

God, Man and World¹

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Is God a Mere Belief Which Can Never Be Proven ? Or, Is it Actually Possible to Know God ?

We will start with God. Every individual has a concept of God and a concept of cause for every situation. The cause of any creation is sought after by any human intellect. Why? Because a deliberate creation presupposes an intelligent being; one who conceives the creation, who knows the purpose of the creation and who also has or finds the skill for the creation.

A simple example would be that of the potter. The potter must necessarily know what a pot is, as well as the purpose for which a given pot is to be made. And he should also have the know-how to make the pot. He should either possess the necessary skills or be able to find those skills elsewhere.

In the creation of the pot, there is an intelligent being who has the knowledge and skill of creating the pot. Since I don't see a natural cause for this pot-creation, I assume it has come from the hands of someone, and therefore, I presume an intelligent being as a cause. That cause we call *nimitta-kāraṇa* in Sanskrit. *Nimitta* means 'efficient' or 'intelligent' and *kāraṇa* means 'cause'. The term 'Efficient Cause' is used to cover both the knowledge and skill required to create the pot.

Since we don't see a natural cause, yet we see a pot, we assume that there must be a cause. Similarly, when we see a deliberate, purposeful, useful creation here, comprising all the things in the world, we assume that there must be a cause. Why? Well, everything seems to be in order and to have some purpose; like my two hands, for instance, which have certain joints which move and function in certain ways. They seem to form a well-engineered creation. If there were no joints, these hands would be useless. And if there were too many joints, the hands would not serve the same purpose as they do now. Because of the extraordinary degree of intelligence in the creation, we presume that

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this has not been created by any human endeavor, or by any locally available being. And thus, the searching intellect concludes or presumes (and it is a simple, wild presumption) that there must be some cause who is not locally available.

Even though we don't see the cause anywhere here in this world, at the same time, the intellect doesn't accept such an intelligent, deliberate creation just arising at random. It does not accept the possibility that such a creation can exist without an efficient cause. Because it is a cause that I cannot see, I make the wild presumption that there is an efficient cause somewhere and just accept it. It is wild because it is based on an erroneous assumption. Since I don't see a naturally occurring pot, I presume that there must be an intelligent cause for it. There is an intelligent being involved in the creation of the pot. This is reasonable. But then, I extend this line of thinking to the creation. I don't see the creation as something unnatural, like a pot. Yet I have not seen another naturally occurring creation with which I can compare this one to be able to say that one is natural and the other creation is unnatural. Therefore, to conceive of an intelligent cause for the creation which has the same relationship as the potter with the pot is a wild presumption. Nor is it possible to evade the issue of the cause by dismissing the world, as some schools of thought do, when we see the creation sprawling before us.

So we look to the scriptures which become the revealing means of knowledge. The scriptures say that there is God. We simply accept this because it is not something that is within the scope of our given means of knowledge. But it is something more than mere acceptance. The human heart is able to appreciate the presence of a cause, even though, logically, it doesn't withstand scrutiny. That there is God we cannot really prove logically. Yet we feel or presume that there must be some cause, some creator.

Let us assume that the scriptures, all the world over; like the Quran, the Puranas, the Bible, the Vedas, the Tao etc., all talk about God. Assuming that there is God, a cause for all of this, let us assume that they are talking about God. Accepting that God is the cause, it becomes easy to accept what that God should be. If we can say that the one who makes the pot necessarily has the knowledge of the pot, and the skills to make the pot, then the one who has made everything must be omniscient, all-knowing, and also, must have all the necessary skills. Therefore he is omniscient and omnipotent, all-knowing and almighty. All scriptures give that definition of God. The all-knowing and almighty, whom we call God is the cause for the entire creation. In one form or the other,

this is how the Hindu, the Islam, the Christian and all other religions define God. This is generally the definition of God.

An omniscient, omnipotent God who is referenced by 'He'; the Father. It's a local expression that reflects a patriarchal social structure. Why should it be He? If you use the word father, a local word, you must also think of mother. Then you should look upon God as the parents of the world. Because you are using a local word to reference God, it is necessarily both He and She. In the Hindu religion, the God's are all happily married. They are the parents of the world, both He and She and there is no distinction.

