

# Confluence of Spirituality and Religion

Dr Mahendra Perera

<https://mahendraperera.com>

# Disclosures/Personal Info

- Christian
- Grew up in Sri Lanka – a predominantly Buddhist Country
- Respects all religions
- Read widely on philosophical and mystic matters
- Consultant/Specialist Psychiatrist

# Religion



Some religious symbols

# What do these terms mean to you?

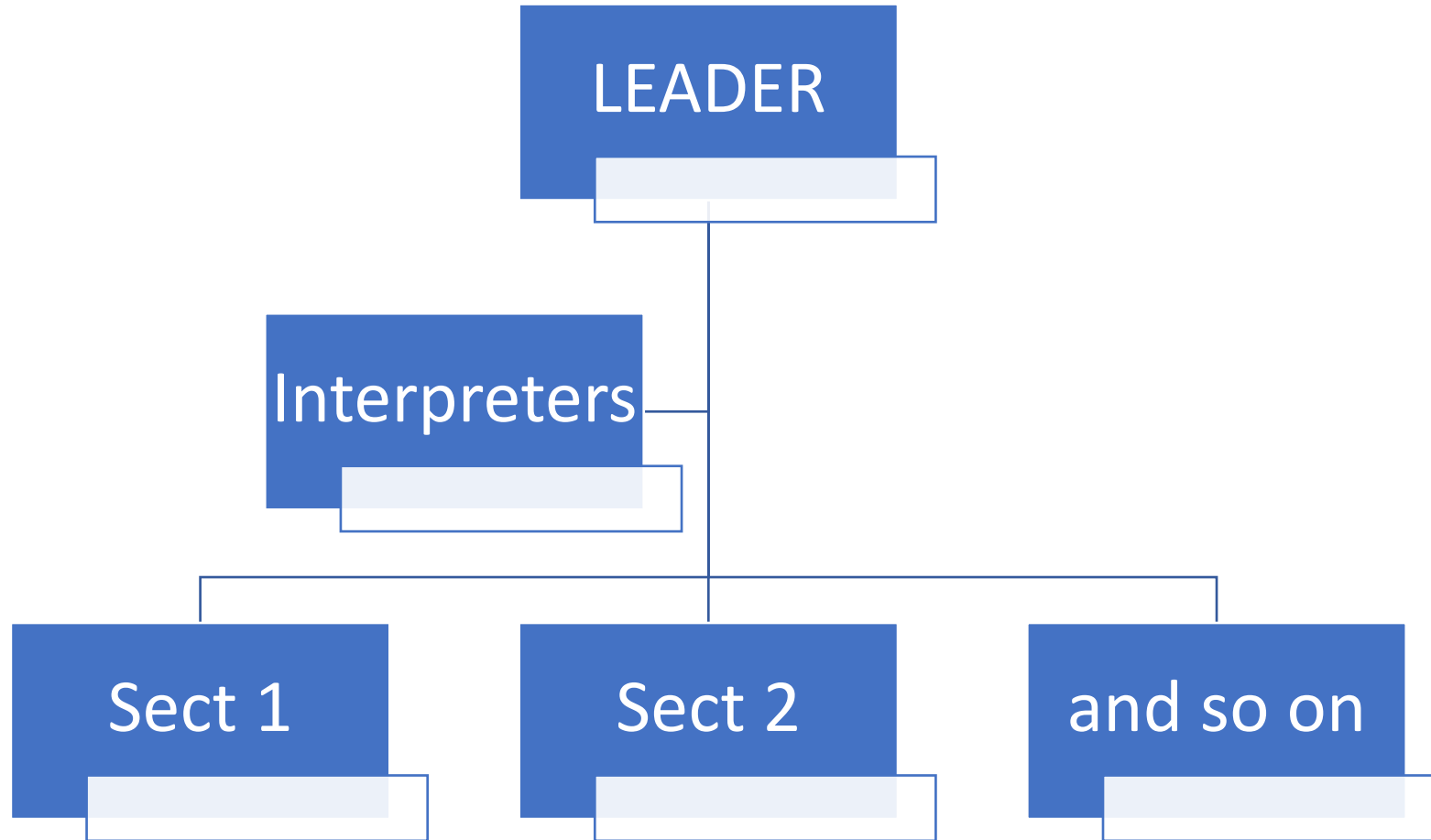
## RELIGION

- *a specific set of organised beliefs and practices, usually shared by a community or group*
- *Promulgated or in reference to teachings of an individual or practices coming down generations*
- *Usually rule bound*

# Issues

- Context
- Language
- Time
- Vested Interests
- Appearances
- Orthodoxy
- Fragmentation

# What Has Happened to Religion: a personal view



# Benefits

## **Individual/Family/Society**

- Teaches the young for rules to live by
- Brings the family together at worship
- Promotes cohesion in those who usually belong to the same group

## **Religious Leaders**

- Security
- Time to study the teachings in depth
- Review the materials and update as is required – contextual
- They are revered members of the society

# Problems\*

## Individual/Family/Society

- Divisions
  - Within different religions
  - Within the same religion
- Hostilities
- Giving Up →
- Convert → problems even within your own family
- Persecution

## Religious Leaders

- Abuse of Power
- Struggles within the same religion
- Materialism
- Politics –Should or shouldn't?

