

DOES GOD HAVE A FUTURE?

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Abstract: Knowing God and believing in Him is not a path of slavery and self-destruction but a golden path towards the highest destiny and dignity of humans. If humans decide the future of God, then that God is a fake and a man-made one. The true God is above human comprehension and beyond human control. In the postmodern times, human search for absolute freedom makes us reject and deny the existence of God and His supremacy. 'Death of God' provides a new world of freedom to many and develops into an attitude of surrendering to secular rationality and science. They dismiss the traditional God due to experiences such as the horror at Auschwitz. As God was here before the humans came into existence and as He will be here even after the humans disappear from this planet, getting God in the present will be our greatest ecstasy and agony in searching for an answer to the question 'Does God have a future?'

Keywords: *Apatheia*, Atheism, Belief, Freedom, Future, God, Nothingness, Process, Religion, Secularism, Transcendence

1. Introduction

The thought of God always fascinates me like a fragrant breeze. There is no need within me to get the enumeration of logical reasons and elucidations to prove the existence of God. By nature, without any hard work or stressed contemplation, I am capable of getting in touch with God and am so attracted to God who is hidden behind every created thing on this earth and in the panoramic horizon of the universe. Although He is invisible and

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without having a material image, He is all the more visible in countless forms that flick around me and He adds convictions that are so strong and enduring about His presence in all my deep thoughts and in all my profound memories. It is not I who made God or the God-thought. It is God who made the conscious human beings with God-thought.

Does God have a future? To frame such a question in India would be really scandalous. Because for most of them God is a living reality. The truths about the world and God contain not merely in the scientific, tangible, and rational calculations of human intellect but in the process of mind's transcendence that helps humans to experience the unseen and the omniscient God. God is beyond the periphery! As Deepak Chopra says, "God is our highest instinct to know ourselves."¹ Hence, knowing God and believing in Him do not constitute a path of slavery and self-destruction but a golden path to reach our highest destiny and dignity. As intelligent creatures, we do pose questions like who am I? How did we come here? Why do we exist? Who made this earth and the amazing universe? Does that source of all creation care for us? Is there a life after death? All these questions will surely lead us to a transcendence to meet a domain of invisible truths and realities. Without the idea of God our knowledge is imperfect; our world is meaningless, our destiny is desolation and our nature is simply selfish immaturity. Excluding God, our world is a half circle and an insignificant incompleteness!

2. Man Is Man Because God Is God

There is a famous picture that illustrates Virgil's legendary story *Aeneid*. Here we see a Trojan who walked to Rome: Aeneas carrying his father on his back and his child in his hand. Typically, we carry our past on our back and hold our future in our hands. The God-thought we carry on the back of our memory is not a burdensome and heavy curse of the past but it is the key

¹Deepak Chopra and Kyra Philips, "A Conversation: The Future of God - A Practical Approach to Spirituality for Our Times," <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXyq376EYgI>> accessed on 15 September 2015.

of humanity's success. Does God have a future? I would say that it is not the Man who decides the future of true God. If humans decide the future of God, then that God is not an authentic God but a fake one! True God is certainly above human comprehension and beyond human control. But the irony is that human being is the very instrument and the agent of God by whom God Himself comes to be known and recognized. Humans are the signs and symbols of God-existence! By the fact that we are created by God, we also contain His intelligence and creativity. Man becomes Man because God is God.

The power of consciousness in human beings urges them to believe in God's existence. The idea of God did not evolve from one particular human being or one particular geographical region and developed in an undeviating style to reach its final conception. The idea of God is as old as the thinking human beings. The pre-agrarian religion arose as a worship of seen and unseen, natural and supernatural powers. Karen Armstrong quotes Wilhelm Schmidt in her Book *A History of God*: “In the beginning, human beings created a God who was the First Cause of all things and Ruler of heaven and earth... Gradually, he faded from the consciousness of his people. He had become so remote that they decided that they did not want him anymore.”² In the modern and postmodern times, in many corners of our world, religion and faith in God seem irrelevant. Many men and women no longer have the sense that they are surrounded by the sacred. Our scientific culture educates us to focus our attention on the physical, secular, and tangible material world. The contemporary market-driven world invites us to focus on the pulls of money, pleasure, power, freedom, possession, etc.

