

## GOD

God is the Object of the religion-mystical consciousness or attitude. The manner of knowing or apprehending God is specially the province of the intuitive or Gnostic consciousness, that is to say, subjective revelation of the truth that is immanent in it as also transcendent to it. Natural objects are the objects of sensory or objective knowing. Truths of Nature such as uniformity of Nature and theories of evolution and others are derived from the sensory experience by reason that is inferential, that is, both inductive and deductive. Truths or laws of science are inductive laws and are strictly limited to the region of experience of the sensory level. Even the dialectical method is limited to the region of the senses or objective nature. These truths have varying degrees of probability, but the region of religion is the region of subjective knowing of that which is trans-subjective. God's mystery may be admired and felt by gazing at the 'starry skies above and the moral law within', but it can be known only through the divine Gnostic revelation. All religions thus have a special way of describing the unique Gnostic approach to God. That is the revelation of God by God; śruti is the result of divine seeing: *divya caksus* and *divya śrotas* lead to the knowledge of the Divine. Islam too speaks of the rasools who are granted the vision of the truths of the Divine even as the Vedic Rsis have been granted the vision of the supreme texts and heard them in their purified being through the Divine Word. God is the Eye of the eye, Ear of the ear, Life of the life, Mind or the mind: from Him everything, Gods, men and senses recede baffled<sup>1</sup>. These sensory and mental organs can only reveal the manifested but can never reveal the Cause of these manifestations. Thus the Causal or Root knowledge is to be had only by a consciousness that is causal or original. That is the reason why we are asked constantly to know God, for by knowing Him we can know all the manifested. God thus could only be 'known' truly as Subject or Self.

Further, we know from the History of Philosophy that all theological speculations ungoverned by the revelations stop, at the conception of the finite God, a power for Good but ineffectual and ever anxious. It is a conception that serves no purpose at all, and cannot be the Object of the religious consciousness. But we should guard ourselves against identifying intuitive apprehensions with revelations experience. These are unique and belong to a class of experiences that are instigated or granted by the Divine, whereas intuitions are but openings out of the individual consciousness towards the higher vistas and planes and presences of the all comprehensive reality. There are several levels which have to be passed before the Divine form is opened up to the human aspirant<sup>2</sup>. The intuitive consciousness has to denude itself of

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<sup>1</sup> *Kenopanisad*, I. 1: cf. *Kenopanisad-bhāṣya*: ed and trans. S.V.O. Series 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Kathopaniṣad*. 1.2.20. Some modern thinkers, following Śankara deny the doctrine of Grace but substitute the peaceful or tranquil mental state as the meaning *prasāda*. They forget the verse 2 where is found the root-*Vṛṇ* and the whole range of spiritual literature of Grace. Cf. Maitra(S.K): *On the Kathopaniṣad* (New India Antiquary I): God is the “sum of our supersensible need: said Ernest Renan.

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its thralldom to objective existence, to objective perceptions and dependence on mere inferences based on perceptions, and must depend and lean more and more on the experience of all in the Spirit that is first experienced as subjective or immanent is oneself, and later experienced as trans-subjective and transcendent to one self and all, including Nature, that previously were gathered into the objective, for the limit of this capacity towards solipsism is reached rather quickly even when the soul aims at extreme openness and receptivity. The soul is finite and its receptacle is limited. In the Divine it gains the continuity that it tended to lose in the course of experiencing subjectivity. That is the reason why subjective experiencing is the easiest way towards the realization of oneness with the

Infinite; whether we are finite or infinite does not matter at all in that context for there is the feeling of fullness, *pūrṇatva* of God alone.

Thus it is clear that revelation knowledge can only be reached by man through the glance of the Divine who permits the opening out of the consciousness of the individual so as to be continuous with His infinite consciousness. But the intuitive consciousness is a beginning, an opening into wider and wider planes of Being, even as the inferential knowledge is permitted to arrive at universal laws. That is the reason why the highest truths of mystic experience could only be communicated through the intuitive and the subliminal, and occasionally through the intellectual level. That is also the reason why the higher truths are normally communicated through symbols and analogies. That is also the reason why certain philosophical schools hold *upamāna* to be a means of right knowledge (*pramāṇa*). The fullest transmission of divine truths is impossible in terms of our human understanding. But they have been transmitted allows in three distinct ways corresponding to the *ādhyātma*, *ādhibhautika* and *ādhidivika*.<sup>1</sup> An integral knowledge involves a fundamental understanding of the three ways which are capable of yielding an integral synthesis.

