

Why Do We Not Believe in God?

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The question: 'why do we not believe in God?' can be analysed into four questions, namely, (1) Who are 'we' who do not believe in God ? (2) What do we mean by 'God' whose existence is under question? (3) What do we mean by saying that we 'do-not believe' in God? (4) On what grounds the existence of God is put under question?

(1)

Of course, 'we' means Deva Dharmis. It may be said that Deva Dharmis are too insignificant a group to deserve any serious attention to its views. This attitude is not logically justified. The truth of a belief does not rest on the number of people who hold it. There was a t'me when Copernicus believed that earth goes round the sun and the whole of Christian world which was and is the largest religious group in the world, held the biblical view that it is the sun which goes round the earth. Now, though Copernicus was one against millions and billions of believers, his view was true. Today, every child in the world is taught that it is the earth which goes round the sun. The view of Copernicus is not true now because it is accepted by all. If a belief depends for its truth on majority of believers, it is sometimes true and sometimes false, which is an absurd position. The truth of a belief is its correspondence with facts and not correspondence with beliefs of the majority of people. Hence, even if it is the belief of Deva Dharma that there is no God, it deserves to be studied even though Deva Dharmis are a small group.

However, we are not alone in the family of man. We have fellow brothers and with them we constitute majority in the world population. It is not only we Deva Dharmis who donot believe in God. Buddhism which is the second largest religious group of the world, does not believe in a creator or controller of the universe, that is, it is atheistic. Buddhist number 436,745,000.

Again, Jainism does not believe in a creator and controller of the world and Jains number more than two millions (2,027,281). Let us take religions of China and Japan. Confucianism and Taoism are both Chinese religions. Shintoism is the religion of Japan. They are naturalistic or Nature centred. They number: Confucians 37,158,700; Toists 3,128,600; Shintos 57,154,200. The fourth religion is Buddhism which is atheistic. Now Marxism dominates the Chinese minds which is atheistic in ideology. Marxism is a religion today. Both Sri Aurobindo and Perri Teilhard, the greatest mystics of East and West, of Hinduism and Christianity, in the present century, recognise Marxism to be a religion. Marxism is atheistic. It holds that theistic religions are result of ignorance about the character of natural forces and provide an imaginative escape against unjust and cruel exploitative economic system of society. Worship of God is the opiate of the people. Marxism is taught in schools and colleges in Russia as once Christianity was taught in medieval Europe. The children are indoctrinated with Marx's atheistic philosophy like Christian dogmas were indoctrinated in the medieval period in the West. Russians number 241,748,000.²

It is clear that non-believers in God as creator and controller of the universe out-number believers in it. However, we have not cited the number of non-believers as an argument against theism, but to counter the objection of those who deny us the right to be heard, on the basis of number. We ourselves hold it bad logic to consider the number of believers as an evidence for the truth of a belief.

We atheists not only dominate in numbers in the family of man, but we are true to the Hindu genius in being atheistic. The philosophers are the kings of thought. Indian kings of thought, the philosophers of different Indian schools of philosophy, are essentially atheistic. We will deal with them at the proper place. In the meanwhile let us explicate the other three questions.

(2)

Our second question is as to what do we mean by God whose existence is under question. God whose existence is questioned by us is by definition a disembodied being, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-Good, creator, preserver and destroyer of the

universe, existing outside the created world, 'our father in heaven'. This is the conception of God as the infinite person. There is another conception of infinite being called Brahman. It is conception of infinite impersonal consciousness, which alone is held real and the world of things and persons are considered Maya. Brahman alone is real and human souls are not distinct and separate in existence from it. We are 'ansha' or aspect of this Brahman, this one universal consciousness. The consciousness of our distinct existence from Brahman and other fellow human beings is due to 'avidya'. This is impersonal concept of God, where God and human soul are not distinct entities. The belief in both personal God and impersonal Brahman is questioned by us.

(3)

When we say we 'do not believe in God', we do not hold to the position of agnostics. An agnostic holds that he neither believes in the existence of God nor denies the existence of God. He suspends judgement on this question. We positively deny the existence of God. We hold that the existence of a disembodied infinite being is existentially impossible.

(4)

What are our grounds to deny the existence of God? They are two-fold: (a) The arguments given to prove the existence of God are fallacious; (b) The nature of the universe as disclosed to us by science, does not admit God.

We will first consider atheism in its historical perspective to show that we are not alone in philosophy in rejecting belief in God. Atheism has as great and distinguished an ancestry and history as theism.

It is our contention that Hindu genius, as represented by Schools of Indian Philosophy, is essentially atheistic and therefore Deva Darsana is not alone in the world of Indian Philosophy in denying the existence of God. The Indian schools of philosophy are divided into two groups—heterodox and orthodox. The heterodox schools do not accept the authority of Vedas. They are Carvaka, Buddhism and Jainism. The orthodox schools accept the authority of Vedas. They are six in number—Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta. We will take the heterodox schools first, for they are older than the orthodox schools. Some claim Carvaka as the

school of philosophy.² Carvaka holds that perception and inference³ are the sources of knowledge. God, by definition, is not given in perception. Again, no conclusion or inference drawn from perception can establish the existence of God. All inference from perceptual experience admits of something perceptual. If I see smoke, I can infer fire, since in the past experience, both of them, fire and smoke, have been invariably observed together. But no such link is observed in the past, between events in the world and God. We do not perceive God doing one thing or another, say, making rain, or making earth. Hence, we cannot infer the existence of God, from the events in the world. No test verifiable by perception can establish the existence of God and therefore we have no ground to believe in the existence of God.

The Jain Darsana traces its origin to prehistoric times as far back as 84,000 years before Mahavira, their last Tirthakara who flourished in the sixth century B.C. Jains hold that all the arguments for the existence of God are fallacious. We have no evidence that there was a time when there was no universe. From all we know, it has always been there. If so, the question of the creator of the universe does not arise.

Again, there is no evidence to establish the general principle that everything is made. Human artifacts are made. But human artifacts are an infinitesimally small part of the things in the universe that come into existence and go out of existence by the law of Karma. A tree in a jungle is not made as a pot is made. It is not a conscious thing but it still grows in an organised pattern by itself without any conscious agent doing anything for it. It cannot be said that God is invisibly working in a tree. This could be said after God's existence is established independently of such instances, otherwise the reasoning is circular. It is crude anthropomorphism to think that everything is made by some conscious agency.

