

# Wittgenstein, Language - Games, and Religion

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In this article, I have made an attempt at understanding Wittgenstein's religious viewpoint in the light of his use of the game analogy and its relatedness to forms of life. There are some misconceptions regarding proper significance of the game analogy and its relatedness to forms of life which are much discussed by many eminent philosophers, and I am indebted to their scholarly discussions on this controversial aspect of Wittgenstein's philosophy which has special implications in philosophy of religion. I am interested to know how the game analogy should be understood in the right perspective. My second contention is to understand meaning and significance of the religious dimension of life in the light of Wittgenstein's deeper reflections on the meaningfulness of different forms of talks and conversations and to understand how language works in the ordinary discourse as well as in religious discourse. How to understand the significance of the statement that the mystical, the ethical and the religious dimensions of talks refer to things that can not be put into words, though they make themselves manifest. In what sense meaning of religious language is related to human life and behaviour? What sort of logical connections would make them into religious beliefs? I would like to make an attempt at understanding the significance of human language as a form of life or as an activity related to our life and culture which in turn would help me in understanding religion in the light of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language.

I have difficulties in relating languages to games in a very simplistic manner which could give an impression that the way one learns what speaking is and what 'games' are, is to follow a similar strategy: to explain what are the different rules of one particular game or of one particular speech act. But we can not extend the simile beyond that. Just because both games and speech acts are rule bound activities there is a common tendency to treat these as activities cut off from life. This leads to relativity of some sort in matters of morals and religion but one should be cautious while using Wittgenstein's game analogy as Rush Rhees has correctly pointed out: *"When Wittgenstein says that an account of what 'language' means would be something like explaining what 'game' means, he is not thinking of an explanation you would give to anyone in an ordinary way, but of the explanation you might give in philosophy. And then the trouble is to know what that is: what kind of explanation does one look for here? He gives an analogy when he refers to the explanation of 'game', but it is never more than an analogy, and at times we may feel unsure just how to take it. There is the analogy between speaking and playing*

*a game too, of course. But I am thinking of the analogy in the idea of 'explanation'; the analogy which should show what 'explaining what it means' or 'explaining what it is may be'."*<sup>11</sup> Rush Rhees brings out the differences between learning what 'game' means and learning what 'speaking' means. The point he raises here is the need for learning something more in the case of speaking than just learning mechanically what speaking is just by describing various cases of speaking. It is possible to tell someone what game is by describing various games to him. When a child learns various language games he learns the technique of using different expressions and also what it is to mean something. To understand the meaning of an expression like 'cursing', 'greeting' etc one learns the use of these expressions as different activities related to forms of life. One can play the game of cricket if one knows its rules or can talk about it. One can also play the game of 'thanks-giving' or of 'greeting' as one knows how to use these expressions and when. But there is a difference between games and speech acts in other areas. We may very well imagine a community with limited vocabulary for whom speech act is just a means of communication, a technique they have learnt as a part of their building activity. But it would not bring out the distinctiveness of human dimension of language, which is not only a part of the building technique. Learning how to speak is much more than learning how to react mechanically to a signal.

The Wittgenstein builders have a form of speech or language with a very limited vocabulary. One of the builders shouts orders and the other reacts to the orders, and they might have no other speech or language except this. Rhees comments: "*But I feel there is something wrong here. The trouble is not to imagine that they spoke the language only to give these special orders on this job and otherwise never spoke at all. I do not think it would be speaking a language.*"<sup>12</sup> But there must be some occasions when these builders would give instructions to their children how to react to shouts etc or they may relax and discuss about their building activity in a leisurely way. But this would require other uses of those expressions which are not related to building technique. Learning the grammar is to know rules which is common to all rules. How will the children understand the language which is not related to the building technique. Understanding a 'slab' is not simply reacting to the order, but for that there must be scope to use those expressions in other ways. If language is just a kind of mechanical activity of reacting to a signal and it is always one kind of response to that particular speech act then language is a kind of game. In games too, the signals are part of the game which have no reference to other activities of life. Unless there is flexibility in the use of expressions with options for signals to be used differently in different occasions, we will not understand the sense a particular expression conveys in this particular occasion. If that is the only use then there will not be occasions to use such expressions as 'mis understanding' the speaker's order by the hearer. "You might ask why this should

make such a difference---the fact that they are used elsewhere. And one reason is that then the expressions are not just part of one particular routine. Their uses elsewhere have to do with the point or bearing of them in what we are saying now. It is the way in which we have come to know them in other connections that decides whether it makes sense to put them together here; for instance, whether one can be substituted for another, whether they are incompatible and so forth. The meaning that they have within this game is not to be seen simply in what we do with them or how we react to them in this game."<sup>3</sup>

