



WHERE IS GOD

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Chapter One : Introduction

History would have us believe that man has made tremendous progress in the last few thousand years. While it may be true in respect of acquired knowledge and its applications, intrinsically man has not changed. In fact looking at the world today it looks more like regression. The world is beset with chaos, conflict, and turmoil everywhere. There is no sense of security anymore anywhere. The base instincts of man seem to have developed keeping pace with the intellectual progress. The technology revolution that has brought so many amenities to improve life has also provided opportunities to the evil minds for perpetrating heinous crimes. Even the beneficial aspects of technology do not come without long-term detrimental effects such as environmental degradation and global warming. Added to these are many disasters that are not man-made, still they cause immense misery. In times like these people start wondering what is the role of God in

worldly affairs. From time immemorial men have turned to God when in despair. But where is God?

Religion has been a dominant influence in the lives of an overwhelming majority of people on earth. Unfortunately it has also been a dominant cause for the fragmentation of the world. More violence has been perpetrated in the name of religion than any other ideology; this situation continues even today although other factors may get mixed with the religion. Every religion presupposes the presence of God in some form or other, but the trouble starts when a religion claims to own God. The concept of God in most of the world religions is that of a supreme lord living in the heaven or some such celestial abode and overseeing the affairs of the universe and the activities of mankind. He is regarded as a person who is loving and kind like a benevolent king, administering justice to human beings at the end of their life span. His is infinite justice that can not and should not be questioned. This concept is an extension of the human experience and undoubtedly grew from the unquestioned privileged position of kings and emperors in the bygone eras when they were regarded as the highest authorities. To make God be above these human gods He was also referred to as king of kings and the heaven as His kingdom. God is all good but recognizes the presence of evil; that is why He sits in judgment of human actions. Even though He is a person and has his specific abode He is omnipresent and also has the other attributes of omnipotence and omniscience. Since He knows everything including the events yet to occur and is all-powerful, He is in a position to take care of His 'children' whom He so dearly loves.

Things good and bad happen all the time in the world we know. Sometimes evil overshadows good. Crimes of all sorts – from petty to heinous are committed all the time. Atrocities are committed even in the name of God and innocent people suffer. The suffering of innocent people is not exclusively due to the evil elements in human beings. Natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes with or without tsunamis create havoc and people suffer for no apparent fault of their own. These are called acts of God. Why would a loving God cause such events or allow man to perpetrate crimes on man? Where are God and his justice when thousands of innocent men, women and children die at the hands of perpetrators of evil? Theologians will no doubt come up with explanations absolving God, but those would all be based on dogmatic approaches and rely on blind faith. Could it be that this notion of God as accepted by a majority of the mankind is erroneous?

Any concept of God is, of course, valid only for those who believe in God. There are atheists who deny the existence of God and agnostics who doubt His existence. Many scientists believe that there is no need to invoke the existence of God or creator for the origin of the universe¹ However, recent advances in modern science, especially in modern physics, suggest a convergence of the viewpoints of science and religion. Some overenthusiastic physicists have even suggested that the new physics supports not only the existence of God but also the idea of heaven and resurrection of the dead prevalent in Christianity². Most of the physicists, though, believe that there is an ultimate reality and if we use the word God for it, the prevalent concept has to be radically revised. Many eminent physicists have seen in the new findings a striking parallel to the ancient eastern philosophies in which the concept of God is very different³. Before we go into details of the concepts of God let us trace the historical development of the perception of God by mankind.

Chapter Two: Development of the Concept of God

What made man initially think of God? Was it fear or an inborn inquisitiveness? Or was man from the very beginning aware of his creator? There will never be any definitive answers to these questions and whatever answers one comes up with will depend on the perspective from which one views these questions. From a historical point of view one can assume that in primitive stages man must have thought of God as a result of need and desire, which are inherent to all living beings. Needs may be specific and limited but desires have no limits. This was true for the primitive man and is still so for the modern man. Also, man has an instinctive urge to look beyond what he sees, what is apparent. The primitive man looked around him and saw nature – the sun, the moon and the stars, and how they follow a set of consistent patterns. He noticed how the seasons change and how the clear skies become clouded bringing rain, thunder, and lightning. He had no control over these things and started wondering who had. This led him to conclude that there must be some powerful entity whose invisible guiding

¹ Pierre Simon Laplace published his *Mechanique Celeste* and presented a copy to Napoleon who remarked;” you have published this huge book on the system of the world without once mentioning the author of the universe God.”
Laplace replied: “I had no need for that hypothesis.”

