

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN: LANGUAGE-GAME AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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Abstract. Wittgenstein's new understanding of meaning as use has far reaching implications in religion and religious belief. The meaningfulness of language does not depend on the referent but on the actual use of it in the human context. The variety of language uses makes religious language legitimate, and the social character of language makes clear the role of training in religious belief. The characteristic features of religious belief can be summarized as follows: It is an unshakable commitment devoid of evidences and arguments, and it is reasonable only within its framework and grounded on the religious form of life. The rituals that are part of religious beliefs are symbolic and expressive. The existential concerns of human beings reveal a common spiritual nature enabling us to understand other religions and cultures as mirrored in our own humanity.

Keywords: Ludwig Wittgenstein; Language-Game; Religious Belief.

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INTRODUCTION

The linguistic analysis of the *Tractatus* results in the picture theory of meaning. The structure of language reveals the structure of reality, for language is founded on the bedrock of reality. We can observe a decisive change in Wittgenstein's philosophical reflection on language and meaning in the later period of his thought. There is a move from a static view of language to a dynamic one as an activity and as grounded upon something other than an independent reality. Also, there is a shift from linguistic form to linguistic function in his transitional period. In his later philosophy, language is not seen as directly referring to reality in itself, but is viewed as an activity within a social context. It is founded on an ungrounded way of action. It is life - form of life - which is not founded on something more fundamental - that is the fundament. Form of life is the ground of language and meaning. The logical form of the *Tractatus* is replaced by form of life that bridges the gap among language, thought and reality.

In Wittgenstein's earlier philosophy, we have the image of a bedrock with a stable foundation, but here we have an image of a riverbed with its flexibility. The plurality of languages is not given once and for all, but new language-games come into existence and others may disappear. This change in the theory of meaning in the later period made a tremendous impact on his view of religion and religious beliefs. The distinction of *saying* and *showing* in the early philosophy makes it clear that religion belongs to the realm of *showing* and cannot be expressed. Whatever can be expressed is expressed in propositions. Propositions express only fact; religious belief is not a fact, therefore inexpressible. Later, under the impact of his new theory of meaning, Wittgenstein changed his views on religion and religious discourses. The meaning of religious propositions is to be understood in the background of the language game and form of life.

This work attempts to trace Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief on the basis of his revised view of language and its functioning. He maintains that religion, religious belief and the meaning of religious statements have to be determined in the background of specific language games and forms of life. For Wittgenstein, the meaning of religious language involves utility within a context. Every word is to be used in its original home to be meaningful (Shabbir 2010). Therefore, the first part of this work deals with his notion of the language game and form of life, and the following section will be an application of these notions to religion and religious belief. The second section will deal directly with the nature of religion and religious belief on the basis of *Philosophical Investigations*, some of Wittgenstein's lectures and notes in this regard.

THE CONCEPT OF THE LANGUAGE-GAME

Wittgenstein's later philosophy and his new theory of meaning are founded on the concept of the language-game. Whatever the genesis of the concept "language game," it is introduced first in *The Blue and the Brown Books* and frequently used in most of his later works. It is not, however, an easy task to give an explicit idea of what the language-game is. Wittgenstein did not give any clear exposition of it. The numerous examples given by the author do not explicate the

concept, and scholars differ in their views. The language-game could be seen, as an analogy to describe language. In his attempt to describe a complete language, Wittgenstein describes the circumstance of the use for linguistic expressions. To explain what language is, he brings forth the analogy of a game. The game analogy has become a novel technique of philosophical analysis especially in linguistic analysis (Tanney 1994: 997).

Can we compare language with a game? Though game and language are divergent in many respects, there are some philosophically important points on which they agree. Rules determine a game, and language is determined by its own rules. This can be taken as a starting point in the comparison of language with a game. The meaning of a word is not determined by the object it stands for, but is determined by the rules governing its operation. Sentences are formed out of words according to combinatorial rules, and their use in the speech act is specified by the rules. The use of instruments is another inevitable characteristic of both a game and language. Words are the instruments we use in language. Moreover, the use of different words in different contexts gives rise to different meanings. Therefore, setting is very important for language as for every game; without a setting we cannot play a game. "Like any other game, a language-game is 'played' in a setting" (Rono 2018). The use and purpose, role and function, are important features that play a central role in Wittgenstein's philosophy. The language-game may be defined functionally as follows: "language game is a system of operational rules, which necessarily determines the functions of linguistic signs through the application of the rules" (Vinokurov 2018: 56). This opens up the necessity of looking at the new understanding of meaning, linguistic functions and rule following. Together they present a dynamic picture of language. Wittgenstein has used the language-game in a variety of ways as in *Philosophical Investigations*:

Review the multiplicity of language-game in the following examples, and in others: Giving order, and obeying them, describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurement, constructing an object from a description (a drawing), reporting an event, speculation about an event, forming and testing a hypothesis, presenting and presenting the results of an experiments in the tables and diagrams, making up a story and reading it, play-acting singing catches, guessing riddles, making a joke; telling it. Solving a problem in practical arithmetic, translating from one language into another, asking, thanking, greetings, praying (Nagl 2017: 654).

