CHAPTER V

NIGER CONCEPTION OF GOD

1. The idea of God has had an unbroken sway over the human mind from the most primitive ages of human history to the present day. The God of religion as the universal mind working with a conscious design, is at once the beginning and the end of the universe, fills the universe with meaning and value and makes the world intelligible as a system of ends.

Primitive man, whose knowledge and control over environment were inadequate, found in different cult, rites and spells certain attitudes and modes of behavior, through which he could overcome a dangerous situation or conflict. Man's inability to adjust himself to a constantly changing environment compelled him to resort to some superior objects of worship out of fear and awe, with a view to adjusting himself to difficult and changing circumstances. The hunting, pastoral and agricultural stages brought with themselves their own economic needs, thereby revealing a corresponding change in the idea of divinity.
Religion is the manifestation of the urge to completeness. Coupled with this urge is the acute realization on the part of man that the world also is imperfect and that it is in need of a deeper reality to complete it. Both for thought and spiritual experience the world has proved unsatisfying; and this has compelled man to go beyond it to find its true explanation and value in a deeper ground of thought and life, an all comprehending Supreme Being, in God.

God is necessary to the inner life of man; and man has attempted to reach Him by various means. Yet his rational deductions are the expression of the constant tendency of man's spirit to rise to Him. Several arguments have been advanced to this effect.

The Ontological argument involves the reality of God in the idea of God. The idea of God is unique, so that it cannot be a mere idea. God is a being greater than all beings that can be conceived. This idea, in order to be greater than every being conceived, must exist both in reality as well as in intellect, for if it existed only in intellect it would not be so great. God, therefore, necessarily exists.

Descartes asserts that God is infinite and perfect. As such, His idea cannot be formed in man by any
finite object. It must be caused by God Himself. Therefore, God exists. Spinoza infers the existence of God from the idea of God. For him, God is the source and sum of all perfection. He is the infinite and all-inclusive whole, embracing the parallel differentiations of thought and extension as its corresponding aspects. As such, God's reality is inevitably involved in His idea. His concept, he says, includes His existence. He is self-caused, and to be self-caused is to exist necessarily.

Leibniz argues that essences or ethical truths must have their ground in something actual, in existence, of a Necessary Being. In a Perfect Being nothing can hinder the tendency to exist, for in His case what is possible is actual. If God is a Being who is the sum of all reality, then such a conception cannot be considered as a mere idea in the mind. Thought is meaningless without reference to being. Therefore, if there is no such being there would be no thought.

The Cosmological argument begins with the world as given and infers the existence of a God to explain it, from the character of the world. The facts within the world are contingent, there being no element of necessity in them. But this contingency must lead up to something
necessary. Consequently, there must be a necessary being who is the ground of the contingent. Again, effects are always preceded by causes which in turn are the effects of other causes. But there cannot be an infinite list of causes. The series must arrive at a First or Uncaused cause. This First or Uncaused Cause is God. The teleological argument begins with its emphasis on the presence of Order in the world, and infers from it the existence of God who is the source of the design.

The Moral argument seeks to show that the existence of God solves the problems of the moral life. According to Kant, it is a demand of the moral self that the Highest Good be realised. There are two elements in the highest good, virtue and happiness. But these two elements belong to two different worlds, the intelligible world and the phenomenal world. The postulate of God is the teleological ground of both these worlds, guaranteeing the union of virtue and happiness and consequently the realisation of the Chief Good.

The Historical Proof suggests that the only reason of the consciousness of God in human minds is God himself. The idea of God that has gradually taken form in human race would become meaningless with no reality corresponding to the idea. This growing consciousness of
God as a spiritual and ethical Being must have its source and ground in God Himself.

These proofs are simply the efforts of mankind to demonstrate the existence of God. They, in fact, suggest merely probabilities of greater or less degree, for approach to God through logic is bound to be unsatisfactory. Reason is analytic and discursive and therefore bound to lead to contradictions. As we have seen earlier, Bradley wanted us to transcend reason which is full of contradictions. Similarly, Bergson showed that discursive thought cuts reality.

Rumi argues that logical knowledge of God is not possible. All knowledge depends upon comparison and limitations as it moves in contraries. The nature of a thing is made manifest by contrast with something that lacks its qualities. Our knowledge of phenomena depends on our knowledge of their correlates. Everything is made evident by its contrary. Honey is perceived to be sweet by contrast with vinegar. Were there no darkness and evil we should be forever ignorant of light and good:

"Therefore thou knowest light by its opposite; opposite reveals opposite in the process of coming forth."¹

¹ The Kathnavi; Vol.I, 1133.
The Divine Essence, which is the life and soul of all phenomena, cannot be known in this way, because there is nothing that stands in contrast with God and because there is nothing that is the like of Him.

"Hidden things, then, are manifested by means of their opposite; since God hath no opposite, He is hidden. The light of God hath no opposite in all existence, that by means of that opposite it should be possible to make Him Manifest." 2

God never comes into thought, for everything that comes into thought is liable to perish. God is He who is not perishable; He is the Infinite without a beginning and without an end.

"All that you may think of is liable to pass away; he that comes not into thought is God." 3

Thought is a creature, and hence can never be identified with the Creator. It is the shadow of God, as such it cannot resist Him. If the ideas were to contain Him, one who formed the ideas would comprehend Him. But then He


would not be the creator of these ideas. As a matter of fact, the ideas are gross in relation to him as the physical bodies are gross in relation to their reason. cannot grasp the fundamental unity of all existence, as it cannot transcend the duality of subject and object. As Rumi puts it, there is a squint in the eye of the intellect which always sees double.

All that man can know about God is that He exists. The how and why of His existence is outside man’s comprehension. Man can think through the medium of the senses. God is beyond the senses, and as such, cannot be thought of. God is eternal and man is an accident. How can an accident comprehend something that is eternal? God, like the Sun, is His own proof. The proof of the Sun is the Sun himself. His Essence cannot be imagined nor compared.

"The proof of the Sun is the sun himself; if thou require the proof, do not avert thy face from him." 4

God cannot be seen on account of His extreme subtlety. 5 Your breath is visible in winter but invisible

in summer, not because there is no breath in summer, but because the breath and summer both are subtle. Similarly, your essential elements and attributes cannot be seen except through the medium of some act. Your clemency, for instance, can be seen only when you forgive an offender. Your vengefulness is made visible only when you take vengeance upon a criminal and beat him. Likewise, God's omnipotence; His work alone can be seen.