Now that Lord is omnipotent, of course, almighty, and also omniscient. He has knowledge of all that is there. This knowledge is of two types. One is knowledge of oneself and the other is knowledge of everything else; this is called all-knowledge, and the one who has it is all-knowing. Thus the creation presupposes knowledge which is necessarily all knowledge of the entire creation. The one who knows himself and also the creation is called omniscient; all-knowing. This is what we call the Lord, God, the one who is omniscient and omnipotent.

Now the question is: where is this God that everybody talks about? I cannot see him locally nor does anyone see him locally anywhere. So the theologies just place him in a heaven then say that God in heaven created this world. Somebody coined this word 'heaven' which is a kind of place, like this world is a place. In this view, heaven is essentially a place. Therefore God, while seated in heaven, created this world. Now the problem is, if God created this world, then who created heaven? You must necessarily say God. Then where was God before the creation of heaven? The 10 year old child asks his father this type of question and if dad just says "Don't ask silly questions; just finish your homework," the child, the growing, thinking child doesn't give up thinking. He may not get an answer but he cannot give up the question.

What is above logic is not illogical. Anything that is illogical is within logic, not above logic. Therefore, what is above logic is simply above logic, but anything illogical is within logic. So if we talk about creation, we must necessarily ask, "Where was God before the creation of the world?" a question that appears to have no answer. This problem is due to non-recognition of some important facts.

If we are searching for the cause for any creation, we must necessarily search for the cause completely. Whether it is a pot, a table, a horse or anything for that matter, it pre-supposes two causes: an efficient cause and a material cause. Without any material, there is no real creation to begin with. The potter, for instance, must necessarily have some material out of which to make a pot. For anything, if the raw materials are not there, there can be no production. Baking bread, making pizza all require the raw dough material. Therefore, these two causes are necessary for any creation, and are called in Sanskrit; *nimitta-kāraṇa* (efficient cause) and *upādāna-kāraṇa* (material cause).

Assuming that the Lord created this world, to prove that there is a God who is a creator, you cannot omit the material cause or you have no model at all. So if there is a creator, the creator must have some material out of which to create.

Let us assume that God has in his hands the material cause, X. Now the question is, where did he get this material? Everything has to come from something, so from what material does this X material come? Then you have to say from W material, then W comes from V, and V from U all the way to A material. Now who created the A material? It cannot be a created thing. If you say it was created, again you have to find the material for it from something else. Some other material is necessary for the creation and necessarily therefore, the A material must be traced to that very cause, the *efficient cause*. Under the assumption that there is creator, a God (although I have not proven any God at this point) that God must be both the efficient and material cause.

In Indian literature, from the standpoint of the material cause, a god is called a 'she' and from the standpoint of the efficient cause, a god is called a 'he'. Without one, the other does not exist. In the she is he and no he is there without she.

So if the Lord is he and she, both efficient and material cause, then the problem of God sitting somewhere and creating the world is solved. This problem was due to thinking that time and space are absolute, thinking that first there was time and space and then God put this world into it. This is what theologians say. When God is talked about, it is said that God created this world meaning at a given time. At a given time, it is said that everything was created.

Are Time and Space really Objects?

Time and Space are also a part of creation. They are not absolute which is generally proven by your own experience. When you go to sleep, you don't experience any concept of either space or time in deep sleep. And your concept of time continually changes. When you are absorbed in a lecture or a song, time seems to go so fast, but when you are bored, time seems to drag on forever. In deep sleep, time and space do not exist for you at all. Therefore time/space is not something that is absolute. Since time and space go together with the creation, there should be no time/space in the 'beginning' 'before' the creation.

