

to experience, his existence has been denied. But those who deny God may accept Transcendence, or may take the world as a whole or Nature to be "God" in the sense that it has at least some attributes which are predicated of God by theists. Those who accept Transcendence may conceive it as the Absolute Being, Spirit or Self, impersonal and the ground of all existence, or as the Reality of things (the Truth of existence), or as Law or Order, or as the indefinable Supreme State, or as just the Other of evil, evanescence, suffering and mortality. It may even be held that the world considered in another way, transformed by an unique vision, is the Supreme Reality or State. Some assert there are no two realities, but only one: the Absolute or the Supreme (Being or State) is the only reality. For these the world of things and men may be (a) an illusion, a shadow or an incorrect apprehension of it, or (b) a transformation of it without exhausting or involving it totally, or (c) an emanation, an unfoldment, or a progressive realization of itself. All the major Indian philosophies are either philosophies of Transcendence or Theism. As the former deny a personal God, they are atheistic. Some Western thinkers, however, accept Transcendence as only the ideal world without any reality, except that ideals when held and sought to be realized by men shape their actions and in a way construct the world they live in. Some of them, however, may say it has a peculiar reality of its own, like that of the world of numbers.

It is possible to be an idealist or a materialist while denying God as well as Transcendence. It may be maintained that the stuff of the universe, the basic reality, is spirit or intelligence and that it is wholly transformed into all that exists, and that as the world is infinite its basic reality is also infinite. On the contrary, the stuff of the universe, the basic reality, can be conceived as matter. In either case the world is the only reality and there is nothing beyond it.

We should not also fail to mention that some philosophies and religions have thought it fit to assert that two primordial eternal principles — one good and another evil — have created

the universe and govern it and the universe is a battle ground for the two, though ultimately the Good will emerge victorious. Some like to think that there were two such original principles, but that the Good conquered and annihilated the Evil one, and is attempting to subjugate everything that was created by the latter, so that Righteousness and Justice may prevail for ever. The victorious Good Principle is progressively expanding the area of goodness.

2. *Revolt against God*: What is termed the human revolt against God appeared for the first time in a coherent form in the writings of Marquis de Sade. This revolt presupposes that God created the world, finds that the world is evil and from this concludes that God is wicked. It develops the theory of a criminal demi-urge. The wicked God oppresses and denies mankind. He is stupid and spiteful. He repudiates mankind and morality, cruelty and murder are his attributes, and he sins against man. So, in answer to divine sin it is rational for man to sin; even as God has repudiated morality, man can do so; cruelty and murder are justified. In the world we see that virtue leads to misery and ruin, and vice to happiness and prosperity. So, Sadism argues, vice is in conformity to the laws of nature. Nature is irritated by virtue, so virtue must be violated.

Sadism suffers from contradictions. It does not believe that God is a reality and considers "God" to be only a conception "for which man cannot be forgiven". If so, revolt against God is actually a revolt against those who hold such a conception; and if one is cruel, violates virtue and commits murder in the belief one is defying God, one is only fighting one's own illusion, for God does not exist. If God is Goodness and Love, to be good and loving is to imitate him and not to revolt against him; similarly, if God is Evil and Hate, to be wicked and to hate is to imitate and follow him, but not revolting against him; also, by anything we do we cannot harm that omnipotent tyrant. So, Sadism unawares presupposes that not only is God evil, but he commands us to be good,