² *Physics of Immortality*, Frank Tipler

³ *Tao of Physics*, Fritzof Capra

hands made all these things happen. Thus grew in him a feeling of reverence and the idea of worshipping this supreme power.

On the other hand he had his desires, some of which he could not fulfill by his own efforts. He looked to the invisible being as an external source of help and thought of placating him to get the help. This also bred in him the tendency to worship. We find that tendency even today. There is no difference between the primitive and the modern cultivated man appealing to God for fulfillment of some desire or other. And the basic reason for this is fear – the fear that he cannot accomplish what he wants. In the early days this fear and the consequent tendency to worship led to the development of superstitions that were manifested in different forms in different parts of the world. Thus the notion of God came to man along two parallel tracks, one instilled by inquisitiveness the other by fear. As groups of men coalesced and societies formed, these notions grew into religions.

The crudest manifestation of religion came when men wondered what happened after a person died. Perhaps even in the primitive stages man was not totally materialistic and made an instinctive distinction between form and substance. This must have led to the idea of spirit distinct from the body, which lived even after death. If the spirit of the dead lived, it must be active and these people came to believe that the spirits of the dead collectively formed the invisible power both constructive and destructive. A logical growth of this idea was the emergence of tribal gods; each tribe had its own god who took care of his own people fighting with the other tribal gods and annihilating the other tribes if necessary. This was the case with the Greek mythological gods and to some extent it is still there in some sectarian groups. With the emergence of ordered societies and social structures higher ideas came that finally coalesced to form the concept of an almighty God who was the creator and ruler of the universe. For the people in that era the king was the ultimate authority and object of reverence, so they gave God the appellation of King, Lord, etc. God lived in the heaven and created everything for man – the earth for the living and the hell for the wicked dead; the good and pious ones joined Him in heaven and lived happily there after. This was essentially the point where the concept of God became static for the majority of the people in the world. However, if we look closely, there was no development here at all. The idea of gods and God is still basically the same as of the primitive man. This idea of God developed side by side with the idea of materialism.

The other track of development of the concept of God was spurred by observation and intellectual curiosity. Man had all the phenomena of nature before his eyes and he wondered what was the power behind these. The instinctive response was to see the power in the nature itself and he began to worship the elements of nature. He thought of the elements – the sun, the moon, the water, the fire, the wind, the thunder and lightning, etc. – as gods. As societies grew individual groups chose one or the other as their favorite god and worshipped him. But the intellectual curiosity was still not satisfied. Man realized that there must be one supreme power controlling all these phenomena of nature. Thus arose the concept of all pervading invisible force. In this case there was no physical entity. This Supreme Being did not have form or attributes. He was omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and was thus beyond perception by the physical senses. If God is everywhere, He must be in everything and, therefore, everything is God. This led to the generalization that the Universe is not a creation but a manifestation of this Supreme Being. At the very beginning there was nothing but Him – the Supreme Reality. The physical universe emanated from Him and all things, both animate and inanimate, appeared and followed a path of gradual evolution. At the end all will merge into Him and disappear again leaving the One as in the beginning.

It is worth noting that even modern science has come to a similar viewpoint. The generally accepted model of the origin of the universe is the Big Bang theory. It assumes that a sudden spontaneous explosion of a highly concentrated point energy source (cosmic singularity) created the expanding universe nearly fifteen billions of years ago. The energy transformed itself into matter creating different objects and eventually living organisms that evolved into different species. However, this similarity is only qualitative. Big bang theory has several problems. The conversion of matter into energy is well understood but the reverse process is still unclear. The generation of matter is accompanied by equal amount of antimatter and the two cannot exist side by side without combining and exploding to become energy again. The singularity requires the existence of zero volume and infinite density; both are physically impossible to attain. In a normal sense an explosion can only be destructive not constructive. On the other hand metaphysics deals with the conversion of energy into matter in an entirely different way. It negates the statement that nothing can be created from nothing and replaces it by “nothing is everything”⁴. The void or emptiness is the starting point for the origin of the universe.