Buddha's arguments against existence of God are given by Ashvaghose, the greatest philosopher of Mahayana School of Buddhism in his book, Buddha Carita. He thus states Buddha's arguments against belief in God. Buddha argues that if there is omnipotent and all-good God, there can be no evil in the world. To say that God is omnipotent is to say that he is all the power there is and no power exists outside or besides him and

hence all movements of things and actions of men are His actions. Since he is all good, all actions are good. But there is evil in the form of a sea of suffering around us and hence there can be no all-good God. Buddha argues against Brahman, too. If Brahman is said to be out of relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any reasoning. Further, how can we know that anything unrelated to every other thing exists at all. The whole Universe is a system of relations. We know nothing that is or can be unrelated. How can that which depends on nothing and is related to nothing, produce things which are related to one another and depend for their existence on one another!

Thus all the heterodox schools are atheistic. Let us consider the orthodox schools. Sankhya and Yoga Darsana are to be considered together, for they hold the same view about the Universe. Yoga is just applied Sankhya. It tells us how the theoretical teaching of Sankhya can be realized in actual practice.

Sankhya holds that purusa and prakrti are eternal and the world of embodied existences, is result of evolution. In Sankhya Parvachana, argument against the existence of God are given. One of the arguments in this work is that knowledge of causal relation is possible only through experience. For example, by mere reasoning, we cannot know the cause of cancer. By intense research, we may come to know the cause or causes responsible for cancer. When this happens, we will be able to say what is the cause of cancer, what is its nature or characteristics. Now, there is no repeated observation of God creating now this planet, now that planet. Hence logic does not permit us, in the absence of any experience of God creating one or another thing, that he is the creator of this earth, for never have the two been observed in the relation of cause and effect.

Yoga Darsana does introduce God. But as Dr. Radha-krishnan says in his world famous book, Indian Philosophy, 'we cannot help saying that Yoga philosophy introduced the concept of God just to be in the fashion and catch the human mind of the public.⁴ This is true opinion of Dr. Radhakrishnan, for theism is in direct contradiction to Yoga philosophy. In Yoga Sutra, God neither creates the universe nor rules it. He

does not punish or reward the actions of men. Further, Yoga Darsana does not regard moksa as a state of union with God. Had Yoga Darsana been serious about God, it would have denned moksa as a state of association with, or likeness to, God or mergence in God. But moksa is regarded by Yoga Darsana, like Sankhya Darsana, as a state of self gathering. In Yoga system, God has no place in the transcendental world of muktas.

The Nyaya and Vaisesika Darsana are also to be taken together, for like Sankhya and Yoga, these two schools have the same world view. Vaisesika propounds the theory of universe and Nyaya concurs with it. Nyaya develops logical theory and accepts Vaisesika's metaphysics.

According to these schools, atoms, space and time, mind and souls are uncreated and eternal substances. The world is formed according to the adrista of the soul. Adrista is the latent force generated in an individual soul by his virtuous and vicious actions. Our happiness and misery must have causes and these causes are our past adrista. The original texts of these schools contain no mention of God, for they hold that atoms and souls are uncreated and function by adrista or by law of karma. Samkara supports this view about them. In his Vedanta Shastra, Samkara holds that God has no place in these systems.

Later Nyayikas do introduce God. But their God is not creator. Both atoms and souls are eternal and uncreated. God is not the efficient cause. Adrista is the eternal efficient cause and God cannot interfere in the working of the adrista of the individual souls. The relation of adrista and God is compared to the relation between a dumb person and a man with speech. Just as man with speech expresses what a dumb man wishes to say, God only does what adrista dictates. According to Nyayikas, in the state of moksa there is no difference between God and human soul. Finally, moksa is not denned as perfect vision of God which would be the case when a school of thought takes theism seriously. Thus even later Nyayikas admit God in Pickwickian sense denuded of the differential characteristics of theism.

Let us take the last two schools—Mimamsa and Vedanta. Both of these schools donot only accept the authority of the

Vedas but are also founded on them. Mimansa interprets the Vedas and Vedanta interprets Upanisads.

Mimansa school is a fanatic Vedic school. It considers Vedas to be not only authoritative but also eternal and perfect and yet this school rejects God. It means you can believe in Vedas and be an atheist. Had the God of Islam and Christianity not frightfully loomed large on the Indian horizon in the 20th century, Swami Dayananda might as well have followed Mimansa school in an atheistic interpretation of Vedas.

The Mimansa school holds that the world is self-existent, it has neither a beginning nor an end. So it does not require a Creator. As far individual things coming into existence and going out of existence are concerned, nothing more is to be assumed than what is observed. For example, the mundane parents rather than extra-mundane God are the cause of the children. Again, the law of karma in the form of Apurva guides the movements of things and action of human beings. This law is autonomous and self-propelled.

The giant thinkers of Mimansa Darsana like Sahara, Kumarila Bhatta and Parbhakar refute the arguments of later Nyayikas with force and effect. One of the arguments of Nyayikas is that just as a pot needs a potter to make it, God is needed to make the world. Kumarila Bhatta points out that the argument rests on instance of potter making the pot. This is true of millions of other things. So events are not caused by God. If God is the cause of the making of the pot, the potter is not the cause of the pot. So Nyayikas must either renounce their conclusion or their instance for the instance goes against the conclusion.

Kumarila Bhatta extends his argument against the Brahman, too. According to Vedanta, Brahman or pure consciousness is the ultimate reality and creation is due to indescribable ignorance called Maya. But Maya is conceived to be of the character of dream and how could it create anything. Besides, what could be the creative activity of Maya itself? It could not be eternal for in that case creation itself will be so; nor could the activity of Maya be created by Brahman which was ever pure consciousness.