\*There is nothing called a free lunch



# Spirituality



Disclaimer: This is not an advertisement for any of the products

# Spirituality

a broad concept with room for many perspectives

- *in general, it includes a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves*
- *more of an individual practice, and has to do with having a sense of peace and purpose – ‘introspection’*
- *a process of developing beliefs around the meaning of life and connection with others, without any religious connections*

# Benefits

- Cut out the middle-man/woman
- It is an individual working on their own
- Hence you will define what it means for you

# Downside

- Different Views
  - ok as long as there is no proselytizing
- Conflict with your religion/religious beliefs you grew up with
- Do a thing which is not quite OK but justify it with your own brand of 'spirituality' → Cults

# The Four-Way Test\*

- Is it the TRUTH?
- Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

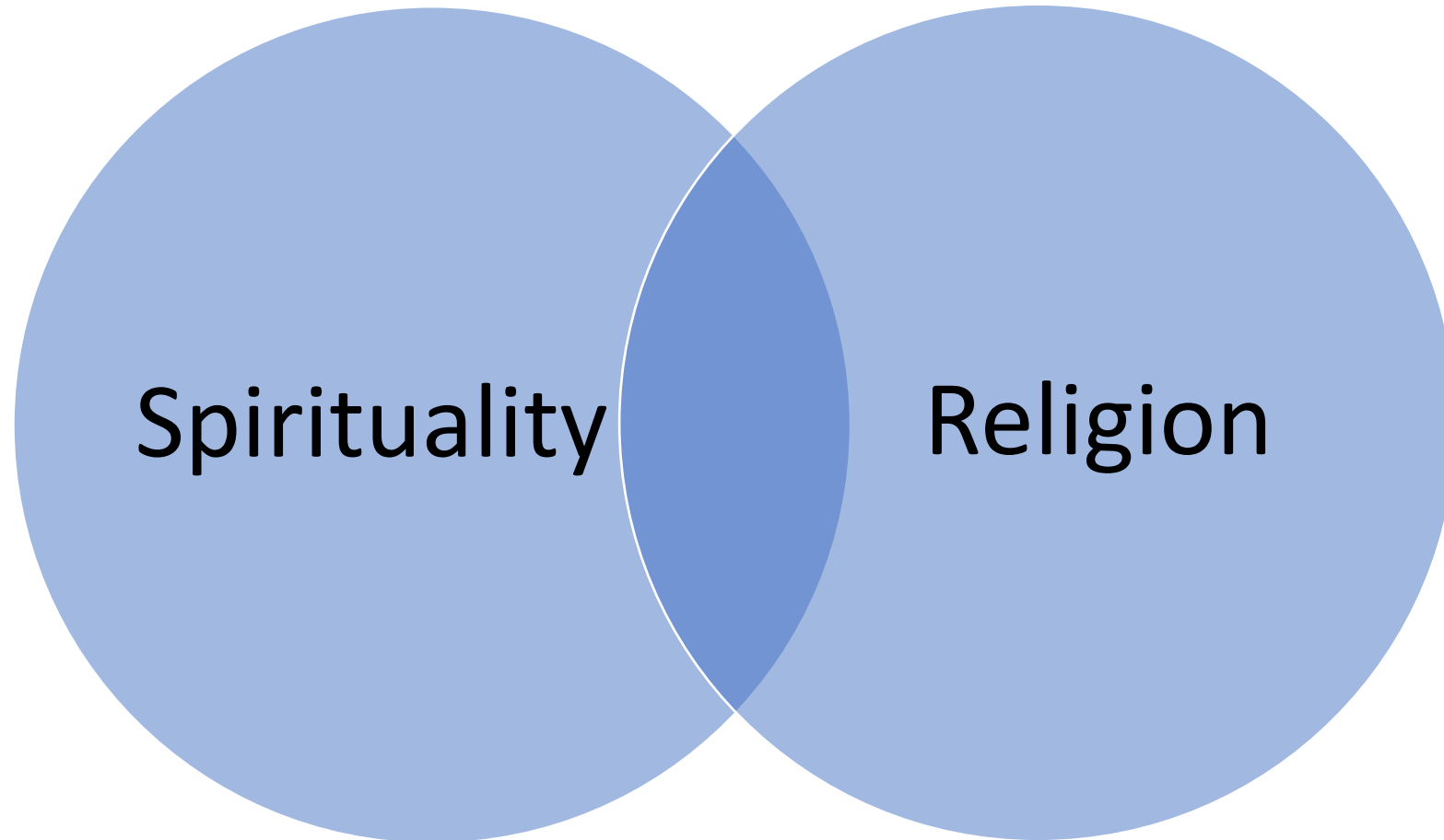
*\*Courtesy of Rotarians*

# Spirituality, Morality and Religiosity

- Morality is doing what is 'right'
- Religion is doing what you are told, regardless of what is 'right'
- Spiritual people are not god-less
- They just happen to honour the “god” in all of humanity

