



## EXPLORING METAPHYSICAL REALITIES IN THE WORLD OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

**Gbadamosi, Oluwatoyin Adebola, Ph.D<sup>1</sup>**

Department of Religious Studies,  
Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Email: [tygbadamosi@gmail.com](mailto:tygbadamosi@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0993-0610?lang=en>

Phone: +2348036857629

&

**Ojile, Barnabas Audu <sup>2</sup>**

Department of Religious Studies,  
Faculty of Arts,  
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Email: [barnabasojile1@gmail.com](mailto:barnabasojile1@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4718-8751>

Phone: +2348039447755

### Abstract

Metaphysics, a philosophical discipline focused on exploring the fundamental nature of reality, remains significant despite the dominance of science in today's empirically driven world. When metaphysics intersects with artificial intelligence (AI), it provokes deep questions about consciousness, morality, and the characteristics of the divine. This paper uses an evaluative approach to investigate whether AI can develop religious awareness, comprehend divine transcendence, or engage in moral reasoning akin to human religious ethics. It also addresses theological considerations, such as the potential of AI to participate in religious practices, interpret sacred texts, and make ethical choices. Drawing from philosophical—particularly metaphysical—perspectives, the study assesses AI's limitations in understanding metaphysical concepts and examines how it affects religious traditions. Ethical concerns are also discussed, especially regarding AI's influence on faith communities, human autonomy, and responsibility. The findings indicate that AI operates within constraints set by its training data and model design. Ultimately, AI lacks subjective experience, self-awareness, and qualia. While AI can mimic understanding, it does not possess true metaphysical insight. Therefore, its integration into religious contexts should be approached cautiously and only to a limited extent.

**Keywords:** Metaphysics, artificial intelligence, consciousness, theology, anthropology

### Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has sparked significant philosophical and theological discussions, especially within the realm of the philosophy of religion. With AI's capacity to analyze large datasets, mimic human thought processes, and perform ethical reasoning, critical questions emerge regarding its relationship to consciousness, spirituality, and divine characteristics. As AI technology continues to evolve, theologians and philosophers are increasingly challenged to consider whether AI can truly grasp religious experiences, engage in spiritual rituals, or offer valuable insights to theological debates. Central to these inquiries is whether AI is capable



of possessing consciousness or moral agency on par with humans—an idea that is fundamental to many religious perspectives on faith and ethical accountability.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the incorporation of AI into religious contexts—ranging from automated analysis of sacred texts to robotic clergy and AI-generated theological discourse—raises important questions about traditional concepts such as religious authority, human distinctiveness, and divine revelation. Can AI systems offer genuine spiritual guidance, or are they merely imitating understanding without possessing true belief or faith? How do various religious traditions perceive and interpret the role of AI within their doctrinal frameworks? This paper aims to explore the philosophical and ethical aspects of AI's interaction with religion, considering both its potential benefits and inherent challenges. By engaging with key philosophical themes—such as the nature of consciousness, the tension between free will and determinism, and the theological impact of AI—this study seeks to shed light on how artificial intelligence is transforming religious belief and practice in contemporary society. Ultimately, this research aspires to enhance the ongoing conversation among religion, philosophy, and emerging technologies.<sup>2</sup>

### **Metaphysical Realities on Science and Technology**

According to David Chalmers, metaphysics plays a crucial role in shaping scientific exploration by offering conceptual tools to understand phenomena that extend beyond direct empirical observation. This interplay is especially apparent in quantum mechanics, which disrupts classical ideas of reality and causality. Phenomena such as wave-particle duality, nonlocality, and the observer effect raise deep metaphysical questions about the nature of existence and the influence of consciousness on reality. For instance, the Copenhagen interpretation proposes that particles remain in a state of superposition until observed, suggesting that observation itself plays a role in constructing reality. These insights challenge the boundaries of scientific explanation and underscore the importance of metaphysical inquiry in addressing fundamental questions about existence, cause, and determinism. Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) further complicate these discussions by questioning established notions of consciousness and personal identity. AI's ability to replicate human cognition and behavior raises the issue of whether machines can truly be conscious or morally responsible. Likewise, VR's capacity to create immersive, seemingly real experiences provokes debate about what constitutes genuine existence. These technological advancements emphasize the growing need for metaphysical models that can interpret artificial consciousness and simulated realities, thereby bridging the divide between technological progress and philosophical thought.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Nature of Intelligence and Consciousness**