The final orthodox school is Vedanta. All the Vedantins including Samkara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarak, Vallabha and

others, reject the arguments given for the existence of God. They hold that God's existence cannot be proved. Ramanuja in Shri Bhasya refutes all the arguments given for the existence of God. Nyayika's pet argument is that a pot which is made of parts needs a maker. The world is made of the atoms. So it needs God. Ramanuja asks whether God produces the world with or without body. It cannot do it without body, for no bodiless entity can act or cause a thing to be made. If God has a body, either it is permanent or non-permanent, If it is permanent it means something made of parts is eternal. If we admit this, we might as well admit the world to be permanent. If the body of God is not permanent, who makes God's body? God cannot be cause of his own body, for bodiless being cannot act. We cannot say that God assumes body by means of some other body, for it leads to infinite regress.

Acharya Ramanuja also rejects the view that God is given in Yogic experience. He holds that Yogic experience is nothing but imagination kindled by perception. If it goes beyond objects previously perceived, it is source of error.⁵

It is clear that Indian philosophic schools are overwhelmingly atheistic. Out of the nine schools—three heterodox and six orthodox—only one, i.e. Vedanta asserts belief in God—personal and impersonal. Visistadvaita of Ramanuja claims belief in personal God, and Advaita Vedanta of Samkara holds the belief in impersonal God, or Brahman. All other eight schools in their original texts are atheistic or non-theistic.

We will now consider the Western Philosophy. Western Philosophy has its origin in the Greek philosophy which begins in 600 B.C. The pre-Socratic philosophy is naturalistic culminating in atomism of Democritus and naturalistic epistemology and ethics of Sophists. It is Plato and Aristotle who bring in monotheism in the western philosophy. Then Christianity gained development and refinement through Plato's and Aristotle's theism. Medieval and modern western philosophy came to be centred in God in contrast to Indian schools of philosophy which have been soul-centred. Whereas we find that discussion of God occupies central place in western philosophy, it is in the margin of the field of discussion in schools of Indian philosophy. However, the 20th century western philosophy

is mainly atheistic. This shows how western mind has loosened itself from the tether of Christianity.

In recent philosophy, there are two main movements of thought. Analytic philosophy in Britain and Existentialism on the Continent. The analytic philosophers hold that there are three kinds of statements about what exists : True, false, meaningless. When I believe : 'My wife cares for me', it is a meaningful statement if there is evidence which makes it true and if there can be evidence which makes it false. If I am seriously ill and my wife feels unhappy at it, nurses me, shows pleasure at my improvement in health, my belief : 'My wife cares for me' is true. But if I am seriously ill, and my wife is indifferent to this fact, and instead of nursing me, attends card parties, my belief that my wife cares for me is false. When there can be certain conditions conceivable, under which my belief can be false, then my belief is meaningful. If there are no condition conceivable under which my belief can be false, then my belief is meaningless. If my wife is not unhappy at my serious illness, does not attend on me, shows no pleasure at my improvement, and even then if I believe that my wife cares for me, my belief is meaningless, for no meaning can be attached to the words : 'cares for me'. It is an empty or meaningless statement.

A meaningful statement can be made vacuous or empty of meaning if we go on modifying it. Prof. Wisdom, in his article "Gods", beautifully illustrates how words are modified to deprive them of all meanings. Suppose two explorers reach a clearing in a jungle where they find many flower-plants and many weeds. One of the explorers says, "A gardener must be tending these plants." The other says, "No gardener looks after these plants." Both pitch their tents and keep a watch. A month passes and no gardener is seen coming to the place to tend the plants. The second explorer tells the first explorer that his belief is false. The first explorer defends himself by saying that the gardener who comes is invisible, like H.G. Wells' 'invisible man'. So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They keep blood hounds, for like the 'invisible man' of Wells, the gardener though invisible, yet has a body which can be touched and smelt. They keep watch for several days. No movement of the wire ever betrays an invisible climber. The

blood hounds never give cry. Yet the first explorer is not convinced. He says, "But there is a gardener, invisible, insensible to electric shocks, a gardener who has no scent and makes no sound, a gardener who looks after the garden he loves." The second explorer naturally challenges him, "This is not what you meant by gardener when you made the statement that a gardener looks after these plants. You have gone on taking away the meaning of the word 'gardener'. You have reduced it to nothing. Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ, from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?"

We can see clearly why the first explorer goes on qualifying the definition of his gardener. He wishes to protect his belief from the criterion of verifiability. One after another he so qualifies the meaning of 'gardener' that it is lifted completely from the prick of evidence against it. He hardly realizes that he is thus moving from the solid facts of the situation to the world of pure absurdity. To put it in other words, he qualifies the meaning of 'gardener' so much so as to render it meaningless.

What is true of the belief of the first explorer that there is a gardener who tends these plants, is true of the belief about God. Suppose a father is restless, sleepless and frantic at the serious condition of his child. He is running from one doctor to another. A priest comes to him and tells him "Do not worry. There is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good God, our Father in Heaven, who loves children as we do. He will cure him". The child dies. The father asks the priest, "If God loved my child as I do, he would not have let him die." The priest takes to the same method of interpretation of the word 'love'. We know what love for another means. There are conditions which make it meaningful to say 'A loves B' and there are conditions conceivable which make 'A loves B' false. If 'A loves B' is believed to be true, whatever be the conduct of A, then the belief is neither true nor false, but meaningless. No theist is able to point out under what evidence it would be false to say, "God loves his creatures as a mother loves her child". If an innocent child dies of inoperative cancer, if a God-fearing mother undergoes unbearable pains in delivery and dies, if a teenaged girl is raped to death

by a number of goondas and even then if a theist holds that 'God' loves all his creatures, as a mother loves her child, a devoted wife loves her husband, a father protects his daughter, he is not living in a false world, but in an absurd world. A belief which no evidence can touch, is not false but absurd and such are the beliefs about God.

The chief European philosophy is Existentialism. It is primarily interested in the study of human consciousness. It holds that nature of human consciousness is entirely different from all the objects of the world and hence the scientific and philosophic categories for understanding the world of objects are not applicable to human consciousness. There are philosophic existentialists and religious existentialists. The most dominating figure among philosophic existentialists are Heidegger in Germany and Sartre in France. Both of them dispense with God. Heidegger holds that we are 'thrown in the world'. This view rejects the theistic view of man's creation in the image of God. He further holds that we are creatures of time and death is the greatest truth about us. No theist holds death to be real. He holds soul to be immortal which has a destiny in God's loving arms. According to Heidegger the world has no meaning. It is we who give meaning to it. What meaning we give to it rests on our creativity rather than fixed in the nature of things. Father Copelstion, the great historian of western philosophy, writes in his volume on Contemporary Philosophy thus: "And the way he (Heidegger) handles the problem of Being seems to suggest that for him Being is necessarily finite and temporal. And, if this was the case, then the existence of an infinite Being, transcending the temporal order, would be ruled out. Indeed, we cannot significantly raise the problem of God.