Things can be arranged according to the degree of superiority possessed by them. A thing superior to another thing is more concealed than the other. Man is endowed with three things: body, spirit and intellect. Body belongs to the lowest category and can be felt. The spirit is superior to it, and is for that reason more concealed. Nevertheless, one can infer its existence from the movement of the body. To infer the existence of intellect is even more difficult for unless one finds an organised and harmonious pattern in behaviour of any being one cannot say that it possesses intellect. Intellect is, therefore, even more concealed than the spirit itself. It is concealed from man in spite of the fact that it is indescribably near to man. What wonder, then, if the Creator of that intellect is also concealed from man even though He is indescribably near to him?
"The intellect is more concealed than the vital spirit; your mental perception makes its way to apprehend the vital spirit sooner than it apprehends the intellect. What wonder if the Creator of that intellect too is with thee? How art thou not conceding the result of that? How, then, should not the King be indescribably near? The intellectual search cannot find the way to Him." 6

As Ibn-al-Arabi says, God considered absolutely is beyond relation, and therefore beyond knowledge, inconceivable and ineffable, quite independent of created beings in respect of His Essence. "He is the First, the Last" he says, "the Outward, the Inward. He is the Substance of what is manifested, and the substance of what remains latent at the time of manifestation; none sees Him but Himself and none is hidden from Him, since He is manifested to Himself and hidden from Himself." 7

Rumi cites the story of an elephant exhibited in a dark room. Being unable to see it people tried to


understand it by touch. One who touched its trunk
thought it to be a water-pipe; one who touched its ears
thought it to be a large fan.

"On account of the diverse place (object) of
view their statements differed: one man entitled
it 'dal', another 'alif'. If there had been a
candle in each one's hand, the difference would
have gone out of their words." 8

Likewise, man's knowledge of God is partial and one-
sided. This partial knowledge also is essentially rela-
tive and, as such, does not represent the true nature
of God as He is in Himself. It merely supplies us with
a rough analogy. Men come into contact with one or
other aspect of the Absolute Reality and generalise it
as the Absolute Reality.

"Everyone is naturally attached to some veil
and judges that it is in sooth the identity
('ayn) of Him." 9

Man, therefore, cannot thoroughly comprehend the
nature of God. One who thinks that he knows the Divine

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Essence merely knows the picture of his own imagination. He is deluded by the illusion of names and attributes. As a matter of fact, man gives God a form of his own imagination, just as a bull or an ass would picture Him only as a bull or an ass:

"If the animal sense could see the King (God), then the ox and the ass would behold Allah. How should he that is in love with his own imagination and conception be one of them that love the Lord of bounties?" 10

Human attributes cannot be intelligibly applied to Him even when they are raised to infinite perfection. Nevertheless, the analogies about the nature and attributes of God are not entirely false. They are the broken lights of God, revealing one or other aspect of Him. However much the seeker may be concerned with the world of manifestation, his sincere conviction and devotion are bound to cause his false ideas to lead him to God.

Everyone of them gives these indications of the way, in order that it may be supposed that they belong to that Village. Know the truth to be this, that all these various persons are not in the right, nor are (sic) this herd entirely astray."

And yet,

"If the lover of that false conception be sincere, that metaphor (unreal judgment) will lead him to the reality."

Hume therefore says the religious experience is the only criterion for the existence of God. With him the existence of God is both a postulate and an experience. His existence cannot be inferred from any other premise, because it is His existence alone that makes all inference possible. As William James puts it, "The attempt to demonstrate by purely intellectual processes the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experience is absolutely hopeless."  


religion demands, cannot be reached by any deductive arguments.

However, Rumi has mentioned the following arguments for the existence of God:

1. The orderly arrangement of the cosmos indicates a wise creator.

"If there is no Wise Creator, what is the reason of this orderly arrangement, the cosmos? And if there is a Wise Creator, how is His action devoid of meaning?" 14

No painter paints a picture for the sake of the picture itself. There is some purpose behind his action. He paints it for the sake of guests and young people so that they may be delivered from cares. In his picture lies the joy of children and the kind remembrance of departed friends by their friends. Nor does any calligrapher write artistically for the sake of the writing itself but for the sake of reading.

The external form takes shape for the sake of the unseen form.

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"The external form is for the sake of the unseen form; and that took shape for the sake of another unseen form." 15

The creation of the world is for the purpose of manifestation, to the end that the treasure of Divine providences may not remain hidden. God said "I was a hidden treasure"; and this hidden treasure burst forth into heaven and earth on account of its fullness." 16

(2) With the revolving object there is a one who causes it to revolve. Every moving object implies a Mover. 17 The body is moved by the spirit which we do not see, but whose existence we infer from the movement of the body. 18 Likewise, God is to be known through the movement of the universe. The universe is the body and God is its life, ever sustaining it and ever maintaining it.

God is the Mover and the Writer. The pen moves according to His wish. We see the pen, but we do not

see the hand. Beholding the beauty of this hand, one would simply say that such a hand cannot be without a pen. He is the Giver of aspiration and can be apprehended by means of the manifestation of the effect alone. He is alive and full of intellect, for the regulated movements in the universe indicate that He is full of knowledge. Knowledge that turns the motion of copper into gold. So, therefore, says:

"If you do not see Him visibly, apprehend Him by means of the manifestation of the effect."

(3) Cause is always free from matter as compared to the effect. Thought and imagination, for instance, have effects on the body. A person thinks ill of his enemy. The thought makes him angry which in turn makes him perspire. Perspiration is a material thing; but its cause is thought which is immaterial. One might object that even thought and anger are material as they proceed from brain which is material. But thought in itself is not material even though it comes into existence through something that is material. As compared to the body it is free from matter.

Things are material and immaterial. Material is the caused and immaterial is the cause of it. As there are differences in the material things according to the degree of materiality possessed by them, there are also differences in the causes according as they are free from matter. The cause of a cause is free from matter, as compared to its effect; and its cause in turn is freer still. The process continues till an immaterial and the highest cause of all causes is reached. It is completely free from matter, hence cannot be felt. This highest of all causes is God and He is the Formless.

"These forms have their existence from the formless; what means, then, their denial of Him who brought them into existence? Assuredly the Absolute Agent is formless: form is as a tool in His Hand." 20

Yet He cannot be thought of except under certain forms. Man has to get beyond these forms, which veil him from truth. He has to transcend them in his progress towards God.

(4) Cause is superior to the caused as it possesses some quality that is not possessed by the caused. If both are the same, then there is no reason why one should be the cause and the other the caused. Possibilities do not exist by themselves, for existence does not belong to their being. Their existence is caused by some cause.

The process of causes and effects ends with a cause which exists by itself, in the sense that existence belongs to its very being. The process either stops at this cause or continues ad-infinitum. In the first case it stops at God. In the second case cause and effect become equally important as both exist by themselves and exist necessarily.