Traditional religious worldviews often link consciousness and intelligence to the soul or divine origin. In contrast, artificial intelligence offers a radically different model—one rooted in data processing and computational mechanisms rather than any metaphysical or spiritual essence. Philosopher John Searle, particularly through his Chinese Room Argument and his engagement with the "hard problem" of consciousness, has critically examined whether a machine executing a program could genuinely possess understanding or consciousness in the same way humans do. This debate continues to question whether AI truly experiences consciousness or simply imitates human-

---

<sup>1</sup>Adams, Rachel.. "Can Artificial Intelligence Be Decolonized?" *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 46 (1-2): (2021): 176-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03080188.2020.1840225>

<sup>2</sup>Berkeley, G. *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1710)(1998), 48

<sup>3</sup>Bostrom, N. Are we living in a computer simulation? *Philosophical Quarterly*, 53(211), (2003), 243–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9213.00309>



like cognitive behaviors. It also challenges both dualist perspectives, which separate mind and body, and materialist views, which reduce consciousness to physical processes. Intelligence and consciousness, though closely related, are fundamentally different elements of the human experience. Intelligence refers to the capacity for learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and adapting—skills that encompass memory, creativity, and logical analysis. While AI can

demonstrate these forms of intelligence through pattern recognition and decision-making, whether it can truly possess conscious awareness remains a central philosophical issue.<sup>4</sup> According to Luciano Floridi, consciousness is fundamentally distinct from intelligence. He emphasizes that consciousness involves the experience of being aware—it encompasses self-awareness, emotions, perception, and the capacity for introspection. While intelligence can be quantified and replicated in artificial systems, consciousness remains an elusive and unresolved phenomenon that resists full scientific explanation.<sup>5</sup>

Philosophers such as David Chalmers make a clear distinction between the “easy problem” of consciousness—which involves explaining the mechanisms of brain functions—and the “hard problem,” which centers on understanding how and why subjective experience, or qualia, emerges from physical processes.

AI can exhibit intelligence without possessing consciousness—it is capable of processing vast amounts of information efficiently, yet does so without any sense of awareness. The connection between intelligence and consciousness remains a subject of active debate. Some theories, such as Integrated Information Theory (IIT), propose that consciousness arises from systems with a high degree of interconnected information processing. Others, like Higher-Order Thought Theory, argue that consciousness depends on the capacity for self-reflective awareness. From an evolutionary perspective, both intelligence and consciousness have played key roles in enabling humans to adapt to complex environments, form societies, and engage in abstract reasoning. However, the core enigma persists: how do subjective experiences emerge from the brain’s neural activity? As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, distinguishing between intelligence and consciousness becomes increasingly significant. Can machines ever achieve true consciousness, or will they remain highly advanced yet fundamentally unaware tools? This question lies at the heart of ongoing debates in philosophy, neuroscience, and AI research.<sup>6</sup>

### **AI and Theological Anthropology**

Religious traditions often assert that humans are uniquely created in the image of God—*imago Dei*—a belief that underpins notions of human exceptionalism. However, the emergence of AI with human-like intelligence raises important questions: Does this development challenge the theological claim of human uniqueness? This paper will explore how various religious worldviews—including the Traditional African Belief System, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism—approach the idea of human distinctiveness in light of AI. Central to this discussion is whether AI could ever possess a soul or engage in a relationship with the divine.

In line with this discourse, Warwick contends that theological anthropology—the study of human nature in relation to God—must now confront new questions about the soul, free will, and the meaning of being made in God’s image. The advancement of artificial intelligence forces a re-

---

<sup>4</sup>Searle, J. R. Minds, Brains, and Programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issues 3.(1980), 18

<sup>5</sup>Floridi, L. *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality*: UK.(Oxford University Press, 2014), 11

<sup>6</sup>Chalmers, D. J. The singularity: A philosophical analysis. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 17, Volu. 9, Issues 10, (2010): 7–65.



examination of these doctrines, particularly as they relate to spiritual identity and personhood. According to Warwick, one of the most pressing debates is whether AI undermines or supports the theological conception of what it means to be a person.