The point is, as Rhees has very clearly marked out, in learning to speak, one simply does not learn to make sentences and utter them. When one speaks, one learns to tell something "...he comes to have some sense of how different remarks have something to do with one another. This is why he can answer you and ask you things, and why he begins to follow a conversation or to carry on a conversation himself.... For in beginning to carry on a conversation, in trying to tell you something and trying to understand your answer, he is getting a sense of how different remarks have a bearing on one another."<sup>4</sup> What makes sense to say something is to see what conclusions one can draw from it: what makes sense to ask or what sense one remark may have in connection with another. In conversation one knows what it is to make comments, to ask questions and each one has to contribute to the talk as they have something to say. "In a conversation: one person throws a ball; the other does not know: is he to throw it back, throw it to a third person, or leave it lying, or pick it up & put it in his pocket etc."<sup>5</sup>(Culture, p84e) What makes a talk interesting and lively is its relatedness to a particular background, which is rooted in life and in its various forms. If the builders are not marionettes but real human beings with hopes and aspirations, their building activity must have relations to their life, which includes other activities and other non-technical uses of the words. But when speech becomes a part of the technique of building activity, only the description of builders could be shown as engaged in using speech only in relation to the building technique which is cut off from other activities of their lives. This is an incomplete picture: "...do they have songs and dances and festivals, and do they have legends and stories? Are they horrified by certain sorts of crimes, and do they expose people to public ridicule? The description of them by the building side, if you add 'this may be all' makes them look like marionettes. On the other hand, if they do have a life, then to say that their speaking is part of that life, would be different from saying that their speaking is part of this activity of building."<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly, a superficial understanding of the game analogy has led some philosophers to show forms of life as esoteric and isolated, cut off from life and its other activities. Fergus Kerr observes: "*Oddly enough, Malcolm is largely responsible for the talk about religion as a form of life; it is language embedded in action---what Wittgenstein*

*calls a language-game. Science is another. Neither stands in need of justification, the one no more than the other.*<sup>16</sup> This clearly counts as a form of fideism: unless one has the faith one can not take part in rational discussion on the Christian religion or on any other religion." Roger Trigg goes on: *'We have only to ask whether religion, Christianity or a particular Christian denomination such as Catholicism should be regarded as a form of life. There is no clear way of answering such questions....'*<sup>17</sup> This has also led to the idea of an autonomous language game with its own rules intelligible only to players of the game. It would rule out any meaningful talk between believers and non believers, between players of the game and the outsiders in spite of the fact that some of the words used by the believers are also used by non believers with a common meaning attached to them. Wittgenstein observes: "In one sense, I understand all he says -- the English words 'god', 'separate' etc. I understand. I only say: 'I don't believe in this' and this will be true meaning."<sup>18</sup> Not believing in these is like not being guided by these pictures or not being passionately committed to those ideas. This is how inter personal talk and even inter community talks would make sense. Wittgenstein often talked about religious matters not as cut off from ordinary talk but as a continuation and an extension of the familiar notions in a distinctively specific manner. The special use would add its religious dimension but there is continuity of these two talks. Certain words used in a religious talk are also used in an ordinary talk though the implications may be different in each case. The following one is one such illustration: "In 1933, Drury had decided against training for the priesthood. Instead, with Wittgenstein's encouragement and financial help, he undertook medical training. One day in 1933 he told Wittgenstein that he had been asked to be a godfather at the christening of his nephew. Drury went on to say: 'The godparents have to promise in the child's name to renounce the devil and all works, the pomp and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful laws of the flesh.' I feel it would be hypocrisy for me to speak those words. It is something that I have not done myself". Wittgenstein replied: To renounce the pomps and vanity of this wicked world. Just think what that would really involve. Who of us today ever think of such a thing?"<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps one can identify the human dimension in Wittgenstein's philosophy which is very much related to the philosophy of life as opposed to the philosophy of abstract learning, philosophy of man with their passion for objects of love and beauty, of man who is ceremonial by nature and who takes recourse to the mythical and the symbolical way of expressing the strangeness and the depth that is in them as well as in the world around them. With his aversion for anything that is mechanical and rigid, anything that is stereotyped and lifeless, Wittgenstein continued his fight against the current to safeguard this deeper dimension of life. Anything mechanical aroused his aversion. The stupidity of mediocracy, of lifeless routine activities and its rituals could not reveal that deeper part in man which gives meaning and human significance to one's acts and

deeds. This explains why he was against all rituals of meaningless activity: "It may well have been the necessity which lecturers, journalists and suchlike are under to write or talk even when they have nothing to say aroused his aversion."<sup>10</sup> Anything that is passionately done is an intense expression of a serious activity with a sense of commitment and that is how philosophy comes closer to life and its activities. With his passion for life and the living against the dead and the mechanical, Wittgenstein sees the difference between science and religion, between passionlessness and passion, between passionless wisdom and what Keirkegaard once identified as the 'faith of passion.'