"Then there are two likes, O God fearing man, why should this one be more fit than that one for the purpose of creating?" 21

God is hidden in His workshop. His work is the actualisation of the potential; a perpetual clothing of not being with his own qualities. But the work has woven a veil over the worker; so long as man sees nothing; but the veil, he is outside God's workshop.

II. God's nature has been described in various ways by philosophers and mystics. The Deistic conception of God sets the Deity over against his world. God is not immanent in the things of the world, nor does He sustain them. He stands apart from the world without maintaining any intimate and living relation with it, even though He creates it. He is a Personal Being, the object of worship, deserving the reverence of man. He is transcendent, and therefore should not be confused with man and the world.

In Pantheism one single and all-embracing Being dwells in all the variety of the Universe. The conception gives effect to the scientific desire of unity. Behind the variety of phenomena there is a Universal Law, which comprehends and expresses itself through them. All things are God. Pantheism, thus, emphasizes the immanence of God. God is everywhere present in the world; no region of experience is outside the Divine Care.

The Theistic conception of God makes Him both immanent and transcendent. God is not identical with the world, but the world is not independent of Him either. There is divine activity behind the phenomena of nature and life, and there is a continuous divine revelation in the spirits of men. Theism, thus, seeks to present the
statements of Belief and Pantheism in a form which is consistent with the integrity of the spiritual values. The Pantheistic statement "All is One" is transformed into 'All depends on One'. And instead of speaking of the identity of the self with God in the religious consciousness it speaks of communion and co-operation with God. All elements in the cosmos are related to a single experient subject and are sustained by a Single Will.

The Qur'an is theistic. God is the Creator and is different from His Creation, which has a real existence apart from Him. The creation, therefore, is not an illusion; it is a reality. It came into being from nothing or from non-being. Its existence depends upon God who can reduce it back to nothing.

But it is evident from some of the verses in the Qur'an that the Theism of Qur'an also passes into a type of Pantheism. The transcendent God, who at first stands outside of His creation, gradually comes nearer and nearer to His creation so that He becomes nearer to man than his own jugular vein. He then identifies himself with his actions before He passes once again into the light of the heavens and the earth, embracing all directions. Finally He enters utter immanence wherein He is the Beginning and He is the End; He is the Outward
and he is the Inward. His Being alone abides, while everything else passes away. The Quranic Theism, thus, ends in the conception of an all-embracing Divinity, in whom we live and have our being.

It is generally asserted that sufism is a pantheistic doctrine. But the mere assertion that it is pantheistic does not explain its views about God and the Universe. Sufism covers such a great variety of metaphysical and moral ideas that any view may be said to be true of some of its representatives. As a matter of fact, it is not a doctrine with any definite boundaries that would mark it off from Orthodox Islam or from any system of metaphysics.

Early sufism was predominantly ascetic and was an attempt at moral purity, avoidance of sin for fear of God, and the consequent renunciation of the world. About the end of the third century after Mohammed the Muslims began to speculate on the relation of the finite and the infinite. The worship of God turned into an identification of human individuality with the Unconditional Transcendental Ego. Real Being and God are identical; Being, in so far as it is real, is God. If this is pantheism, then sufism in general may be said to be pantheistic.

But the sufis' intimate communion with a personal
God makes the problem complex. The sufi dies to himself in order to live in God. Some sort of dualism still persists, for it is not simply God living by himself. Baqa, abiding life, always follows his death unto himself. Sufism, therefore, is not Pantheism but Panentheism. As a matter of fact, it is the attempt of the sufis to interpret their feeling of union with the divine into the language of logic that gave it the form of Pantheism.

Rumi’s conception is not pantheistic because he is a believer in the development and survival of the individual personality. Losing oneself in God means for him living in God: it is being clothed with his attributes without losing the essence of one’s own personality, rather than the merging of the drop in the homogeneous ocean. As such, he describes the ultimate union of man with God in analogies that speak of the preservation of personality even in that ultimate absorption.

"He exists in respect of the survival of his essence, but his attributes have become non-existent in the attributes of him (God)." 22

It is evident that in his views about God, Rumi is not a pantheist, even though certain passages describe

his oneness with God in terms which appear to be pantheistic. Although he identifies himself with the all-comprehending reality of God, calling himself cloud, rain and meadow, such a belief need not be confused with pantheism, for his standpoint is consistent with his belief in a personal God. The Divine immanence does not absorb and dissolve the finite selves. On the contrary, it enhances the reality of the finite selves, emphasises their existence, and brings to light their individuality.

Before Rumi all possible conceptions about the nature of God were preached and taught, some emphasising the Divine Attributes along with the Divine Essence, some identifying them with the Divine Essence and some completely denying them — all exaggerating one or other aspect of the truth. It was Rumi who attempted to satisfy the cravings of the theologians, the philosophers and the mystics by creating a synthesis of the philosophical and the mystical elements. A careful study of his thought reveals that he is successful in his attempt.

In his theory of emanation and in his conception of the Absolute Unity he bears a striking similarity to Plotinus, who was known to the Oriental System through his immediate successors. Rumi states what Plotinus states, but clothed in obscure and fanciful allegory.
refers to the Absolute Unity by metaphors like Sea, Light, Love, Wine, Beauty and Truth. The Neo-Platonic conceptions of the Universal Mind and the Universal Soul are called by him Aql-i-Kul and Jan-i-Kul or Nafs-i-Kul. He affirms the soul's original purity and its pre-existence in God. The soul of man had its being in God and it laments its fallen state in the world in which it has remained embodied. Sūrat is the manifestation of soul from which it ceaselessly strives to return to the fountain whence it came. This awakening of the soul from the sleep of phenomenal existence and its striving towards the Ultimate Unity also reminds one of Plotinus. But Rūmi parts company with Plotinus in so far as his Unity is essentially personal in character. It is the Divine Beloved, unlike the Neoplatonic God who is purely an abstract entity. God is the All-Good and the All-Beautiful to whom man is irresistibly drawn. Rūmi's God is a personal God.

The religious consciousness demands that God must be a personality. A God who is the God of the whole Universe without having any relation with its details is not sufficient for religion. His impersonality is recognised as the Divine Principle or the Moral Order for He determines the destiny of the universe and man and works
on a large scale, there being no discoverable point of identity between His own purpose and that of man. Such a God is shadowy and elusive. The possibility of communion between the soul and God must exist so that God's purpose should also be the individual's purpose. The barriers between man and God must be overcome. The assurance that the highest aspirations of man are not frustrated has its roots in the principle that the ground of the world is a Self-conscious and Self-determining Spirit. God's personal character is revealed in the teleological order which embraces the world of existence in a living unity. This personal God appears in the souls of men and in the religious experience of the race.