"Now, those who, on the basis of the first volume of *Sein Und Zeit— Of Beings & Time—*(There never was a second volume of *Sein Und Zeit*) have interpreted Heidegger's philosophy in an atheistic sense cannot, in my opinion, be blamed for doing so. True, he does not deny the existence of God in so many words. But he seems at first sight to suggest that apart from man himself and the brute impenetrable existence of things, there is Nothing, (p. 82. Revised edition).

Jean-Paul Sartre, the greatest French existentialist is out

and out an atheist. He holds that the idea of God is an impossible idea. He contrasts the nature of consciousness and nature of things. A thing is identical with its qualities. A piece of chalk can be fully described by stating its qualities, i.e. it is white; it is 3 inches in length; it is round; it is soft to touch, etc. Again, an animal is defined by the events of its growth and decay, i.e. its history. A thing cannot separate itself from its qualities or history. It is one with it. But human consciousness can separate itself from its past history. I can see the past history of my life as if on a screen. I can write my autobiography. So human consciousness is other than its history, and distinct from its history, since its history is an object for it, as any other person's life is an object for it or table or chair is an object for it. Again, human consciousness projects itself into the future. It is directed to what is not. It desires what it does not have. As soon as it gets what it wants, it forgets about it and goes in search of what is not. It is directed to unending future of unsatisfied desires. If consciousness ceases to be directed to what it is not, i.e. to the future, it ceases to be. Now, God is believed to be perfect consciousness. He is defined completely like a piece of chalk, perfect in power, knowledge and goodness. If he is complete, he is a thing and ceases to be consciousness. If he is a conscious being, he is always incomplete, ever eager to be what it is not and therefore, not God. According to Sartre the idea of God combines contradictory characteristics of a thing and a conscious being and therefore it is an impossible idea.

We have considered atheism in the briefest historical perspective, only in relation to classical schools of Indian philosophy and recent schools of western philosophy. It is clear that in the Indian and western philosophy atheism has a very distinguished history. Hence Deva Dharma's rejection of theism deserves serious consideration.

Let us now deal from logical perspective the main arguments given for the existence of God.

1. The Cosmological Argument

The first argument is called cosmological argument. It claims to prove the existence of God from a certain-character of things and events, that is, they have dependent

origination, or conditional or contingent existence. For example, I am not the cause of my own existence. My existence is caused by or is dependent on something outside of me. My birth depends on my parents and my parents' birth is dependent on their parents and we may go as far as" possible, we cannot find in this unending causal chain any satisfactory explanation of my birth. It is the demand of the causal principle that we posit a being as cause who is not dependent on any other existence and is sufficient in itself, that is, God.

This argument is further strengthened. It is pointed out that we may admit that the events within the universe have causal explanation in other events in the universe, but what is the cause of the universe itself. The causal principle demands of us to accept God as the cause of the total chain of events called the universe.

It is clear this argument rests on causal principle, i.e., the series of cause and effect must have a cause outside the series which is itself uncaused, i.e. God.

Now let us study the concept of cause to know how far the argument is cogent. Our experience tells us that what is cause in relation to consequence is effect in relation to its antecedent. My parents are the cause of my birth. But my parents are effects of their parents. Both cause and effect have beginning in time, happen in time. I have a date of birth, so have my parents and grand-parents. This is what our experience discloses to us. This empirical understanding of the concept of cause as event in time which is itself caused would not allow us to posit God as cause of the events in the universe, which is itself uncaused, for the concept of God negates the whole meaning of the concept of cause. As the great English logician J.S. Mill puts it : "Our experience (of cause and effect relationship) instead of furnishing an argument for a first cause (God) is repugnant to it".

The theists admit that science in its study of events in the universe has discovered no first cause which is not an effect. But they argue that our understanding is not limited to our empirical experience. We have a priori reason in us which tells us that everything has a cause and therefore the world must have a cause, otherwise the world remains unintelligible. We

point out to the theists as to why do they stop short at God. Why do they not ask for the cause of God. And if they assert that God is without a cause, why should they hesitate to accept that the world is without a cause.

The theists can retort that if the existence of God as uncaused is unacceptable, then the belief in the existence of the world without a cause is also unacceptable. We submit that it is for the sake of argument that we assert that the world is without a cause. Our position is that whereas it is sensible to ask for the cause of an event, it is meaningless to ask for the cause of the existence of the world. What we call the world is sum total of things and events. It is not an entity. So it is not meaningful to ask about the sum total as to what is the cause of it. The greatest philosopher of the present century, Bertrand Russell, makes this point clear by an instance. Every one of us has a mother. But it is meaningless to ask who is the mother of the mankind or totality of men. The totality of all men is not a man about whom it is meaningful to ask what is the cause of it. Since the universe is the name for totality of things and events, it is meaningless to ask the cause of it. But it is meaningful to ask the cause of the existence of God, for God is an entity. Some theists, therefore, try to get out of this situation. They hold that God is not an entity, not a being, he is Being of beings. He is the 'ground' of all beings. What does 'ground' mean? The earth is the ground of my house. If there were no earth, then no house can keep standing. In this sense, God who is disembodied pure consciousness can not be the ground of the physical world. The ground for physical world can be physical and not consciousness. It may be said that God is ground of the world in the sense of cause of it, as bread is the cause of the formation of blood in a body. We have already shown that what is cause of an event is in time, is an effect of earlier cause and God is not event in time, is not an effect of another God and therefore, to call him 'cause' is to set the problem of finding out cause of him and cause of his cause. Thus God, instead of explaining the world needs to be explained.