and so to be evil will be a revolt against him. But this whole philosophy is absurd, as there is no God according to itself. If so, can man be a rebel in any sense? Can he at least irritate or insult Nature, outrage it? Yes, by practising virtue, since Sadism asserts Nature is evil and cruel and vice is in accordance with natural law. By being good and loving only could man thwart Nature. There is no God, we cannot revolt against him; so, if one desires to be a rebel one can only rebel against Nature—by being good. That is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Sade's philosophy. On the other hand if harmony with nature is sought, as Sadism maintains that Nature is evil, aches for sin, yearns for cruelty and is athirst for destruction, then "if we would be one with Nature, let us continually do evil with our might". (Swinburne in a paraphrase of passages from Sade's works, *William Blake, A Critical Essay*, London, 1925, p. 157 n.) Thus by being cruel and vicious one may be natural, but is not in revolt. Sadism which seeks to be an ontological rebellion ends in conformity. But neither history nor science indicates that in nature we have "a vision of ghastly glory, without pity or help possible". (loc. cit., p. 158.) Sadism is parallel to the conception of nature as red in tooth and claw and of the fundamental natural law as the struggle for existence, which, therefore, leads to an ethics of competition and ruthlessness. The onward progress of industrialization, capitalism and imperialism was inspired by such thoughts. The antithesis of Sadism "Everything is good, everything is the work of God" ("tout est bien, tout est de Dieu") is equally silly, though it was what Rousseau virtually taught.

In *Atalanta In Calydon*, which G. Lafourcade described as "a theological tragedy", and in *Anactoria*, Sadistic philosophy received its synthesis in poetry of a high order. God, Swinburne makes the Chorus in the first say, has covered us with hate, "made us transitory and hazardous", he has laid upon us life with his left hand and death with his right hand, has let fall sins and wars among us,—in short, he has made this world as imperfect and evil as possible and makes us

suffer and die for no fault of ours. His is a diabolical creation and government. So, it concludes, to "The Supreme Evil, God",

"That each man in his heart sighth, and saith,
That all men even as I,
All we are against thee, against thee O God most
high".

... *Atalanta In Calydon and Erechtheus*,
Heinemann, London, 1923, p. 43.

In *Anactoria* Swinburne states that God "hath made all things to break them one by one", his incense is bitterness and his meat murder, "the mystery of the cruelty of things" cannot be changed with prayers and thanksgivings, for the whole cosmos "feeds the mute melancholy lust of heaven". Why has God made us, what had we done that we should live, suffer and die? So,

"Him would I reach, him smite, him desecrate,
Pierce the cold lips of God with human breath,
And mix his immortality with death".

— *Poems & Ballads* (First Series),
Heinemann, London, 1918, p. 63.

Swinburne too thought God was "the absurdest of all human figments". What then was the sense of blaspheming and revolting against a figment? How kill a non-existent God? The revolt of Sade and Swinburne was really against the European society of their times which they thought accepted an untenable theology, which in turn served as the foundation for an oppressive and senseless morality. It turned out that the ethics of redemption from virtue which they themselves preached as an alternative was an insane pathognomonic one. It may be added that in his later life Swinburne himself went beyond Sadism and reached a kind of pantheism and stoicism. God then became for him "the substance of men which is man" and the essence of Man's Soul, liberty and love. (See some of the poems in *Songs before Sunrise*.)

Some of the greatest poets have dealt with the Titanic and Satanic revolts against God. In the Greek account Prometheus is a person of high moral and intellectual force, and impelled by pure and noble motives without any ambition or envy, he puts man on the path of progress and civilization. For this he is cruelly punished by the greatest of gods, but is in the end reconciled to him. In Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Prometheus "stands forth alone in strife against the Omnipotent" and becomes "the saviour and strength of suffering man". His immortal spirit remains unreconciled to "Crime, where it sits throned in brief Omnipotence", and as all things except Love are subject to Fate and Time, Eternity makes Jupiter sink to the abyss, the great void. Prometheus triumphs. I had earlier something to say about the Greek myth in the annexe to Chapter I. Through this work Shelley suggests what he said more plainly in other poems. God, Hell and Heaven are the inventions of "grave and hoary-headed hypocrites, without a hope, a passion, or a love", who have crept to the seats of power. Religion is a palpable deceit which has peopled the "earth with demons, hell with men, and heaven with slaves". Its God is as vengeful as he is almighty and is an omnipotent mad fiend, "who, prototype of human misrule, sits high in heaven's realm, upon a golden throne, even like an earthly king". But men have awakened and they are in rebellion against this belief, and are about to overthrow religion. Religion hears "the step of fate", "flames might light" its "funeral pyre" and the time has come for its "descending to the darksome grave, unhonoured and unpitied". (All these quotations are from Shelley's *Queen Mab*.)