For so many people, to believe in God becomes a power game or power politics rather than that of a religious experience. In fact, for centuries humans made gods and goddesses to set the style of their lives and values and to enjoy a greater sense of security. The created gods and goddesses were serving temporarily to the purposes of a particular group of individuals or tribe and they

²Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, London: Vintage Books, 1999, 9.

very often turned out to be an abuse and an exploitation of the innocent people by the mighty ones. Such derailed religious practices became a matter of distraction in true religious experience and destruction of the sacred experience. Others find God's absence and lack of His intervention during the suffering and death of the innocents a cause for deserting God. The holocaust at Auschwitz, for example, became a case against God. Still others believe that the concept of God is the greatest hindrance for human freedom. Consequently, many scholars have edited out the sense of the 'spiritual', 'sacred', or 'holy' from the lives of people in more traditional societies. We find here a friction between the seen and the unseen, matter and spirit in our philosophical and theological arguments.

3. A Criticism on Existing Practice of Religion

There is persistent criticism on religious practices as enunciated by contemporary media productions such as the famous Indian Film *PK*. It is regarding the current religious affairs that brought so much of discourse amidst the believers of different religions. It sheds light on the aberrations contributed by various traditional religions. *PK* offers an uplifting fantasy on religious practice in the Indian context that brings surprises at every turn without exaggerating its thematic focus. *PK* provokes a critical look at religious practices among different religions. The film asks questions through its 'idiot' scholar protagonist, but does not attempt to deliver facile and absolute answers. This approach makes this film all the more effective.

PK is propelled primarily by famous Indian Actor Amir Khan whose delightful but funny superstar turn as a nameless seer from outer space, who is stranded on Planet Earth. In other words, this is a story of an alien who lands in the desert and, then, proceeds to acquire the ways of human adults in a bid to survive in a hostile environment. In the film's terrific first half, *PK* tries desperately to recover his remote control device, an item of great value to him, which was stolen by a stranger he met soon after his landing on Earth. He cannot return home without giving signals through the remote control. When he was told that only God

could help him, he sets off earnestly to find God and discovering in the process the hypocrisies and prejudices of traditional religions and their misguided obsession with each other.³ In Delhi, he encounters TV news reporter, Jaggu who, fascinated by his idiosyncrasies, promises to help him recover the remote control device. *PK* poses impossibly innocent questions that sting. *PK*'s Gola (Planet) doesn't even have any religion and, hence, there is no segregation and they live a simple and happy life. He visits distant temples, mosques, and churches. He follows the advices given by priests and religious leaders to convince the god of every faith. However, *PK* slowly finds out that some self-styled gurus or 'godmen' use superstitions and cheat religious devotees.

The film generated strong reactions among the believers of different religions. However, *PK* also invited people to be aware of their blind faith in the so-called fraudulent ministers of religion. In one of the scenes, a priest tells a man to take an arduous journey to a temple in the Himalayas to ensure that one of his sick family members gets well. *PK* jumps into the conversation and asks the priest whether it is true that God considers all humans as His sons and daughters. As the priest answers in the affirmative, *PK* follows up with another question: "Which father would send an already troubled son on an arduous journey?" Such simple but important questions have made the movie a thought-provoking drama. The sequence shows *PK* bathing in holy rivers, trekking to reach holy temples and painfully beating himself in mourning. He later discovers that such advices do not mean much and most 'god-men' use religions to further their business and to amass huge profits.

PK, in its climaxing scene, debates with one such powerful 'god-man' who is in possession of his remote control. In the end, he proves that the 'guru' is wrong and, finally, returns to his own planet. In all, *PK* questions the belief system that humans have created to reach God. Analysts say that *PK* is an important movie

³See "Why Is Bollywood Film *PK* Controversial?" <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-30602809>> accessed on 5 June 2015

of this generation. It initiates social debates on issues that matter to the country.⁴ It questions superstitions in a country where religion is deeply rooted in social consciousness of the people. Finally, *PK* offers the punchline: “Believe in the God who created you, not the one you created.”⁵

4. A World without God

Throughout human history, we find that people had a tendency in giving up the belief or the concept of God. Sometimes this has grown into a form of ferocious counter culturalism. The modern secular man of the nineteenth and the early-twentieth centuries held that atheism as an unalterable condition of humanity in the scientific age.⁶ In fact, we see in Europe the churches getting empty without believers and followers. Slowly, atheism has become a prevailing attitude in many technologically developed countries. Many lost the roots of religious beliefs and practices and the society seems not concerned about losing the thread of faith. Man searched for absolute freedom for which the critical thinkers wanted to deny the very existence and supremacy of God-thought.