⁴ Ending of Time, J. Krishnamurti, p.27

We thus see that the concept of God, following the two tracks of development gets to be different. One is based on the worldly experience of human beings and relegates God to the highest authority known to man, i.e. the Lord or the king of kings. The other view recognizes God as the Supreme force governing all the functions in the universe but stresses the fact that He is beyond the human experience and the question – who is He can not really be answered in a positive way; One who does not have any form and attributes cannot be described, He can only be realized. The seers who realized this fact (and realized God) had also initially looked for the answer in the external world. But all they could find that there was a Supreme Being who was responsible for creating and maintaining the universe. It could not tell them who this Being was. It also led to another doubt. If He created the universe, the matter or the material used for the creation must have existed before. Where did that material come from? Also, in this case His creation would be limited by the material available. And, if He was limited by anything, then the idea of His being omnipotent falls by the wayside. The seers then decided that they could not know about God looking into the external world. Nothing that they could perceive with the senses would tell them anything about God; to realize God they would have to transcend the limits of the senses and hence of the space and time. There essentially lies the difference between the two viewpoints. In one case everything related to God and religion is largely within the purview of the sense objects, in the other case it is internal within the soul. In one the religious and spiritual activities are meant to help one cross the immense space between man and God, in the other these outward manifestations are only stepping stones for getting to the inner Self.

Chapter Three: Religion and Afterlife

It was mentioned earlier that the earliest incentive for man to look for religion was the curiosity about what happens to one after death. Surprisingly even now that curiosity underscores the core of every religion although in a different, perhaps more refined form. The emphasis of every religion remains largely on afterlife because in some way or other God remains the focal point at the end of the journey. The spirits of the dead no longer lurk around to haunt or protect; they have to face God for the final judgment. Subconsciously a religious person spends much time and effort to prepare for that event. Death is certain but what happens after death no body knows. Our ideas on this subject are all nebulous; they come from philosophy or speculations. No one has ever come

back to say that he is dead and relate the death or after-death experience. Only thing of which one has or can have experience is life. So any experience involving God as well has also to happen while one is alive. And it is here that the concept of God becomes a crucial factor.

No matter how we look at it – physically or metaphysically, we all come from the invisible and ultimately go back to the invisible. This is true for everything in the universe; anything that has name and form has a beginning and an end. The sun, the stars, the galaxies and the universe itself have been born at sometime in the past and will die sometime in the distant future. Even things like cultures, nations, civilizations have life spans just like human beings although on different time scales. God is the only entity that is eternal. The word eternal involves time in two ways. It implies the absence of a beginning and an end, both of which denote events occurring at certain times. Eternal also means time-less. Both are of course equivalent because time implies duration that cannot exist without beginning and end. So God is beyond time. He is also infinite which is implied by His being omnipresent. Infinite implies no limitations in space and that means He is beyond space as well. We cannot visualize anything that is beyond space-time. (In fact there cannot be a ‘thing’ beyond space-time.) Visualization is a function of the mind that can operate only in the realm of the known. Therefore the mind, as it is, cannot deal with the eternal and infinite.

The omnipresence of God brings in another problem with the concept of a personal God. As a person He cannot be everywhere. One can of course argue that being omnipotent He can project Himself everywhere. But that would mean fragmenting Himself into different entities and the infinite cannot have fragmentation. Let us see how we can reconcile the idea of omnipresence with space as we know of. The word space is used in both absolute and relative sense. Used by itself it denotes an unbounded empty region, while in relation to other object(s) it refers to a bounded empty region. In either case it signifies emptiness or void. Any object of our perception cannot exist without emptiness surrounding it. The emptiness can be external as well as internal and it is the emptiness that gives the meaning to an object. A container of any kind is not only its shape and design but also the emptiness inside, without which it would not be a container. Emptiness permeates everything. At the quantum level everything is porous. The structure of the atom, which is the building block of all matter has electrons going around the nucleus in discrete orbits. The separation of the

orbits itself implies empty space⁵. Moreover electrons, quarks, and other elementary entities are no longer particles but only aggregates of vibrations coalesced into different configurations. Thus at the most fundamental level it is emptiness that characterizes everything. In other words it is nonexistence that brings forth existence.

