, and are free to take whatever positions on the word God they may choose, individuals are free to develop in integrity. Thus polydoxy is rooted existentially in the uniqueness of every individual, a uniqueness for which the evidence from biological science as well as history is overwhelming.

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