I now come to the Satanic revolt. No brief allusion will do justice to Milton. In Byron's *Cain* Lucifer is what he is because he dares "to look the Omnipotent tyrant in his everlasting face, and tell him that his evil is not good!" "Goodness would not make evil; and what else hath he (God) made?" This perplexes Cain too: "Why are things so?... he's omnipotent: Then why is evil — he being good?" When

asked what does God love? Cain admits: "All things, my father says; but I confess I see it not in their allotment here." "Omnipotence", says his believing sister and wife Adah, "must be all goodness"; but when Lucifer asks her "Was it so in Eden?" she could only exclaim, "Fiend! tempt me not." This drama gives the following account of the "great double mysteries": God and Lucifer are both immortal; it was God who created the world and evil; God is his victor but Lucifer does not acknowledge him to be superior and will pay him no homage; they both reign over all things everywhere (life and death, time and eternity, heaven and earth are the realms of both); and they will battle against each other through all eternity. Their conflict will never cease, because nothing can quench their immortality or their mutual irrevocable hate. God as a conqueror calls the conquered *Evil*, but what is the *good* he gives? If Lucifer were the victor, God's works would be deemed the only evil ones. The philosophy Byron suggests is as follows. "Good and evil are things in their own essence"; as man possesses *reason* he can judge which is good and which is evil. If man does not allow his reason to be swayed and forced into faith against all "external sense and inward feeling", and can "think and endure", he can "form an inner world in his own bosom — where the outward fails". By doing so, Byron teaches through Lucifer, man will be nearer the spiritual nature and conquer even human nature.

Is it possible to conceive Jesus himself as a rebel against God — the God of formal morality and Law (of prohibitions, taboos and "thou shalt not's), the God of the Pharisees, the God of Terror and Fear, the God of lifeless synagogues and churches? William Blake appears to have done so. Some of the passages in his works may be interpreted as follows. The God who (according to the world and religion) created this world and fashioned good and evil was a forbidding and restraining tyrant, a vindictive judge who meted out punishment without mercy and kept humanity in ignorance and bondage. He was a divine demon. Jesus taught that God is the God of love and liberty, of freedom and joy, who is

never vindictive. Only Satan, not God, wants vengeance for sin. It was law which "created hell's dark jaws." Jesus reversed the Mosaic law which was diabolical; he forgave all sins and blasphemies. His is not the God of Moral Virtues "whose element is war and whose essence retaliation", of Iron Laws which no one can keep for a moment, and of Justice which must avenge. He taught the love that is not bound by law, the virtue that does not stagnate into self-righteousness and moral petrification, pity for all suffering, and infinite forgiveness of sin. "After Christ's death he became Jehovah", says Blake. Can we interpret Jesus' becoming Jehovah as the discarding of the creative and coercive deity — of the Father — and the retention only of the divine man — the Son — the man who through his love, forgiveness and readiness to redeem all, has become God? Was the old God of Terror, Law and Vengeance replaced by the crucified Jesus who had risen and become God? Did the divine demon, creator of the world and of prohibitions and punishments, vanish, and was his place taken over by the divine man who henceforth became the redeeming and ruling power of the universe? Blake in some places suggested that God and man are One*, — the free, loving and forgiving person living a life of the spirit, — whereas he also maintained that the so-called God the avenger of sins is really Satan. The remembrance and punishment of sin is more evil than sin; the Lord, Blake thinks, heals injury, but not vengeance. All things will finally awake into the Saviour's bosom in the life of immortality, says Blake. (See for this paragraph, Blake's poem *The Everlasting Gospel*, and his 'prophetic book' *Jerusalem*, etc.) Blake's writings are not exactly models of clarity and coherence, so it can be only hazarded that what has been said so far may be the sense of some of his passages. Nevertheless, an addition may also be ventured. Jesus by his life, revolt and sacrifice became God; similarly, any man, Blake taught,

*Cp. "Thou art a man; God is no more;
Thine own humanity learn to adore."
(*The Everlasting Gospel*)

can become like God by similarly scorning and revolting against "the God of this world", "earth's God", i.e. the God of established religion and conventional morality, and by overturning him. By holy revolt only is man saved.