If time and space necessarily come with the creation, you can understand one thing. Suppose you have a piece of cloth made of cotton in your hand. The weaver is not sitting upon the cloth because the weaver did not weave the cloth out of himself. Thank god he didn't because he would be sitting on everyone who wore the cloth if he had. The weaver used cotton and then made the cloth. Although the weaver has his house in California, the cloth is traveling all over as well as the cotton. Why? Because the material cause is never away from the creation. If the table is made of wood, the wood is never away from the table because the very table is nothing but wood. If we cut the legs and the table in pieces, you still have wood. But, if we take the wood away, we no longer have the table. So too, if you take the cotton away, you no longer have the cloth.

Any creation, then, is sustained by the very substantive, the substance or material of which it is made. The material is the substantive. But what you see when you see a table, a chair or a piece of cloth is the particular object, not the substantive. If you analyze any creation, that creation is never separate from its material cause. A creation is sustained by its material and it goes back unto its material, just like a pot made of clay. It is sustained by clay and goes back to clay when the pot form no longer exists, never having been away from the clay at any time in its time/space life.

Can the World Be Different from God?

Any creation is born of a material cause, sustained by the material and is never away from the material. So if the Lord is both the material and efficient cause, where is that Lord on the basis of what we have understood here? Where is the cloth in relation to the cotton? The Lord, as the material cause must necessarily be the creation because the

creation is non-separate from the material. So if the creator and the material are identical, then where the creation is, there the cause must be. Therefore the Lord as the material cause is the whole creation. The Lord is time; the Lord is space; the Lord is stars; the Lord is the sun; the Lord is the moon. As is stated in Taittiriya Upanisad, from That (Lord) alone; Space is, Air is, Fire is, Water is, Earth is. And again the Upanisad says that all these trees and plants and food and this body which is made up of food, minerals etc., is also the same Lord.

Therefore, at this physical level, the body is a modification of food, the material alone, so this body is the Lord. So too, the sense organs, the *prāṇa* or life force, the thoughts, the various faculties of the mind,; all of them are the Lord. Then there is a consciousness 'behind' all of them, informing all of them, which is the essence of the Lord.

In these few broad strokes, the topic is covered. The conscious being is the Lord; the body-mind etc. is the Lord, and the so-called world from which we exclude ourselves as observers, that is also the Lord. Therefore, all that is here is the Lord. We don't say there is one God; we say there is only God.

This concept of one God is very limited God. If there is "only one" God, then who are you? If you say you are from him, he is somewhere remote. This is a 1 + 1 god. And if it is a 1 + 1 god, that god is minus my power, minus your power and minus everybody's power. Even a mosquito has some power. A mosquito can make even the most powerful man in the world, the president of America go crazy. In fact, a mosquito is more powerful than a man. I'll give you the logic. Man is a genius; in fact he is ingenious; he is able to catch any animal. He throws a net to catch the fish, a net to catch the lion and a trap to catch the bear, etc. But when it comes to a mosquito, he doesn't throw a net; he gets into a net. Therefore mosquitoes are more powerful than man.

So even bugs have some strength. This means that God minus you ; minus me; minus mosquitoes; minus all the microbes and bugs must be minus all those powers. Therefore, he is an individual with very limited powers. He's like me; a little more or a little less power makes no difference; it is still limited. If he occupies a given place, like heaven, he's an individual in time and space. He will have a front and a back. That means when you see the front side of God, you won't see the back side; you'll have to go

around to see the back. Then when you see the back, you will miss the front. That is the 1 + 1 God.

But in our vision, there is only God. If there is only God, this means the Lord is the creation. If he is the material cause for the creation, he's non-separate from the creation; a material cause being what it is and creation being what it is. That is the reason the Lord can be worshipped in any form. You can invoke God in any form such as the 'sun' or 'moon'. Or, you can invoke in the sun, the whole Lord. Why? Because the Lord is everything.

Anything worshipful in the creation can become an aspect of God. And in a given aspect, you can invoke the whole creation, the whole Lord. It is like this. When you touch my little finger, it is not a little of me that is touched; you touched me; the whole of me is touched. It's not that if you pull my little finger I give you only a little attention, and if you pull my ring finger I give you a little more attention. No. I am present all over this body and any part of this body is me. Therefore, when any part of this body is touched, I am invoked totally.