What is the difficulty in accepting that the causal chains in the universe are without beginning and end? In an infinite causal series no event is denied a cause. Aquinas thinks that

that if we do not recognize the beginning in series of events, we cannot explain the presence of things in the world. Take a simple example. If there had been no Jawahar Lal ji, there would have been no Indira ji. If there had been no Moti Lal ji, there would have been no Jawahar Lal ji, no Indira ji. So if there had been no first cause, there would be no intermediate causes and so there would have been nothing in the world. Since there is Indira ji, there must have been Moti Lal ji. So it is said that if we remove God, like Moti Lal Nehru, there would have been no Adam and there would be no present generation. But there is the present generation, so there must be God. This reasoning of Aquinas lacks understanding of infinite series. He thinks that an infinite series is just a long series. But a series however long it may be, is not an infinite series. In a finite series it is true that if the first cause is removed, the intermediate causes are also removed and nothing survives of the series. But there is no first number in infinite series on which it stands. Whatever be the number of an event in an infinite series, there is a cause of it and that is itself an effect of an earlier event. To deny God is only to deny that there is any first number in the series which is not itself an effect of earlier cause. In an infinite series, no event is denied cause, what is denied is that it is caused by something which itself is not an effect.

It may be pointed out that the positing of God does not make the causal series intelligible. It obscures it. It asserts that one entity exists for which no explanation can be found. But the believer in the infinite series can claim that there is no phenomenon, whatsoever it is, which is beyond explanation. If the defender of the First Cause or God says, "What of the beginning?" We can say, "It did not start. There was no beginning." If this answer is felt unintelligible to the theist, we can make it intelligible to him by telling him that he believes God to be without beginning.

The cosmological argument is fallacious. But let us assume that it is true. Even then it does not prove the existence of God as defined. God is defined to be not only uncaused cause of the world of existence, or necessary being, but also all good and all knowing. A God who lacked goodness will not be the God whom theists worship, or Brahman which lacked positive

value character of anand would not be the Brahman in whom the Vedantin seeks his absorption.

2. The Teleological Argument

Now the question is how to prove from the character of the world we live in, that its creator is all good. The theists supplement the cosmological argument with teleological argument. They point out that there is not only relation of cause and effect between constituents of the world, but there is relation of ends and means, there is harmony of parts for discharging some function. The relation of constituents in the world is the same as is the case with human artifacts. Paley, the eighteenth century theistic philosopher, takes the example of a watch. In the case of a watch all its parts are so shaped that they together discharge the function of giving time. If we find a watch anywhere in a jungle, we will infer from its adjustment of parts in the discharge of the function of giving time that it must have an intelligent maker. A watch is in controversial evidence of the existence of a watchmaker. Now, we do find in the world things, like human eye, in which parts are so shaped that they work together to give us sight. From this, we can infer that there must be intelligent cause of the construction of the eye. Let us hear Henry More: "Now why have we three joints in our legs and arms as also our fingers but that it was much better than having two or four ? And why are our fore-teeth sharp like chisels to cut but our inward teeth broad to grind (instead of) the fore-teeth broad and the other sharp ? Again, why are the teeth so luckily placed or rather why are there not teeth in other bones as well as in jaw bones? But the reason is that nothing is done foolishly or in vain; that is, there is a divine providence that orders all things"

This type of argument has lost its value. The theory of evolution explains to us why we have the most convenient number of joints in our fingers and why our teeth are in the jaw bones. There is the fact of chance variation. Just as the same parents have children with different potentialities, some one is intelligent and the other is dull, one is of white complexion and the other black; similarly, due to change in genes, species are born with different characteristics. This

is called mutation. Those species which possess advantageous features survive and the other die in the competition of life. Mutation and Natural Selection explain the adjustment of parts to each other for the purpose of survival. It is true that Darwin's theory is not complete explanation of the teleological order—it tells us only how some cases develop from other cases. But at present biochemistry is in progress to explain the rise of life from lifeless matter. Hence there is no reason to postulate a God.

Today the theists find that the science of biology and biochemistry is able to explain particular cases of adjustment of parts for discharging function for certain ends, and therefore shift their argument from particular cases of adjustment to the total universe. They claim that it is not particular things that show design, but the whole universe is a designed whole. The whole universe is a huge machine in which every part is adjusted to the other for mutual good.

We can offer two criticisms: Why should we compare universe to a human artifact like watch or a machine. We can point to other facts which show adjustment besides machines. The plants in a jungle show adjustment for ends of maturity. Why not think of the universe on the analogy of the plants instead of a watch? How is the machine analogy better than the analogy with plants? If we think of the structure of the universe on the pattern of a living being like a tree or an animal, instead of on the pattern of a machine, we have no reason to posit a God. A tree in a jungle is not made like a watch. The principle of its movement and growth of parts towards maturity is self-contained. As Sankhyins point out in the case of a cow, the milk comes to the udder to feed the calf. The whole process is purposive but instinctive with no need of exercise of intelligence or design, unlike the case of Mother Dairy milk.

Further, if there are beneficent adjustments in the universe, say grass for the lamb, there are evil maladjustments too, for there is wolf for the lamb, too. Let us look at the destructiveness in the animal world, where one species is out to destroy the other. There is cruelty and injustice in the jungle where the innocent animals live in terror or suffer death

at the hands of strong and fierce animals. Man is heir to diseases which are not due to his intemperance. No reasoning can wash clean the tragic deaths and sufferings in the human world due to natural calamities like flood, earthquakes, epidemics etc. If there are beautiful cases of valuable adjustments, there are tragic facts of maladjustments, too, and hence it is illegitimate to infer from facts in the world that it is a creation by a perfectly good God.

The teleological argument even if taken as true does not prove monotheism. There are designs in Nature, like eyes, ears, nose, heart or lungs, but it does not prove a single designer. There may be different designers for different parts of the human body, as is the case in modern artifacts. Some design one part and others design other parts. Even if the designer happens to be one, he need not be infinite in knowledge, power and goodness to produce the world. He needs only to possess power and goodness to the extent necessary for creating the present world.

Both these arguments—cosmological and teleological—are inconclusive to prove the existence of God. We have seen that causal principle which is used to prove the existence of God, asks for the cause of God, too. If everything must have a cause, God must have a cause, too. We can check the application of causal principle to God if we can show that the nature of God is different from the nature of the existents in the universe, so that it is silly to ask the question how God happens to exist.