I will not discuss here the question whether the idea of revolt against God is found in Eastern cultures or not. Regarding Hinduism itself, we may ask: Were the battles of the asuras or rākṣasas against Indra and other gods revolts against God? How did these, if at all, differ from the conflicts of Hiranyakasipu, Kamsa and Śiśupāla with Viṣṇu or his avatāras? Could Kṛṣṇa's lifting of Mount Govardhana and his stopping the worship of Indra be interpreted as a revolt against "God" and proclamation of God? But these and similar questions must now be deferred.

Revolt against God is impossible unless one believes in God or knows him, or is in God's presence. Prometheus and Satan, in the myths, were aware of Divine reality and power and yet defied it; hence theirs were genuine revolts. The Sadistic revolt is humbug because Sadism does not believe in Divine existence. All that Sadism could do was to assert that "God" was a fiction and exhort people to act with a knowledge of this fact. The blasphemy and desecration it indulged in was just an exhibition of its desire to flout social canons of decency, shock people, attract attention, and, maybe, to wound peoples' feelings. Swinburne who only expressed Sadism in excellent poetry need not detain us now; but he and such others in asserting their antitheism thought they were fighting a superstition and helping people to see truth. Byron and Shelley wanted to bring about a revolution in thinking and behaviour and to some extent used their superb poetry as a means for this. But they did not conceive the revolt against God as leading either to a reversal of values or to their destruction. Values like truth, goodness and liberty are objective; it is not religion in general or a particular form of it which established them or can serve as a means of realizing them. With the progressive eradication of superstition (which includes religion) and ignorance, and

changes in social organization, men will have a better opportunity to understand and appreciate values and realize them; and a man's life becomes significant to the extent it is devoted to a pursuit of values. The revolt against God does not mean a revolt against morality, but means ethics in accordance with reason and conscience; and this does not mean the abandonment of what Christianity considered to be virtues, for its basic conception of the good life and virtues is not something original but is identical with what some of the best Greek and Roman philosophers taught. Values do not lose their meaning when it is seen there is no God. Such was more or less the teaching of men like Byron and Shelley. It thus differed from the position of Sade and Nietzsche: one of whom maintained that God was a criminal and a murderer and, therefore, man should also be a criminal and a murderer; while the other asserted that as there was now no God, the old values cannot be valid and, therefore, man must become God and create new values. But, as against this, Shelley's values, in spite of his atheism, were not different from those of Plato and Cicero, and was Augustine's and Aquinas' conception of the good life very much different from that of Plato and Aristotle? Blake's revolt against God was rather of a different kind; he revolted against other men's God and had him sometimes killed or depicted him as fit to be killed in some of his myths (*Urizen, Ahania*). Blake's God was not the God of the philosophers — e.g. of Bacon and Newton, nor was he the God whom society, law and religion recognized; Blake did not also set much store by morality as conceived by the Greek or modern philosophers. He did not also have any coherent positive conception of the good life or reality. His revolt was against other men's God, whom he considered to be the Devil, whereas regarding the reality of his own God he only probably was sure. It was an incoherent revolt.

The idea of a revolt against God arises when he is thought of or believed to be (a) the creator of all that is, man and the world, and so responsible for the evil and injustice in the world, and (b) omnipotent. For philosophies and religions

which do not admit a creative deity in the sense in which Semitic religions do, God can not be responsible for the evil and injustice in the world. He did not create souls, he did not ordain the conditions of their incarnation, for these were determined by what souls did previously, and as they are imperishable, he cannot destroy them, and it is their actions which determine what their future states shall be. One single life does not also decide for ever whether their destiny will be eternal torment or eternal bliss. They will have innumerable opportunities for that. Even when salvation is considered to be God's gift, it is asserted it is bestowed on the worthy only, as determined by what they have thought, believed and done. One would not think of revolting against God so conceived. Whether we read the arguments of Byron's Lucifer, Shelley's Prometheus or Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov, their great problem is how to reconcile goodness with omnipotence and how can these be simultaneously present in the Creative Deity — the One who brought forth everything from nothing solely as he liked. When only two alternatives are seen, viz. the Semitic conception of God or atheism, the problem may be more baffling, especially if the moral system is considered to be founded in his will. When God is conceived or experienced in a different way, this problem and the ground for the revolt vanishes. And God has been legitimately conceived and experienced in many other ways, no less valid than the Semitic. One of these has been indicated in this paragraph.