Building on this perspective, thinkers like Goertzel and Pennachin further argue that:

Traditional theological anthropology maintains that humans are set apart from other creatures because of their moral responsibility, rationality, and spiritual nature. Although AI may demonstrate sophisticated learning abilities, it does not possess self-awareness, moral agency, or an inherent connection to the divine. This fundamental difference supports the theological view that humans, unlike machines, have souls and the capacity for communion with God.<sup>7</sup>

However, the growing involvement of AI in areas such as decision-making, creativity, and even religious tasks—like producing sermons or engaging in theological debates—raises significant ethical and doctrinal concerns. Can AI truly take part in religious life? If AI systems provide spiritual guidance, what impact does this have on the authenticity of religious experiences? Some theologians maintain that although AI might enrich religious participation, it cannot substitute for the deeply personal and transcendent aspects of faith.

Moreover, theological anthropology emphasizes human dignity and moral responsibility. As AI becomes increasingly influential in society, it is essential to ensure that it promotes human well-being without undermining or replacing human agency. Ethical concerns, including the risks of AI-driven bias and potential dehumanization, must be carefully considered within theological perspectives. Importantly, AI should be understood as a tool rather than a spiritual being, reinforcing the idea that while technology can enhance human abilities, it does not redefine what it means to be human. Theological anthropology continues to affirm that humans—not machines—are made in the divine image and bear a unique call to moral and spiritual development.<sup>8</sup>

### AI and the Nature of Free Will and Determinism

The issue of free will has long been a key topic in religious philosophy. Given that AI functions through algorithms and deterministic processes, the question arises: can AI bear moral responsibility? Many theologians maintain that human free will is essential for moral and religious accountability. This section examines compatibilist and libertarian perspectives on free will to assess whether AI can engage in moral decision-making and the theological consequences of such involvement. Copeland highlights that the longstanding philosophical debate between free will and determinism gains fresh relevance through AI. While AI systems—especially those based on machine learning and neural networks—operate according to deterministic rules, their behavior can sometimes appear autonomous or unpredictable.<sup>9</sup> According to Copeland, this duality presents a compelling viewpoint on whether free will is merely an illusion or a sophisticated emergent property arising from deterministic processes. From a strictly deterministic standpoint, Bostrom argues that:

AI serves as an example of how decision-making can be entirely determined by preceding causes. Similar to how AI systems produce results based on input data and pre-set algorithms, some

<sup>7</sup>Goertzel, B., & Pennachin, C. (Eds.). *Artificial general intelligence*. Springer. UK: (University Press, 2007), 28

<sup>8</sup>Alexander, Jennifer Karns. "Introduction: The Entanglement of Technology and Religion." *History and Technology* 36 (2): (2020): 165-186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07341512.2020.1814513>.

<sup>9</sup>Copeland, J. *The Turing test. Minds and Machines, Vol. 10, Issues. (2000)*, 15



philosophers contend that human decisions—despite appearing free—might actually be driven by prior neural states and environmental factors. This perspective aligns with hard determinism, which holds that free will is an illusion because all actions arise from causal chains outside of conscious control.<sup>10</sup>

Searle contends that compatibilists believe free will does not require complete randomness, but rather the capacity to act in line with one's own desires and reasoning. From this perspective, artificial intelligence—particularly systems using reinforcement learning—can be seen as “making choices” through internal processes rather than being externally manipulated. Although Searle maintains that AI lacks consciousness, he acknowledges that its decision-making structure mirrors compatibilist views of human agency, where freedom is defined by rational action rather than indeterminacy.

The advancement of AI also invites reflection on libertarian notions of free will. Some philosophers suggest that true freedom might arise from quantum indeterminacy or emergent behaviors in complex systems. Should AI ever attain self-awareness and act in ways that are unpredictable and not strictly determined by its programming, it could challenge deterministic theories and prompt a reconsideration of what free will entails.