4.1. Friedrich Nietzsche

In 1882, Friedrich Nietzsche brought forward violent campaigns as he declared that God was dead. He publicised this shattering thought in the parable of ‘Madman’ who ran into the marketplace one morning shouting, “I seek God! I seek God!” When the arrogant bystanders asked him where he imagined God had gone – had he run away or emigrated? The Madman glared at them. “Where has God gone?” He called out. “I mean to tell you that we

⁴“PK: Critical Review,” <<http://www.bollywoodhungama.com/moviemicro/criticreview/id/558557>> accessed on 5 May 2015.

⁵“PK Review: It’s a Courageous Film That Sticks to Hiraní’s Well-Oiled Formula,” <<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/pk-review-its-a-courageous-film-that-sticks-to-hiranis-welloiled-formula/518934-47-84.html>> accessed on 5 May 2015.

⁶Armstrong, *A History of God*, 442.

have killed him – you and I. We are all his murderers!”⁷ It was a dreadful, unbelievable, and shocking incident that had torn the peoples from their roots and legacies. By this shuddering event, we find that one part of humanity lost their sense of direction and meaning in life. We understand that this attitude of supplying ‘the death of God vision’ would lead in effect an incomparable misery and anxiety in the human societies. By this radical presentation of God’s death Nietzsche deeply touched the Western mind and, as a consequence, the fundamental aspect of God was considered as a difficult concept to believe in.

As an after effect of God-denial-process of philosophers, the literal understanding and interpretation of ‘creation story’ of Genesis became all the more incredible. The interaction with the scientific theories and knowledge led to a more secular and profane understanding of the world. Together with it, the age-old consideration of God as a divine overseer was also rejected in the common understanding of the intellectuals. The educated people in the West felt that they were witnessing a new beginning, which is based on the idea of death of God or a world without God. Nietzsche’s Madman could suggest that the death of God would bring about a newer phase of human history. According to Nietzsche, to become worthy of their deicide, human beings will have to become gods themselves. Therefore, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche declared the birth of the Superman who would replace God. He believed that the new enlightened man would declare war upon the old Christian traditions and practises. “He took the most widely believed, most important ‘truths’ of his day, turned them upside down, shook them a little, and watched with delight all the fascinating insights that flowed out.”⁸ He considered that, as God is dead, this world and Man could take God’s place as the supreme value and our world could be valued as eternal and divine. Thus, the attributes that had once functional only to the distant transcendent God became attached

⁷Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, New York: International Publishers, 1947, No. 125.

⁸William Bill Chapko, *Introduction to Nietzsche's Life and Writings, Nietzsche's Love of Fate Series*, Version 4.67, 1 March 2010.

to Man and his world.⁹ According to Nietzsche, the Christian God was pitiable, absurd, and a “crime against life.”¹⁰ The reason Nietzsche believed was that this God encouraged people to fear their bodies, their passions and alienated people from their humanity and from sexual passion by means of a life-denying asceticism.¹¹

Nietzsche was a tender hearted, lonely man, afflicted by ill health, who was very different from his concept of Superman. Eventually, as we can read in his history, he went mad. In deepest analysis, he could not abandon God joyously as we can imagine and read from his writings. He makes Zarathustra plead with God to return: “No! Come back, with all your torment! Oh, come back to the last of all solitaries! All the streams of my tears, Run their course for you! And the last flame of my heart - it burns up to you! Oh, come back, my unknown God! My pain! My last-happiness.”¹² Nietzsche spent the last few years of his life in an asylum for the insane, in syphilitic paralysis and he died in 1900. The Godless pursuits did not comfort his soul as he bade farewell from his earthly existence!