(a) Authentic revolt against God is possible only when he is experienced or believed in: you cannot rebel against a figment, a hypothesis or an unknown person. It is also possible when a man assured that something is what God has ordained man to do or heed, deliberately flouts it. A Radical Theologian said, "some of us may even need to rebel against God... in order to come to know him." (W. Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity*, p. 140-1.) This makes no sense, for how can one rebel against an unknown person? (b) Certain that there is no God, one can fight against God-theories

or theistic beliefs of some or all religions and philosophies by trying to expose their invalidity, and against institutions which presuppose the sanction of God by trying to show their false claims, irrationality or irrelevance. This may be euphemistically called revolt against God. (c) It is possible to fight against other peoples' God or gods, on the ground they are (1) false, or (2) unjust, or (3) not supreme. When a Śaiva and a Vaiṣṇava fought, neither denied the reality of the other's God, but only denied the supremacy of the other's God. In the ancient Middle East, in Greece and Rome too, more often the supremacy of a God rather than his reality was in dispute. Other peoples' gods are only idols, demons or lesser gods: so they must be fought, and thus only one establishes the glory of one's own god, the true and supreme God. Such a crusade or jihad also could be revolt against God.

To conclude, having come to know or believe in the Divine Person a man may entertain doubts or reservations regarding the ways the Divine acted or wants him to act, and he can question the Divine regarding this, express also his opposition to this, and the man-God dialogue or further meditation on the Divine that may follow may resolve his doubts and remove his reservations. A man may also feel he knows what God wants him to do or think, but being free man can choose to do otherwise. These are the only two ways in which a human being can revolt against God. The man who cannot see or believe in God cannot revolt against him. Only a spiritual man can revolt against God. Much of the contemporary talk about revolt against God is nonsense.

3. *God, hidden, silent, or self-withholding*: Ancient scriptures in some of their passages have spoken of God as hidden. "Verily thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour". (Isaiah, XLV. 15.) Indian texts referred to his being *gūḍham*, hidden, mysterious, secret. Abū Sa'yad al-Khurraz and Ibn al-Arabī called God the hidden and the apparent. Pascal was perhaps the first great modern thinker to emphasize *Deus absconditus*. Christianity, wrote Pascal, says that "men are

in darkness and estranged from God" and they have no clear view of him. He has hidden himself from their knowledge. But in the Church God has set up "visible signs to make himself known to those who should seek him sincerely", but at the same time he so disguised these signs that "he will only be perceived by those who seek him with all their heart". (*Pensées*, 194.) Everything does not reveal God, nor does everything conceal him. "He hides himself from those who tempt him and reveals himself to those who seek him." He does this, explains Pascal, because men by their "corruption" are unworthy of him, but by their "original nature" are "capable" of him. (*Pensées*, 556.) From our darkness and unworthiness — from our having been deprived of God — we cannot conclude "the absence of all divinity", because there had been appearance of God. And not only once, his appearances have been "occasional, though not continuous". "If he appeared once, he always exists." Now he does not appear to us, Pascal concludes, because we are unworthy of him. (*Pensées*, 556-8.) There are, Pascal admits, many religions, and a number of them have martyrs. Precisely because there is not just one religion, God is not manifest. The true and instructive religion would be the one which affirms God is hidden and gives the reason for this. If God were entirely manifest, Pascal argues, man would not know his corruption, his wretchedness; if God were entirely hidden — if he were to never appear — man would have no hope. He hides himself to bring home to man his condition — his wretchedness, and God occasionally appeared to give man light and hope. (*Pensées*, 584-5.) Such is Pascal's conception of the hidden and yet revealing God.