It might be objected that the conception of a personal God contradicts His infinity. But to think of personality as essentially finite is to confound personality with individuality. The individual is finite, but the person is infinite. As Lotze points out, only the Infinite is completely personal. To think of God as being all that one ought to be is the reality of the moral ideal. By tracing the Divine image in oneself one learns the very nature of God. As a matter of fact, the spiritual and ethical view of the universe necessitates the conception of personality. God is to be conceived as
"Super-personal" rather than 'impersonal', says Bradley, the absolute stands above its internal distinctions and includes them as elements in its fullness, a concrete identity of all extremes.²³

Rúmí's God is not a bare abstraction who stands behind the scenes eternally unmoved. His personal attitude towards God introduces positive elements in the conception. God is the Divine Beloved. He is the candle, everything else is the moth that dashes itself against the candle and is consumed by it. However much its agony and distress the moth cannot do without the candle, for if it were not consumed by the candle it would not be a candle.²⁴ Likewise the man who can do without God is no man at all; while if any man were to comprehend God, he would no more be God, for God consumes man and makes him naught. The true man, therefore, is never free from striving. He always revolves restlessly and ceaselessly about the Light of God.

Divine Love pervades the cosmos. All things, though they seem diverse, are ruled by this eternal principle and are moved to endeavour for their own ful-

²³ Bradley (F.H.): Appearance and Reality; p.471.
filment. The Divine Essence is the only Love that surges in the universe, for every atom in the universe journeys towards God. Everything is moving towards its source. A static thing is destined to suffer like a tree that suffers the pain of the saw or the blows of the axe. The sun that illuminates the world at morning tide; the water that goes up from the sea to the sky, falls as rain and flows as river; the earth that takes the form of grass; in fact, all the elements, wander from place to place striving to rise towards this Unity which reveals itself in the union of all loving souls. All phenomena when stripped of their individuality become one with each other and with the Real Being. They are the individualised modes of the Real Being that wipes out their individuality. In the words of Rūmi:

"This thirst in our souls is the attraction exerted by the Water: We are Its, and It is ours. The Wisdom of God in destiny and in decree made us lovers of one another." 25

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The religious consciousness also demands an ethical God. An ethical God is a moral personality, sustaining the moral order, maintaining ethical relations with men and working for good in the world. But His ethical attributes become isolated qualities if there is no immanent working in the world of experience. Muni's God is a moral personality with living ethical attributes which evoke our affections and move our wills.

God is benevolent and compassionate. He governs and directs the cosmic process. Every event has its own place in the design that exists in His mind and is worked out in the world. In other words, God is not indifferent to human life. He is interested in, and is sympathetic to, human ideals and values. And it is His boundless mercy and infinite compassion that help man in his efforts to achieve noble ideals.

God is Absolute Beauty. All earthly beauty is nothing but a manifestation and reflection of this absolute Beauty. The real object of love, therefore, is not the earthly form; it is the Divine Beauty mingled in earth, which is only the medium through which the uncreated Beauty reveals itself and carries on its creative activity. It is the real object of all search, all strife and all opposition.
From that hidden goblet of Thine Thou hast poured out of the cup of the noble (prophets and saints) a draught on the dusty earth. From the draught thereof there is a trace on the locks and cheeks of the fair: hence kings lick the earth of which the bodies of the fair are made.  

Every form in the world is beautiful viewed as a copy of the divine archtype. The mystic who contemplates these copies perceives only the eternal Beauty in the ever-changing aspects of creation. All others are veiled by illusion. God thus revealed to him exercises complete sway over his soul and renders him a seeker of union with the true Beloved. And Love, whether earthly or heavenly, ultimately leads him yonder, to this eternal Beauty, for God is Beauty and God is Love.

God is Absolute Mercy. Even His wrath is mercy in disguise. This Absolute Mercy does not seek to do violence unless there is some advantage in the act. All pain and punishment that He inflicts upon man is for some good purpose. His mercy, thus, precedes his wrath.

"His (God's) mercy is prior to His wrath, to the end that by God's mercy he (the afflicted person) may suffer application.

His (God's) mercy eternally preceded His wrath, in order that the stock-in-trade (which is) existence, should come to hand." 27

But this mercy is not like human mercy, because human mercy is mingled with pain. Nor can its nature be thoroughly comprehended. Only its effects can be experienced.

"His mercy is not the mercy of Adam, for sorrow is mingled with the mercy of Adam. The mercy of the creature is anxious; the mercy of God is exempt from sorrow and anxiety. Know that the mercy of the Unconditioned (God) is like this, O father; naught but the effect thereof comes into the imagination." 28

The Divine Bounty is eternal. It is not dependent on receptivity as human bounty is in which case


receptivity is necessary. Bounty is an attitude of the
Creator, while receptivity is an attribute of the crea-
ture. As a matter of fact, the capacity to receive
depends upon His bounty, which is infinite and uncondi-
tional and, therefore, does not depend on the temporal.29

The prophets attained prophethood through
divine favour. Pharaoh too, made great personal efforts
in the way of bounty and charity, but his beneficence and
efforts had no lustre, since Divine favour was not pre-
sent. He is like the military Commander in charge of a
fortress. Although he is kind and generous to his people
in the fortress, his generous actions are all without
worth because he intends to become a rebel.

Nevertheless, God's was not entirely denied to
Pharaoh. He probably favoured him secretly and caused
him to be rejected for a good purpose, for, as Kuri puts
it —

"His Mercy is long in gripping, but grips tight;
His presence does not keep you absent from Him
for one moment." 30

Every created being is spiritual in so far as
it receives the overflowing Divine Grace, which is

sprinkled throughout the universe and to which man's
endeavours should finally lead. God is good, says Gandhi,
there is no evil in him. But Goodness is not an attribute
of God. Goodness is God. He is the supreme alchemist,
who turns iron into gold, evil into good. He is Goodness
and he is Truth. 31

God is not only truth and love but also justice.
He acts according to his own fixed laws, never suspending
then, so that the moral order in the universe is not
broken. He is the source from which all things come and
the Good into which they finally enter. Man's grief does
not melt him, nor does any pain make him sorrowful.

"He covers up the sin many times in order to
manifest His grace; then again, He chastises
the sinner in order to manifest His Justice,
to the end that both these attributes may be
displayed, and the former be hope inspiring
and the latter deterrent." 32

III. The study of Greek Philosophy, Mysticism and

Neo-Platonism exercised an enormous influence on the Muslim conceptions of God. But these foreign sources were given a basis in the verses of the Qurān. Several attempts were made to know the phenomena and the Reality underlying them.

The Mutazilites laid stress on the unity of God. The Qurānic conception of unity of God was consistent with the multiplicity of attributes. But according to the Mutazilites the unity was inconsistent with multiplicity. They, therefore, denied the attributes of God. They argued that if any attribute is different from the essence then there is a multiplicity. On the other hand, if it is identical with the essence it is nothing but the essence itself. The Unity of God and the multiplicity of attributes cannot co-exist. God in their hands, thus, became merely a bare abstraction.