On the other hand, if I show my little finger to my doctor and ask him to please see what is wrong with it, he looks at the little finger alone. And that's how we have different deities. There is different worship of many Gods, but only one Lord is being invoked because there is only God, one Lord who is the whole.

Now we have talked about this creation. Before the creation of anything, what is there? As we saw, the creation presupposes knowledge. Whether it is a house or a light or a cup or a piece of cloth, etc., it's creation presupposes knowledge. If it is the whole world, then the knowledge of the whole world must necessarily be there before the creation of it. And that knowledge, any knowledge, has to be with a being, a conscious being. Knowledge cannot be elsewhere. It has to be in consciousness alone; therefore a conscious being. Since knowledge is never separate from the conscious being, and there is only one conscious being, therefore, knowledge is God. What we call God is nothing but knowledge in the form of creation, and the promise to create.

Now if this is so, before the creation you can understand Time being existent, Space being existent or anything in the time/space framework being existent. So what was there before the creation of time/space? What was it exactly like then?

Am I Different from God and the Rest of the World?

Here is a model for it. It is exactly like what was there when you slept. We call it *laya*. Before the creation what was there was *pralaya* (the prefix *pra* enhances the meaning of the stem). When you go to sleep, there is no time, no space, no creation. All that was there was you, you without time/space and creation and with all the potential to create. You were there alright, but beyond time and beyond space, meaning you were not in time/space in your sleep. There you are totally free from time and space.

Now, let us say you dreamt. Please see this well. You partially wake up, meaning you dream. You don't wake up to this physical body, and therefore, you are dead to the physical world. From the waking state you understand that in your dream, you are the creator of the dream world. Where did you find the material for the dream creation? In yourself. You, Mr. Dreamer is the maker of this entire dream world and the same one who found all the material for making the dream world. Suppose you have created a few people and some mountains, rivers, forests, houses, etc. Now all these people will be looking at what? Your creation—and thinking also: “What a wonderful creation. How beautiful are the mountains, the stars, the moon.” They marvel at this creation. You are God for them; for all of them. Here you are the efficient and material cause; the two being not separate, but in you alone.

The dream is a clean model. For a subjective creation like the dream, your mind alone is good enough to provide the material. You are a conscious being, an intelligent being. Before the dream creation, there was you having the knowledge of what you created, necessarily. You didn't see any “gugaboogai” in your dream. Nobody can see any gugaboogai in the dream. Why? Because you don't know what gugaboogai is. You can only see there what you know. Sometimes it may be jumbled like a man with horns. You have seen men and you have seen horns, and you have seen people behaving like they have horns. Therefore you see a man with horns (that's why it is a dream). You can create anything there but only as much as you already know.

So a dream is a creation born of you. You are the efficient cause (the maker of the dream world) and you are the material for it as well. Therefore you cannot separate the dream world from yourself. That is the model. And the dream world or any creation for that matter, if you analyze it, is not there at all, really speaking.

Where is that ‘Oneness’ that all the Philosophers Speak About?

The general thinking is that the understanding of realities is left to philosophers.
Then what are we dealing with? This is a crucial topic for any human being. We are dealing with the reality of the world with just three words. One is “is”. The second is “is not” and the third is “false”. These three are all that we live with in this world that we are dealing with. The Swami “is”. The table “is”. The cup on the table “is”. The horn on the Swami’s head “is not”. A tail for the Swami “is not”. So the Swami Is. His horn is not. Suppose you mistake a rope for a snake. What is this called? I have seen a rope. The rope is. The snake also is. But then on the rope, the snake is not. If it is a rope and you insist that it is a snake, what is that? It is subjective. It’s called *prātibhāsikam*, a projection, a false thing. Let us call it superimposition. Therefore we have “is”, satyam; “is not”, *tuccham*; and false, *prātibhāsikam*.