3. The Ontological Argument

The theists give a third argument called the ontological argument. This argument, if true, proves the existence of God. It is a case of logical deduction and if the deduction is valid, it proves the existence of God beyond the possibility of doubt. The argument is presented thus : God is a being who is all perfection. Existence is one of his perfections. To say that God does not exist, is to say that a perfect being lacks a perfection which is as self-contradictory as to say that a triangle is not three-sided. Here existence is deduced from God's nature. The relation between God's nature or essence and existence is necessary, as the relation between triangle and three-sidedness is necessary or relation between triangle

and its interior angles being equal to two right angles is necessary. 'God exists' is a necessary proposition as 'the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles' is a necessary proposition.

Even if we consider 'existence' to be a predicate like red, omnipotence or omniscience, the existence of God is not proved. From the logical truth that if anything is perfect, it exists; it does not follow that some being exists which is perfect any more than from the logical truth that 'if anything is square, it has four sides', it follows that some square thing exists which has four sides. Further, this argument rests on the false assumption that existence is a quality or an essence like omniscience. Let us think of the idea of centaur. We can describe centaur as (1) a horse with (2) human body, arms and head. We can ask, does centaur exist? It is a proper question because 'existence' is not a part of the definition of centaur. It is not part of the content of the concept of centaur. The question: 'Does centaur exist?' asks whether there is an object to which the description of centaur applies. The question about the meaning of a concept is different from the question of the object, if any, answering to the concept. The function of 'exists' in a proposition is to assert the instantiation of a given concept. Hence, the existential proposition like 'cows exist' is not a statement about cows to the effect that they have the attribute of existing, but about the concept or description 'cow', to the effect that it has instance. Now, let us take the concept of God. It is a concept of a being all-knowing, all powerful and all-good. Just as we can ask whether centaur exists, that is, whether there is an object answering to the description of centaur, we can equally ask if there is a being corresponding to the description of God. The proposition 'God exists', is not a statement about God that he possesses the property of existence, but about the concept of God that there is an instance which satisfies the definition of God. Existential propositions are always true or false as a matter of fact rather than as a matter of definition. Whether anything of a specific description or definition exists can be tested by experience. Definition of a thing, like centaur, states the essences or qualities which differentiates it from other things like mermaid but it has nothing to tell us about the existence of the object

defined. In fact theists hold this view when after defining God as being all powerful, all-knowing and all-good, they go about giving evidence for his existence, that everything in the universe has dependent character, or we find the parts of things in the world are so organised that they function for mutual good. There would be no point in offering such evidence if existence was part of the essence and hence the definition of God.

4. The Argument from Religious Experience

Today theists find that proofs given to prove the existence of God fail to prove God's existence. The cosmological and teleological arguments, even if taken to be valid, do not prove the existence of God defined as infinite power, knowledge and goodness. The ontological proof, could only prove existence of God of infinite power, knowledge and goodness, if it were valid. But it has no capacity to move from the world of thought to the world of facts.

The theists take to another course. God is beyond proofs, beyond intellectual categories of understanding. The belief in God has its unshakeable foundation in religious experience of God. Professor J. Baillie in his book, *Our Knowledge of God*, puts the case of religious experience as undisputable evidence for the existence of God. He says, "We are rejecting logical argument of any kind as the first chapter of our theology or representing the process by which God comes to be known. We are holding that our knowledge of God rests rather on the revelation of His presence as Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is not as a result of an inference of any kind, whether explicit or implicit, whether laboriously excogitated or swiftly intuited that knowledge of God's reality comes to us. It comes rather through our direct personal encounter with Him in the person of Jesus Christ, His son, our Lord" (p. 143).

This way of knowing the existence of God is as follows: I have direct experience of God, therefore I have valid reason to believe that God exists.

The question for us to consider is whether such an experience is self-justifying or its validity is to be checked by tests.

To say that experience of God is self-justifying means that

the contents of the experience reveal an objective truth. There is experience of God; therefore, there is God in the objective world independent of my experience of it. The difficulty with this view of religious experience of God is that the contents of what is experienced and named God are so varied and con-tradictory that it discredits the objective character of what is experienced. Let us take a direct experience of say, a 'chair'. If one person's experience is the report which is the description of a house, another of an elephant, a third of a cow, we can dismiss the experience of all the three as subjective, with no claim to objective truth. Now the experience of God, i.e., what evokes attitude of obeisance and worship to the primitive man is of the nature of 'Mana', to a Sanatanist of a Vishnu or Shiva, to a monotheist of personal infinite being, to a Vedantist of impersonal universal consciousness or Brahman, to a Christian of trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We can safely consider such experiences of God as subjective experiences, though the sincerity of the experiences is not under question. The chaos of the contents of the experiences puts to doubt the self-justifying character of experiences. In fact, no experience which claims what is outside of its experience of it, can be self-justifying. There must be tests or checking procedure to differentiate genuine experiences and non-genuine experiences.

The primitive man's experience of God as 'Mana' is rejected by theists on grounds other than on the fact of his experience. The primitive man's experience is questioned to be genuine, on the ground that there are no such spirits as 'Mana.' The Sanatanist's experience of gods or goddesses is rejected on the ground that outside his experience, there are no such existences in the objective world. The Muslim mystic rejects the experience of Christian mystics of trinity of Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as non-genuine, because such an idea is intellectually outrageous.

In defence, it may be said that the experience of God is of the same character, the difference in verbal presentation of it is due to the interpretation of that experience. Interpretation of an experience depends on one's state of intellectual development, knowledge, and culture and if we remove the influence of these factors in the interpretation we will find

that there is identity of the experience of God. But if we remove the element of intellectual development, knowledge and culture, what is left of experience is kinaesthetic sensations, and nothing more.