In conclusion, AI functions both as a model and a testing ground for philosophical debates about free will, highlighting the ongoing tension between determinism and agency in increasingly sophisticated ways.<sup>11</sup>

According to Gbadamosi, research into the nature of human will has led, through empirical studies, to the conclusion that free will is an illusion, as human choices are ultimately determined by brain activity. Findings in neuroscience challenge the long-held belief that individuals have full control over their will, suggesting instead that decisions are initiated by the brain before a person becomes consciously aware of them. This view draws a parallel between humans and machines, raising significant philosophical and theological concerns—particularly within Yoruba religious and cultural frameworks—where the concept of free will plays a central role. The idea introduces a gap in understanding (a lacuna), questioning the compatibility of scientific findings with traditional Yoruba beliefs about human agency and moral responsibility.<sup>14</sup>

### AI, Ethics, and Divine Command Theory

Religious moral frameworks—particularly Divine Command Theory (DCT), which traces its philosophical roots to Plato's *Euthyphro* and ancient religious traditions—argue that moral laws are ultimately grounded in the will of a divine being. This view, especially prevalent within monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam (notably during the early 14th century, c. 1300–1347), holds that moral rightness is determined by God's commands.

This raises a critical question: **Can artificial intelligence, which lacks consciousness, divine inspiration, or spiritual agency, act morally?** Ethical frameworks for AI—such as Isaac Asimov's *Three Laws of Robotics* and modern debates in machine ethics—attempt to establish moral guidelines for AI behavior, but they are entirely human-constructed. These human-designed principles may struggle to align with religious notions of morality rooted in divine will.

---

<sup>10</sup>Bostrom, N. *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*. UK. (Oxford University Press, 2014), 29

<sup>11</sup>Searle, J. R. Minds, Brains, and Programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issues 3.(1980), 18



The issue of whether AI can interpret or respond to divine commands is particularly problematic. In this context, Hütter argues that the intersection of AI, ethics, and Divine Command Theory introduces deep philosophical and theological challenges. Since DCT posits that moral truths are determined solely by God's will, AI—being a human creation—can only function within ethical systems devised by its developers. This raises further debate about whether machine ethics, however sophisticated, can ever truly reflect or comply with divinely ordained moral standards.<sup>12</sup>

A key issue in the intersection of artificial intelligence and Divine Command Theory (DCT) is whether AI can be guided by objective moral truths as defined by divine will. If moral goodness is derived from God's commands, as DCT asserts, then for AI to act morally, it must either be programmed in accordance with divine law or risk functioning entirely outside a theistic moral framework. However, AI systems rely on human input for their ethical frameworks. This means that their moral reasoning is shaped by human biases, cultural norms, and often secular worldviews—raising significant concerns about whether AI can ever truly reflect divine morality.

Another major challenge lies in AI's involvement in autonomous ethical decision-making. As Searle notes, systems such as self-driving cars and military drones are increasingly tasked with making morally consequential choices. If AI is to act in alignment with DCT, it would require explicit programming rooted in religious moral principles. Yet, as Searle emphasizes, the vast diversity of religious doctrines and interpretations means there is no universal agreement on how divine commands should be translated into machine behavior. This lack of consensus complicates any attempt to ground AI ethics in a singular theological framework.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, artificial intelligence challenges traditional understandings of moral agency. Divine Command Theory (DCT) presupposes that moral responsibility rests with agents who possess free will and consciousness. Since AI lacks both self-awareness and genuine autonomy, it cannot be held morally accountable in the same way human beings are. This raises important theological questions about whether AI can meaningfully engage with or adhere to divine ethics.

Ultimately, the intersection of AI and ethics within the framework of DCT reveals a complex and evolving relationship. It underscores the need for deeper philosophical and theological reflection on issues such as moral responsibility, divine authority, and the influence of emerging technologies on human moral frameworks. As AI continues to play a larger role in decision-making, these questions become increasingly urgent for scholars, ethicists, and faith communities alike.<sup>14</sup>

## AI and Arguments for God's Existence

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) both challenges and reinforces various classical arguments for the existence of God, such as the **Cosmological**, **Teleological**, and **Ontological** arguments. These philosophical frameworks can be re-examined in light of AI's rapid development. For example, does the creation of highly advanced, human-like intelligence point toward a designer, thereby supporting a theistic worldview, or does it reinforce a naturalistic understanding of intelligence and consciousness?