The symbolisms are all – important in religious understanding. Their unique truths have to be grasped. A dictionary of these symbols is not available. Therefore many theologians do not wish to trouble themselves with the symbolisms of the revelations and the Veda and other such apocryphal literature. But without a knowledge of the symbols and what they symbolize or correspond to, we may only extract principles and leave out the essence of those teachings or instructions<sup>2</sup>.

The symbols denote power, omniscience, omni-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kaballah literature: *Heaven and Hell*: E.Swedenborg. 87-115 sections (Trans. Rev. Samuel Nobel. Ed. 1851). Dr. Mohan Singh in his two books

*Mysticism of Time in the Rg Veda and New Light in Krishna and the Gītā* has attempted this method of correspondence. But it is Sri Aurobindo who has excellently shown it be used in the Rg Veda from the *ādhyātmika* or psychological standpoint in his masterly essays on the *Secret of the Veda* (Arya 1915 – 16). See also “There is not a verse of the Quran but has a literal sense, and an allegorical sense, and its allegorical meanings”. *Kitabal–Arba* in *Al-Risālat Al-Ladumyya*, Margaret Smith

<sup>2</sup> *Life Divine*: Sri Aurobindo Vol. II

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beneficence, love and others. Even the functions would find personifications, and myths may be made to reveal the coherency of the spiritual activity of symbolization. We meet with these in the Mythologies of every nation. And we ought to treat them with care and respect. It is difficult to trace these symbolisms to one source, for the revelations have passed through several types of selves even as the mythologies have passed, and we are left with apparently conflicting but perhaps reconcilable revelations. An integral understanding of the nature of the Object of religious consciousness will demand from us a fair and foundational understanding of the fundamental demands of the individual consciousness on the one hand and on the other an equally elemental responsiveness in manifold way to these demands on the part of One Divine God.

The Veda, the Bhāgavata, the Hymns of St. Sathakopa and others are most important in this connection, for they reveal the omni-planal nature of the Divine, and His infinite ways of responsiveness to the infinite demands of the individual soul, which itself forms the wonderful history of the Līlā of the Divine Being, the archetypal Mystery of Divine Being.

Prof. J. Mact Taggart wrote, “If there is a God, He is a person and not an abstract quality. Still lest, is God to be resolved into a couple of abstract qualities which can be treated as opposing one another<sup>1</sup>.” In writing the above he was

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<sup>1</sup> *Some Dogmas of Religion*: p.232; *Life Divine*: II “Spirit is Person who has many personalities”.

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perhaps referring to the Spinozistic treatment of God as possessing two attributes, Thought and Extension which were opposed in one sense, though corresponding to each other in another sense. We know from the history of monistic philosophy that it tends to treat God as subordinate to the Absolute because He is a person, qualified, and subject to the categories of Thought<sup>1</sup>. The importance of the Absolute Godhead is realized by the religious persons and for them the concept of person is more important than the impersonal principle that is abstract, mere law and order, and nothing more. It is true that monism seeks to make the concept of power or causality nugatory and makes it appear self contradictory for no other reason than to deny that the concept of power involves the positing of an intelligence that is a person; ultimately all the infinite regress that is affirmed of the causal prius is referred to the Person. In the name of anthropomorphism this is denied by certain thinkers, but it must be admitted that all thought-processes are anthropomorphic. The impersonal, is no less anthropomorphic than the personal and it cannot be maintained with any show of justice that the impersonal as ground is not surreptitiously introducing the concept of causality. The fact is that there happens a confusion of the terms belonging to one plane of experience with those belonging to another plane

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<sup>1</sup> Advaita Vedānta considers God to be less than the Absolute, even as Bradley thought God to be less than the Absolute. Certain thinkers made God an evolute, the purest form available to manifestation of the Absolute through devotion as an object of Devotion. The Absolute is an object of jñāna was Śuddha-sattvāvachchinnā Brahman whereas Yādava Prakāśa made Īśvara the first evolutes of Brahman.

