CONCLUSION

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Ludwig Wittgenstein has influenced the discipline of philosophy as well as its subsidiary fields including the philosophy of religion. He has produced two different philosophies, both equally brilliant and mainly centered on the philosophy of language with a non-metaphysical approach. His novel and sublime insights into religion and religious beliefs contribute to the contemporary philosophy of religion revitalizing itself. I have attempted to expose his descriptive, pragmatic and non-metaphysical method of looking at religion and religious beliefs. The central theme of his philosophy at every stage of his career is focused on language and meaning. Wittgenstein has not produced any systematic theories of religion in his philosophical career. Rather, he has expressed a persisting tendency to doubt the possibility of meaningfully expressing religion and religious beliefs in language. In spite of his doubt about the meaningful expression of religion in language, can one find any traces of meaning in religious utterances? Is there a space for a meaningful talk about religion and religious beliefs in Wittgenstein's philosophy at its various stages? A positive answer to the question can be arrived at after surfing his philosophy.

Wittgenstein, in his linguistic analysis, focuses on the theories of meaning at both phases of his philosophy. *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, which represents his early thought, brings forth the picture theory of meaning where the structure of language reveals the structure of reality, and language is founded on the bedrock of reality. At this stage, there is not much room for any meaningful talk about religion and religious belief, since they come outside the boundary of language. The purpose
of his philosophy is served by setting boundary to the expression of thought; that is, language which describes the facts of this world. Any attempt to trespass the boundary results in nonsense. Since religion and religious belief fall beyond the boundary of language, any statement on religion becomes nonsense. That is the realm of silence.

However, in his later work, *Philosophical Investigations*, there is a decisive change in his philosophical reflection on language and meaning based on his new philosophical methodology of the language-game. The language-game can be seen as an analogy to describe language. His linguistic analysis based on the language-game and form of life has contributed to different issues in the philosophy of religion and the epistemology of religious belief. The dynamic and pluralistic understanding of language and religious beliefs has rich implications in today’s world to deconstruct the dogmatic and fundamentalist attitude of religions. From this, we can understand that Wittgenstein had a respectful attitude toward religion and religious belief, though he presented himself as a non-believer. Religious belief is taken out from the upper chamber of conceptualization and dogmatization to the real life of humans, where it finds its meaning. Religion is that realm where belief and life merge together. A meaningful talk about religion is possible within the boundary of language-game.

Philosophy is conceived as a critique of language in both phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy. Philosophy starts with puzzlement; philosophical problems cannot be solved, but they dissolve. They are compared to a mental cramp, and a person caught up in philosophical perplexity is compared to one who is caught
in a room and wants to go out but doesn’t know the way, or a fly caught in a bottle. The function of philosophy is to show a way out. "Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language" (PI 109). Therefore, the function as well as the method of philosophy is the same in both phases of Wittgenstein's philosophy. The function is therapeutic; the method linguistic. However, the linguistic method he employs differs in the two stages of his philosophy. In his early philosophy, logical form was the concern, whereas linguistic function was given the top priority in his later philosophy. For Wittgenstein, the therapeutic function of philosophy is proper linguistic analysis. The role of language in human life is a running theme of Wittgenstein’s philosophical analysis. Problems start when language goes on holiday.

For Wittgenstein, philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thought and proposition. It aims at settling the controversies about the limits of natural science by drawing the boundary of what can be said or by setting a limit to language. Language articulates the facts of the world with clarity and precision. Language is capable of depicting the reality or the world. The world is a totality of facts. In fact, the world is divided into facts, and facts uniquely determine what the world actually is. A fact is a set of the state of affairs and that state of affairs is a combination of objects. A fact is not itself some kind of object but objects combined in a specific way give rise to a ‘fact.’ Language describes the essence of reality in the form of propositions. Hence to know the structure of language is to know the structure of propositions. *Tractatus* gives a clear analysis of the structure of propositions. A proposition is essentially an assertion about a fact or state of affairs. It can also be
analyzed into its component propositions until a proposition is reached which cannot be further analyzed. This unanalyzable proposition is called an atomic or elementary proposition. Language is powerful enough to contain reality.

However, Wittgenstein brings out a realm that cannot be articulated by language. The explication of the mystical – that which is outside the boundary of human language is that realm. Human language fails to reveal the realm of what is beyond, where we have to resort to silence. Ethical, aesthetical and religious values cannot be articulated in propositions, since language is not reference-free in the first phase of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. Religion and what we call religious are beyond human language. A sentence from the preface of Tractatus distinguishes the areas where language can articulate and where it cannot articulate. “What can be said at all can be said clearly and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence.” This sublime understanding of the mystical which he describes with his ‘doctrine of silence,’ revitalizes religions that try to prove and conceptualize divine existence.