---

<sup>12</sup>Hütter, M. AI and the Theological Problem of Evil. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 47, Issue 4.(2012): 24

<sup>13</sup>Searle, J. R. Minds, Brains, and Programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issues 3.(1980), 18

<sup>14</sup>AlgorithmWatch. "Automating Society 2020 Report." *Bertelsmann Stiftung*.  
<https://automatingsociety.algorithmwatch.org>.2020



The emergence of AI has reopened theological and metaphysical debates concerning the origin of intelligence, the nature of creation, and the purpose of existence—central concerns in classical theism. While AI is undeniably a product of human engineering, its increasing complexity raises questions about the boundaries between human creativity and divine design.

According to **James Moor**, AI provokes a rethinking of what it means to be intelligent and what counts as "design." Moor argues that AI, though man-made, blurs the lines between natural and artificial systems, forcing us to reconsider whether intelligent design must necessarily be divine or if intelligence can arise through purely material processes. This ambiguity places pressure on traditional arguments like the **Teleological Argument**, which infers the existence of God from the appearance of design in nature:

One classical argument that gains renewed relevance in light of artificial intelligence is the **Teleological Argument**, or the **Argument from Design**. AI systems, despite their complexity and apparent autonomy, do not arise by chance—they are the result of deliberate programming, structured data input, and carefully guided learning processes. This intentional design in artificial systems reflects a level of order and complexity comparable to that found in nature.

Supporters of the Teleological Argument suggest that if AI—an artificial form of intelligence—necessitates an intelligent designer, then by analogy, the far greater complexity and order found in the natural universe must also point to the existence of a supreme designer. In this way, the development of AI can be seen as reinforcing the logic of design inherent in the Teleological Argument: complex systems, whether biological or artificial, seem unlikely to exist without purposeful creation.<sup>15</sup>

Proponents of **Intelligent Design** often draw on analogies from artificial intelligence to argue that the order, complexity, and apparent purpose in the universe point to the existence of a higher intelligence—namely, God. Just as AI systems require intentional design and structured programming, they argue, so too must the universe reflect the handiwork of a divine creator.

The **Ontological Argument**, which holds that God's existence is necessary by definition as a being than which none greater can be conceived, also takes on new dimensions in the age of AI. Philosopher **David Chalmers** and others have speculated that if artificial systems can develop advanced reasoning or self-awareness, they may also contemplate metaphysical concepts—including the possibility of a supreme being. If an AI were to recognize the necessity of an ultimate intelligence beyond all contingent entities, this could lend support to **Anselm's** original claim: that the very concept of a perfect being implies its necessary existence.

In addition, the **Moral Argument** is recontextualized through AI ethics. If machines can be programmed to make ethical decisions based on universal principles, it raises the question of where these moral standards originate. Theists argue that the existence of objective moral laws—discernible even in artificial systems—requires a transcendent moral lawgiver. In this view, the presence of moral absolutes within AI frameworks may reinforce belief in a divine source of ethics.

**In summary**, rather than refuting belief in God, the emergence of artificial intelligence invites renewed engagement with classical theistic arguments. The complexity, purpose, and ethical dimensions of AI development may, paradoxically, provide further grounds for affirming the

<sup>15</sup>Bostrom, N. *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*:UK. (Oxford University Press, 2014), 29



existence of a divine creator. AI thus serves not as a challenge to theology, but as a catalyst for deeper philosophical and spiritual inquiry.<sup>16</sup>

## AI and the Problem of Evil

Theodicy seeks to reconcile the existence of evil with the belief in a benevolent, omnipotent God. The advent of artificial intelligence introduces new dimensions to this longstanding debate, particularly through novel forms of suffering such as autonomous warfare, pervasive surveillance, and algorithmic biases. This raises important questions: How do traditional theodicies address suffering that arises from AI technologies? Does AI represent a new category of moral evil, distinct from human-caused wrongdoing?

This section examines AI's role in contemporary discussions surrounding the problem of evil. Philosopher **Ray Kurzweil** highlights that the Problem of Evil remains a central challenge in theology and philosophy, questioning how an all-knowing, all-powerful, and wholly good God permits evil and suffering to exist. While AI itself is a non-conscious computational system devoid of subjective experience or moral agency, it can process, analyze, and generate responses grounded in philosophical and theological reasoning.