What does it mean to be beyond space and time? Beyond means “outside the reach of” or “not subject to the limitations of”. So omnipresent God can be anywhere and everywhere at the same time. However, the terms anywhere, everywhere, at the same time are relevant only in the context of man’s relationship with God; for Himself they have no meaning since space and time do not exist for Him. Even in the phenomenal world space and time are no longer absolute; science has stripped off that attribute. There is no universal “now” and no universal “here”. The existence of space and time is linked only with that of the physical universe.

As a rough analogy we may consider the salt in ocean water. It is infinite (in a limited sense) stretching over the earth because it has no beginning or end. It is also independent of time. So it can be considered beyond space and time. A rather esoteric example is the photon. Light consists of photons. A photon has zero mass and travels with the speed of light. According to the special theory of relativity both distance and time require a frame of reference in order to be meaningful. Let us suppose that photon is an entity with its own frame of reference. In its frame of reference distance vanishes and time stands still. So for the photon there is no space and no time. It also has no mass or volume; hence it is contained in nothing. In the same way the void representing consciousness is infinite in an absolute sense. Consciousness is always in the present, the now. There is no past and future in it. The past and future as well as the idea of space are created by the mind. Contrary to what some may believe consciousness is not in the mind, rather the mind with all its attributes is in consciousness.

Chapter Four: Perception and Reality

The world that we see out there is the world of our perception. Our sense organs gather the data that they receive, pass on to the mind which processes the data and projects it out for us to see. There is no way of ascertaining that what we see corresponds to the reality. Most of our perceptions are indirect. We see color but we know that

⁵ The structure of atoms is 99.99999999% empty.

out there there is no color, only electromagnetic waves of different frequencies. We hear music but out there there is no music as such, only pulsations of air pressure. It is the same with all sense perceptions. In day to day life if we can see and touch something it is taken as a proof of its existence. But the reverse of this logic is not true. Even if we cannot see or touch a thing (or sense it some other way) it may still exist. We cannot see or touch electrons or even atoms and molecules but they do exist. Then there are nonphysical things like thoughts and feelings whose existence is never in question. We don't know what mind is and can't put our hands on it; still we never doubt its existence. So existence and nonexistence have nothing to do with physical presence.

The perception of the outside world is directly related to observation. The act of observation (or any function of the mind) contains the duality of subject and object. The observer is the subject and the thing being observed is the object. In the subatomic world quantum physics has almost relegated the observer to the creator of the object. It is the observer's consciousness that makes the object appear. A generalization of that concept would mean that the outside world is created inside the mind. As we have seen it is the mind that projects the processed content of the observation for us to see. Does it mean that objects cease to be real if we are not looking at them? The answer depends on how we define reality.

We perceive everything in the outside world through our senses. All that we see, hear, touch, smell, taste or feel comes from the data gathered by our senses and processed by the mind. So all our knowledge of the external world comes from the images constructed by the mind. An image by very definition is not the reality. My image in the mirror is not me; it is only an artifact created by reflection of light. You can do anything with the image, even destroy it and that would not affect me, the real person. The same is true for mental images of the world. The things may seem real but in effect they are merely images created by the mind. So what we take as reality is perceived reality or subjective reality; it may be different for different persons depending on the perspective, viewpoint, background and other factors. What gives rise to the perception is the objective reality. The subjective reality is what we experience and the objective reality is what causes the experience. But by its very definition objective reality is tied to objects that can be perceived. Therefore it is also relative. As we shall see later even this is only a reflection of the absolute reality underlying all the perceptions and, in fact, the entire universe. Since it is absolute it is beyond the realm of the mind and can never be directly perceived

In order to see any projected picture we must have a background for the projection. What is the background on which the mind projects the picture of the outside world? It is the nothingness that we have talked about, an infinite void that represents the universal consciousness. The same background is used in the projection of a mental picture. The mind in individual consciousness tries to reach the universal through a shadow of reality.

