

IS GOD A PERSON

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The conception of God as a person is natural to common sense and the popular view is that God is a person and knowing, in infinite measure of course as contrasted with ourselves whose faculties are limited and finite. He is one with whom one can come into relationships of love and affection. This savours of course of anthropomorphism, that is humanism. God is reduced to human terms and descriptions. God has been described as beyond all human terms being immeasurably superior and different. To describe God or imagine him to be of the same shape and form and characteristics of man is wrong utterly. Saints as well as sages have refused to reduce God to the level of themselves even when they had developed relationships with Him.

The real reason may be traced to the fact that God as the all-controlling and ruling principle of the universe cannot be localized at any one place, or body. Omnipresence of God prevents localization. But is personality or the person to be localized in a body? Normal view is that a person is an embodied being, physical in appearance and liable to all the ills and limitations of man or embodied

beings.

The view of personality as unbegun and unending energy of the Universal, that it is a conscious rational will is held by certain thinkers. Personality centres round the possession of conscious will. The arguments adduced to prove that God has conscious will are (i) that all actual data are conscious experiences, (ii) that all physical forces act on and produce conscious experiences in man, and (iii) that all evidence for law and order speak for a personal mind at work in the universe: this of course is analogical inference, and (iv) that the existence of purpose in revelatory of personal will and the world has purpose, (v) history of religion reveals that in all branches of human experience there is some personal God at work, (vi) the very growth of value experiences or their emergence reveals the existence of a Personal God, who is the determiner of all values, (vii) Personalism includes impersonalism and yields a more coherent and all inclusive explanation than impersonalism which cannot produce person. Lastly the evidence for God as personal consists of empirical facts of religious persons. This is about the most important arguments.

Impersonalists claim that God is not personal and if God is personal he cannot be God.

Disbelief in God is also stated to be due to the fact of evil in the world. God cannot have created evil, and a creator God and existence of evil cannot go together. As pointed out it is an argument against the all creator God.

Consciousness being neural, it can be shown that conscious will cannot be an argument for the existence of God. God again is not necessary for explanations of science, and is a positive hindrance to the growth of scientific knowledge. God is a superstition not an illumination. The personality of God is unverifiable in the sense of knowing Him as any other sensory object. In fact all law is impersonal, and the world is governed by laws. The question of their being a person behind all laws is a misapplication of the analogy of state laws and their making. Man's demand that God should be like man leads to the conception of personal God, and it is a kind of human arrogance. A human God is no God. Lastly the concept of personality is not an ultimate concept as inclusive of all other concepts or as most valuable. In fact there have been as many saints and seers who have accepted that the Ultimate is transcendent to personality or person.

The Brahman of the Advaita Vedanta is super personal if not impersonal. God is transcendent to humanity and

towards which all humanity moves. The immanence of God is not identifiable with the view that God is just human, a struggling conscience or consciousness like man himself. Ignorance of man is incompatible with that omniscience of God. A truer conception of God is that which upholds all the statuses of God - as transcendent, as immanent, as incarnation and as guide of man and the goal of man. While the Guide of Man and the Goal of Man are acceptable concepts of God at the personal emotional need based level, the real concept of God is that which cannot be defined and expressed through real. God is a fact of experience in religious and spiritual aspirations of Man and is something more than what can be defined - to say it is Nothing is wrong but to say it is Nothingness is more true.