Since language games are used as signs in contexts, there are innumerable kinds of language games depending on the contextual use of words. There can be different kinds of sentences, and the same sentence can have a different meaning in different contexts. Multiple language games can be differently categorized, such as pure and impure depending on the content and involvement of factors. In a pure language game, according to Pitcher, Wittgenstein includes pure speech activities such as telling a joke or reporting an event whereas in an impure language game there are some extra-linguistic factors involved such as "builders game." However, the distinction between these two kinds of language games is a matter of degree. Language-games can also be categorized into real and imaginary language games such as the imaginary builders game. They can be religious or non religious

language-games. As K. C. Pandey maintains, there is no rigid compartmentalization among these categories, and they can depend on each other. For example, the religious language-game depends on the ordinary language game since the terms and composition of the religious language-game happens in the background of day to day life (Phillips 2017: 149).

Wittgenstein, in his later thought, tried to come out of his atomistic thought on meaning to a coherent and holistic understanding of meaning. Frege's idea of the context principle, that words have meaning within a sentence, was an inspiration for Wittgenstein. However, Wittgenstein's holistic understanding of meaning goes far beyond Frege's understanding of breaking the closed system of propositions to a larger and broader setting of cultural practices and social behavior that make up human life. Words find their meaning within their position in the system. Words attain meaning within the language-game against the background of human life (Mulhall 2011). If words are detached from any particular language-game and its background, meaning will change. "A meaning of a word is a kind of employment of it. For it is what we learn when word is incorporated into our language ... when the language-game changes, then there is a change in concepts, and with the concepts the meaning of words change" (Morra 2019: 5).

LANGUAGE-GAME AND FORM OF LIFE

Though the two important concepts of the language game and form of life cannot be identified, there exists an affinity between them. It is important to note that language cannot be imagined outside the human context. Meaning is rooted in the context of human activity. Speaking of language is part of human activity. When this theory of meaning is applied to religion, the meaning of religious language is seen to be rooted in religious practices. The treatment of religious belief, as a distinctive language-game, takes for granted religion as a form of life, which Wittgenstein never identified though he is very close to it when he said, "Why shouldn't one form of life culminate in an utterance of belief in a Last Judgement?" What is important, as basis, is form of life for Wittgenstein. For he says, "only in the stream of thought and life do words have meaning" (Lerner 1995:173). "A smiling mouth smiles only in a human face" (Kidd 2012: 583). The significance of something depends on the surroundings. Religious belief has meaning within the surroundings of religion. We have a belief only in the background of a system of beliefs. That system of beliefs is what we call religion, which has become so natural by way of practice. Wittgenstein cites that it is the practice which gives words their life. "Practice gives the words their sense" (Lerner 1995:85). Therefore, a sense of religious belief comes from use, not from assertions. Religious belief is grounded on religious practices. Therefore, the search for the sense of religious belief leads to the discussion of the situation in which it is used and how it is used and practiced.

'THEOLOGY AS GRAMMAR'

Wittgenstein has used a parenthetical remark in the *Philosophical Investigations* "theology as grammar." This expression is to be understood in the background of his later philosophy of language and grammar that are associated with the concepts of the language-game and form of life. One could observe a

development of thought about grammar in Wittgenstein from *Tractatus* to *Philosophical Investigations*. For Wittgenstein, philosophical inquiries are investigations into the grammar of language. Grammar in *Philosophical Investigations* replaces logical symbolism of *Tractatus*. This change in approach is not a result of a single leap. However, it is a gradual change in the significance of grammar in the construction of *Philosophical Investigations*. The goal of *Tractatus* was to set a limit to language and thought through logical symbolism. Wittgenstein developed a calculus conception of grammar with its autonomy of rules to establish the limits of language and thought in *Philosophical Grammar* and complimented it in *Big Typescript*. He developed an anthropological view of grammar through *The Blue and the Brown Book* to *Philosophical Investigations* (Phillips 2017: 140).