In trying to describe anything that has only substance and no form we run into the problem of language limitations. The very purpose of language is to make distinction and isolate. When we use the word 'thing' it already implies existence. But can a 'thing' be without name and form? In normal usage a thing is always material; it involves matter. But matter-energy equivalence now has made energy the most elementary substance. Is energy physical? From the physicist's point view the answer is yes. It has substance but no form. It is all pervasive and also concentrated in almost point-like objects such as atoms and nuclei. The universe itself is believed to have originated from a highly concentrated point form of energy. Everything in the universe came into being through a transformation of that primordial energy into matter. But besides matter the universe has also consciousness. If we accept the view that nothing can come out of nothing it has to be assumed that consciousness is a necessary attribute of energy.

There is a vast amount of research going on relating to consciousness. Strictly speaking consciousness cannot be studied because it is not something one can be conscious of. Here one comes to the esoteric problem of how can the knower be known or how can the seer be seen. We see everything with our eyes but cannot see the eyes. Only way we see them is through reflection in a mirror, which is an image and not the real thing. With recent advances in quantum physics people have talked about the physics of consciousness. The laws of physics do not apply to consciousness (or anything that is not physical). In fact they do not apply to even energy in a very general sense. Energy is not entirely physical. We spend mental energy that cannot be measured. Then there is the vital energy that sustains life. In psychology we have human energy fields and all sorts of psychic energy. These are all intangible but they are there. In recent years there has been considerable discussion if consciousness is energy. It is important to note that just like energy consciousness also has different aspects. At individual level there is subjective consciousness, at a group level there is collective consciousness, and in a holistic sense there is universal consciousness. Energy and consciousness are one in the sense that they cannot be separated, they are like

the two sides of a coin. They may not be identical, oneness does not necessarily mean identity.

If we generalize the concept of energy and consciousness as above, in a broad sense it should be possible to reconcile the concept of God with the ideas of modern science. God remains omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent but becomes a universal existence. As we shall see later it also absolves Him from the responsibility of things happening in the world good or evil.

Chapter Five: God the Creator

Almost all religions believe that God is the source of the physical universe in one way or the other. Some take Him to be the creator in the literal sense, while others view the creation philosophically. Everything that gets created gets ultimately destroyed also. If God is the creator He must also be the destroyer. During the lifetime of the creation there has to be some provision also for maintaining it in good order and that gives Him the role of the maintainer as well. Every life cycle has these three phases and it is seen most vividly in the case of living organisms; human life is a typical example. Life is created, lasts for a certain number of years, and is then terminated. In nature this is an ongoing cycle. Seeds germinate and become plants that grow, produce flowers and fruits, and end into seeds again. There are two ways to view this process. We can say that the seed is destroyed and the plant is created; at the end the plant is destroyed and the seeds are created again. Creation and destruction follow each other. The other way of looking at it is that the seed contains all the subsequent stages of the process in latent form each transforming into the next one. Thus there is no creation or destruction only transformation.

From materialist or reductionist point of view both processes are the same. It is the same basic material consisting of a swirling mass of electrons and quarks rearranging itself to take a different form. However, when it comes to living systems and life in general, there is lot more in play than just matter. The body may be a conglomerate of trillions of cells but what makes it living is something other than matter and that is consciousness. Only the parts put together do not make the whole; the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts. How life enters and leaves the body is still beyond the grasp of science.

Is man also subject to the same cycle? All religions have speculated on the answer of this question but no one is or can be

sure. Everyone is concerned about what happens after death; very few give any thought to what happens before birth or if there is any continuity from death to birth. Almost everyone is afraid of death. Fear always involves the unknown and death is the ultimate unknown. We are accustomed to associate unknown with the future but the past is equally unknown. The continuity of time does not end at our birth; past continues for ever just as future. But we are never worried about, let alone be afraid of that past. If life can continue into the future after death, it could have as well continued before birth. For this to happen there must be some element of life that is beyond space and time. As we have seen earlier the only entity that can be beyond space and time is the Universal consciousness and this element of life – the individual consciousness must be a part of the Universal.