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experience, and incidentally the lower plane is denied by the higher or made relatively unreal. But the godhead-concept is something that transcends the

private – personality of the sensory experience and the universal – impersonality of the rational experience. the concept of infinite person that is a Person having infinite personalities emerges at the highest point of revelation experience, though to be sure it has some semblances with the sensory – level which alone makes confusion possible. God is more than human just as much as He is more than reason. God as Transcendent is Absolute Person.

The qualities of the transcendent Person or God which are primary and exclusively belonging to Him alone are Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Omnibeneficence. The fundamental nature of Deity has always been considered to be supernatural Wisdom. Power was added on to this omniscience as a consequence of Knowledge. For mere cognizance without an ability to help or thwart, to impel or to govern would be ineffectuality in the extreme. Knowledge was and always is a sense of possession of the object of knowledge Brahma vid āpnoti param. Knowledge is power. One who knows all could in one sense claim to possess all, it is in this sense that certain yogis or mystics who had become omniscient speak of being identical with the Divine. But then the Deity is eternally and supremely omnipotent and omniscient because He is also omni-pervasive. Religions of love shudder to think of power but they too unequivocally consider Love to be a power – transcendental<sup>1</sup>.

Magical religions, whether they are conscious of their purposes or not, are conscious of the element of power in the universe<sup>2</sup>, and they are also conscious that this elementary universal power could be tapped by means of some psychophysical practices even as the natural scientist taps the hydroelectric power. The only difference between the magical scientist or supernatural scientist and the physical natural scientist consist in the definite and accurate knowledge that the physicist has of laws that govern natural causation. By this determination of the principles of causation, in respect of each process the supernatural held is more and more brought into the natural field, Supernatural causation even like natural causation starts with the concept of determinability or

controllability of all phenomena. Causation is conscious of the ground of all causations, namely the reality, which it seeks to exploit for its own purposes, whether good or evil. Science and Magical Science are impersonal and could be used or misused. A God discovers the laws of reality and invents instruments for the good of all, but it is most often a devil that uses them for the destruction of all that is good and great. That is why there are two branches of Magic, the White and the Black.

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<sup>1</sup> Christianity revolted against Judaism or Hebraism because of the latter's conception of God as Omnipotent power of justice, ruthless and violent. It upheld the God of Love and pure beneficence who did not strike even when struck. Gandhiji's doctrine of Love is an extension of the same concept of love.

<sup>2</sup> This is called Mana, Orenda, Adr̥ṣṭā, Grace, Śakti, etc.

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But Religion need not wholly be a magical science, where the concept of power is more important, Biological evolution made it imperative that man should strive to discover the laws of Nature and even super-nature. It made for survival of the human species against animals and brutes. The ego impulse and the consciousness of power have been important for survival and exaltation of spirit. Religion therefore as supernatural science of magic was, and even now is, incapable of being divested from the concept of power, even when this power came to be known as sacrifice (in its widest and psychological sense)<sup>1</sup>. It is not necessary to go to the primitive religions except to show that there always has been this conscious or unconscious, groupal or tribal or individual and personal, urge within each person to worship and to acquire, to sacrifice or mediate and to possess the right relationship with that supernatural power called God. But this power is unique, and it is sometimes considered to be the fundamental source of all kinds of power such as sovereignty and shamanism, natural law, common law and others.

The concept of Reality as power is such that no law of Reality could be violated except at the peril of oneself. There can be no transgression of the law. The rules of worship and

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Power: Bertrand Russell: Tapes or mystic heat produced through self-meditation is also sacrifice. Yoga is a typical manner of approach to the Supernatural worlds. Siddhis are fruits of such knowledge through Yoga. Sri Aurobindo shows tapas to be concentration of Consciousness in its most general usage including total or partial , fundamental or superficial or of the surface and even here of the whole surface or part of the surface.