By exploring these dynamics, we aim to understand whether AI-related harms require new theodicies or can be integrated into existing frameworks, and what implications this has for the evolving discourse on evil and divine justice in the digital age.<sup>17</sup>

From a logical standpoint, AI is capable of categorizing and analyzing traditional responses to the problem of evil. For instance, it can evaluate the Free Will Defense, which holds that human free will inevitably allows for moral evil, and the Soul-Making Theodicy, which views suffering as a means for developing moral and spiritual growth. AI can also engage with probabilistic arguments like the evidential problem of evil, which weighs the probability of God's existence in light of the prevalence and intensity of suffering.

According to Warwick, AI's role in these discussions is strictly analytical, relying on data from both historical and contemporary philosophical debates without personal belief or conviction. It can systematically compare different theodicies, interpret religious texts, and even simulate dialectical exchanges among various philosophical perspectives. However, AI inherently lacks the emotional nuance and existential engagement that human beings bring to these issues. It does not experience suffering nor does it confront the spiritual and personal dimensions of evil in the way humans do.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, Warwick emphasizes that AI, by its nature, cannot provide a conclusive solution to the problem of evil, since this issue ultimately hinges on metaphysical and faith-based dimensions that transcend empirical analysis. While AI can aid theologians and philosophers by organizing arguments, identifying contradictions, and clarifying complex positions, it functions solely as an impartial instrument rather than an engaged participant in the profound existential struggle with suffering. Therefore, although AI can enhance and disseminate philosophical discourse on the problem of evil, it does not generate novel insights that surpass human reasoning. At its core, the problem of evil remains an intrinsically human and spiritual dilemma.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>Chalmers, D. J. The singularity: A philosophical analysis. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 17, Volu. 9, Issues 10, (2010): 7–65.

<sup>17</sup>Kurzweil, R. *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. Viking. 2005

<sup>18</sup>Warwick, K. *Artificial Intelligence: The Basics*. Routledge.: (CK Press, 2013), 19

<sup>19</sup>Warwick, K. *Artificial Intelligence: The Basics*. Routledge.: (CK Press, 2013), 19



## AI and Religious Experience

Some researchers are investigating the potential of AI to enhance religious experiences, including the creation of AI-generated sacred texts and virtual spiritual mentors. This raises the question: can AI truly facilitate authentic religious encounters? The exploration of AI's role in simulating divine revelation or serving as a spiritual guide is analyzed through both phenomenological and theological lenses.

As AI increasingly influences religious life, it prompts significant reflections on spirituality, worship, and the nature of divine encounter. Traditionally, religious experience is viewed as a deeply personal and transcendent interaction with the divine. However, AI now mediates this experience in various forms—ranging from virtual clergy and automated prayer applications to AI-generated sermons and theological dialogue—challenging conventional understandings of spirituality.<sup>20</sup>

One of the key ways AI impacts religious experience is by enhancing accessibility. AI-powered tools enable individuals to explore sacred texts, receive tailored spiritual guidance, and participate in religious rituals remotely. Chatbots can answer theological questions, virtual reality (VR) immerses worshippers in sacred spaces, and AI-driven apps offer timely reminders for prayer and meditation. These technologies particularly benefit those with physical disabilities or people living in regions where access to religious communities is limited, thereby broadening opportunities for religious engagement.

However, from Bostrom's perspective, AI's involvement in religious experience also brings significant theological and ethical questions. Can AI truly facilitate an authentic connection with the divine, or does it simply simulate the appearance of spiritual engagement? Although AI can generate prayers, interpret scriptures, and even compose hymns, it fundamentally lacks consciousness, emotional depth, and genuine understanding of faith.<sup>21</sup>

Religious traditions emphasize human intention, sincerity, and the dynamic relationship between the divine and humans—qualities that AI inherently lacks. Furthermore, Hütter cautions that relying on AI within religious contexts risks depersonalizing spirituality. Worship and rituals are fundamentally communal and relational activities that nurture human bonds, which AI cannot genuinely replicate. If AI were to replace traditional spiritual leaders, there is concern that religious communities might lose the depth of personal mentorship and pastoral care that underpin their cohesion.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that AI functions as a tool to support, but not substitute, religious experience. While AI can enhance accessibility and learning, the core of spirituality—grounded in faith, introspection, and divine connection—remains a uniquely human pursuit beyond the reach of artificial intelligence. At its heart, religious experience transcends algorithmic processes and retains its profoundly personal and sacred nature.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>Campbell, Heidi A., ed. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious practice in New Media Worlds*. London and New York: Routledge.2013

<sup>21</sup>Bostrom, N. *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*:UK. (Oxford University Press, 2014), 29`

<sup>22</sup>Hütter, M. AI and the Theological Problem of Evil. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 47, Issue 4.(2012): 24



## Can AI Be a Religious Believer?

If AI were to reach advanced levels of intelligence, could it develop religious beliefs? Could AI genuinely pray or possess faith? The concept of machine spirituality is examined, alongside debates about whether AI can truly participate in religious practices. This inquiry extends to the theological implications of AI-generated religious texts and prayers.