There are different ways to relate the two. Nietzsche saw a dichotomy between the Apollonian and the Dionysian trends which made him an explorer of the variety and richness of life and its irrationality against the crave for dispassionate objectivity of reason. But for Wittgenstein it was a search for the deeper, the transcendental dimension of life which could harmonize wisdom with passion, philosophy with religious commitment as he understood philosophy as wisdom with symbols. Bare wisdom conceals life and its secrets: like 'grey ash covering the gloomy embers' when it is a show of cleverness. On the other hand philosophical pursuit becomes an act of offering when all is dedicated to that deeper quest that makes man a humble seeker of a mysterious, everpresent reality called God. With his deeper sensitivity Wittgenstein could easily talk on equal terms with a believer when and in what sense something could be as precious as to be an offering to the Deity and in what sense one could be amazed at the very existence of the world since philosophy for Wittgenstein is a kind of passionate wisdom. His critical search for clarity and meaning retained in his life and personality 'what 20th century Philosophy is like: difficult and profound'<sup>b</sup>, which could not accommodate anything that is not clearly said. With is poetic sensibility he also acknowledged the unseen and the unsayable, the mystical part of life which philosophy is neither in a position to talk about nor to reject outright as nonsense. What is not said can be shown because there are things which can be shown which make themselves manifest. These two traits in his personality give uniqueness to Wittgenstein's philosophical worldview; he is not only a brilliant critic of speculative philosophy, but also of 'art and emotions of the Viennese manner of Hofmannsthal.'<sup>c</sup>

What is the relation between man and his philosophy, between being a good human being and a good philosopher? What is Wittgenstein's religious point of view and how does it differ from his philosophical viewpoint? Is there any way to relate the two? Is there any way to relate life and philosophy, Wittgenstein's life and his philosophy? If there is dichotomy between life and philosophy then religious beliefs are to be accepted as expressions of our attitudes and one will have to rule out an outsider trying to talk meaningfully about such esoteric practices. As an outsider Wittgenstein could

understand what it was 'to feel absolutely safe' at times, what it would mean to be guided by a picture of the Last Judgement, but he was not committed to that picture as the sole framework which could regulate his other mundane activities. With his craving for high spiritual and intellectual creativity, Wittgenstein was committed to performing a task:" he lived as if the philosophical work that wholly absorbed him, was demanded of him. To do his work he held himself in constant tension, always engaged, never allowing the problems to slip from his grasp, from ever trying out new analysis, fresh companions. The search for insight was unremitting."<sup>11</sup> Probably Wittgenstein realized that if he gave himself to prayer with the intensity this would require, an intensity that was characteristic of every work he undertook-then he would 'disintegrate'. That is his philosophical concentration would be disturbed." The 'stiff knees' may be a metaphore for his stern posture of total engagement. Becoming 'soft' would mean losing the tautness, the fighting alertness, that was required for him to peruse his ceaseless battles with the taps of ...."<sup>12</sup> With this serious commitment to the persuit of philosophy, Wittgenstein identified philosophical problems not in the realm of science but in the realm of life:" We feel that even when all possible scientific questions have been answered , the problem of life remains completely untouched."<sup>13</sup>

Wittgenstein's thinking was much inspired by the problems of life which were moral and religious in nature. His fear to become soft and to disintegrate with a believer's commitment to a 'form of life' is an expression of his dedication to the philosophical pursuit which demanded his complete loyalty. Could Wittgenstein serve two masters with equal devotion? His passion for philosophy demanded much from him. Though not committed to believing in the Last Judgement, Wittgenstein could see the believer's point of view. Taking religion as a practice which is not cut off from other activities of life as it is rooted in life and its problems, the search for religion became for him a search for meaning: it is a search for some meaning in life. As an outsider he could have a sympathetic understanding of believer's standpoint without himself being guided by that particular picture. But he could understand under what contexts these pictures could reveal something deep. Wittgenstein often compared language to a mediaeval city and this would rather point to connectedness of language games. This definitely goes against the autonomy of language games. To quote Kerr. "...but if Malcolm's original insight is correct -that comforting a wounded creature is a good example of what Wittgenstein meant by a form of life-it is impossible to apply the expression to any phenomenon on the scale of religion'-which must include innumerable language-laced activities. As a very specific exchange that normally involves talking, comforting someone can not be isolated either empirically or conceptually, from encouraging him, explaining, promising, calling a doctor and many other different but obviously related activities..."<sup>14</sup> As an outsider, Wittgenstein could explore the possibility of a religious