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ritual and sacrifice of oneself or of animals or dear ones to the powers that are addressed, even the process of mediations and tapas (askesis), have to be strictly and scrupulously followed to the last detail. In this sense, power enacts absolute obedience and conformity to the laboratory method. If modern science, the child of Magic, has brought man to the sense of the law, even so has the mystic and psycho – physical Yoga of previous ages insisted upon rigid conformity to the path chosen. This is the natural imperative, the experimental imperative<sup>1</sup>. Conquest of Nature does not mean that Nature gives up its nature or quality but that the man who has know gives up its nature or quality but that the man who has known ho to adapt himself to it through knowing the laws of nurture, is capable of achieving his own desires in respect of it.

There is a deeper sense of making Nature docile, that is through knowledge, that comes through reason. Magic most often is intuitive and irrational and dependent upon one solitary instance and is essentially anthropomorphic in its approach to Nature and the reality behind Nature. It believes in the condescension of Nature-Gods and powers. Whereas Science shews that it is inevitable for nature to obey man once he knows the principles of

its constitution and organization and structure and their modifiability. In doing so indeed Nature is made to obey itself by the scientist.

Thus we proceed to the concept of law which rationalizes power. Law is the truth about Nature. Knowing the law we can use powers of Nature. For knowledge of law is not merely knowing it in and for its powers but also definitely to

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<sup>1</sup> This is Śaradhā.

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Which utilities Nature could be put. Nature is full of contingencies. And utilities are the first and foremost facts about man's life in the universe. Knowledge of the laws of Nature enable him to plan his life intelligently. Nature is, in the language of Indian Philosophy, the field of *Artha, Kāma and Dharma*. *Dharma* it is that makes realization of utilities and desires good and efficient and happy. That is the reason why in Indian philosophy *dharma* is equated with *Rta and Staya*. *Dharma* is purposive or practical karma. *Rta* is cosmic law, order, which is the abstract law also in the sense that it is in conformity with that *Rta* that Nature itself subserves the utilities. *Satya* is ultimate and integral Truth, which embraces both the *Rta* and the *Dharma*<sup>1</sup>

The concept of *Rta* which is the root of *Dharma* reveals the first concept of unity of knowledge of the Universe. It is true that *Dharma* became a synonym for sacrificial rits in Vedakarma, with Yāga and Yoga, because the inner meanings of the two work – *rotos dhan* and *yuj* are to support and to connect or form or perform. The concept of *Rta* is traceable to the Veda. It means Cosmic Order, a primay regularity in the movements of the Sun, Moon and Stars and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. . *Rta and the Law of Karma*: V.A.Gadgil (pro. Xth A.I. Oriental Conference p.15ff)

He holds that *R̥ta* means sacrifice even as Sāyana held, not only in its singular but in its plural usage which has been interpreted as Laws by western savants. Even in the plural we may say the *R̥ta* means the laws of the several planes and worlds and need not be sacrifices at all. *R̥ta* rendered by Sāyana as water occasionally. (Nāra?) the Cosmic form of *Dharma* which means sacrifice in the Jamini's *Pū̃rva Mīmāmsā: Athāto Dharma jijñāsā*.

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the seasons. It was a very great discovery. Prajāpati, the Creator of the Creatures and their Lord, was called the upholder of *R̥ta* year (samvatsara), Varṣa, rtu, māsa, yajña. One thing is certain that *R̥ta* was the primary concept and had its origin in the Divine, and all the various powers or personalities of the Divine such as Varuṇa, Sūrya, Yama, Indra, Br̥haspati or Brahmanaspati or Prajāpati, Rudra, Maruts, Aśvins and the Goddessess were upholders of the *R̥ta* Dharma is a means towards becoming conscious of the *R̥ta* and the Satya. This has made possible the equation between dharma as function of uniting or knowing the Divine and Natural laws and later as conformity. Indeed it is clear from the Br̥hmanas that the sacrifices were deemed to be indeed the building up of the ectypes on the pattern of the archetypal *R̥ta*. We pass beyond the *R̥ta* or the Order of crested or manifest movement to the Creator, for the impersonal cannot be its own explanation. Further it was very clear from the way things moved that selfish powers (called dasyus. Asuras, diatyas vṛtra, valas and others) began to misuse or confine the truths for purposes that were neither evolutionary nor beneficial. These 'thieves of truth' have been made possible because impersonal knowledge science or magic can become a tool of any owner, good or bad. The concept of the Good was made necessary because the impersonal cannot become as such Good. The Good most often is made into goods and that means that misuse is possible. That is why the Veda and the Br̥hmanas and the Upaniṣads always harp back to the śreyas and the Īśvara and the Brahman, the Person, the One who is the life and soul of the many, who is the Ordainer and Ruler.