Wittgenstein, in his later linguistic analysis, also aims at dissolving problems by rearranging what we already have. Here the aim and method of philosophy remain the same. However, he shifts the emphasis from logical form to linguistic function. This results in a new philosophy of language. This is done with a new understanding of language analysis with the help of the language-game and form of life. In language, words are used with their own grammar in specific contexts. A word finds its meaning in its use. The different uses in different settings legitimize the plurality of language. The logical form of the Tractatus is replaced by linguistic function.
Philosophical method is like the treatment for some illness. In Wittgenstein's philosophical methods, he describes different linguistic therapies. Therapy is used according to the nature of the illness and the person afflicted. The power of the word to heal is better elucidated by his new theory of meaning. Meaning depends on the use of the word in its context. Therefore, meaning depends on the activity of use and context of its use. The meaning of language is explicated in connection with action rather than reference. The meaning of the word evolves from the mould of activity. Justification is possible only within the language-game. The language-game itself is not called for justification.

Language enjoys its meaning in religious discourses; this is in sharp contrast with Wittgenstein’s early understanding of language. The variety of language uses makes religious language possible. Language used within the religious setting is meaningful within the language-game of religion. The meaningfulness of language used in religious surroundings is tested only within the language game, which is not called for justification. The rationale of language used in religion and religious belief is found only within the setting of religion. The multiple uses of language also legitimize the plurality of religious traditions and religious languages. Language employed in religious settings enjoys its sense within its boundary. There is nothing common between different religious traditions. There exist some similarities and relationships which Wittgenstein calls a family resemblance. Commonality cannot be found at the depth level. The sense of religious language operates within its setting. Therefore the meaningfulness of each religious belief is to be sought only
within its context; it operates within the purview of those believers who follow that particular belief.

In Wittgenstein's later philosophy, language fails to give ample proofs and evidences for religious belief. It fails to articulate a firm ground for religious belief by way of evidence. Propositional proofs and scientific evidences do not support religious belief. The use of language in relation to religion is not meaningful in the sense that religious belief is groundless. It is groundless in the sense that it is not grounded on any scientific proposition, but rather a way of life. "The end is not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting" (OC 110). Propositions cannot safeguard religious belief. It is grounded on the way of life that is acquired through constant practice. A belief is based on a system of beliefs, which is taken for granted. We acknowledge and trust that system of beliefs, which is there as is our life. Here it is the sphere where action dominates. Language is not something essential to religion. If it occurs, it is part of religious behavior.

In Wittgenstein's meta-philosophical project, traditional philosophical theories give way to descriptive linguistic method where philosophical problems are due to confusions in the linguistic usage. Philosophy practiced not by formulating theories about phenomena, but rather by describing. Wittgenstein remarks: "philosophy simply puts everything before us and neither explains nor deduces anything" (PI 126). The traditional view of solving philosophical problems by providing scientific theories and metaphysical explanations are untenable in his philosophical project (Hansen 1013). Wittgenstein is not in favor of a traditional and theoretical approach - construction and defense of philosophical theories - to solve
philosophical problems. Rejecting the traditional and theoretical approach, Wittgenstein never proposed an alternative theory. His approach is therapeutic. This unorthodox method can be seen in his remarks on religion and religious beliefs. The traditional view of having a cosmological understanding of God - God as creator of this universe and looking for solid evidence to prove and formulate sophisticated theories to support such proofs are not in Wittgenstein's project of doing philosophy.

One could meaningfully talk about religion in Wittgenstein's philosophy without metaphysical commitment. His remarks about religion point to the fact that one can meaningfully engage in religious practices without committing to any doctrinal and dogmatic system. Wittgenstein's treatment of the language-game and its relationship to form of life reveals the connection between human behavior and the language they use. A philosophical investigation, which is primarily grammatical, leads to the depth grammar which is the language situation. A study of the grammatical situations of religious language finds its footings in the ceremonies and rituals performed by human beings. Therefore, the connect between linguistic use and function is important in Wittgenstein's philosophy.

Wittgenstein always wanted to see the connections - connections between the different elements of the language-game. In order to understand a clear view of any language-game every element of language-game needs to be seen in its entirety. At the depth grammatical level the philosopher sees the connection among the different elements of the language-game and among different language games. Grammatical investigations lead one to specific language situations. In specific language situations - as in the case of religious language situations - the connections existing
among different objects used in language can be seen. The kinds of objects like God, suffering, salvation, and sin are to be understood in relation to the occasion in which they are used.