But Rūmi is against such an attempt at abstraction of God from His attributes. He believes in the attributes of God and in this point he comes nearer to the school led by Al-Ashārī, which maintained the reality of the attributes of God. God, according to this school, is the Ultimate Necessary Existence, carrying His own attributes. The attributes, as such, are not inconsistent with the Divine Unity. An upholder of this view, Rūmi gives a number of Divine attributes.
God is 'ahad', One and has no second. He is formless, indivisible and uncreated. He is unthinkable and indescribable, hence, unknowable and unknown. He is the nearest to man and is the farthest from him. He is the Ultimate Ground of everything that exists.

God is the Absolute Being. He has no equal. He has no origin and He has no end. Being neither Universal nor particular, He is free from all limitations. He has no opposite; nor is there anything in the like of Him.

God is the Mysterious Power that pervades the universe. This Power transcends the senses and is felt rather than seen. There is an unalterable Law that governs the universe. This Law is not a blind Law, because there is orderliness in the universe. This Law is God.

The world is unreal because it is changing every moment. Yet, it is real, in so far as it has something about it that persists. Everything is ever changing and ever dying. Underlying this change is a Living Power that does not change, the Power that creates and destroys and recreates. This Power is God, and this Power is the Underlying Unity in the variety of phenomena. As is found in the Gita, He is:

"The supreme goal, supporter, lord, witness, abode, refuge, disinterested friend, origin and end, the
resting place, the storehouse in which all beings are merged at the time of universal destruction, and the imperishable seed." 33

God is one, and He comprehends all. One is perfection. Being in all numbers there can be no number without it. Any addition to it is diminution. As such, number exists only in the world of plurality, there being no room for it in the world of Divine Unity, any verbal expression of which virtually means a denial of that Unity.

"In the world of Divine Unity, is no room for Number, But Number necessarily exists in the world of Five and Four." 34

"That Unity is beyond description and condition: nothing comes into the arena of speech except duality." 35

God is unsupported, says Hallâj, unconditioned, the eternal one, without beginning and end, beyond the limits

33. The Bhagavadgîtâ: Ch.IX, v.18.
35. The Râthnâvi; Vol.VI, 2034.
of space and time, to whom nothing is impossible. So also says Jami, that the Absolute Being is Pure Being, who is not subject to any defect or diminution or to plurality. He is the Ultimate Ground and Cause of everything but is Himself uncaused, Omniscient and Himself unperceived and unknown. For Plotinus God is absolutely one. He is the Unity that lies beyond all multiplicity. In Him there is no plurality, no movement and no distinction. He is over and above all thought, which involves the distinction between subject and object. He is indescribable in terms of volition too, because volition involves the distinction between the willer and the willed, as well as in terms of activity which involves the distinction between the actor and that which is acted upon. In other words, He is ineffable and inconceivable.

In God's presence, therefore, no two "I's can be contained. Either man has to die before him or God has to die before man. As God's dying is impossible and inconceivable, He being living and immortal, man has to die before Him.36

"You may count a hundred thousand sweet apples in your hand:

If you wish to make one, crush them all together."

Plurality is thus inconsistent with Divine Unity. As Rumi says, if you tie two birds together they will not fly, in spite of the fact that their wings have become four. But if a dead bird is tied to a living one, then they will fly because there is no duality present. The realm of Pure Being is the realm of "colourlessness" as he calls it. It is the Absolute Unity, in which there is no individualisation or limitation of any kind.

Nevertheless, colour proceeds from this realm of colourlessness. The One appears as the Many, the Unity displaying itself in forms which are outwardly opposed. Oil, even though formed from water is opposed to water. Rose springs from thorn and thorn springs from rose, yet both are at war with each other. Strife and discord are characteristic of phenomenal forms. Yet they are the Divine Essence viewed under the aspect of 'Otherness', identical like ice and water.

"Conceive the Soul as a fountain, and these created things as rivers: While the fountain flows, the rivers run from it." 38

"Since colourlessness (pure unity) became the captive of colour (manifestation in the phenomenal world), a Moses came into conflict with a Moses." 39

It is, however, a mystery that these forms proceed from the Formless Reality, to which their phenomenal nature is opposed. Does all this discord mark a deep design and a harmonious purpose? Or is this riddle inscrutable by the intellect? Or is the solution to be found in mystical bewilderment? The treasure of Divine Unity can be found only through true self-abandonment, through the complete emptying of oneself and of all things.

"When you attain unto the colourlessness which you originally possessed, Moses and Pharaoh are at peace with each other." 40

God is One, though religions are many, just as the light is one though the lamps are many. One who

38. Ibid, xii, 40
fixes his gaze upon the lamp is lost in plurality. One who looks at the light is delivered from the dualism inherent in the finite body. The Truth is independent of outward form, shining equally brightly in the tavern as in the mosque or the Church. The religion of the heart alone has value. It is not the monopoly of any particular creed for all creeds are one. The ways to God are more than the number of stars in heaven. All forms and objects of worship are broken lights of the One Being. God does not dwell in earth or heaven; He abides in the heart. The names are mere metaphors; save his face everything else is fancy. He is not found by search because the seeker does not seek Him until he finds Him.

"What means this idol-form, if this is the house of the Kābā?

And what means this light of God, if this is a Kašian temple?" 41

God is infinite. He is unlimited and boundless, perfect, complete and self-sufficient as against the finite whose grounds and conditions of existence lie

beyond itself. God is infinite. But He is not infinite in the sense of spatial infinity, for temporal and spatial infinities are not absolute. They are nothing more than the interpretations put by thought upon the creative activity of God. God is infinite in the infinite inner possibilities of His creative activity, of which the universe is only a partial manifestation or expression.

God is eternal. There is a succession and change in the world of phenomena and there is beginning and end to this succession in time. This is essentially a serial time and, for that reason, untrue. But there is a change without succession as is found in man's own self, wherein the inner states interpenetrate each other in such a way that one cannot discern where one ends and the other begins. This is pure duration which is an organic whole and which operates in the present. The past is not left behind nor does the future lie ahead. It is this duration that is applicable to the life of God, the entire sweep of manifestation being nothing but a moment in His inner life.