On Pascal's profound and lucid account of this matter, a few observations may be ventured. If God has revealed himself to some persons in the past, there is no reason to suppose he is not doing so to any now and will not do so in future. In the past also he did not disclose himself exclusively to the prophets, sages or saints of any one particular nation or country. No nation or culture has been without a witness

to the Divine. Either there has been no revelation at all, or there is a general and continuous revelation. Of course, everyone has not direct access to revelation, nor does any one feel throughout his waking life the presence of God. It is not also possible for any one to whom God has appeared to prove this, nor can any one prove the truth of what he may claim to have been revealed to him. The human condition and the human need postulate God's existence, but it has "the certainty of the heart" only. *Sva hṛdaya pratyayam Brahma-vedanam*, said Śankara. This must be wagered upon. (For a development of some of these points, see my *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta*).

In a curious passage Sartre wrote God "spoke to us and now is silent", and he added: "This silence of the transcendent, combined with the perseverance of the religious need in modern man, that is the great concern today as yesterday". According to Sartre, previously men believed God spoke to them and they cannot believe so now; he thinks they need not also, because there would be no harm if God is forgotten. The human world is the only reality for Sartre, and man can create his own values. God not only does not speak to us, says Sartre, there is now no sign of him in the world. So, he does not exist, at least not for us. What is not an object for us does not exist for us, thinks Sartre. I shall not now discuss the metaphysics of this.* But the following questions have not been raised by Sartre. Did God speak to all even in the past, or even in the past did all believe he spoke to at least some, if not to all of them? In other words, was God a living reality or at least a believed reality to all at any time? Are there now none anywhere who claim to hear God or see (or experience) him? And, even if he is silent now, *if* it was God who spoke once how can he ever cease to exist? One answer

*God, wrote Sartre, is the hypostasis of that complete being towards which human reality is perpetually transcending, grasping itself to be an incomplete being; but this complete being is only human reality itself as totality. It is the particular totality which human reality lacks and which it is in the form of not being it and which is what it is. (*The Philosophy of J. P. Sartre*, ed. R. D. Cumming, p. 170-2.)

to this can be all who in the past believed they heard God and those who now believe they hear him (or experience him) were and are deluded. But this cannot be proved. There have been even in modern times and there are some even now who claim to experience Divine Reality. All such claims may not be those of impostors. I do not experience any such reality, so it does not exist for me: this subjectivist argument is not satisfactory. I cannot see the beauty in a sunset or the beauty in Beethoven's music; so there is no such beauty for me: What can this argument prove? That I am blind to such beauty. Either there is no God and so he never speaks; or there is God and he speaks in all ages, and it requires among other things training, *sādhanā*, to be able to listen to him. The religious need, Sartre grants, still persists, but his philosophy—denying the Transcendent and also God—cannot fulfil it. There is no God; if you feel the need for him, become yourself God and do yourself all that he was supposed to have done. God was supposed to have prescribed what was right and wrong and defined good and evil. Let man do this now. God served as the object of worship previously. Let man worship himself or Humanity now. This is more or less the answer of Sartre, and is hardly an advance over what Feuerbach, Nietzsche etc., said. It can satisfy neither the rational, nor the religious needs of man. (For Sartre see his *Situations I; Existentialism; The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. R. D. Cumming.)

We had occasion to refer to Heidegger's views previously. In some passages he allows us to think that what he calls the holy is not only as real as men and things, but is a reality of a greater sort. But ours, he says, is an age in which God is absent. He is there, but he has withheld his presence and being as it was known to men previously. God is not dead, but has "failed", failed to appear in our time. We are, says Heidegger, in the presence of "God's self-withholding". God appears to us as his own absence, but, Heidegger asserts, this absence is not nothing. It is a fullness of that which has been, a reminder of it and is also a promise that God may reappear.

Man lives awaiting this reappearance of God. Heidegger, as usual with him, does not leave the matter at that, but complicates it. He talks of the possibility of "God and the gods" appearing again, of the Coming God, of the traditional metaphysical-moralistic God's death, and of Divinity which lives on and abides as a task for future thought and as an event to be awaited. The old gods have fled and the new God has not yet come and revealed himself. Meanwhile, to overcome this emptiness, Heidegger advises, we now should not acclaim the accustomed God without believing, nor invent a new God; but await the arrival of God and the gods.