It is clear that no experience, which claims truth about what exists outside of it, is self-justifying. Such experiences must be put to tests or public procedures to discriminate between genuine and non-genuine experiences. In perceptual experience we do differentiate between a genuine perceptual experience and an illusion or hallucination. We have objective tests. If a drunkard says that he sees a horse dancing in his goblet, we do not doubt the sincerity of the report of his experience. What we deny is that it is a genuine perceptual experience. It is a case of hallucination for a horse dancing in the goblet is absurd. Similarly, if a Christian mystic claims that he experiences trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as one person, we do not doubt his sincerity. What we deny is that it is a genuine experience. It is a case of hallucination. If some one says that he sees God as pure disembodied spirit in his experience, we do not question his sincerity. We question his assertion that what he sees, exists outside of his experience; for there is no disembodied being in the universe. Whatever exists is known to exist as embodied. We have no evidence for the existence of disembodied entity. We have shown that the arguments to establish the existence of disembodied infinite being are a failure and this is recognised by theists themselves. Ramanuja and Samkara, both, show the puerile character of the arguments for establishing the existence of God.

The theists do try to formulate some tests or checking procedures to discriminate the genuine religious experience from the non-genuine experience. They point out that experience of God (1) is universal. It is found from the pre-historic times to this day. (2) It is experience of the men of highest character and integrity and therefore their reports of their experience is beyond all suspicion. (3) Such experiences influence the character and life of the subject.

These testing or checking procedures are unreliable for deciding the objectivity of the experience of God. The experience of God, defined as one infinite (1) disembodied (2) person, all

powerful, all knowing and (3) all good; is not what is the common religious experience from pre-historic times. We have already referred to religious experiences of primitive people, how childish they are in character compared to belief in one infinite person called Ishwar! Again, in the higher religions, the religious experience is sometimes reported to be of contact with super-personal being, at other times with an all-inclusive impersonal whole, sometimes with all loving being, sometimes with a being indifferent to such matters. The chaos of reports of religious experiences, as already pointed out, do not satisfy the first criterion of objectivity of religious experience as experience of God as one disembodied infinite personal being.

Let us take the second test. It safeguards the honest reporting of the experiencer and not the error-free character of the report of the experiencer. A saint who fasts and sees heaven and the man who drinks much and sees snakes are at par so far sincerity of reporting of their respective experience is concerned. Both are referring to their abnormal state of mind.

It cannot be said that a person who shows non-attachment from the worldly pleasures and is of the highest noble character must see God in his religious experience. Buddha's report of his highest religious experience, his state of Enlightenment, which made him the Light of Asia and the world, contains no trace of the experience of God. In his state of Enlightenment, he saw the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Path and in them there is not the remotest trace of God or Brahman. In the same way, the religious experience of 24 Tirthankars are without God as their object of experience. So it is clear that integrity of character of the religious genius is no criterion of the truth of what he reports about the objective character of his experience.

Let us now take the third criterion. The truth of a belief is not guaranteed by the changes it brings in our life. The sense of peace and tranquillity, of nobility and power comes to persons with different beliefs about God and even without any belief in God. To some peace and power comes through reading a scripture, to others from reading a poem, to still others through hearing some music and these poems and music have nothing to do with God or religion.

Modern Sociology and Psychology claim to show how the experiences of God have naturalistic explanation and thereby are not genuine experience of God independent of their experimenter. Consider the following experience of St. Teresa, "Often when the soul least expects it, our Lord calls her suddenly. She hears very distinctly that her God calls her, and it gives her such a start, specially at the beginning that she trembles and utters plaints. She feels that an ineffable wound has been dealt her and the wound is so precious in her sight that she would like it never to heal."

Psychologists interpret this mystic experience of St. Teresa thus: Natural desire for sexual love had not been only inhibited but also repressed in young saint woman. These desires were nevertheless active and pressed for some sort of fulfillment. In this case they found indirect and acceptable expression through hallucinatory experience of the intimate presence of the male deity.

Such a psychological explanation can be given for the mystic experience of losing one's individuality in an all inclusive whole together with a sense of profound peace and ineffable joy called the Brahman experience. We find that the primary model for such experience is to be found in the experience of the infant who has not made any distinction between himself and the external world and whose experience therefore is an undifferentiated sea of feeling. The mystic experience is to be interpreted as repression of early infantile experience.

The mystic experience of God as 'Father in Heaven' is interpreted by Freud as father complex, as regression to the child's experience in relation to his father.

The scientific explanation of religious or mystic experience of God as subjective, giving no insight in supernatural reality, is acceptable for neither logical arguments nor the character of the world of embodied entities which science studies, establish the truth of such beliefs about God and Brahman.

5. Scientific World and God

We have so far shown that the logical arguments and religious experiences fail to establish the truth of belief in God. We strengthen our conclusion for atheism by referring to the characteristics science has discovered about the universe.

We all agree that scientific knowledge is paradigm case of knowledge about what exists. The theists of today even hold that what science says about the physical universe is to be accepted as true and views against it, even if given in scriptures are to be given up as outmoded beliefs of pre-scientific age. The modern Christian theists accept that the biblical cosmological views, about the formation of our earth, life on it, the emergence of man are outmoded and false and that scientific views on all these matters are to be accepted. Scientific knowledge is based on evidence and its truth can be vindicated. A revealed belief is not supported by evidence and therefore cannot claim truth. The scientists provide evidence for the truth that earth goes round the sun through verification of eclipses. The science provides evidence for the fact of evolution of man. The scriptures provide no evidence for the statement that God created man. So what sciences tell us about the character of the universe is acceptable in comparison to what is believed on intuition, revelation or speculation.

Our contention is that what science discovers to be the nature of the universe goes against the belief in God:

1. Science holds to the principles of conservation of matter and conservation of energy. The conservation of matter means that matter can neither be increased nor decreased. It can only take different forms. The conservation of energy means that the energy cannot be increased or decreased. What we know in experience is that matter and energy take different forms but they never disappear, are never destroyed altogether. To hold that God created the world means that there was a time when there was no matter and no energy. But matter and energy are eternal and constant. If this is what science holds to be the character of the universe, there can be no creator of the universe out of nothing. It is true that some theist thinkers hold that when it is said that God is the creator of the universe, what is meant is not that he created the universe at a particular moment of time out of nothing. The universe is eternally existent. So matter and energy are eternally existent. God is creator in the sense that universe is eternally dependent on God. The character of events in the universe is contingent and therefore cannot exist unless there is a necessary being to support it. We have already rejected

this cosmological argument for the existence of God. Some theists take shelter in Einstein's Theory of Relativity, according to which some matter can be converted into energy, so matter and energy do not remain constant, when matter is converted into energy, matter becomes less and energy becomes more in amount. However, this modification in relation between matter and energy does not change the situation for the theist. Today science speaks of the conservation of matter-energy instead of conservation of matter and conservation of energy.