God is omnipotent. Omnipotence would suggest that God has the power to invest the content of His will with reality. God possesses the highest attribute of Power. The Universe is sustained by His activity. He is self-
sufficient and independent, and not limited by anything that does not proceed from His own will. The nature of God is, therefore, dynamic and highly active in its essence. Being the absolute unconditioned ground of all that there is, the sole and sufficient cause of all existence, He is a self-directing and self-conscious energy, the one infinite life who is continuously active, and who loves activity connecting mysteriously enough even the most incongruous things, as the vision of the eye and the fat of the eye, the dust of which man is made and man himself. Consequently, everything is made capable of fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. As Huxi puts it:

"With a God so mighty that in a moment He causes a hundred worlds like ours to come into existence from non-existence." 42

Some might object that Omnipotence is incompatible with any limitation. God, instead of bringing about the result by His mere word, uses means and therefore works under limitation. But those limitations are willed by God Himself, hence are not defects. For Him what is possible means what is compossible. It is not correct to suppose

that the abstractions of possibility and impossibility are prior to God. In fact, they come into being with the world of dependent existences. Hence, the conception of a possibility not willed by Him becomes a pure abstraction. It is in the region of fact rather than of possibility that the idea of Omnipotence gains positive value.

God is omnipresent. But one cannot refer Him to a spatially extended world, because He is not a being in space. The spatial order has developed out of the coexistence of individual elements. God is the condition of space as it is He who brings into existence the world of interacting individuals. He, therefore, cannot be limited by space. Again, since He is the active ground of all existence the sphere of His operation extends to every point of space. Hence God's Omnipresence means that His being is not separated from His activity.

The Omnipresence of God implies the immanence of God. But Rumi does not draw this conclusion. He makes God neither transcendent nor immanent.

"Not united, not separated; O Perfection; say, devoid of quality or description or causation." 43

Yet He is both transcendent and immanent. He is transcendent because He is beyond space and time, and at the same time the condition of all space and time.

43. Ibid. Vol. III; v: 1340.
Cos is transcendent. He is transcendent in the sense of being a necessary being, self-begotten, self-caused, self-existent, independent and absolute, in contradiction to the contingent, created and determined beings of the phenomenal world. God is transcendent because He is beyond space. Rumi argues that man's thoughts and moods have no place. The Creator of these thoughts and moods is subtler than these, just as the builder of the house is subtler than the house. The house is the medium through which his subtlety is made visible, and God's subtlety in like manner enters the sensible world in order to display itself.

Where is He who is beyond the heavens and apart from all that exists? Rumi would say the demand is invalid, for whence and where is this objection itself? It is neither in the tongue, nor in the mouth. Even if you cut yourself piece by piece you will not find its place. So your objection has no place, because your thought has no place. When you cannot discover the place of your own thought, how can you discover the place of the Creator of that thought? Your thoughts and moods are beyond your control and you are incapable of penetrating them. How do you expect, then, to penetrate your Creator? The Upanisads give a similar conception. God is subtler than all gross phenomena. He is the subtle essence underlying all phenomena, and at the same time the Origin of all phenomena.

God is beyond time. Terms 'Prior' and 'Posterior' have nothing to do with Him, as His priority is a spiritual priority. These terms involve duality which is inconsistent with Divine Unity. All the Divine Attributes are eternal and essentially identical with each other. It is only in regard to their effect that they can be discriminated.

"Tis a spiritual priority, unqualified and unconditioned. Have you seen the prior and the posterior without duality (Have you seen them to be one)? 45

It is a grave error, therefore, to ignore the essential transcendence of God and confuse Him with the world, in which His Light is temporarily reflected.

However, this does not mean that God is cut off from the world of existences within which the time process rules; nor that the time-process is unreal, the timeless God being the truth of the Universe. But God is not eternal in the sense that He fills endless time, nor is He eternal in the sense that He has no relation to time. He is eternal because He is over and above the

45 The Fatimavi, Vol.IV, 3744.
process of time. Being the ultimate condition of its existence, He is not subject to it.

And yet God is immanent. He is the all-one spiritual primal force which reveals itself in everything, and to whose life, power, wisdom and goodness correspond the life and perfection of the universe. Everything possesses its own value and holds in itself its own future, as one and the same life pervades in ascending series of powers.

Everything comes from God who is the Real Being and the Essence of all existents. The Divine Essence is the sole ground and cause of existence of the phenomenal forms in which its effects are manifested. Everything is only a shell in relation to Him, He being the kernel of all life and all that there is. As the cause of all things, says Spinoza, God is the essential heart of things, the sapidity in water and the light of the moon and the Sun, as the Gita describes Him. 46

"Before Omnipotence all the people of the Divine Court of audience (the world) are as helpless as the embroiderer's fabric before the needle." 47

God is Absolute Beauty, says Jami, Absolute Knowledge and Perfection. Therefore, all beauty, knowledge and perfection found in the world are derived from Him. In fact, all things in the world are His attributes. As is found in the Gita:

"All this is permeated by Me in My unmanifested aspect as ice by water, and beings abide in the idea within Me." 46

For Iqbal, the Ultimate Reality is both immanent and transcendent. It is immanent because it comprehends and encompasses the whole cosmos. But it is not immanent in the pantheistic sense, because it is a personal reality. God has an egocentric, a consciousness of His own 'I-ness' which, however, is beyond the grasp of the experience of finite egos. God is both in man and out of man; he is both the divine darkness and the unencumbered light.

McTaggart's Ultimate Reality is the Absolute which is broken up into finite egos with the result that the finite selves became eternal. This immortality of finite egos places the Absolute in the position of a community rather than a person. But Iqbal maintains that

46. The Bhavaradriti, Ch.IX.v.4.
the Absolute cannot be a mere community as in that case it cannot exist over the above the finite egos. Again, there would not be any possibility of the creation of new egos in the universe, the differentiations of the Absolute being all fixed. The Universe is not a completed act, and the process of creation has not come to an end. The orderliness and adjustment in the differentiations of Absolute is far from being a permanent orderliness and adjustment. In fact, this orderliness is yet to be achieved through incessant efforts on the part of the finite egos. In one word, the finite egos are not the necessary differentiations of the Absolute. 

Existence, therefore, is a Divine Gift conferred on request which may be either explicit or implicit. Everything was created on account of need, and everything has received actual existence and realised its potentialities. Not-being has derived its transient existence from Absolute who endows it with being. It, therefore, loves God as the beggar loves the bountiful giver. From this Spirit all forms appear, and from this Sea of Wisdom all waves of human thoughts, disposition and action leap to light.

"We and our existences are really non-existences: thou art the Absolute Being which manifests the perishable. We are not, and there was no demand on our part; yet thy grace was hearkening to our unspoken prayer and calling us into existence." 50

Whether transcendent or immanent, God is with those who are free from the illusion of phenomenal existence, from the deception of sense-perception. It is his transcendence that leads man to the full development of his personality. It is his destination, his guide on the way, without which his journey will be a purposeless journey. Being immanent He is never absent from the world, the rays of the Divine sun having been diffused and woven through creation.