Wittgenstein's philosophical project is centered on the philosophy of language with a non-metaphysical approach. Wittgenstein claimed "what we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical use to everyday use" (*PI* 116). Wittgenstein's renewed approach to language and religious beliefs significantly influenced the traditional Judeo-Christian approach to religious beliefs which is highly metaphysical with its doctrinal and dogmatic character. After Wittgenstein, there was a change in the approach and application of religious belief, a change from theory to practice. The meaning of religious language is divorced from its doctrinal footings and finds its meaning in ordinary life situations, where one uses them in religious celebrations and ritual practices. Theological discourses, like god-talk, are brought down to their 'original home' which consists of religious practices, rituals and human existential situations. The grammar of theology is the grammar of practice for Wittgenstein.

This non-metaphysical approach is exposed by an investigation into the grammar of language. As we have discussed last section of third chapter, depth grammar is concerned with a wider domain of language used mainly as an integration of speech with other human activities as opposed to the surface grammar which corresponds to the syntactic form of expression. A context-sensitive or occasion-sensitive aspect of language use is taken into consideration in depth grammar (Travis 100). Occasion-sensitive grammar would specify occasion specific
rules for the purpose of a particular occasion of utterance, a correct use of an expression. The sentence can have multiplicity of occasion-sensitive grammars depending on the occasion in which it is used.

Grammar is essential for Wittgenstein in describing language; a description of grammar is a description of essence. Wittgenstein claimed that "Essence is expressed by grammar" (PI 371). He makes it clear that the essence of language, that is its function, is linked to everyday thoughts and linguistic practices. Wittgenstein's claim that "Grammar tells what kind of object anything is" (Theology as Grammar) (PI 373) is seen in an interpretative manner, in the background of the stated claim that grammar expresses essence. Looking at the use of words within its surroundings is the best way to find the meaning of words. Theological discourses, like god-talk, are brought down to their 'original home' which consists of religious practices, rituals and human existential situations. The grammar of theology is the grammar of practice for Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's non-metaphysical approach to religious beliefs takes place in two distinct directions: one in the direction of the referents of language used within the setting of religion, and another in the direction of scientific and historical evidence to support religious beliefs.

Grammatical remarks like "What is God?" or "How does God communicate," are to be looked at by how they are used in their grammatical situation (Wittgenstein, Zettel 717). Concepts like God, love and sacrifice used in theology are to be understood in the context of their use in celebrations, festivals and conventions (Bell, “Theology as Grammar” 310). These concepts are used in a
particular way by the believer and gain meaning. These words gain meaning not because of any object referring to them outside language but because of words related to the people who use them individually or collectively.

Another important point Wittgenstein makes is that grammar which expresses the kind of objects in all religious utterances is not uniform. Grammar of religious utterance is complex, various, and mixed. The use of the analogy of the language game and form of life shows the complexity of language and its close relationship with people and their lives. Wittgenstein's remarks that "If we look at the actual use of a word, what we see is something constantly fluctuating..... If for our purposes we wish to regulate the use of a word by definite rules, then alongside its fluctuating use we set up a different use by codifying one of its characteristic aspects" (PG 77). There is no uniform grammar for the word 'God' since it is used in multiple ways. "I have always wanted to say something about the grammar of ethical expression, or e.g. of 'God.' Now: use of such a word as 'God'. It has been used in many different ways: e.g. sometimes for something very like a human being - a physical body" (Wittgenstein, Lectures 1932-1935 5.1). Varieties of grammatical usage make religious utterance complex and are not limited to a single set of rules that governs it.

The kind of objects used in religious beliefs need not to be justified by the referent or by any rational or historical evidence. For Wittgenstein, religious beliefs are not based on any scientific or historical evidence: "We don’t talk about hypothesis, or about high probability or about knowing" (Wittgenstein, Lectures 57). Religious beliefs are not factual beliefs; however, religious beliefs involve certain
factual beliefs: beliefs about the occurrence of certain historical events. For Wittgenstein, historical narratives or stories are occasions for believing.

The total character of religious belief is not the result of good evidence. This system of beliefs does not rest upon any evidence, but is there like our lives (Bell, “Theology as Grammar” 310). For Wittgenstein, “the end is not ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting” (OC 110). For him, that God exists or not is not the problem, but what is important is what is meant by the word ‘God.’ The believers believe not on the basis of the proof for the existence of God. Religious belief itself is not an outcome of any intellectual enterprise. Religious discourse neither justifies nor explains religious practices. To adopt religious talk is to express one's commitment to a certain way of life (Harre 231). Penetrated into the depth grammar, religious language does not give an explanation of supernatural entities as natural science describes and explains natural entities and facts. The significance of religious expression is not its referent but its function in a person's life. Therefore, it is neither a referent nor scientific or historical evidence to support such a belief that makes the use of language meaningful in religion.