Now please understand this. This cup in my hand is or is not? The cup is. The coffee in the cup is not. The cup is neither false nor is it non-existent. Therefore it is existent. This is how we deal with the world. With these three words then, the world is covered. Now this cup I have is made of styrofoam. Suppose I say this is styrofoam; there is no cup at all. Am I correct or not? I am correct. And suppose you say this is cup. You are also correct. So we are using two words for the same object. Therefore, either one is right and the other wrong or both are wrong or both are right. These are the possibilities. If two words are used to indicate a given object, either both words are wrong, or one is wrong and the other is right, or both are right, or one is more right than the other. These are the only possibilities.

Now when you say this is a cup and I say this is styrofoam, we are both right. Therefore, both of us are not wrong. So one possibility is eliminated. It is not true that one is right and the other wrong. If both are right, then styrofoam and cup must be synonymous. For instance when I say water and you say aqua, both are right because they are synonymns. Similarly, when you say cup and I say Styrofoam, since both of us are definitely right, they should be synonyms. That would mean that wherever there is a cup, there should be styrofoam. But it is not true, and therefore, one is more correct than the other. Which is more correct? Cup or styrofoam? Look here (breaks the cup into pieces). Now where is your cup? My styrofoam is still there. Now the cup is dead and gone and some people will weep for it. There is a lot behind all of this.

Please see this clearly. The cup is gone. Where did it go? Did it walk away from the styrofoam? It did not go away from the styrofoam. That is why initially I said it is styrofoam. Before the cup appeared it was styrofoam and after the cup disappeared is styrofoam. And when the cup was there, it was styrofoam. Therefore what is the word that you have for the reality of Styrofoam? We have already used the word “is” for the cup. Having used up the word “is” or the cup, now what word can we use for the Styrofoam? We don’t have a word – None at all. Therefore, our relationship with the world is without a word to express this reality. In fact, it is without the knowledge of this reality. Without knowing that it is Styrofoam, if the cup is gone, you are going to weep. Why? Because it was a reality for you. You said, “The cup is”. But it was never really there. Yet the cup was there and was very useful; therefore it is not a delusion or an illusion. It is not false. Only if you take the cup for a rabbit is it a delusion. So it is neither an illusion nor is it non-existent. Now, if this broken cup is Styrofoam, then you need another word for the Styrofoam. Thus, it is more appropriate that we use “is” for the Styrofoam since even now, when the cup is ‘gone’, the Styrofoam exists/ Is. Then what about the useful cup that was there? For the cup we have to use another word since it is no longer there. This word will mean a reality that is in-between “is” and “is not”, that has no independent existence. We call it *mithyā* or *māyā*. This is not delusion. What is false can also be *mithyā*, but this is the very useful *mithyā*, the cup. That which is neither “is” or “is not”, neither *sat* nor *asat*, but in-between, is *mithyā*. That which not a substantive, like the cup is not a substantive is *mithyā*. The cup is an attribute, a form for the substance styrofoam.

See how the nature of creation becomes very clear. The creation is like this cup. The cup is the form; it is not the substantive. Then what is the substantive? In this example, Styrofoam is. The cup can be in the form of clay, metal, paper, plastic or many other materials. Therefore all we have for the cup is a form in our mind. A table, chair, house, ball, brick, etc., any thing you can think of is only a form. And every form is reducible to its own locus. Then the locus, if we analyze it further, becomes an attribute for another locus, and therefore, we see that all we are dealing with is form.

In the beginning there was the word, cup, and the cup was with the manufacturer, the maker. In the beginning there was the word, pot and the pot was with the potter; meaning that knowledge was with the potter. Knowledge is never separate from the maker. Here, with reference to the world, knowledge is the maker and all that is made by

the maker is only a form, the material for which is also found in the maker. Therefore, the name and form creation is apparent (in-between). It is not “is”, not real, nor is it “is not”, unreal.

So time/space and the time/space framework, which includes the whole projection of forms is not away from the irreducible substantive which is consciousness. If you analyze anything in this world, there is only one thing that is not subject to negation—consciousness. Anything else, including time and space, is subject to negation. Whatever is not subject to negation, we define as *satyam*, reality. This is only limitless consciousness, which happens to be you.