We may perhaps understand this as follows. The Divine is a reality independent of man and his thinking. Due to man's living in a particular way and his understanding human reality and what surrounds it in a particular way, man was able to apprehend divine reality as "God", the traditional metaphysical-moral God. There have been changes in man's way of living, his understanding and apprehension; so he now does not experience the Divine as "God". This does not mean that the Divine is not a reality, but that it now does not appear as it did. How does it appear now? As the absence of its former presence. This is what Heidegger calls God's "Fail" or "self-withholding". We have now an *anupalabdhi* of *Ívara*, to use Indian terms; from this we can only legitimately grasp his present non-existence *for us here and now* and not his absolute non-existence. The Divine may appear to us in a way it did not appear to any before, that appearance would be the new God, the Coming One; it may appear also as many and then it will be the gods that will confront us. To simplify, we might say, God appeared in a certain way in the past; that appearance is the old God; he does not appear so or in any other way now; this need not hustle us into creating a God of our own; if we wait patiently and prepare ourselves he may appear again; and that will be the new God. God is one; the past appearance, the present absence and the future appearance are all related to that one God. He appeared in the past, so he cannot be unreal; we feel his absence,

we experience being deprived of him, so he continues to be real but not manifest to us; and this leads us to hope he will reappear to us. Perhaps to understand thus is not to distort Heidegger. I would only like to observe on this that in the past too God did not appear to *all* at any time and to those to whom he appeared he appeared in many ways; consequently, there is no one such thing as the traditional God or the accustomed God who has vanished. *All* modern men — including all those now living — do not feel God is absent; there are many now who feel his presence. At least so they claim, and if all these are impostors, how are we sure all those in the past with similar claims were not impostors? Like the past the present experience of God is manifold; but there is no self-withholding of God now. Divine Reality is revealed in all ages to some and it is withheld from some in all ages. If it is there, it cannot cease to be manifest to at least a few in all ages and countries.

4. *Death of God*: According to Hegel to one form of experience God is dead. Coming across in a hymn of Luther what Hegel described as "the cruel words", "the harsh utterance", namely "God is dead", the latter explained this statement as "the expression of inmost self-knowledge which has simply self for its content." It is "consciousness of the loss of everything of significance in this certainty of itself, and of the loss even of this knowledge or certainty of self". He called this "unhappy self-consciousness — the soul of despair", a "bitter pain", and the knowledge of the vanishing of the ethical world. This "tragic fate", he said, results when the certainty of self aims at being absolute and self-sufficient. (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 752-3, 780-2).

Knowing that it is impertinent to dismiss in a few lines what so great a thinker has said, some questions may be raised. Is there a form of experience like this, a consciousness which is aware of nothing outside it? In other words, is there a knowledge which has nothing but the self for its content? If so, to such a consciousness, neither God nor anything

else is present; everything including God is dead to it. From this does not it follow that when everything is dead, God is also dead, and that as soon as everything is, so to say, restored or revived, so is God? To a consciousness which has for its content the living God, God is not dead; and to a consciousness which has itself only as its exclusive content there is no God or anything else. To whom then is God dead — not to the latter type of consciousness oblivious of everything and hence of God's previous existence and present death, but to yet another type of consciousness for which both these become contents? Hegel granted that there is a form of experience for which God as the Other, the Transcendent, is present; and asserted that there is also a form of experience which has virtually no content. The latter is what Hegel himself called "darkness", "negativity". (Ibid., p. 782, 3.) In it the self does not distinguish itself from anything else; in it, said Hegel, Ego is bare identity with Ego. Another form of experience having these two forms as its contents, taking the latter as the succeeding and sublating one, can pronounce that God is dead, because he was present in the earlier form but not in the later. There are many cases of conversion in which men who previously were unaware of God became aware of God. Can we therefore say God was born, at least for them? It is doubtful whether except perhaps sleep there is any form of experience in which Ego is bare identity with Ego, for whenever there is self-consciousness there is also consciousness of other persons and things. And, assuredly in sleep one does not precisely know oneself, for, as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* described it, it is a state in which a person does not exactly know himself 'I am he', nor indeed the beings around him and in which "he has gone to destruction". "Vināśam evāpīto bhavati". (VIII. 11.1.) But Hegel also described the experience he had in mind as consciousness of the loss of everything including the certainty of self. To be conscious of such "loss" is to be aware that there were or have been things and that they are now no more. Can such consciousness be pure self-consciousness? Is it just Ego knowing