"Your calling God 'formless' (transcending forms) or 'formed' (immanent in forms) is vain, without your liberation from form. Whether God is 'formless' or 'formed' He is with him that is all kernel and has gone forth from the husk." 51


The Upanisadic conception is similar to this conception of Rumi. As is found in the Śvetāsvatara Upanisad, God is present in fire, in water and in all universe. He is transcendent, as the Katha-Upanisad says, beyond all the happiness and the misery of the world. In other words, He is both immanent and transcendent, immanent like salt in water, filling each and every corner of the universe, and transcendent, overflowing the universe to limitless boundaries.

"As in a mirror, so (Brahman may be seen clearly) here in this body; as in a dream, in the world of the Fathers; as in the water, he is seen about in the world of the Gandharvas; as in the light and shade, in the world of Brahma." 52

The Qur'anic conception makes God predominantly a transcendental God, beyond imagination and beyond all human endeavours at attainment. He is infinitely exalted above His creatures, even though He is in close relation with the Universe and man. However, the Qur'an gives Him many attributes that are analogous to the human qualities, maintaining at the same time that there is nothing even like the likeness of Him. As such, even if He is nearer to man than His own neck-vein, His nearness should not be

52. Katha-Upanisad: II, 6:5.
regarded as spatial. Everything lives through Him, yet nothing is like Him. He cannot be contained by the Universe, nor can He be bound by time and space. Yet, He breathed His own spirit into man.

He is the Creator who creates things by a sheer act of will. He creates them out of nothing by His mere utterance "Be". Being the source of all life, every being exists and persists through Him. He is the only self-subsisting, eternal and necessary Being, who is endowed with the highest attributes. Everything else has a contingent existence. Everything is perishable except His Own Being.

God is omniscient. His living relation to the whole of reality shows that His experience is universal and His consciousness all-embracing. He is the ground of the medium in which individual existences interest so that every fact and every movement in the universe has a meaning for Him. The objects in the universe are the expression of His will, and are dependent upon His Will. They are not given to Him from without. They are intimately related to Him, and He knows them through 'intellectual intuition'. Every movement and every thought in the universe is an experience in Him. The Quranic conception of God makes the infinity of His knowledge
unattainable by man, who, for this reason, cannot rise to be equal to Him. Nor does God incarnate Himself. However, He does come into the closest personal touch with His chosen ones. Even though He acts according to definite ways, His way is ineradicable. Being the Light of the heavens and the earth, He comprehends everything. Nothing is hidden from Him.

God is independent of Causality. He is the Absolute Knower, Willer and Doer. In spite of the fact that He uses means to bring about desired effects, He is not destined to act necessarily through causes which come from His own nature. He effects all things by acts of His Absolute and uncontrolled Will with means or without means. In other words, He does not necessarily cause things according to the nature and dictates of the primary or Universal Intellect which is emanated from Him as a necessity of His essential nature. He is, therefore, not related to the effect as a cause. As a result, no thought can comprehend Him.

"Not united, not separated, O perfection; nay devoid of quality of description or causation. Thou art not contained in the bosom of any thought, nor art Thou joined with the effect, as a cause."

Again, not being the physical cause of things and events, which must cause and act according to the dictates of a certain nature, He is also not the four temperaments, heat, cold, dryness and moisture, inherent in things of the phenomenal world. God is the First Mover, said Aristotle. He is the First Cause and in His character and absolute end. But He is not a first mechanical cause that existed before the world and created it. He is rather a teleological cause, that works from the end, in the sense that He is logically prior to all beginning.

God, therefore, is not incapable of acting in any other way than He is doing. He is the master of Himself and can perform any action in any way He likes. He creates all causes and effects, although it seems that every cause is the effect of another cause. Steel and flint cause fire to be produced, food and medicine cause health, only in so far as God uses them as means to His appointed ends.

"My action is uncaused and upright (independent):
I have the power of pre-determination, I have no

cause. I alter my custom at the time I choose; at the time I will I lay the dust that rises in front." 55

The Divine Names are all derivative in as much as they refer to the corresponding eternal Attributes of the Divine Essence. They are, in fact, the particular modes, forms and aspects of the One Essence with which they are ultimately identical. Nevertheless, conception of the Divine Names and Attributes is not conception of the Divine Essence, for all conception is begotten of qualities and definitions. God is not begotten.

"If he conceives that he is in love with the Essence of God, conception of the Divine names and attributes is not the essence." 56

God is the Perfect Artist. He is the source of both good and evil, and yet evil does not hurt Him. It is at the demand upon His perfection that He makes

evil, for had He not made evil, He would lack skill and cease to be a Perfect artist. The ugliness of script is an exhibition of the ugly by the artist, says Rūmi, it is not the ugliness of the artist. In order that the perfection of His skill might be displayed, God makes both the ugly and the beautiful. The world is fashioned by the hand of Wisdom, says Jāmi, every brick of it bears the impress of His pen. And so, every glorious scene, every fair design, conveys His message to the mind. He says:

"Deep lies the truth impressed on every heart.
The picture certifies the painters' art." 57

And Rūmi says:

"If you say that evils too are from Him, that is true, but how is it a defect in His grace? His bestowing this evil is even His perfection." 58

God is the root of all jealousies. God is jealous of any existence whatsoever, any existence other than Himself. He is all that exists and so He demands that the lovers make Him alone the sole object of desire and lose themselves in Him. "It was the jealousy of God," says Rūmi "and there is no device against God; where is a heart that is not shattered in a hundred pieces by Gods' love?" 59

The jealousies of mankind proceed from God, who is jealous of anyone who adheres to the world of appearance even after seeing Reality. He guards His saints from the eyes of the vulgar, and the saints in turn conceal the Divine mysteries revealed to them.

"The whole world became jealous because God is superior to all the world in jealousy. The King is jealous of anyone who after having seen the face, prefers the (more) scent." 60

God is the only real agent, the Ocean of Creative Energy, from whom proceeds all movement and all life. He is the Sea that feeds the foam; He is the wind that raises the dust to the zenith. 61 The apparent correlation of cause and effect serves to maintain the world order by providing a basis for human activities. Divine action transcends this correlation. Things come to pass according to rule, but God's power breaks the rule, as His Omnipotence can destroy all causes. He allows the execution of His Will to follow the course of

causation to the end, that the seeker may become capable of pursuing his object of desire. If there were no cause, the seeker would have no way to pursue. Causes are films on the eyes. Man should reach beyond these causes, and behold the supreme causer in the spaceless world.