dimension of life. Wittgenstein recognised the fact that language does not reveal a uniformity of use. There are reasons to believe that the words used in religious discourse could also be used in a different context with a non religious use. He wanted to show what can be said in order to respect that what can not be said. He recognized the poetic nature of thought and of philosophical thought which marked him off from his contemporaries at Vienna or at Cambridge.

There was a difference between Wittgenstein and them. For Wittgenstein the sense of a proposition is its agreement and disagreement with possibilities of existence and non existence of a state of affairs. For him there could be as many different uses of a word or of a picture as there are possibilities and all these made sense as actualisations of these possibilities. He thought that the surface grammar of natural languages are misleading for us not because they conceal a hidden logical syntax that shows the logical forms of the fact but because they deceptively suggest a uniformity of use where there is diversity. Wittgenstein detected endless multiplicity manifested in use. As an outsider his was not an ordinary way of looking at things, 'seeing objects from within their midst' but what could be said as an outsider. To understand this is to be open to the possible modes of expressing joy, resentment, suffering by a ceremonial animal. The religious experience reveals something deep : not metaphorically but literally. These refer to actual happenings which make a deep impression on us and one religiously reacts to that mysterious and the deeper dimension of life. Just as philosophy is related to life, meaning is also rooted in forms of life. There should be agreements in forms of life, not agreements in opinion. But emphasis on agreement should not be wrongly emphasised as opting for relativity in matters of morals so that.' if outside one is clueless'.<sup>15</sup> In the manner of a creative artist Wittgenstein unfolds a pattern or a form in what is there before our eyes: that nothing out of ordinary is involved, that the essence lies open to view. It is seeing the particular concrete case in the right light. Our understanding consists of seeing connections. The spatial temporal character of thought reveals its deeper connections as thought becomes a picture with a sense rooted in a form of life, its being rooted in the stream of life.

To have agreements in forms of life is to accept certain basics as given. The grammar of our use of some such concepts like uniformity of nature, our use of soul talk etc. do not make these concepts problematic. All we can say is: 'that is how we talk'. To understand the sense of the possible situation within that form is to learn the use of the word so as to understand in what language game a sentence is a move. The significance of religious sentence consists in this: to see that it is a move in a particular language game which is rooted in a form of life. It is to be familiar with a distinctive pattern that characterize our use of words, asking whether it would still be usable if certain facts of nature were different (that there is feeling of loss, of living with shame, of nothingness

etc). Taking a theoretical stance is interpreting abstract formal aspects when language is 'like an engine idling.' In religion, concrete cases and diverse life situation provides the background. This theoretical stance can not do justice to the ceremonial nature of man, to the fact that expression of joy is not from knowledge, belief or opinion. The practice and the view are together, both are there in the act. Religious language reveals this deep structure of language which is beyond the reach of the surface grammar; it is the revelation of the poetic and the mythical part in us. It is spontaneous and instinctive reaction to something that is deep and mysterious which stirs something that is deep in me: it is to undertake an imaginary journey exploring the 'strangeness that is in me'. It is expected because there is time to believe it: certain ideas exercise a fascination on our mind and compel us to accept them. It is very interesting that pictures do force themselves on us.' 'Yes that's how it is', you say, 'because that's how it must be.'<sup>16</sup>

Unlike a scientific hypothesis the religious picture is related to one's way of assessing the situation. The force of the picture is evident in the life of the believer whose life has taught him to accommodate all sorts of experiences and their expressions: ugly, vulgar, refined or sublime. Wittgenstein wishes to say that a religious concept can not be given a straight forward cash value and is to that extent non reducible. Religion does not say something metaphorically, nor it is an expression of attitudes only. "*Suppose some one, before going to China, when he might never see me again, said to me; 'we might see one another after death'----would I necessarily say that I don't understand him? I might say [want to say] simply, 'yes I understand him entirely'. 'It says what it says.'*"<sup>17</sup> Religious picture has its force on people; when a believer says to some one 'we will meet after death', he is using a picture which expresses his real hopes and aspirations, 'it says what it says'. A picture, fixed at heaven gives this life its deeper meaning which is to face death and separation with hope and expectation. The relation between experience and practice gives personal touch to theology which is absent in science or in other public pursuits. Religious experience is an expression of sense of wonder, of hopes and aspirations, of fears and celebrations which are experienced deeply. Consciousness of sin, despair, relate something that has happened in man's life. The picture has its captivating force, the message of salvation and beatitude is seized on by men believably (lovingly) as there is genuine expressions of sin and punishment, of loss and nothingness which make life problematic. The conclusions he draws from these pictures are found in believer's reactions: confessions, repentance and despair. Philosophy mirrors practice.