The exact name of the deity is not an important factor when we bear in mind the need to rescue the most essential principles involved in the nature of the Object of Religious Consciousness. The Law of Order of Nature of Supernature is upheld by the power and wisdom and knowledge of the Supreme Personality; and obedience seems to be demanded in respect of the establishment of right relations<sup>1</sup> with that Personality. It is true that for all practical and even cosmic purposes this is so very mechanical that it works with the perfect regularity of cause and effect.

Thus God is the master or owner or power that is regulated by Order. And this cosmic order it is that permits and enhances the possibilities of knowledge. Knowledge is always and essentially a knowledge of causes and effects and of the uniformity of law. Any knowledge that claims to transcend the laws of causality is indeed no knowledge, whatever else that may be. Inter – relationships between different orders of experience even are governed by the knowledge of their mutual dependence . the magical view of reality proclaims this means interdependence and interaction. The rationalistic view of reality cannot dismiss this dependence or affirm interaction between two avowedly different planes of reality such as matter and mind, terrestrial and the superterrestrial, phenomenal and the Noumenal, Appearance and Reality. It finds them to be autonomous. But this is also discovered by it to be not absolute, for man is truly creative like the Spirit that he is: and he is also receptive like the

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'right relations' itself means Dharma. Religion is in this sense Dharma, even as Budhha has sated it to be.

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appearance of Spirit and as an active instrument of Reality. Thus there arises the urgency, even the logical necessity to transcend the two forms of matter and Spirit. This is what the concept of God does to Philosophy and to science, when we understand by the word 'God' something that is much more than what theologies describe Him to be.

The God of Science would be abstract or impersonal intelligence, and even magical religion cannot go beyond this when it is rationalized. But powers are personalities and intelligence is power plus direction. These personalities belong to, and arise from the person.

The evolutions of realization and religion are interrelated. There is a psychological aspect to every physiological and physical transformation or growth. Possibly we may even say that the psychological precedes the physiological and the physical almost immediately conscious of his limitations and dangers to his freedom in the exercise of his instincts. Thus he is confronted with the task of assessing his strength, capacity, ability and possibility. Objective power, that is natural power, is against him; but it is precisely the objective nature that presents him also with the knowledge of a super – nature that presents him also with the knowledge of a super – objective power. Thus we find that so far from being unimportant, at one stage in the Rg Vedic scheme, power-gods had dominated the situation, even as the Law-Gods dominated the situation earlier (sic). It is but right. For we have the consciousness of law, order, that made possible the divination of the force behind the law or which make the law actual. This makes it possible for us to apprehend our so-called priority or superiority. Varuṇa consciousness precedes and is superceded (technically) by Indra-consciousness and Agni-consciousness. Gods belong to three regions and act in unison with one another. Earth or terrestrial gods lead up to the mid-air gods and with them proceed to the super-terrestrial or heaven gods. Beyond all these manifestations of god powers is the One supreme intelligence which is the truth of these many gods, the Person behind these many personalities.

That is the reason why Religion will always be the divination of the One Godhead behind and beyond all these manifestations of that Divine. That is why Sri Aurobindo speaks of religion as an exoteric presentation behind which is an esoteric Yoga. Not until one ever understand the symbology and dogmas of the

religions. “Behind every great religion, behind, that is to say, its exoteric side of faith, hope symbols, scattered truths and limiting dogmas, there is an esoteric side of inner spiritual training and illumination by which the hidden truths may be known, worked out, possessed. Behind every exoteric religion there is an esoteric Yoga, and intuitive knowledge of which its faith is the first step, inexpressible realities of which its symbols are the figured expression, a deeper sense for its scattered truths, mysteries of the higher planes of existence of which even its dogmas and superstitions are crude hints and indications”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Syntesis of Yoga: 'Arya' Vol.III.p.731 (1916-17).*

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