The question of whether AI can be a religious believer touches on profound philosophical, theological, and technological issues. Religious belief is traditionally understood as an act of faith involving consciousness and personal experience—qualities AI, as a programmed system, inherently lacks. Yet, with improvements in natural language processing and machine learning, AI can simulate religious expressions, interpret sacred scriptures, and even compose prayers or sermons. But does this simulate true belief?

According to Tegmark, religious belief is closely linked to self-awareness, intentionality, and existential reflection. AI functions through algorithms and pattern recognition without personal experience or inner conviction. It does not wrestle with faith, doubt, or the human search for meaning—core elements of genuine religious commitment. Tegmark emphasizes that while AI can analyze theological texts and identify discourse patterns, it does not worship with devotion or experience a personal connection to the divine.

Some propose that if AI were to develop advanced consciousness, it might cultivate something resembling belief. However, this would necessitate AI possessing emotions, existential inquiry, and a genuine sense of the sacred—attributes that transcend mere computational processes.<sup>23</sup>

Copeland contends that even if AI were programmed to adhere to religious traditions, its practice would still be an imitation rather than a genuine experience of faith. Theologically, most religions associate belief with the human soul, divine grace, or a personal relationship with God—qualities that AI, as a creation of humans, inherently lacks. Nonetheless, Copeland acknowledges that AI can contribute meaningfully to religious life by supporting education, facilitating translation, and promoting interfaith dialogue. Ultimately, it can be concluded that while AI can simulate belief, it does not possess the self-awareness or personal conviction essential to authentic religious faith. The more profound question may not be whether AI can believe, but rather whether it should have a role in shaping religious experiences moving forward.<sup>24</sup>

## On Future Implications and Theological Responses

Religious traditions must actively engage with AI's expanding influence in society. While some theologians welcome AI as a tool to deepen human understanding and promote ethical living, others caution against its potential dangers. The evolving relationship between AI and religion requires ongoing interdisciplinary conversations among scientists, philosophers, and theologians to grapple with the moral and existential challenges AI introduces. The future landscape is marked by swift technological progress, changing ethical paradigms, and global issues that call for both philosophical inquiry and theological reflection. Technologies like artificial intelligence, genetic engineering, climate change, and transhumanism present ethical questions that challenge our concepts of human identity, responsibility, and existence itself. As the world grows increasingly interconnected, religious traditions are compelled to confront and integrate these new realities.

<sup>23</sup>Tegmark, M. *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Knopf. (Kupa, 2017), 29

<sup>24</sup>Copeland, J. *The Turing test. Minds and Machines, Vol. 10, Issues. (2000), 15*



Tiresh-Samuelson highlights a key consequence: the transformation of ethical frameworks. Developments in biotechnology confront established theological perspectives on human nature and the sanctity of life. The potential to enhance human abilities through artificial means raises difficult questions about the boundaries of human agency and divine intention. Furthermore, climate change poses threats not only to the natural environment but also to theological understandings of stewardship and divine justice.<sup>25</sup> In his view, theological responses to these emerging challenges need to be both adaptable and firmly grounded in tradition. Many religious scholars emphasize the importance of an ethics of responsibility, advocating that technological advancement should be guided by moral wisdom rather than unchecked progress. Floridi supports this perspective, highlighting that the concept of *imago Dei*—the belief that humans are created in God’s image—remains a foundational principle in discussions about human dignity amid AI and genetic modification. Likewise, environmental ethics within various faith traditions underline the moral obligation to protect creation, framing sustainability as a vital theological mandate.