Form of life is rooted in human response to deeper connections. Learning how to greet, to grief, to rejoice, all the deeper expression of our nature and their tacit connections, is to be familiar with the dark and the mysterious side of life, which points to something that is mythical in us as well as in the world. It is a matter of degree to what



extent this connection between the prosaic and the poetic is harmonized and in what manner. In his book *The Golden Bough*, Frazer gives a vivid description of a particular rite, the scene of succession to the priesthood for the temple of Diana: "*Guarding an oak tree in the sacred grove of Diana of the Wood, there prowled the grim, sword-carrying figure of a murderous priest king, warily looking about for an expected assailant who would sooner or later murder him and take up the priesthood himself.*"<sup>18</sup> While recognizing the dark sinister side of such murderous rituals, Wittgenstein would rather draw our attention to something like the symbolic interpretation of such rites. These practices are not guided by some theoretical speculations, rather these are the conclusions one draws from something in life which makes an act symbolic, a pointer to the dark mystery of life, the prominence of death and the demand for sacrifice which looms large in the horizon. The practice become the instinctive response: the practice and the view are both to be seen in the act itself. Like us the primitives act differently while building his hut of wood and cutting his arrow with skill in real life. But burning the effigy of his enemy or kissing the picture of the loved one are rituals and symbolic acts for the primitives as well as for the modern and the same man can act both these ways. That explains the differences: "... Frazer appears to think that all human action, all human questioning, is fundamentally the same: when human beings act, they are trying to achieve ends. When they ask 'why'?, they are asking for the causes of events; and so on."<sup>19</sup> Contrary to this, Wittgenstein concentrates on the differences and the variety of uses when asking a question like 'why the world exists' could be an expression of wonder at the very existence of the world. One will be misled to treat it as a question which demands an explanation. Sometimes theories and opinions are revealed only on the practice. Magic is rather an expression of an wish: burning the effigy of the enemy is an act of wish fulfillment: the practice itself fulfills the desire. One does not have to wait for the real death of the enemy, the act satisfies the urge to express hatred or rejection to that extent. Wittgenstein wishes to say that a religious concept can not be given a straight forward cash value and is to that extent non reducible.

Religion does not say something metaphorically, nor it is an expression of attitudes only. If it is not an expression of attitudes, religious language as well as moral statements reveal a kind of objectivity. Could this objectivity be grounded on our nature which is stirred by something that is there in the world around us resulting in an act of interaction. Because of these two traits in our personality man is both a thinker and a rejoicer - man can think both scientifically and ritually. The intense thinker and a great philosopher of his stature, Wittgenstein could sympathetically share a frame of mind which would provide framework to understanding religious beliefs like 'feeling absolutely safe', thinking only of God etc. Instead of rejecting such beliefs as nonsensical, Wittgenstein would rather visualize a situation when such utterances have a significance or when

such statements would impress one deeply. He had the ingredients of becoming a religious believer of a different sort, with his feelings of significance of life which demands commitment and responsibility; his feelings of guilt and imperfections, anxiety and depression at the very baseness and fallenness of life and of his life, he could aspire to make his philosophy a dedication to that divine purpose. But he would not possibly bring himself to believe all the things that the believers are supposed to believe. With a deeper dimension in him Wittgenstein would very well understand the language of wonder, adoration, dedication as well. His understanding of sufferings and tribulations of life made him appreciate the sense of wonder at the very existence of the world. But how to reconcile wisdom with life? How to respect that unsaid part? Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* was confident of encircling the whole of language and to put a limit to the expression of thought. Anything that made sense to say is to be expressed in language. In his later writing he concentrated more on plotting the boundaries of intelligibility which could separate one kind of discussion from another. On the earlier view only one kind of thing could be said. To depart from it is nonsense but in his later thought there are many different kinds of things that can be said, there can be dimensions of life as well as dimensions of thought.