4.2. Sigmund Freud

The most influential psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud indisputably regarded belief in God as a delusion that mature humans should abandon. According to him, the idea of God was not a lie but a device of the unconscious, which needed to be researched and interpreted by psychology. He postulated that a personal God could be understood as an exalted father figure and the desire for God is an infantile yearning for a powerful, protective father figure; God is a projection of these desires, feared, and worshipped by human beings out of an abiding sense of

⁹See Armstrong, *A History of God*, 418.

¹⁰Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist in the Twilight of the Gods and the Antichrist*, trans. T. J. Hollingdale, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, 163.

¹¹See Armstrong, *A History of God*, 418.

¹²Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin, 1961, 217.

helplessness. Religion belonged to the infancy of the human race; it had been a necessary stage in the transition from childhood to maturity. The reason is that the idea of God had promoted ethical values, which were crucial for the wellbeing of the society. He advocated that God should be left behind, as the humanity had come to the mature age. Science, the new logos, could take God’s place. Freud was categorical about his statements on science, which seemed practically religious in its force.¹³ However, in his last completed book, *Moses and Monotheism*, Freud, “without abandoning his atheism, begins to see the Jewish faith that he was born into as a source of cultural progress in the past and of personal inspiration in the present.”¹⁴ Many psychoanalysts did not support Freud’s views on God. For example, Alfred Adler believed that although God was a projection that idea of God had been helpful to humanity. He considered God as an excellent and operative symbol of excellence.¹⁵

4.3. Elie Wiesel

In the aftermath of the cruelty of Holocaust at Auschwitz, there emerged a cessation of the traditional idea of God for many Jewish people. The Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel wrote on how the shocking experience at the concentration camp changed a traditional faith in God. He was an authentic believer and lived only for God during his childhood in Hungary, following the teachings of the Talmud. As a little boy, he was taken to Auschwitz and later to Buchenwald. During his first night in the death camp, watching the black smoke curling to the sky from the crematorium where the bodies of his beloved mother and sister were to be thrown, he knew that the flames had consumed also

¹³Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. W. D. Robson-Scott, and James Strachery, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1928 56.

¹⁴Mark Edmundson, “Defender of the Faith?” in “The Way We Live Now,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/09/magazine/09wwln-lede-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0> accessed on 10 September 2015.

¹⁵Cited in Armstrong, *A History of God*, 419.

his faith forever.¹⁶ He wrote: “never should I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget these moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.” One day Wiesel watched how in Auschwitz an innocent little child was hanged. Behind Wiesel, one of the other prisoners asked: “Where is God? Where is He?”¹⁷ Dostoevsky had said that the death of a single child could make God unacceptable.¹⁸ Wiesel held that God died in Auschwitz and it is a stark challenge to many of the more conventional ideas of God.

Yet, it is also true that even in the horrible ambience of concentration camps some Jews continued to study Talmud and observe the traditional festivals, not because they hoped that God would rescue them but because it made sense.¹⁹ As we contemplate on the crucified Jesus, we can listen to his cry: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). After a long silence, he said: “Father! In your hands I place my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Thousands of early Christians underwent the most painful persecution and death. Nevertheless, their God did not die! It is for us to feel the same when one day we will be dragged to martyrdom. God survives in spite of persecutions and massacres. In spite of suffering and pain, many take courage from the martyrs to lead an authentic life in Christ. Hence, we cannot say that God is absent in the face of horrifying sufferings of human beings.

5. Secularism and Survival of God

As we have moved into the third millennium, it seems that the world that we know is fast changing. We are facing with the new life-threatening diseases like cancer, AIDS, Ebola, and other virus attacks. Today there are in our world prominently inexpressible

¹⁶Elie Weisel, *Night*, trans. Stella Rodway, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981, 45.

¹⁷Weisel, *Night*, 76-77.

¹⁸John W. Casperson, *Towards Spiritual Sovereignty: A Secular Bible*, Boomtown, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2007, 185.