Strange as it may seem, the part of the universal consciousness is a replica of the whole on a smaller scale. This property of a part being the whole is demonstrated by a hologram⁶, which in ordinary sense is a three-dimensional photograph. But the intricate pattern of the hologram cannot be observed by the naked eye. Since it is a photograph made by a laser beam, the pattern shows up only when it is illuminated by a laser. If a part is cut out of the photograph the part and is illuminated, it also shows the pattern of the whole photograph intact although on a smaller scale. This runs contrary to the generally accepted belief in science that objects can be divided into parts, analyzed, and then synthesized. This idea of wholeness was applied by the eminent quantum physicist David Bohm⁷ to the subatomic world. He later extended the concept to the universe itself suggesting that it was effectively a hologram. At the level of absolute reality everything is connected to everything else. Subsequently the idea has been adopted by neurophysiologists who consider the brain also to be a hologram⁸. It applies equally well to consciousness.

Earlier we had noted the distinction between the subjective and objective reality. If the universe is only a gigantic hologram – a picture, then objective reality (i.e. the objects in the outside world) itself is a perception. This means that there is no such thing as

⁶ A hologram is a photograph taken with the aid of a laser. A laser beam is passed through a half-silvered mirror. A part of the beam is reflected and the rest goes through the mirror on to a photographic plate. The reflected part illuminates the object to be photographed and is, in turn, reflected by the object and also reaches the photographic plate. The two parts interfere at the plate and produce a pattern that is recorded. This pattern is so fine and complex that it can be seen only when it is illuminated by another laser beam. Unlike an ordinary photograph there is no point-to-point correspondence between the object and the image.

⁷ Wholeness and the Implicate Order, David Bohm

⁸ Karl Pribram, a neurophysiologist at Stanford has been a pioneer in this field. He worked closely with David Bohm on the holographic idea.

objective reality. It is simply a veil (*maya*) covering the absolute reality and does not get lifted unless the mind merges with pure consciousness. Space, time, matter are all phenomena of experience in the mind at a lower level; they define the characteristics of the images formed by the mind and through them it makes sense of the eternal void – the nothingness.

Chapter Six: Conditioning and Beliefs

It is an unfortunate fact that as individuals most people are incapable of thinking independently. This is especially true when it comes to religion and God. A person is not born with a religion, he is born into a religion. The social environment and circumstances shape his ideas and values in life. The mind is conditioned and patterned to think only in conformity with those ideas. All subsequent development of the individual's personality is colored by this conditioning. It is rare to see someone break free from it and begin afresh. Even those who are able to break free, merely change one conditioning for another because it is mostly done not independently but under the influence of someone else. Therefore for most of us the ideas about God and the values in life are entrenched in our minds unwittingly. God is seen not as He is – an objective Reality but as an extension of one's own beliefs. That is one of the root causes of religious conflicts that create so much misery in the world.

A common fallacy is to talk of seeking God. The word search implies prior knowledge. You cannot search for something you do not know. God is unknowable, cannot be described, and cannot be found in the usual sense. He can only be realized or experienced. But that experience is not of the same kind as experienced in day-to-day life. It can happen only when there is no duality between the subject and object of the experience because the experience as well as the experiencer is outside the realm of time. That is a state in which the person has only feeling and no thought, so no memory either. For that state to occur the mind has to go beyond mere deconditioning; it has to be totally empty, devoid of any thought.

Chapter Seven: Good and Evil

All religions lay stress on embracing good and shunning evil. With the belief in the personal God this leads to the anticipation of reward or punishment in after-life. But good and evil like all pairs of

opposites have only meaning only in relation to each other. Neither has an absolute and independent existence. Something is good in relation to something else that has been assumed to be evil by social consensus. What one group or religion considers evil is good for another. For example, killing animals for food or even for sport is an acceptable norm in some groups, while in others it is tantamount to evil. Killing human beings in the name of religion may be a spiritual act for ultra-believers even though for a vast majority it is the greatest sin. We see this happening all the time. The expectation of reward and the fear of punishment for an action may be diametrically opposite for different people. This again is rooted in the conditioning of the individuals. The main reason for human misery is the tendency to base all actions on future expectations. No one has known or will ever know the future in this life or beyond.