His late philosophy is a recognition of the fact that there are different kinds of talks: talk about love and war, about science and objectivity, about religion and superstition and culture! As the grammar of the use of a word decides the nature of reality, to penetrate reality one has to understand reality by language. About the mystical the *Tractatus* was sure of its stand: what can not be said is unsayable. But there is also the other side of the coin: that there exists mystical things which can not be put into words. If it is a picture what it tells about God? The elements of a picture and what it represents are internally connected. Internally the picture contains the possibility of a situation which it depicts. It expresses a possible situation in logical space. To express a thought is to use a picture with a sense, using it as a picture is expressing its sense. There are internal relations between such propositions which form part of the logical syntax of length or color respectively. "...*This is red*' excludes '*this is blue*'. *These are internal relations between such propositions which form part of the logical syntax of length or color respectively.*" We need to know in what language game a sentence is a move before it can say anything to us. Is it a story, a dream report, a command, or a funeral scene, which form of life the use of the word is dependent on. In his major works there is absence of any sustained treatment of religious questions, which Brian R. Clack describes as his desire to 'come out the transcendental twaddle' and to remain silent about such matters. But his notebooks and his some lectures broke this silence.

There is a possibility that the same picture will sustain different people, a believer, a

non believer and a rebel differently. It is very interesting that pictures do force themselves on us, believing in the Last Judgement is not believing in a matter of fact. The believer can not contradict the non believer because they are not talking on the same plane. The belief can be both well established and not so well established. They think differently. One does not think in terms of Last Judgement: that is not the dominating picture for the one and it is a dominating one for the other. Part of the substance of that belief is terror: 'not to be dragged to the fire'. D.Z. Phillips brings out the distinctive nature of religious talk and of God talk in the following remark: "*The criterion of what is to be said of God is found within a religious tradition.*"<sup>20</sup> Phillips argues for an internal role of theology, religious belief is determined by the religious tradition and the concept of God is determined by the religious tradition and the picture is taught to children through stories. The idea of God is being found in the actual story telling and related services. Theology decides what makes sense to say meaningfully about God since theology is the grammar of religious discussion. This personal character of theology makes it different from scientific discourse. Theology is personal as it is based on one's personal knowledge of God, loving God is learning to respect a picture that is firmly rooted in one's thought. Once one has embraced a religion one has established 'what can be said' in a particular religion: it is learnt. For the believer, seeing the point of religion is believing it. The rebel sees the point of religion, he knows the story from the inside but it does not captivate him. In loving God we love something that does not exist but a picture is to be there at the root of all our thinking which is to be respected. While superstition is a lower mode of expression of religious practice or something like a false science, it is an expression of fear while religion is an expression of trust. If someone acts out of fear of the Last Judgement that it is in store for him, that is superstition, but if there is a sense of disgust and a sense of undue and intense suffering, then it provides a context which could make the Last Judgement picture acceptable. Unlike a scientific hypothesis religious belief is related to one's way of assessing the situation. The force of the picture is evident in the life of the believer.

The words uttered is not important, how something is said reveals the force of the picture. Religious practice is an expression of a sense of wonder, of religious hopes and fears, which one experiences intensely. The superstitious man could not be transformed to a man of reason and enlightenment so that the primitive and the religious part could be forsaken. Wittgenstein interprets religious belief in our experiential awerness and gestures to our deeper sensitive part. Religion is the expression of something that actually takes place in human life. Concepts of sin, despair etc. relate something that has happened in man's life. The picture captivates because the message is seized on by men believably (lovingly), that is the certainty. The conclusions he draws from these pictures are found in believer's life, in confession, and in repentance. Religious

experience is related to one's way of assessing the situation which can be banal, vulgar keeping room for all sorts of religious expressions, higher or lower, refined or ugly. The force of the picture is seen how he draws conclusions and regulate life accordingly. The pictures and the words used in religious discourse have different uses and different impacts on different people. The Tractatus's confidence to circle the whole language drawing a limit to the 'expression of thought' was softened by recognizing boundaries of intelligibility of separate discourses. On this view there are many different kinds of things that can be said concentrating on the internal subdivisions of languages. His concern is now: what it is for languages to have meaning. Now his stand is on grammar or the use to which language is put which describes what kind of object anything is. It is in reference to a form of life that the word gets its meaning but forms of life are not isolated language games, these are rooted in the human response to deeper connections: how to grief, to greet, to rejoice. When Wittgenstein says that a child learns various language games when he learns to speak, he shows how the child could be taught to use the different expressions with some flexibility.