¹⁹See Armstrong, *A History of God*, 441.

poverty, increased population, terrorism, human trafficking, and other uncontrollable and scary problems. Thousands are dying of famine and drought. The ecological catastrophes are immense that our very existence on earth is being challenged and threatened. The ethnic conflicts, fundamentalism, shameless homicides, etc., are growing day by day. In the middle of all these frightening factors, we ask a question: “Will the faith in God survive in the years to come?” God must be there to comfort the whole humanity, as human rationalities and philosophies are unable to provide the hope above their own calculations. I strongly believe that the faith in God can only bring us a hope and attitude for the building up of our tomorrow. God must be there to illumine human minds and conscience so that we will have a just and compassionate humanity. Only God’s irrevocable love can save and redeem humanity from all that is pathetic and tragic! The very reason that he is our creator motivates him to protect and guard us. The fact that God is the creator and protector of our lives convinces us to take care of the growth of a dignified humanity.

Secularists of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries saw atheism as a permanent condition of humanity in our scientific age. Hitherto much-admired God-fearing nations now show a substantial disinterest in the practice of piety and faith. The secular waves have grappled strongly many societies of the world and the so-called atheism is no longer the agonizingly acquired ideology of a few intellectual innovators but it has become a predominant disposition. In the past, atheism was always disproving a particular idea about God. But now, it seems that atheism has lost its inbuilt relationship to theism. It has become an automatic Godless response to the experiences of living in a highly secularised society. Like the group of people surrounding Nietzsche’s Madman, many are easily choosing a life governed by the prospects of life without God and many others find his absence a positive relief. Secular men and women think that they have a new intellectual freedom and can boldly follow up their own ideas without altering the difficult articles of faith and morals. According to William Lane Craig,

the theological meta-ethical foundations do seem to be necessary for morality. If God does not exist, then it is plausible to think that there are no objective moral values, that we have no moral duties, and that there is no moral accountability for how we live and act. The horror of such a morally neutral world is obvious. If, on the other hand, we hold, as it seems rational to do, that objective moral values and duties do exist, then we have good grounds for believing in the existence of God.²⁰

With other Logical positivists, A. J. Ayer asked during 1950s, whether it made any sense to believe in God. According to him, the natural sciences provided the only dependable source of knowledge because it could be empirically verified. Ayer was of the opinion that it is so confused and so incapable of verifiability and, therefore, propositions about belief or unbelief are logically impossible. He held that atheism is also as unintelligible and meaningless as theism. There is nothing in the concept of God to deny or be sceptical about.²¹ Like Freud, the positivists believed that religious belief represented an immaturity which science would and should overcome. However, science can only explain the world of physical nature; the transcendental and spiritual realities, however, are beyond its consideration and verification. The human being has unlimited faculties to peep into the unseen, supernatural, nonmaterial, and experience within oneself the unverifiable immortal truths.

6. Radical Theologians and God-Talk

The radical theologians of the 1960s enthusiastically monitored Nietzsche and asserted the death of God concept. In *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* (1966), Thomas J. Altizer claimed that the good news of God's death had freed humanity from slavery to a

²⁰William L. Craig, "Can We Be Good without God? Why God Is the Only Sound Foundation for Morality?" <<http://www.reasonablefaith.org/can-we-be-good-without-god#ixzz3nb1N6hbi>> accessed on 20 September 2015.

²¹A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974, 152.

tyrannical transcendent deity. According to Altizer, the death of God represented the silence that was necessary before God could become meaningful again. All our old conceptions of divinity had to die before a true theology could be reborn and we need a new theology.²² Paul van Buren claimed in his book *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (1963) that it was no longer possible to speak of God acting in the world. Science and technology had made the old mythology invalid. We must do everything without God and hold on to Jesus of Nazareth. The Gospel was “the good news of a free man who has set other men free.” Jesus of Nazareth was the liberator, “the man who defines what it means to be a man.”²³ In 1966, William Hamilton observed in his book *Radical Theology and the Death of God* that

we try to convince others that God is dead. We are not talking about the absence of the experience of God, but about the experience of the absence of God. Yet the death of God theologians claim to be theologians, to be Christians, to be speaking out of a community to a community. They do not grant that their view is really a complicated sort of atheism dressed in a new spring bonnet.²⁴

Hamilton saw this theological mood as a way of being Protestant. For him, as Luther and other radicals walked away from the sacred place where God used to be to find the man Jesus in their neighbour out in the world of technology, power, sex, money, etc., “Modern secular man did not need God, he would find his own solution in the world.”²⁵ As Karen Armstrong comments that, in 1990s, the Death of God theologians were vehemently criticized, as their standpoint was coming out from the wealthy, middle class, white Americans. James H. Cone, an American

²²Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966, 136.