The concept of grammar is one of the key notions in his later thought. As far as language is concerned, grammar is generally associated with the structure (syntax) of language. However, Wittgenstein uses grammar as associated with meaning (semantics) in his later thought. For him, grammar refers to an investigation of content (semantics) rather than form (syntax). The concept of language and grammar is best understood in relation to the use of language in a particular context (Rono 2018: 60). The concepts of grammar, meaning and use are intimately connected. Grammar describes the use of words, and the use of words bring forth meaning (Shabbir 2010: 60). As opposed to the *logico-syntactic* use of words of *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein describes use as an activity of speaking with words in the context of extra-linguistic activities. The *Logico-syntactic* use of words is a narrow use of words representing the way a word could or could not combine with other words in the sentence. However, the use of words in a broader understanding concerns the use of words in a particular context. It pertains to the use of language in the context of various human activities (Tanney 1994: 23). Corresponding to the two dimensions of use, Wittgenstein has distinguished two kinds of grammar i.e. surface grammar and depth grammar.

THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The search for the nature of religious belief, we suppose, is all against the very philosophy of Wittgenstein. He was a critic of essentialism, as we have seen, one cannot identify a common property for different religions. "... But look and see whether there is anything common to *all* – for you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationship and a whole series of them at that" (Tanney 1994: 66). At the same time, looking at how believers use religious language enables Wittgenstein to describe some of its characteristic features. This material is found in a series of lectures Wittgenstein gave at Cambridge in 1938. The lecture notes are not available to us; however, the notes taken by some of the students are at our disposal. Wittgenstein did not check the accuracy of the notes, but they are the most complete source available to us on Wittgenstein's views on religious belief. Wittgenstein recognized that the reductionist approach failed to feature the distinctive character of religious belief. Wittgenstein points out the logical distinctiveness of religious belief that distinguishes it from other areas, especially the scientific. The content of the *Lectures on Religious Belief* can be summarized as follows:

Religious belief is an unshakable commitment that guides one's life and is not based on evidence or arguments; it is incommensurable with atheistic thought in the sense that the assertions of believers and nonbelievers do not contradict one another; and although religious belief is not reasonable it is not unreasonable (Tanney 1994: 369).

Let us consider each of these in detail. Another important source we could rely on is the philosophical notes that Wittgenstein kept from the years 1929 to 1951, with significant remarks on religion. A selection of it is published under the title *Culture and Value*.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS AN UNSHAKABLE COMMITMENT

Religious belief is absolute, unlike hypotheses or opinion. It is absolute in the sense that it is not dependent on anything else but itself. It is a commitment which is not shaken by any contrary evidence. He says, "very intelligent and well educated people believe in the story of the creation in the Bible, while others hold it as proven false, and the grounds of the latter are well known to the former" (Phillips 2017: 336). It is not the intellectual and rational basis that makes the belief firm. Even in the face of good evidence to the contrary the believer still holds the belief – that is what he calls firm belief that can make a difference in our lives. This is characterized in *Lectures* as 'unshakable belief.'

For Wittgenstein, religious beliefs are not matters of empirical fact. They neither can be justified by an appeal to evidences, nor can they be criticized on the ground of non-supporting evidences. For example, the religious utterance, 'There will be a last Judgment Day' should not be approached as one that will occur in future as if one approaches an empirical belief. One utters such a religious statement to express his commitment to a certain way of seeing things and a certain way of living. Thus, suppose somebody made this his guide line for this life: believing in the Last Judgment. Whenever he does anything, this is before his mind (Phillips 2017). Religious belief can be seen as a passionate commitment to a system of reference. A system of reference is a system of concepts, and concepts play a vital and fundamental role in the life of a religious believer. "It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it's *belief*, it's really a way of living or a way of assessing life. It's passionately seizing hold of *this* interpretation" (Lerner 1995: 183). This passionate commitment to a system of concepts involves a distinctive way of leading one's life (Phillips 2017). Religious belief involves a distinctive set of religious concepts in describing and thinking about the world and life. It is a commitment to those concepts to lead life in a certain way.

Certainty is considered as one of the characteristics of religious belief, and this is not one of intellectual certainty but of love and trust. Commenting on the entries in *Culture and Value*, Cyril Barrett compares the certainty of religious belief to that of mathematical propositions. However, it is also different: The certitude of a mathematical proposition depends on its intrinsic logical structure, whereas religious belief lacks such intrinsic logical structure and extrinsic support (Arnsward 2009). It is a matter of heart and soul. The genuineness of religious belief is not weighed by the intellectual caliber, but by action which the believer is prepared to

perform on account of the belief. There are many entries of Wittgenstein's to substantiate this,

... So we have to content ourselves with wisdom and speculation. ... But if I am REALLY to be saved, – what I need is *certainty* – not wisdom, dreams or speculation – and this certainty is faith. And Faith is what is needed by my heart, my soul, not my speculative intelligence. For it is my soul with its passions, as it was with its flesh and blood, that has to be saved, not my abstract mind (Díaz 2019: 33).

