**Call for Papers: Religious/Spiritual Experience and Other Domains of Human Activity**

The Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience invites submissions of high-quality abstracts of 150-300 words for its group meeting at the Central APA. The APA is currently planning the Central Division meeting at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, IL, on February 23-26, 2022, with virtual backup plans. Abstracts should be anonymized and sent by email to [apacentral@sophere.org](mailto:apacentral@sophere.org) before **August 15** with the subject line “Central APA Submission”. Notifications of acceptance will be emailed by **Aug 25**. Paper presentation time should be no more than 20-30 minutes. Presenters will have to be registered members of the APA. Selected papers will be published in the special issue of Religions free of charge.

Alfred Schutz developed a theory of finite provinces of meaning, beginning with pragmatic everyday life and continuing on to suggest a variety of finite provinces of meaning that are not pragmatically motivated as everyday life is and that involve modifications of everyday life. Such provinces of meaning could include: literature, art, music, play, dreaming, theorizing, phantasying, telling a joke, or religious/spiritual experience. On the basis of his analysis of everyday life, he articulated six features of the cognitive style that would pertain to any province of meaning: a form of spontaneity, a tension of consciousness, the way one experiences oneself, a specific *epoché* by which one distinguishes the province one inhabits from other provinces, a form of social relationship, and an understanding of temporality. These features would all be modified from the way they are found in everyday life as one passes to a different province of meaning.

We, members of SOPHERE (The Society for the Phenomenology of Religious Experience), hope to sponsor a session at the meeting of the Central branch of the American Philosophical Association to be help in Spring of 2023. The title of the Session is “Religious/Spiritual Experience and Other Domains of Human Activity.” Submissions need not employ Schutzian methodology, but the idea would be to compare and contrast religious or spiritual experience with other domains of human activity. For example, how is religious or spiritual experience like or different from play? Is religious experience like experience of painting or music? How is religious/spiritual experience like or different from literary experience or from the kind of theorizing one often finds accompanying religious/spiritual experience, e.g., metaphysics or natural theology.

Samples of possible questions might be:

1. How does theorizing interact with religious/spiritual experience? Are the standards of philosophical/theological justification altered when dealing with religious experience as certain views on pragmatic encroachment suggest? Can an overly theorized approach to religious/spiritual experience distort it? What does one make of discussions in the philosophical tradition about the relationship of faith and reason?
2. How is religious/spiritual experience like and different from phantasy? What would be the implications for a view that religious/spiritual experience is nothing more than an unfounded imaginative projection that flies in the face of reality?
3. Discuss the role of the body in religious experience, e.g. what role does religious/spiritual ritual play in religious experience? Why do rituals include art, paintings, music, gesture, incense, light and darkness, architecture, the spoken word? Does the sphere of art undergo a transformation when integrated with religious-spiritual experience? Is ritual like and/or different from play?
4. Discuss the place of narrative, sacred texts, and literature in ritual and religious/spiritual experience?
5. How might one think of religious/spiritual experiences and experiences of awe (e.g. at the sight of a landscape) or forms of play (eg. Sports events or political realities) as para-ritual events? Are there differences?
6. Can one develop comparisons or contrasts of how religious/spiritual experiences interact with other spheres of activity in different religious communities, e.g. the role of music or narratives in Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, or Christian rituals?
7. What is the relationship between religious/spiritual experience and the natural sciences? Is religion inherently inimical to the natural sciences?