The meanings of expressions they use can not lie wholly in the use or reactions that it receives in this job. If the signs had no use outside this transformation, the transformation would be without any significance and it would not show anything. The sense of a proposition is not only what it means: but it is learning how to draw conclusions from what is being said in one context: what it leads to if I say something, what questions are relevant to ask, what should be the expectations etc. To tell something mechanically imitating sounds, undergoing rituals etc, is not 'telling' something which is learning what one remark may have in connection with another. One must learn the use of thanks giving, gratefulness to be able to tell something about these. It is a difference between learning how to calculate and learning how to tell things. It is not a parrot like learning, a child learning the correct use of the word 'pain' for example is also learning to use the word in many other occasions, he learns to play with the word when he pretends to be in pain. In order to make out the difference between these two in religious language one can learn the correct use of the word God from Theology as Wittgenstein shows the connection between Theology and grammar. It is only by listening to what we say about God (what has been said for many generations) and how what is said about God ties in with what we say and do in innumerable other connections, that we have any chance of understanding what we mean when we speak of God. Faith, like thought, is visible (also is love). These practices and gestures are not subject to our choice than being a living human being is only possible realization of the human soul. Such gestures are not conventional. The expressive gestures vary across cultures. There is a primitive explanation about the human body. How the practice or the gesture reveals the belief or the picture is evident from the following observation; "We

might say very roughly, of people whose nature it is to kneel down on certain occasions, and fold their hands, that in their language they have a personal God.'<sup>21</sup> Faith, like hope, is embedded in human life, in all of the situations and reactions which constitute human life. It is reaction to life situation where the picture varies related to different kinds of wisdom that life bestows on us:' Someone for instance say, it is a very grave matter that such and such a man shall have died before he could complete a certain piece of work; and yet, in another sense, this is not what matters. At this point one uses the words in a deeper sense."<sup>22</sup>

Learning to talk about God is not to have the idea of God as an item in the world. The kind of object that a thing comes out in the kinds of things that it is appropriate to say about it. This evidently goes for God as much as for imagination. To explain what the concept God means we have to listen to what is possible to say about the subject. We have no access to the divine independently of our life and language. We talk about God in manifold activities as blessing, cursing, repenting, confessing. Life educates us to believe in God and experiences bring that about (not visions but sufferings of souls.) Experiences, thoughts, life, can force this concept on us. Something in life being terrible, horrible and tragic and insignificant is what brings about the ceremony. People carry out ritualistic actions in reaction to certain situation as there is something in us too that speaks in support of that. In effect, Frazer's theorizing cancel our kinship with his savages by assuming that their customs can be made intelligible to modern civilized man round 'Cambridge college dinner tables only by dispassionate observations---as if there tables were not occupied by beings at least as sinister as any dancing savage'.

Religion addresses this intimate self in us, something that is most passionate, something that is dark and sinister as well. 'We have to rediscover the strangeness in our own nature, that makes stories of religious cultures intelligible.'<sup>23</sup> The dark sinister rites associated with the dark practices are responses to something that touches them deeply, that stirs them into actions are depictions of possible situations which give sense to a particular picture. 'Yes, but that which I see in those stories is something they acquire, after all, from the evidence, including such evidence as does not seem directly connected with them--from the thought of man and his past, from the strangeness of what I see in myself and in others, what I have seen and have heard.'<sup>24</sup> These similar acts make sense to us before we look for explanation in terms of causes and purposes. To deny this is to deny what human beings are like with deep continuity between the sensibility of our ancestors and our own. 'Wittgenstein's watch words in the philosophy of psychology and also contributions of central importance to a theology that starts where we are; a theology for ceremonious animals, so to speak, rather than for celebrating solipsists; a theology that starts from the deep and sinister thing in human nature, rather than from a hypothesis about a deity; a theology naturalized, so to

speak.<sup>125</sup> To stay within the religious sphere one must struggle to act morally.

We make judgements of value in circumstances in which it makes sense to do this. Religious response is anything but a trivial matter, it stirs one deeply. The moral rebuke has the significance that goes beyond the circumstances, as in religion when one reacts with force that comes from the deeper nature of man, sustained by one's culture, language, priorities, pictures. Reacting from inside is like mechanically responding to a particular situation, responses that come from a deeper and a wider dimension is of another sort: it has the whole world with it. Rule governed activities are learnt studying ways and customs as a rule is neither a command nor it is an empirical statement of how the majority of the people behave. "Language - I want to say-is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed'<sup>126</sup> These are like concepts of causation originating in primitive reactions." Calling something 'the cause' is like pointing and saying: 'He is to blame'.<sup>127</sup> Language is not for ratiocination: it is the medium of primitive means of causation. It shows primacy of animality over reason. "We need, then, to examine the role of 'primitive reactions' in religion, before considering why these are to be regarded as ur-phenomenal." The sense of what Wittgenstein says here is made with the kind of analogy drawn between the language of pain and the language of religion: 'we have seen how the language of pain is said to develop out of instinctual, non linguistic behaviour. Similarly the language of religion (the articulation of religious beliefs) is an extension of certain primitive reactions, say a natural expression of wonder or of fear. Note, however that the religious belief is not equivalent to that expression of wonder (the expressive view). Rather, just as instinctive pain behaviour opens up a logical space whereby a greater articulation can occur, so the primitive religious reaction opens up a conceptual space, making possible the articulation of thoughts about the meaning and ultimate end of life, making possible new experiences, new ways of relating to the world."<sup>128</sup>