Even though the concept of good and bad varies from group to group it should be possible to have a pragmatic way of distinguishing them. Since the universe is a manifestation (or creation if one prefers) of God and human actions relate primarily to the earth, we can adopt the view that any act that makes the world a better place to live is good and one that makes it worse is evil. This also means that the act of destroying evil is not evil. Another way of looking at good and evil is in terms of construction and destruction. Again this is in reference to human activities only. In general to destroy life is evil, to create a facilitate life is good. However the universe is a chain link of events both constructive and destructive. Stars are born and eventually die. Catastrophic events like collision of stars happen or they disappear into black holes for ever. We don't feel the impact of these on earth but we do see similar things happening in nature around us although on smaller scales. In fact the universe itself is supposed to go through the creation and destruction cycle. So does life. Who is to label birth and death as good or evil? God as creator is responsible for both.

Chapter Eight: Kindness of God and Real World

Let us now turn to the role of God in the affairs of the world related to events that appear to be contrary to His image of an omnipotent merciful entity. The idea that He should be responsible for everything happening in the universe is still tied to the notion that He is a being. The ultimate reality without form and attributes does not have a name either. Just because we call this reality God and use the personal pronoun He the infinite does not become a finite being subject to sense perception. So when we talk of God's

actions it is not in the same sense as that of living beings. For example the sun sustains the biosphere and life on earth. In that sense the sun acts but the sun does not have any concern about myriads of individual living entities on the earth. Similarly God has provided for an ordered flow of nature but does not oversee each and every detail. And here lies the fallacy of calling Him king or king of kings. He does not have an administrative organization to go down to the level of individual entities in the universe. To think that He views the events of the world in the same way as we do is again an attempt to make the infinite finite. His benevolence, love, or mercy is for everyone and everything. How one receives and benefits by it is up to the individual. In that sense every person (or living entity) is responsible for his own actions and has to face the attendant consequences. That is the gist of the theory of karma which is sometimes erroneously equated with fatalism, especially in the West. Since God is everywhere and in everything, he is in the saint as well as in the criminal. What prompts a person to be good or evil? Does God within him have any role in what he chooses? Any action is preceded by thought which is a function of the mind. The mind is conditioned by several factors – environment, religion, and culture - which are extraneous.

We also have to recognize the fact that good and evil, as other pairs of opposites, are inherent not only in living beings but in nature in general. Even modern science has realized this in the discovery of matter and anti-matter, particles and anti-particles. So evil cannot be totally eliminated from the world. It can be contained though and attempts should be made to keep it at a minimum and least harmful level. If the universe can sustain itself with an excess of matter over anti-matter, so can the world with excess of good over evil. Religion plays an important role in maintaining this excess. Man has also to realize that there will be different religions as long as there are different societies and he has to learn to coexist. God is not different for different religions; it is the man's viewpoint that is different. It is the responsibility of all religious leaders to wake up to this reality and strive to make their followers see the need for accepting the differences not merely tolerating. The ultimate responsibility of any action falls on the individual and the actions decide his fate here as well as hereafter. But, just like individuals societies, cultures, and even nations have a collective fate. Nothing in the world, not even the universe, is eternal. If the goal of man is to ultimately reach God, he better realize that every thing in the universe is a part of him as he is a part of the universe.

When people ask in desperation where is God they are actually asking why is not God doing something to right the wrong. From the

point of view of the universe or nature as such God is impersonal and totally neutral. He has provided man with the capacity to judge for himself and act in a way appropriate for his evolution and enlightenment. God is everywhere but He is not responsible for the evil perpetrated by man or even by nature. The responsibility lies squarely on the persons or groups engaged in the action. The universe is a well-organized God's system following well defined sets of laws. The earth and its biosphere work the same way. The humans have free will and they must set their laws of behavior as a collective society. Man is at the highest stage of evolution of living systems on the planet and the evolution will go on along the same pattern. However, the evolution refers to the species as a whole. Within the species there can also be devolution that may take individuals down the chain of evolution. Depending on their actions they may reach God or go right down to the lowest level of living organism.

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About the author: Dr. D. R. Sharma is a retired professor with physics and electrical engineering background. He has written several articles and books on the interplay of science and philosophy. He has also written a couple of novels. He maintains a website for his writings at <http://www.cosmosebooks.com>.

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