A significant element here in Wittgenstein's religious thought is that religion is a realm of passion rather than intellect. Religion springs from emotive lives and passions not from speculative mind. A similar citation can be seen as "wisdom is cold and to that extent stupid (faith on the other hand is a passion)" (Dienstag 1998:56). Though unshakableness is considered as one of the characteristics of religious life, there is room for doubt. The man who believes in the Last Judgment acknowledges that this is not a well-established fact. Belief is possible where doubt is permissible. In fact, his religious belief may alternate with doubt. This is something that differentiates religious belief from empirical belief. Religious belief is unshakable in the face of doubt even to the extent of alternation (Kidd 2012:145). The firmness and steadfastness in belief do not depend on the grounds. This commitment could be further explained by the groundlessness of religious belief.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS PICTURE

Wittgenstein explains the normative function of religious belief by considering the role of pictures in life. In the earlier phase of his philosophy, language is conceived as a picture of the reality. Propositions, as pictures of state of affairs, are static; they are idle pictures. However, in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein describes the dynamic role of pictures in our life and language. He says: "One wants to say that an order is a picture of the action which was carried out on the order; but also that it is a picture of the action which *is to be* carried out on the order" (Graham 2014: 519). Here we can see the close connection between the picture and the action to be carried out. A religious belief, taken as picture, is a call to live by it and also to interpret the religious teaching in the light of that picture. Therefore, the picture has a normative value.

It is correspondence that makes language a picture of reality in Wittgenstein's earlier philosophy. Later, when he uses the technical term "picture" to describe religious belief, he presupposes no correspondence; it may not refer to any object or person. A corresponding reality is not a necessity in the case of religious belief. What is important is the picture itself, and the role it plays in human life. "The whole weight may be in the picture" (Wawrzyniak 2003:72). When Wittgenstein uses the term picture for religious belief, he does not refer to the referent but to the meaning. For example when we say "God," we do not look for the referent behind the word "God" or we don't look for the proof for the existence of the referent, but we look for the meaning of the word "God." He also says that the meaning can be arrived at by the role it plays in the life of the believer. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein brings forth his idea of a picture. "A

picture tells me itself is what I'd like to say, that is it's telling me something consists in its own structure in its own forms and colours" (Wittgenstein 1965: 523). This very same thought is found in *Lectures*. A sentence expressing a religious belief is that 'It says what it says. Why should you be able to substitute anything else? (Wittgenstein 1965: 71). A religious picture expresses itself. This thought is further carried out in *Remarks on Frazer* while considering religious belief as expressive (Wittgenstein & Granger 2012: 61).

Wittgenstein understands religious belief as being capable of controlling human life in the sense that it is able to change one's whole life. A particular belief may be a guideline for life; it somehow regulates his life. An example will clarify it.

Suppose somebody made this guidance for this life: believing in the Last Judgement. Whenever he does anything, this is before his mind. In a way, how are we to know whether to say he believes this will happen or not? Asking him is not enough. He will probably say he has proof. But he has what you might call an unshakable belief. It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds of belief, but rather by regulating for all in his life. (Wittgenstein & Granger 2012: 86).

Wittgenstein considered religious belief as using a picture to regulate one's life. The picture is always present there to guide one's thinking. This picture constitutes the framework for what makes sense of his experience of life (). A belief becomes religious, therefore, when it has control over the life of the person who believes it. In the Last Judgment, a future divine retribution is what Wittgenstein calls a picture before a believer's mind controlling his actions when one is tempted to do something evil. Wittgenstein's understanding of religious belief has gained a moral character. Religious expressions serve some sort of moral purpose recommending a commitment to a particular way of life (Vinokurov 2018: 71).

Wittgenstein used the technique of employing the pictures of God. The picture, 'god created man', is not a description of any state of affairs. "That talk of God is in some manner expressive of feelings, attitudes and emotions" (Vinokurov 2018: 75). The function of the utterance of faith is to express existential attitudes of life and their practical use in guiding human actions. According to Wittgenstein, religious belief is upholding certain pictures which help to give orientation and guidelines his actions and attitudes. Commitment to such a picture is founded on passion not in intellect and systematic understanding is insignificant (Kidd 2012). In talking about the life-guiding role of religious beliefs, Wittgenstein makes an important point that religion is more a matter of praxis than merely a matter of intellect. This will be examined in more detail in the next section.