Wittgenstein's interest in all sorts of religious expressions, primitive or modern, crude or refined, superstitious or religious, magical or metaphysical is an attempt on his part to draw out possibilities of life situations in which certain rituals and practices make sense as these become instinctive or causal responses to that imaginary or actual situation. The many possible myths which can be schematised and founded in reality, not with what rituals exist among which tribes and how to defend these practices, but with logical and conceptual possibilities, with what possible rituals might exist or folk tales might exist. We can think out for ourselves the different possibilities and find them in reality about human thought. 'The ceremonial (hot or cold)' as opposed to the haphazard (lukewarm) is a characteristic of pity. To account for the phenomenon of human sacrifice one needs to understand the kind of creatures human beings are. Thus, the enquiry must turn upon 'the thought of man and his past... the strangeness of what I see in myself and in others, what I have seen and have heard.'<sup>129</sup> It is not to make the

full horror of such rites trivial: That man becomes so sinister is disturbing fact itself but it is a possible situation which makes sense to us who can be transformed from friends and homely people to potential assassins:" if I see such a practice, or hear of it, it is like seeing a man speaking sternly to another because of something quite trivial, and noticing in the tone of his voice and in his face that on occasion this man can be frightening. The impression I get from this may be very deep and extremely serious one.<sup>130</sup> Underneath our rational exteriors are strange and passionate creatures with violent propensities which reveals our kinship to those savages.

Both logical form and the mystical are transcendental as both are unsayable but they show themselves. In religious response we bring out the stock of our mythology of our past beliefs: "When we speak of fate, taking a hand, or fearing the wrath of the gods', we bring out of storage the mythology of our ancestors. All of this is entirely consonant with Wittgenstein's overall view of language, which he likened to a city: ...our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with addition from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and inform houses".<sup>31</sup> Religions and cultures bring out the hidden potentialities of man in its diverse forms: 'Each culture has its own new possibilities of self expression which arise, ripen, decay, and never return.<sup>132</sup> Religion, for Wittgenstein declines not because its adherents recognize it to be intellectually unsatisfactory or in any other way erroneous. Rather, it declines because the values to which it gives expression are largely absent in an age of decay. To this extent the religion of a culture, like its architecture, acts a barometer for its values, and as Wittgenstein writes: 'Architecture immortalizes and glorifies something. Hence there can be no architecture where there is nothing to glorify.' Religious language makes sense as there is sense in visualising conceptual possibilities of different language games. In our total response we bring out the store of mythologies, our cultural background and our rich and multifold use of concepts to respond to a situation that stirs one deeply. If our human nature is changed beyond recognition that there is no recognition of a deeper level in life, that it makes no sense to become, to use Charles Tylor's terminology, 'subjects of significance', that matters of shame, pride and guilt no longer stir one deeply, then the picture loses its grip. Not because the picture does not stir one but because there is no one left for whom making confessions, committing sins or becoming ashamed of would make sense. This would reduce religious talks to those language games which are cut off from life and its activity. This would then make speech act a kind of game, a part of the technique which is cut off from other activities of life. Contrary to this Wittgenstein could see the deeper connection between language and life which gives meaning to any kind of discourse, including religious one.

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- 3 Ibid.p.79.
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- 5 83.
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- 17 Wittgenstein. Quoted in D.Z.Phillips, *Wittgenstein and Religion*.(St Martin Press,NY.1993)p.250.
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- 24 Ibid.
- 25 21 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* ed. G.H.VONWRIGHT. (London, BLACKWELL, 1974).
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- 29 Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* ed.G.H.VONWRIGHT. (London, BLACKWELL, 1974), p.151.
- 30 Ibid.p.150.
- 31 Ibid.p.168.
- 32 Ibid.p.74 e.

## Endnotes

- A (Culture, p84e)
- B Ludwig Wittgenstein. A.C.Grayling.OXFORD.1988
- C Quoted in Brian R. Clack. Wittgenstein, Frazer and Religion. (MACMILLAN, 1999).