Wittgenstein's discussion on the symbolic and expressive nature of religion gives some footing for a meaningful talk about religion in his later thought. Religion is expressive and symbolic; it emerges from cultural rituals, metaphors and symbolic narratives. The symbols, which are expressive, are without scientific explanations. For Wittgenstein, error and progress are not features of religion but of science. Science and technology are based on instrumental practice; intellect and reasoning tend toward progress and development. Religious beliefs 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 a lack of explanation. Wittgenstein proposes an anti-intellectualist approach to matters of religion and religious beliefs. As symbolic and expressive, they are more akin to ritualistic practices. Wittgenstein places prime importance on action rather than doctrine concerning the spiritual nature of religious practices: "I can well imagine a religion in which there are no doctrinal propositions, in which there is thus no talking (Waismann, Vienna Circle 117).

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. They are created by cultural communities in relation to the primitive natural expression of human existential concerns such as anger, friendship, love, birth, death and other occasions deeply important to humans. Religious beliefs are meaningfully understood as attitudes that pertain to life and concern living experiences. Wittgenstein's understanding of religious beliefs as ritualistic does not totally neglect the theological worldviews that support ritualistic practices. However, such worldviews that are systematically presented are not essential feature of religious beliefs for him. 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 symbolic. The expressive use of symbols is an important characteristic of religious practices as distinct from the instrumental use of signs Wittgenstein's point is that rituals are not based on any proven theory; however, one can well understand a ritual in terms of a theory.
In Wittgenstein's view, faith in God that pivotal part of religion and religious belief can be meaningfully understood as an attitude. This attitude of belief in God can be supported later by rational thinking and theological formulations. Wittgenstein is against holding any instrumental purpose behind religious practices as in the case of the act of burning an effigy or kissing the photograph of a beloved one. They simply satisfy an urge or an instinct. In that sense, they are non-cognitive.

There is a possibility of religion in Wittgenstein. There is a possibility of a meaningful talk about religion even if not in the traditional philosophical way. In his project there is a naturalistic and pragmatic tendency which surpasses the space for any superseding supernatural beings and any dogmatic and doctrinal proofs to support such a being. It is pragmatic in the sense that it is rooted not in doctrines but in actions, and that religious beliefs are capable of guiding one's life. Religious talk, insofar as it is considered as a religious act, can be accommodated in the philosophical understanding of Wittgenstein. What is important for him is not the words but the role of the words in the life of the believer. It is practice that gives the word its meaning. Wittgenstein, in his understanding of meaning as use, is also consistent in its application to religious belief. Religious language is part of religious activity; therefore, as religious behavior it gains meaning. Penetrated into the depth grammar, religious language does not give an explanation of supernatural entities as natural science describes and explains natural entities and facts. Religious assertions are not fact statements (Clack, Wittgenstein, Frazer and Religion 55). The significance of religious expression is not its referent but its function in a person's
life; one can meaningfully engage in traditional religious practice without metaphysical commitments.

Wittgenstein had a descriptive method in dealing with religion and religious beliefs as in the case of all philosophical subjects. He never claimed to be the author of any particular theory of religion. Wittgenstein had made several remarks about God; however, he was not favoring a cosmological understanding of God as in any Abramic religion of the world. Wittgenstein conceived religious belief more as attitudinal than cognitive. It is a deeper and comprehensive worldview. A belief in God is the effect of such a worldview. Wittgenstein anticipated some sort of religious atheism reflected in the contemporary writers on religion.\(^7^1\) He was able to see the world from a religious point of view. His religious point of view at its depth permeates everything pertaining to human life. A metaphysical and scientific approach to religion is incoherent in Wittgenstein's view. However, the rejection of a metaphysical approach seems to amount to a kind of naturalistic tendency in religion.

Wittgenstein has influenced the discipline of philosophy as well as its subsidiary fields including the philosophy of religion. His novel and sublime view on religion and religious belief enriches the contemporary philosophy of religion. His profound thoughts on religion and religious belief are based on his different understanding of language and meaning. Wittgenstein's new approach to the philosophy of language has considerably influenced his philosophy of religion. This

\(^7^1\) Ronald Dworkin in his recent book claims that religion is not restricted to theism. There is a possibility of being religious without believing in any god. He seeks a possibility of religious atheism since he considers religion as an interpretative concept. See Dworkin 14.
non-metaphysical approach has brought religious discourse back to the life of the community of believers. Theology after Wittgenstein\textsuperscript{72} becomes the grammar of practice surpassing the priority of doctrines. This pragmatic approach is explained by the analysis of his parenthetical remark, theology as grammar, based on his new approach to the theory of meaning in his later philosophy. The religious celebrations and ritualistic practices of the believers find meaning without scientific and historic evidences. A meaningful talk about religion and religious beliefs is made possible in pragmatic contexts without scientific and doctrinal justifications.

\textsuperscript{72} Kerr argues that theology has become a matter of practice with Wittgenstein's considerable influence in philosophy as well as theology in his recent work \textit{Theology after Wittgenstein}. See Kerr 140.