SYMBOLIC AND EXPRESSIVE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Philosophers of religion interpreted Wittgenstein's thought about religion focusing around the language-game and form of life even before some of his notes on religion were published. Wittgenstein's "*Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough*" is crucial for an understanding of his philosophy of religion, along with *Culture and Value* and *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*. Wittgenstein, after reading James George Frazer's *Golden Bough* which accounts for myth, magic and religion, wrote a series of comments on it. He criticized Frazer's explanation of myth, magic and religion and offered his own conceptual account of

myth, magical and religious practices. Here is an attempt to expose Wittgenstein's thoughts on religion based on his criticism of Frazer. Frazer had a conceptual and instrumental view of religion along with magic and myth whereas Wittgenstein exposes a more symbolic and expressive nature of religion. His comments on Frazer elaborate the symbolic nature of religion and the spiritual attitude towards life expressed in these symbols. These symbols which are expressive are without explanations especially scientific. The symbolic and expressive nature of religion brings us the common spiritual nature of human beings. As we journey through Wittgenstein's insights on religion from *Tractatus* where it is non-sensical to speak about religion to *Philosophical Investigations* where religion is meaningful only within the limit of the language-game, we come to a broader understanding of religion as symbolic and expressive and the common spiritual nature of human beings.

Frazer in his *Golden Bough* exposes his positivist view of historical progress. Primitive people approached life by reasoning about its underlying causes and trying to manipulate and influence them. This process of reasoning is done by myth, magic and religion. These practices, according to Frazer, are faulty ways of reasoning. "The views of natural causation embraced by the savage magician no doubt appear to us manifestly false and absurd; yet in their day they were legitimate hypotheses though they have not stood the test of experience" (Frazer 62). Such reasoning is done by scientific theories in the modern era. Myth, magic and religion are carried to the modern era because of the superstitions of the people. Frazer had a positivist stand on myth, magic and religion; they are at the first stage of the human search for knowledge, philosophy is at the second and science is at the final stage. Wittgenstein was struck by Frazer's crude assumption that the religious activities of ancient people were primitive forms of scientific endeavor - misguided attempts to influence the outcome of natural events (Kidd 2012). However, Wittgenstein has a strong criticism on this point and concludes error and progress are not features of magic and religion but of science. "The distinction between magic and science can be expressed by saying in science there is progress, but in magic there isn't. Magic has no tendency within itself to develop" (PO 141). Science and technology, which are based on instrumental practice, intellect and reasoning tend towards progress and development. Religion, magic and myth are not of this kind. One prays not because the prayer is based on a proven theory, nor does one abandon an old prayer due to lack of explanation. For Wittgenstein, religion, magic and myth are beyond intellectual reasoning and conceptual explanation that calls for development and progress.

Myth, magic and religion are expressive and symbolic; they emerge from cultural rituals, metaphors and symbolic narratives. Since they are expressive, they differ from instrumental practices such as cooking or building huts. Being symbolic, they differ from non-symbolic expressive practices, such as playing music. As symbolic and expressive, they are more akin to ritualistic practices and these symbolic and expressive practices cater to the human spirit. The conceptual features that make these practices spiritual are the promotion of an attitude of wonder at the mysterious nature of life, the manner in which they express symbolic

actions, poetic language, powerful images, and finally the deep existential concerns of human beings. These features make myth, magic and religion, transforming them into inspiring a spiritual attitude towards life (Kidd 2012). Mulhall places prime importance on action rather than doctrine concerning the spiritual nature of religious practices. Waismann records Wittgenstein's remark regarding his view on religion.

I can well imagine a religion in which there are no doctrinal propositions, in which there is thus no talking. Obviously, the essence of religion cannot have anything to do with the fact that there is talking, or rather: when people talk, then this itself is part of a religious act and not a theory. Thus it also does not matter at all if the words used are true or false or nonsense (Mulhall 201: 117).

There are other occasions where Wittgenstein strongly argues that ritualistic practices and deeds gain priority in religious beliefs. In *Culture and Value*, we learn "the origin and the primitive form of the language game is a reaction; only from this can more complicated forms develop. Language - I want to say - is a refinement, 'in the beginning was the deed'" (Nagl 2017: 31). While quoting Goethe, Wittgenstein is not simply referring to the historical origin of the development of language but, what lies at the bottom rather than how things were in the beginning. What lies at the bottom is not propositions but actions (Morra 2019: 307). "Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; - but the end is not certain propositions striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game" (OC 204). What lies at the grounds is acting and reacting not propositions even in religious beliefs. Wittgenstein is offering primacy of acting and reacting in religious beliefs over and above language that is used in celebrations.