"The Causer brings into existence whatsoever He will: the Absolute Power tears up (destroys) the causes. But, for the most part, He lets the execution of His Will follow the course of causation in order that a seeker may be able to pursue the object of his desire." 62

God's bringing things into existence can add nothing to His unchangeable perfection, nor does their perishing take anything away from Him. The Divine light is not made greater by being consumed; it remains unchanged. What is increased is the effect, which is the world of appearance. The Essence itself suffers neither increase nor diminution.

God is the Absolute Being, the Universally immanent and the only real 'cause' of all that there is. He comprehends all effects which are the objects of existence.

The objects of existence appear under the form of contingency, individualisation and plurality for the purpose of displaying the Divine nature in action. If the Divine Essence were to increase or decrease, it would mean that it is also originated and is subject to causes.

"God was not increased by His bringing the world into existence: that which He was not formerly He has not become now. But the effect (phenomenal) being) was increased by His bringing created things into existence; there is a greater difference between these two increases." 63

The diversity of the Divine Attributes and of the archetypal ideas in God's knowledge determines all actual differences of character and individualisation in the world. God, who has no like or opposite, is the ultimate source of all the opposites proper to the world of appearance. These are the reflections of the Divine Attributes of Beauty and Majesty, Mercy and Wrath. These are the aspects in which God reveals Himself to human minds. Such contradictions, however, are transcended and

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united in the mystic's vision of Reality. The mystic knows that the infinite Divine perfections include all these contradictions, as he sees by the Light of God.

"Know that both those flow from one origin. Pass on from them both, go all the way to their origin. Now he makes the picture thereon (one of) the Devil, now (of) Adam, now He makes the picture thereon (one of) joy, now (one of) grief." 64

Manifestations, as such, are veils created by God. They are created for a good purpose, for if Divine Beauty were to display itself without a veil man would not enjoy it, nor would he endure it. 65 What will happen if the sun comes near the world? It will destroy the whole world and every creature on it. But through intermediaries it bestows innumerable benefits on mankind. In its light man walks, sees, distinguishes good from bad and enjoys the fruits that fill the trees and orchards. Likewise, when God reveals Himself through a veil to the mountain He fills it with trees and flowers. But when He makes a revelation without a veil, He over-

throws the mountain, shattering it to pieces. The beauty in the world is the image of the Eternal Orchard, that flourishes in the heart of Perfect Man. The reflection is like the reflection of boughs in a stream.

Thus, God is ultrasensuous and ultra-rational. He is both everything and nothing; he is everywhere and nowhere. He is rational but beyond reason. All forms emerge from Him and yet He is the Formless. He is the nearest to man, yet so remote that a whole life struggle is required to approach Him. No objective reality can contain him. It is He alone that comprehends all. In the words of Gandhi: "God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness; God is the source of Light and Life, and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheist of the atheist." 66

There is nothing that does not proclaim God's precise. Love for God is latent in the Universe. Consequently, everything in the universe obeys God and glorifies God by displaying some or other Divine Attributes in a way that is known to Him and itself alone.

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atom is a part of this whole, and is impelled by love towards this Universal Light whence it sprang. Being different modes of one Divine Being, all existent things are endowed with life. They apprehend their Creator, know Him and worship Him according to the necessity of their original nature. Nevertheless, even if every atom were to proclaim His qualities, they would yet be incapable of unfolding them adequately and completely.

"The glorification of God by inanimate beings will become evident to thee; the doubts suggested by false interpretations will not carry thee away from the truth. Each glorifies thee in a different fashion, and that one is unaware of the state of this one." 67

All men love God in their inmost hearts. They seek Him and pray to Him. This love is neither infidelity nor faith, for thoughts, being subtle, cannot be judged except by their outward profession. It is only when they flow out of the heart and acquire form and expression, that they gain the names of infidelity of

faith, good or evil, just as plants are completely devoid of form before they come out of the earth. They acquire fine and delicate appearance only when they grow.

God is in charge of man’s heart. He controls his thoughts and his ideas, his fantasies and his suppositions, forming them without material means and uncovering them without effort. Being essentially both the object of worship and the worshipper, God plays the game of worship with Himself. The illusion of individuality, of 'I' and 'Thou', arises out of the interplay of the two opposite aspects, essence and form of God, which are, however, destined to become finally submerged in Him.

"He brings forth purity from defilements, He takes your acts of wrong as faithful performance of duty." 68

Therefore, the man who acknowledges God and the man who denies God both are revealing God continually. It is difficult to establish a thing without denial so that all those who affirm the existence of God and all those who deny His existence go to establish His existence. In so far as the object of praise is one, all religions are

one. The qualities in individuals are nothing but the Divine attributes reflected in them. Hence all praise is necessarily rendered to God, who reveals Himself in all forms of worship. Even when Iblis disobeyed God by declining to worship Adam, it was from envy which arose from his love of God. It was from fear lest another being become the companion of his Beloved, and not from his denial of obedience to the Divine Command. 69

"In as much as the object of praise Himself is not more than One, from this point of view all religions are but one religion. Know that every praise goes (belongs) to the Light of God and is only lent to created form and persons." 70

True prayer is the prayer without outward form, and for that reason without beginning or end. Similarly, the profession of faith is not merely the formula uttered by the tongue, because everything expressed in words has beginning and end. The little child gets milk only when it cries. His crying is the reason why he gets milk. Bowing and prostrating in prayer is like the child’s cry arousing the compassion of God, which is not confounded

with the innumerable roads leading to it. Once the seekers reach the goal, all disputation, all war and all diversity melt away, for the human heart is His abode.

"Cross and Christians, from end to end,
I surveyed; He was not on the Cross,
I went to the idol temple, to the ancient pagoda;
No trace was visible there.
I went to the mountains of Kerāt and Gandāmār;
I looked; He was not in that hill-and-dale.
With set purpose I fared to the Summit of Mount Wāf;
In that place was only the 'Anqā's habitation.
I bent the reins of search to the Kā'bā;
He was not in that resort of old and young.
I questioned Ibn Sīnā of his state;
He was not in Ibn Sīnā's range.
I fared towards the scene of 'two bow-lengths' distance';
He was not in that exalted court.
I gazed into my own heart;
There I saw Him; He was nowhere else." 71

Thus, all are doing God's service in the world; some are aware of the fact while others are not. Goli would say, it is like people stitching a tent. One man twists the rope, another strikes the pegs, another weaves the covering, so that everyone appears to be engaged in a different task. But from the standpoint of weaving they are united and are doing the same job. All hearts have one attachment, one love, the love of God. Man has to realise that his earthly nature is not the original nature, and that he is the image of the Divine to which he shall return.

"If Love shall be thy part
Thou canst not suffer loss, my heart;
Is it so sorrowful
That thou art moving to the Soul?

Thou camest at thy birth
Out of high heaven unto earth:
To heaven at the end
Thou shalt again from earth ascend. 72

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