# Spirituality

**WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS ?**



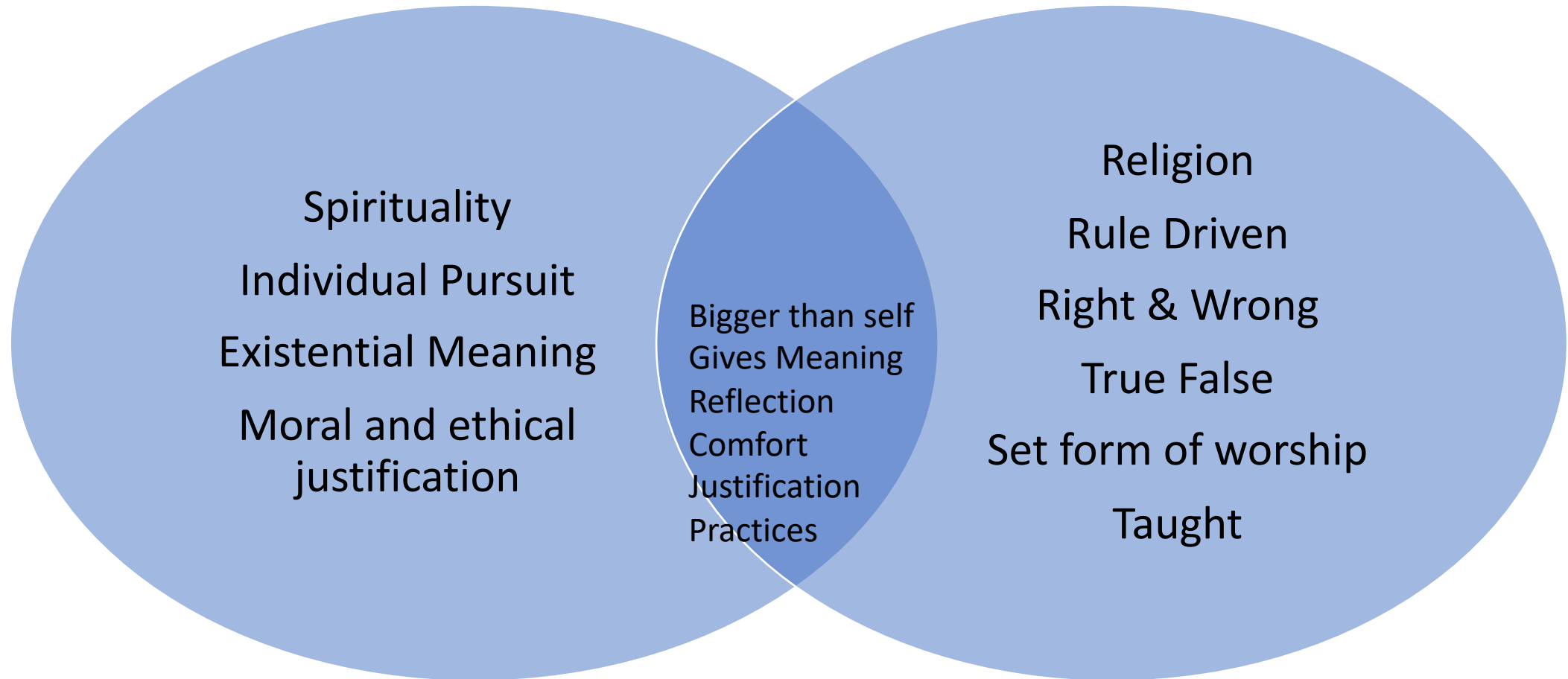
**Spirituality**

**Religion**



**Does God/Supreme Being  
belong to  
any religion ?**

Paraphrased of a quote by Mahatma Gandhi



# Concluding Remarks

- Religions arose from spiritual background
- Individuals have redefined what was taught by the Masters
- The average religious practices are based on spiritual values – *confluence*
- Unfortunately, there are those who advocate make rules and interpret teachings to their advantage – *divergence*

**It is the role for each one of us to think carefully  
and decide on the spiritual basis of the religion we belong to**

# Epilogue

The trifling of life creates  
differences

In the higher order of things

We are all

**ONE**

Thank you for  
listening