²³Paul van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, London: SCM Press, 1963, 138.

²⁴William Hamilton, “The Death of God Theologies Today,” <<http://www.religion-online.org/showbook.asp?title=537>> accessed on 6 October 2015.

²⁵Cited in Armstrong, *A History of God*, 446.

black theologian best known for his advocacy of Black liberation theology, in his *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969), provided a new way to articulate the distinctiveness of theology in the black Church. He probed a very painful question: How the white people felt that they had the right to affirm freedom through the death of God when they had actually enslaved black people in God's name.²⁶ Indeed, there should be a God to liberate the poor from slavery and from the tough hands of their dictators and tyrants. The dictators' and tyrants' possess freedom not from the death of God but from their own self-indulgence and greed.

The Jewish theologian Richard Rubenstein found it truly impossible to understand how they could feel so positive about a Godless humanity so soon after the Nazi Holocaust? Rubenstein himself, like many other Jews, was convinced that the deity conceived as God of History had died forever in Auschwitz. However, his knowing of God took another shape as he learned about the mystics' vision of God. For him, "all mystics had seen God as a Nothingness from which we came and to which we will return."²⁷ Hence, to know about this invisible God one must enter into an interior silence and an inner emptiness like mystics. As the mystics could experience God in their profound silence and emptiness, we need to discover God in the silence of our own heart.

Paul Tillich always supported the aspect of religion for the wellbeing of humanity; yet, he was against the concept of a personal God. He believed that we always have a persisting innate anxiety and fear because of the changes that happen in our body, which would be non-existent one day as we die. He wrote: "The concept of a Personal God interfering with natural events, or being 'as independent cause of natural events,' makes God a natural object beside others... This indeed is not only the destruction of the physical system but even more the destruction

²⁶Armstrong, *A History of God*, 446-447.

²⁷Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism*, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966.

of any meaningful idea of God.”²⁸ According to him, a God who kept fiddling with the universe was absurd. A God who interfered with human freedom and creativity was a tyrant. Then God will never be different from any of the earthly dictators.²⁹ He preferred to use God as the ‘ground of being’ with ultimate concern. We find in him an attempt to understand God above all natural objects and events.

7. Liberal Theologians and Their God-View

In the process of accommodating themselves to the intellectual world of modern times, the liberal theologians focussed on science, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and interreligious realms to form their new concept of God. Amazingly, we find a remarkable God-knowledge expounded by a brilliant Jesuit priest, Teilhard de Chardin who reconciled the aspects of Christian theology with the scientific evolutionary philosophy and complimented the facts of religious experience to those of natural science. According to him, “a certain mass of elementary consciousness was originally imprisoned in the matter of earth.”³⁰ Being a palaeontologist, he wrote a new theology of God-dynamics combining his knowledge in prehistoric life and drawing upon a new understanding of evolution. He tried to comprehend the entire evolutionary process to a divine dynamism that transformed the universe from matter to consciousness, to personality, and finally going beyond the personality to God Himself. According to de Chardin, “the universe in its entirety must be regarded as one gigantic process, a process of becoming, of attaining new levels of existence and organization, which can properly be called a genesis or an evolution.”³¹ He calls the fourth stage of evolution *noogenesis* that reaches to a point *Omega*, as opposed to the *Alpha* of elementary

²⁸Paul Tillich, *Theology and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964, 129.

²⁹Tillich, *Theology and Culture*, 129.

³⁰Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, London: Harper & Row, 1959, 72.

³¹de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 13.

material particles and their energies.³² In the fifth stage, he equates the future hyper-personal psychosocial organization with an emergent Divinity and he speaks of this culminating supreme point as *Christogenesis*. He considers it as the cosmic Christ who is the ultimate personalization of all beings.³³ In de Chardin's *Omega* point, the finite selves will discover their identity as sharers in the infinite Self.³⁴ Of course, de Chardin has been criticised for identifying God so methodically and closely with the world that the sense of God's transcendence was overlooked. But his spiritual insights to find an accompanying God in every process of evolution is most appreciated. God grows within us through all our being and becoming. God is very closer to humans than they think!

