

## Homo Religiosus?

Are humans naturally predisposed to religion and supernatural beliefs? If so, does this naturalness provide a moral foundation for religious freedom? This volume offers a cross-disciplinary approach to these questions, engaging in a range of contemporary debates at the intersection of religion, cognitive science, sociology, anthropology, political science, epistemology, and moral philosophy. The contributors to this original and important volume present individual, sometimes opposing, points of view on the naturalness of religion thesis and its implications for religious freedom. Topics include the epistemological foundations of religion, the relationship between religion and health, and a discussion of the philosophical foundations of religious freedom as a natural, universal right, drawing implications for the normative role of religion in public life. By challenging dominant intellectual paradigms, such as the secularization thesis and the Enlightenment view of religion, the volume opens the door to a powerful and provocative reconceptualization of religious freedom.

Timothy Samuel Shah is Research Professor of Government at Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion; Director for International Research at the Religious Freedom Research Project at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs; and Senior Director of the South and Southeast Asia Action Team with the Religious Freedom Institute.

Jack Friedman is pursuing his PhD in political science at the University of Maryland. He is a former project manager at Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion, and a former research assistant for the Religious Freedom Research Project at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs. He is also co-editor of *Religious Freedom and Gay Rights: Emerging Conflicts in the United States and Europe* (2016).

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42235-2 — Homo Religiosus?  
Edited by Timothy Samuel Shah, Jack Friedman  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

## CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND SOCIETY

### SERIES EDITORS

PAUL MOSER, *Loyola University Chicago*  
CHAD MEISTER, *Bethel College*

This is a series of interdisciplinary texts devoted to major-level courses in religion, philosophy, and related fields. It includes original, current, and wide-spanning contributions by leading scholars from various disciplines that (a) focus on the central academic topics in religion and philosophy, (b) are seminal and up-to-date regarding recent developments in scholarship on the various key topics, and (c) incorporate, with needed precision and depth, the major differing perspectives and backgrounds – the central voices on the major religions and the religious, philosophical, and sociological viewpoints that cover the intellectual landscape today. Cambridge Studies in Religion, Philosophy, and Society is a direct response to this recent and widespread interest and need.

### RECENT BOOKS IN THE SERIES

Roger Trigg  
*Religious Diversity: Philosophical and Political Dimensions*

John Cottingham  
*Philosophy of Religion: Towards a More Humane Approach*

William J. Wainwright  
*Reason, Revelation, and Devotion: Inference and Argument in Religion*

Gordon Graham  
*Philosophy, Art, and Religion: Understanding Faith and Creativity*

Keith Ward  
*The Christian Idea of God: A Philosophical Foundation for Faith*

# Homo Religiosus?

*Exploring the Roots of Religion and Religious  
Freedom in Human Experience*

Edited by

**TIMOTHY SAMUEL SHAH**

*Baylor University and Georgetown University*

**JACK FRIEDMAN**

*University of Maryland*



Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42235-2 — Homo Religiosus?  
Edited by Timothy Samuel Shah, Jack Friedman  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108422352](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108422352)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781108381536

© Timothy Samuel Shah and Jack Friedman 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-42235-2 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-108-43395-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

*The philosophers of the eighteenth century explained the gradual weakening of beliefs in an altogether simple fashion. Religious zeal, they said, will be extinguished as freedom and enlightenment increase. It is unfortunate that the facts do not accord with this theory . . .*

*The short space of sixty years will never confine the whole imagination of man; the incomplete joys of this world will never suffice for his heart. Alone among all the beings, man shows a natural disgust for existence and an immense desire to exist; he scorns life and fears nothingness. These different instincts constantly drive his soul toward contemplation of another world, and it is religion that guides it there. Religion is therefore only a particular form of hope, and it is as natural to the human heart as hope itself. Only by a kind of aberration of the intellect and with the aid of a sort of moral violence exercised on their own nature do men stray from religious beliefs; an invincible inclination leads them back to them. Disbelief is an accident; faith alone is the permanent state of humanity.*

*In considering religions from a purely human point of view, one can therefore say that all religions draw from man himself an element of strength that can never fail them, because it depends on one of the constituent principles of human nature.*

— Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. I,  
Part 2, Chapter 9

*Man can hardly be defined, ..., as an animal who makes tools; ants and beavers and many other animals make tools, in the sense that they make an apparatus. Man can be defined as an animal that makes dogmas. As he piles doctrine on doctrine and conclusion on conclusion in the formation of some tremendous scheme of philosophy and religion, he is, in the only legitimate sense of which the expression is capable, becoming more and more human. When he drops one doctrine after another in a refined skepticism, when he declines to tie himself to a system, when he says that he has outgrown definitions, when he says that he disbelieves in finality, when, in his own imagination, he sits as God,*

*holding no form of creed but contemplating all, then he is by that very process sinking slowly backwards into the vagueness of vagrant animals and the unconsciousness of the grass. Trees have no dogmas. Turnips are singularly broad-minded.*

— Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *Heretics*, Chapter XX

*He has made everything beautiful in its time: also he has put eternity in men's hearts, so that no man can find out the work that God does from the beginning to the end.*

— Ecclesiastes 3: 11

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>page ix</i>
Introduction Jack Friedman and Timothy Samuel Shah	i
1 Are Human Beings Naturally Religious? Christian Smith	35
2 Are Human Beings Naturally Religious? A Response to Christian Smith Phil Zuckerman	55
3 On the Naturalness of Religion and Religious Freedom Justin L. Barrett	67
4 Sacred Versus Secular Values: Cognitive and Evolutionary Sciences of Religion and Their Implications for Religious Freedom Richard Sosis and Jordan Kiper	89
5 Theism, Naturalism, and Rationality Alvin Plantinga	120
6 Alvin Plantinga on Theism, Naturalism, and Rationality Ernest Sosa	140
7 Research on Religion and Health: Time to Be Born Again? Linda K. George	157
8 Religion, Health, and Happiness: An Epidemiologist’s Perspective Jeff Levin	177
9 Why There Is a Natural Right to Religious Freedom Nicholas Wolterstorff	195

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42235-2 — Homo Religiosus?  
Edited by Timothy Samuel Shah , Jack Friedman  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

viii	<i>Contents</i>	
10	Religious Liberty, Human Dignity, and Human Goods Christopher Tollefsen	230
11	Human Rights, Public Reason, and American Democracy: A Response to Nicholas Wolterstorff Stephen Macedo	243
	<i>Index</i>	258



## Contributors

**Justin L. Barrett** is Professor of Psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary.

**Linda K. George** is Professor of Sociology, Psychology and Neurosciences, and Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Duke University.

**Jordan Kiper** is a graduate student at the University of Connecticut.

**Jeff Levin** is University Professor of Epidemiology and Population Health at Baylor University.

**Stephen Macedo** is Professor of Politics and the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University.

**Alvin Plantinga** is John A. O'Brien Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame.

**Christian Smith** is William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame.

**Ernest Sosa** is Board of Governors Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University.

**Richard Sosis** is James Barnett Professor of Humanistic Anthropology at the University of Connecticut.

**Christopher Tollefsen** is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina.

**Nicholas Wolterstorff** is Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale University.

**Phil Zuckerman** is Professor of Sociology and Secular Studies at Pitzer College.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-42235-2 — Homo Religiosus?  
Edited by Timothy Samuel Shah , Jack Friedman  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---