Wittgenstein here is imagining a pure ritualistic type of religion not supported by doctrinal propositions. Doctrinal principles are often theological worldviews to support the rituals practiced. Wittgenstein imagines a religion without such theological and metaphysical support to the rituals. The language used in rituals is not part of doctrinal principles; however, it is symbolic and expressive which is to be distinguished from the language used to ascertain theological claim. Therefore, there is no reason to find foundations for religious practices on any doctrinal or theological propositions, since they are expressions and promotions of a personal spiritual attitude towards life. Wittgenstein is not totally eliminating theological principles from religious practices; however, he makes a clear distinction between the language used in religious practices and the language used in doctrinal principles to assert those rituals. Religious practices are ritualistic, and they are symbolic. The expressive use of symbols is an important characteristic of religious practices as distinct from the instrumental use of signs (Lurie, *Human Spirit* 161). Wittgenstein's point here is that rituals are not based on any proven theory or beliefs. However, one can well understand a ritual in terms of a theory (Morra 2019: 134).

The key to understanding Wittgenstein's account of rituals lies in his idea that they are rooted in instincts. The natural disposition of human beings to react in an expressive way and to create and observe rituals that can symbolically express

the existential concern of human beings serves as the foundation of religious symbols. Wittgenstein describes

When I am furious about something, I sometimes beat the ground or a tree with my walking stick. But I certainly do not believe that the ground is to blame or that my beating can help anything. 'I am venting my anger'. And all the rites are of this kind. Such actions may be called Instinct-actions.... (RFGB 137-138)

Wittgenstein stresses the spontaneity of ritual action as the natural behavior of a ceremonial animal. This particular passage elicited some misunderstandings of Wittgenstein's thought about rituals. Some reduced his thought to a mere expressivist account ascribing no meaning beyond the secondary function of venting emotion to rituals. "Wittgenstein's point is not that all rituals are automatic or of one kind, but that all meaningful rituals have some basis in our natural way of seeing and reacting to the world. Ritual and ceremony - along with song, dance panting and countless other forms of expressions are natural ways of responding to aspects of the world that are meaningful and important to us" (Lerner 1995: 176). A meaningful ritual is one that brings new and significant aspects of life and the world to light, and thus helps a person to reorient his own life.

Religious rituals come out of the natural inclination to express our concerns, not out of reasoning about cause and effect. They are created in relation to the primitive natural expression of human existential concerns. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein expresses a similar concern regarding sensation words as they are connected to primitive natural expressions of sensations. "Words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place" (Morra 2019: 189). It is the cultural community that creates the rituals. Human beings have a natural disposition to create and observe rituals that can express their everyday concerns. Hence, humans create symbolic practices that can express their concern as for instances, anger, friendship etc. A right ritual can evoke in a participant spiritually edifying way of birth, death, sex, love, other infinite number of occasions that are deeply important to humans. Wittgenstein is not bringing forth a formula for distinguishing meaningful rituals from meaningless rituals. The meaning of rituals depends on the apt use of it in Wittgenstein's broader context of his later philosophy.

By including the natural inclination and disposition feature into the rise of religious rituals, Wittgenstein wanted to confront Frazer's claim that myth, magic and religion are practices based on theoretical and instrumental ways of reasoning. Wittgenstein ruled out Frazer's claim that religious rituals arise from erroneous reasoning which is overcome by science in the historical advancement. The practices based on theoretical reasoning are not symbolic and expressive according to Wittgenstein. He labels such an explanatory theory opinion. Opinion is not the foundation of any religious practices but attitudes. "No opinion serves as the foundation for a religious symbol. And only an opinion can involve an error" (Shabbir 2010: 442).