We also find a new theology that came through Daniel Day Williams, which is known as 'process theology' and it stressed God's unity with the world. He had been influenced by the British philosopher A. N. Whitehead.³⁵ He described God as the great companion, the fellow sufferer who understands, and spoke of God as the 'behaviour' of the world.³⁶ He found it wrong to set the supernatural order over against the natural world of our experience because there is only one order of being. Williams rejected the old Greek idea of *apatheia*, which presented God as remote, uncaring, and selfish. His new vision was an effort to bring correction to a discrepancy that had caused through the idea of an isolating God.

There is always a problem in knowing and speaking about God. To understand Him fully by our restricted capacities and faculties is impossible. God is not a human product. I understand

³²de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 18.

³³Anto Amarnad, *Creative Catechesis: A Creative and Psychosocial Approach to Faith Formation*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2015, 128.

³⁴Amarnad, *Creative Catechesis*, 129.

³⁵Alfred North Whitehead, "Suffering and Being" in *Adventures of Ideas*, New York: The Free Press, 1929, 497.

³⁶Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, Gifford Lectures, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929, 497.

Him as the supreme intelligent Being who shaped our world and gave us the ability to discover Him in the process of becoming the crown of whole creation. Knowing and experiencing God is the highest capacity in humans. Our own human limitations and tragedies cause sometimes to deny Him and argue for His non-existence. This is well depicted throughout the human history and through the philosophical and theological arguments of many thinkers. Yet, we need to know and speak about God in spite of all our limitations and catastrophes. Because, our knowledge of God and its expressions substantiate that we are beings belonging to the milieu of God and we are also generated from the fountain of God with a consciousness and conscience. To have a good knowledge and experience of God, it must be reckoned as a gift of both God and the person who searches and struggles for it. It is interesting to see that humans have the ability to philosophize and prophesize. The greatest philosophy and prophecy is that of knowing and elucidating God. Because in Him we become what we are and what we ought to become. For us, every becoming is a coming closer to what God is. Whether humans affirm or deny God, they do that by being the creatures of God. God's infinite love and freedom shine in whatever they do. In our modern world, there is the predominance of fundamentalism, subjugation of weaker sections, and massacres of innocent people. Certainly, these are not uplifting human acts in any sense. The escalating crime rate, drug addiction, suicides, and too many death penalties are not signs of a spiritually healthy society. All over the world, there is a growing sense of emptiness and unhappiness due to the denial of God. God was so powerful in the human consciousness and in the lives and culture of the society. God-thought was inspiring humans to choose what is right and avoid what is wrong. When human beings make themselves the yardstick of their own actions, they become blind due to their own seditious egotism. God is not only the ground of our being but he is the very inspiration, illumination, meaning, and moral righteousness among human beings. They cannot endure this emptiness and unhappiness because they fill the vacuum by creating new centres of meaning. In this context, once again the question is repeated:

Does God have a future? Indeed, God has a future and without Him humanity does not have a future; it may also be stated that without Him we will not remain humans either!

8. Conclusion

Many giant intellectuals prophesied that God will not return to human homes. For, He is dead! They predicted that the religions would soon disappear from the face of the earth. They even imagined a world that would be ruled by rationality and science. A hundred years ago, such predictions would have seemed very honest. But, with the resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and other faiths all over the world, secularization proposals seem discredited.³⁷ Some years back many philosophers believed that the talk about God is meaningless; for them, it was nonsense as it is not verifiable by the five senses. This verificationism, however, collapsed, in part, because philosophers realized that verificationism itself could not be verified!³⁸ Its collapse meant that philosophers were free once again to hold traditional problems of philosophy that verificationism had blocked. Yet, the secularization thesis cannot be dismissed too quickly.³⁹ However, we find more mosques, temples, and churches being built worldwide. Old traditions and faiths receive their new skins with greater support. Surprisingly, the secular growth is not the most important issue for the future of God. Certainly, God is the Lord of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He was here before the humans came into existence and He will be here even after the humans disappear from this planet. Getting him in the present is our greatest ecstasy and agony.

³⁷See Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994.

³⁸William L. Craig, <<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/july/13.22.html>> See also <<http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/the-future-of-god-and-secularism>> accessed on 7 October 2015.

³⁹<<http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/the-future-of-god-and-secularism>> accessed on 7 October 2015.