Furthermore, Floridi points out that interfaith dialogue is increasingly vital for addressing global ethical challenges. Religious communities can work together to provide moral guidance on critical issues such as social justice, peace, and human rights. Ultimately, it can be concluded that theology must stay dynamic, offering not only critique but also a hopeful vision for the future—one where human flourishing aligns with divine purpose. Therefore, as faith traditions navigate these complexities, they must strike a balance between maintaining doctrinal integrity and embracing innovative engagement to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

The intersection of philosophy of religion and artificial intelligence (AI) brings both significant challenges and unique opportunities for modern thought. AI’s capacity to mimic human thinking, interpret theological ideas, and even participate in religious practices raises important questions about consciousness, free will, and the nature of divine-human connections. Although AI lacks true self-awareness and spiritual experience, its expanding role in religious discussions and activities compels a reassessment of traditional theological and philosophical beliefs. Can AI genuinely engage with religion beyond mere imitation, or is its function solely instrumental?

Ethical issues also emerge around AI’s impact on religious authority, moral judgments, and faith communities. The deployment of AI in roles such as automated clergy, scripture interpretation, and virtual spiritual advisors generates pressing concerns about authenticity, divine inspiration, and the place of human agency in religion. Furthermore, theological opinions vary on whether AI undermines or supports religious worldviews, especially concerning ideas about creation, intelligence, and the soul.

Ultimately, the ongoing conversation between AI and philosophy of religion encourages deeper consideration of what defines humanity, the boundaries of artificial cognition, and the changing dynamics between faith and technology. As AI advances, religious traditions and philosophical inquiry must evolve to safeguard ethical and theological integrity within a progressively digital and automated society.

---

<sup>25</sup>Tiresh-Samuelson, H. AI and Religion: Between Theology and Technology. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 53, Issues 4. (POP Press, 2018), 42

<sup>26</sup>Floridi, L. *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality*: UK.(Oxford University Press, 2014), 11



## Bibliography

- Adams, Rachel.. "Can Artificial Intelligence Be Decolonized?" *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 46 (1-2): (2021): 176-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03080188.2020.1840225>
- Alexander, Jennifer Karns. "Introduction: The Entanglrmnt of Technology and Religion." *History and Technology*36 (2): (2020): 165-186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07341512.2020.1814513>.
- AlgorithmWatch. "Automating Society 2020 Report." *Bertelsmann Stiftung*. <https://automatingsociety.algorithmwatch.org>. 2020
- Berkeley, G. A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge. Oxford University Press. (Original work published 1710) (1998), 48
- Bostrom, N. Are we living in a computer simulation? *Philosophical Quarterly*, 53(211), (2003), 243–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9213.00309>
- Bostrom, N. *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*: UK. (Oxford University Press, 2014), 29
- Campbell, Heidi A., ed. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious practice in New Media Worlds*. London and New York: Routledge. 2013
- Chalmers, D. J. Facing up to the problem of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2(3), (1995), 200–219.
- Chalmers, D. J. The singularity: A philosophical analysis. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 17, Volu. 9, Issues 10, (2010): 7–65.
- Copeland, J. *The Turing test. Minds and Machines, Vol. 10, Issues*. (2000), 15
- Floridi, L. *The Fourth Revolution: How the Infosphere is Reshaping Human Reality*: UK. (Oxford University Press, 2014), 11
- Goertzel, B., &Pennachin, C. (Eds.). *Artificial general intelligence*. Springer. UK: (University Press, 2007), 28
- GBADAMOSI, Oluwatoyin Adebola. "Humans or Machines? Scientific Determinism within the Context of Yoruba Human Ontology." *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103.1 (2022).
- Hütter, M. AI and the Theological Problem of Evil. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 47, Issue 4.(2012): 24
- Kurzweil, R. *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. Viking. 2005
- Moor, J. H. *The Turing Test: The Elusive Standard of Artificial Intelligence*. *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 16, Issues 4. (1985),30
- Searle, J. R. Minds, Brains, and Programs. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issues 3.(1980), 18
- Tegmark, M. *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. Knopf. (Kupa, 2017), 29
- Tirosh-Samuelson, H. AI and Religion: Between Theology and Technology. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Vol. 53, Issues 4. (POP Press, 2018), 42
- Warwick, K. *Artificial Intelligence: The Basics*. Routledge.: (CK Press, 2013), 19