Primitive people did not act from opinions but from attitudes. Even though they had opinions and sometimes acted upon them, these practices are not

symbolic as in the case of religious rituals which are symbolic and expressive. "I believe that the characteristic feature of primitive man is that he does not act from opinions" (Shabbir 2010: 442). The primitive form of language games is not based on theoretical reflections or opinions. "The origin and the primitive form of the language-game is a reaction; only from this does the more complicated form grow. Language-I want to say-is a refinement, in the beginning was the deed" (Wawrzyniak 2003: 31). Wittgenstein makes a clear distinction between opinion and attitude. "What is the difference between an attitude and an opinion? I would like to say: the attitude comes *before* the opinion" (Shabbir 2010: 443). Opinions come out of reasoning and reflections. They are rational and based on good reasoning. One could be able to give solid philosophical or rational explanation to an opinion that one holds. People may differ in opinions according to the rationale behind them. They are open to discussion and debate. However, attitudes pertain to life and concern living experiences. "Attitudes are related to ways of seeing and experiencing various aspects of things, to desires, feelings, concerns, likes and dislikes. They are ways in which we grasp the meaning of things that make up our lives in a very personal, basic, immediate, and non-inferential fashion" (Wawrzyniak 2003: 176). The rich content of attitudes can be expressed in beliefs and accompanying feelings and thoughts. "Isn't belief in God an attitude? (Shabbir 2010: 442). Faith in God, that pivotal part of religion and religious belief, can be meaningfully understood as an attitude (Asuquo 2019). This attitude of belief in God is supported later by rational thinking and theological formulations. Attitude and opinion are mostly related to one another in human life. Wittgenstein wanted to show that religion along with magic and myth arises out of attitudes concerning human life not from opinions. Faith in religion is to have faith in what religion symbolizes through ritual practices (Sasa 2018). This faith has the ability to transform existential concerns into inspiring spiritual concerns. The effect of faith in spiritual or religious practice is different from faith in instrumental practices. Wittgenstein points to this difference; "I read among similar examples of a rain-king in Africa to whom the people pray *when the rainy period comes*. But surely that means that they do not really believe that he can make it rain, otherwise they would do it in the dry periods" (Shabbir 2010: 447). "Kissing the picture of one's beloved. That is *obviously not* based on the belief that it will have some specific effect on the object which the picture represents. It aims at satisfaction and achieves it. Or rather: it *aims* at nothing at all; we just behave this way and then we feel satisfied" (Shabbir 2010: 449). The point Wittgenstein makes is that religious practices are immune to error, since they are different from other kinds of cultural or social practices which may have an instrumental purpose. Religious practices are purely spiritual, and they do not have any instrumental purpose. That is why people hold on to the primitive ritualistic practices even when it does not fulfill any instrumental purposes (Wittgenstein & Granger 2012: 62).

Wittgenstein, commenting on Frazer's intellectualistic, rationalistic and scientific approach to the ritualistic practices, claims some sort of emotive and expressive aspect of ritualistic practices. Some of the readings from his remarks on Wittgenstein & Granger allude to this claim.

Burning an effigy. Kissing the picture of one's beloved. That is obviously not based on the belief that it will have some specific effect on the object which the picture represents. It aims at satisfaction and achieves it. Or rather, it aims at nothing at all; we just behave this way and then feel satisfied. But I certainly do not believe that the ground is to blame or that my beating can help anything. I am venting my anger. And all rites are of this kind. Such actions may be called instinct-actions (Wittgenstein & Granger 2012: 123).

There is no instrumental purpose behind the act of burning an effigy or kissing the photograph of a beloved one. They simply satisfy an urge or instinct. In that sense, they are non-cognitive. These analogies that Wittgenstein uses are parallel to the formation of pain behavior as he explains how human beings learn meaning of the word pain. "Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, natural expressions of sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behavior" (Shabbir 2010: 444). Crying out in pain is non-cognitive. If one genuinely is in pain then, the crying is not purpose directed. In a similar way, we shout 'come here'. The language of pain is said to develop out of instinctual, non-linguistic behavior. Similarly, the language we use in religion - the expression of religious beliefs, is an extension of certain primitive reactions that is to say a natural expression of wonder or fear (Wittgenstein & Granger 2012: 109). The kissing of a photograph of a loved one is an expression of love and burning an effigy is an expression of hatred. These acts are not purpose-driven and do not to have any effect on the person in the case. This is as opposed to the instrumentalist understanding where burning an effigy for example is to effect some harm to the persons involved (Wittgenstein & Granger 2012: 22). The satisfaction derived from the performance of the rituals does not arise from the belief. The action affects the objects represented in it. Yuval Lurie, while commenting on Wittgenstein's remarks on ceremonies and rituals in *Philosophy of Psychology*, makes the following statement:

Myth, magic, and religion are inspired symbolic expressions of existential concerns, promoting and enriching shared spiritual attitudes toward life. They manifest our common human nature, which gives rise to such concerns, as well as our natural human tendency to channel these concerns into expressive rituals that transforms them into inspiring spiritual attitudes toward life. (Graham 2014:179)