2. Science finds that explanation of an event is in other events within the universe. If it rains, we can discover its explanation in other events that precede it, i.e. heating of the water by sun, evaporation of water, its reaching a cold spot and condensation and then its falling as rain. Science explains the formation of the earth, the rotation of the heavenly bodies by events within the universe. No supernatural event is introduced in the explanation of the events of the universe. In the same way, the cause and cure of diseases of human body and mind are discovered within the universe. In the same way, the moral and spiritual principles can be explained without resort to a supernatural agency of God. There are conditions which make possible the existence and progress of society. There can be no society if everyone is after the life of others. So murder is bad. There can be no society if everyone is out to steal or snatch the possessions of others, So theft is bad. There can be no society if every male is out to rape and ruin the honour of every woman. So sex crime is evil. There can be no society if men all the time deceive one another in every day speech. So telling lies is bad. Thus the moral principles of respect for life, property, sex and truth, etc. are conditions for social life without which an individual cannot grow into a human person. What makes moral principles obligatory for us is not that God commands them, but that they are indispensable to social life which is necessary for the growth and progress of an individual.

It is false to believe that if there were no God, there would be no ground for moral principles. So long there is body, there are laws of health; so long there is society, there are laws of the health of the society, called moral laws. In the same

way, spiritual laws are nothing but laws of the health of the soul. Our soul degenerates if it does not exercise itself to develop its understanding with knowledge, its finer sensibilities with appreciation and creation of beauty, and its volition by development of the feelings of compassion and justice as a body degenerates if it does not develop the organs of the body. So all events, physical, biological, psychological, moral and spiritual, have their explanation within the universe.

Physical and social sciences find explanation of all events within the universe. To hold that God interferes in the working of the universe in the form of miracles is repugnant to science. So miracles which mean non-natural causation operative in the chain of natural causes, have not been verified in science laboratories. All stories of miracles are marketplace gossip to feed anti-scientific outlook on life.

The autonomous character of the universe repels the idea of a supernatural power controlling the events in the universe. Scientific understanding of the universe dispenses with the idea of the creator and controller of the universe, i.e., it finds it redundant to bring in God for explaining physical, biological, psychological, social, aesthetic, moral and spiritual events in the universe. The ideals have as much roots in the natural order as facts. It means that the events in the universe give no ground for inferring the existence of God.

3. Science finds no evidence for the possibility of disembodied consciousnesses. It tells us that life has evolved under certain physical and chemical conditions. The plants are living organisms but they do not have explicit consciousness. Again, the most elementary animals, do not possess explicit consciousness. It is in the higher animals who possess consciousness which has elements of human cognition, affection and conation. A cat or a dog cognises things, learns by experience, shows feelings of anger, hostility and love and acts in certain learnt ways. However, man has all these powers in higher excellence and is, therefore, able to create science, arts and social institutions.

Now, what is the character of life and consciousness? It is found by science that there is inseparable relation between the conditions which give rise to a new emergent and the earlier emergent. Life has emerged from certain physical and chemical

conditions and though the biological laws are different from and irreducible to laws of chemistry and laws of physics, yet there is no life without physics and chemistry. A living organism is under the physical laws. We are as much under the law of gravitation as a physical object. We are under the laws of chemistry, too. Living body depends on the balance of the chemical constituents provided by external stimuli and internal secretion of the glands. If our diet lacks calcium, our bone development suffers. If our pituitary gland is excessive or deficient in secretion, our bodily growth is affected. Our chemistry affects not only our physiology; it affects our psychology, too. If we take alcohol in excess, it does not only damage our digestive system, it disturbs our coherent thinking and even makes us unconscious. Certain chemical changes in the brain lead to psychological disorders.

Again, science discovers inseparable relation between brain and consciousness. It is found that as brain gets more complex, consciousness gets more developed. Human brain is the most complex and human consciousness is the highest in power of knowledge. If brain is damaged, the consciousness becomes elementary. In some cases brain damage leads to insanity. The evolution of consciousness is correlated with evolution of brain.

The evolution of life and consciousness of billions of years show how life and consciousness grow in the physical matrix and evolve along with its evolution. The complexity of life and consciousness is based on complexity of the body development. Life is as impossible without body as fire without oxygen or water without oxygen. There is no evidence of life or consciousness without body. Hence the speculation of a disembodied consciousness is pure speculation without ground in facts. Hence it is false to believe in disembodied God. If God is a disembodied being, he has no place in the world of reality for science knows of no consciousness which is not embodied and it knows billions of embodied consciousnesses.

4. Our everyday experience of the world is that everything undergoes change. Science discovers changes even when we do not see them with our naked eyes. It does not find anything which does not change. Even an atom changes. Our body changes, our mind or consciousness is in ceaseless change

To be is to change. If to be is to change, a changeless being is non-existent. God is defined as changeless, for a being in change is imperfect, even if changes are for the better. If what exists is in ceaseless change, there cannot be God, for God is defined as changeless being.

To sum up, science supports the view of the universe as self-existent and holds to the constancy of matter-energy. So there can be no creator of a self-existent universe.

Science shows that explanation of events is in other events, and uniform working of the universe is autonomous. There is no controller of the universe.

Science discovers that consciousness is related to body and is inseparable from it. It finds no instance or evidence for disembodied consciousness or atma or God.

Science finds that whatever it investigates is in ceaseless change. It finds no instance or evidence for unchanging existences. What we call things are nothing but series of changes. There is nothing unchanging beyond changing states. So the belief in unchanging atma or God is a myth.

Neither logical arguments nor the fundamentals of scientific understanding have the least tendency to warrant the truth of the belief in God. This is why, we, along with the Jains, Buddhists, Sankhyas, Mimansakas, Taoists, Confucians, Marxists reject belief both in personal God or Ishwar and impersonal universal consciousness or Brahman.

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