Anthony O'Hear asserts that Wittgenstein emphasizes the expressive and emotive aspects of primitive religion as religious beliefs accompany ritualistic practices that express and evoke deep needs and emotions (Shabbir 2010: 449). The expressive and symbolic interpretation of religious rituals leads to a non-cognitive understanding of religious belief in Wittgenstein. Religious rites are expressive and celebratory, none of which are performed to bring out anything. The theological function emphasized by Frazer is sidelined here in Wittgenstein's explanation. Wittgenstein urges us to see that religious rites need not be understood as purpose-driven at all. The rituals express something; however, what is expressed cannot be logically separated from the ritual itself. What is expressed

in the celebration of rituals cannot be described without reference to the form of the ritual itself (Lerner 1995).

TOWARDS A COMMON SPIRITUAL NATURE OF HUMAN BEINGS

Wittgenstein's criticism of Frazer on the conceptual nature of religion as it is based on reasoning and theoretical foundation point to another important aspect: There is a common underlying spiritual nature to human beings in all cultures. Wittgenstein imagines a religion without doctrines; however, he could not imagine a culture without some sort of religion. In every culture, there is a common spiritual nature that inspires humans to perform symbolic and expressive practices that relate to existential concerns without being founded on any theoretical principles, adapted in the course of time to support such practice (Allam 2018).

Frazer traces several religious practices along with myths and magic in several cultures in the ancient world due to historical influences. Wittgenstein, by criticizing this historical explanation to various rituals in different cultures, describes that these cultures manifest a common spirit. It is the common spirit or spiritual inclination that enables human beings to create and practice religious rituals and give expressive meaning to them. In many different cultures, human beings give symbolic expression of common existential concerns through religious practices. "All these different practices show that it is not a question of the derivation of one from the other, but of a common spirit. And one could invent (devise) all these ceremonies oneself. And precisely that spirit from which one invented them would be their common spirit" (Arnswald 2009: 151).

Wittgenstein criticizes Frazer's attempt to trace the similarity of different rituals due to historical influence and the failure to acknowledge the common spirit. These practices derive from the common spiritual nature manifesting human existential concerns (Lerner 1995). Our understanding of the expressive meaning of religious rituals can be articulated in meaningful and expressive language. 'Man as a ceremonial animal' (Díaz 2019:129) has a mysterious life which is brought about by the symbolic and expressive rituals. The common spiritual nature of human beings has to be understood by the very self that performs the rituals and makes research about the common spiritual nature. The focus should be on the primitive nature of the self with its instincts and urges instead of primitive distant societies. Wittgenstein's method seems to reduce the unfamiliarity between oneself and an alien culture by prompting us to see that certain practices performed in other cultures stem from the same primitive urge and instinct out of which certain rituals are practiced in our own culture. Foreign culture and rituals originated in other cultures are made more familiar and understandable. Seeing our humanity reflected in rituals and practices of other people help us to see the familiarities and strangeness and ultimate inexplicability of our own human nature (Lerner 1995). Wittgenstein's purpose is to show that people's behavior is manifested through its religious beliefs which are expressed in the practices ceremonies. The communal religious practices make manifest the values, ideals and concepts which lie at the heart of their culture. Rituals are mirrors that reflect human nature (Nagl 2017: 31).

CONCLUSION

Wittgenstein, in his later philosophy, has developed a new theory of meaning - meaning as use is sufficiently supported by his idea of the language-game, family resemblance and form of life. Language is compared to a game which is played in accordance with certain rules and a patterned order. These rules are mastered by constant practice, and it is very much embedded in daily life. Language-games are based on the form of life which provides ample context for any game. The rules of all language-games are meaningful within their internal boundary. Since they have their own patterned order and social nature, they go beyond individual freedom either to create or choose the rules to be applied. Here reconciliation is attempted between the language-game as a rule-bound activity and the role of human freedom within the language-game on the basis of form of life. Wittgenstein's philosophy is an attack on the essentialist view that essence precedes existence. In the essentialist view, a rule is conceived as something abstract, and the application of a rule is something concrete. The application is controlled and directed by the abstract norms and rules. This Platonic essentialism is questioned by Wittgenstein in his interpretation of rule-following as one activity. The Platonic idea of internalized mental structure as determining and justifying our linguistic action is refuted here (Nagl 2017). Wittgenstein sidelines any concept of the abstract idea of rule or any mental structure which can determine our linguistic activity by removing the gap between the rule and application. Wittgenstein's understanding of rule-following is an attack on Platonic idealism and essentialism.

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