nothing except itself? I will now take up another point. Let it be granted that there is absolute self-consciousness, i.e. consciousness aware of itself alone. Hegel described it as unhappy consciousness. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* also says, he who is alone has no delight. "Ekākī na ramate". (I. 4.3.) It would, however, seem that absolute self-consciousness can neither be happy nor unhappy, for a self when it does not distinguish, compare or contrast cannot be conscious of happiness or unhappiness; aware of itself it just abides. No wonder some Indian thinkers conceived the pure self as free from suffering and not having bliss also. Others conceived it as not only consciousness (*caitanya*) but also bliss (*ānanda*). On the other hand, Sartre conceived human reality as lack (*manque*) and in inseparable connection with what it lacks. It is by nature an unhappy consciousness, for, to simplify what he said, it knows what it lacks but can never obtain it. (*The Philosophy of J-P Sartre*, ed. R. D. Cumming, p. 170, 172). But the form of experience which Hegel described as unhappy consciousness, negativity and darkness is so only for another form of experience which reflects upon it and comes to know thereby what it is missing.

To conclude, there is a type of experience for which God, the Perfect Being, One, Holy and Transcendent, is a reality, and another for which there is no such reality. The former may consider the latter to be incomplete and the latter may hold the former to be an illusion. Those who do not experience God and are certain there is no God cannot be unhappy on account of his non-existence, because no one can be unhappy in such a case; but those who are not certain of his non-existence may be unhappy when they can neither believe in him nor experience him. There may be some who are certain that he does not exist and be therefore unhappy because reality is not otherwise. On the other hand, those who experience him or believe in him may also be unhappy, because of the fear of his judgment, of their inability to fulfil his demands or obey his commands, of their imperfection as compared to his perfection, or of their unworthiness to receive his love or

mercy. There can, however, be no experience of God's death, if he is conceived in the way in which some great philosophers or some major religions did; but if it is maintained that God is just an idea or abstraction and its incoherence or untenability is demonstrated, he becomes like the square-circle or a barren woman's son. Abandonment by some of the idea of God may be metaphorically called by them the death of God; but to others he never dies.

In his "History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany", Heinrich Heine commented thus on the publication of Kant's first *Critique*: "Do you hear the little bell tinkle? Kneel down — one brings the sacraments for a dying God". Heine influenced Nietzsche. Nietzsche's mad man (see below) entered diverse churches and there sang his *requiem aeternam deo*. Since Heine and Nietzsche the phrase Death of God became popular and many take it to represent a cultural historical fact, if not a metaphysical assertion about reality.

In addition to what has been said in Chapter IV, something more may be said about Nietzsche. In his parable of the mad man in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche tells us about the mad man who searched for God in the market place in the bright morning hours with the help of a lighted lantern, crying incessantly, "I seek God!" To the people who laughed and scoffed at him he told that he and all of them had *killed* God, that they were his murderers. So, "God is dead" and "remains dead". How did this happen? The mad man said this happened because of the scientific revolution — the new cosmology etc.—and because men had slaughtered "what was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned." He also informed the people that though it was he and all of them that murdered God, "this tremendous event" had not yet reached their ears, and that he came too early, before his time. Such is the parable.

We may notice that Nietzsche through the mad man — a prophetic figure of doom and nemesis like Cassandra — does not say that there is no God, but that he is dead, killed. What is meant is that in contemporary European civilization

belief in God and an essential moral order has vanished, but that this has not yet been realized. But this did not make Nietzsche happy. If it is realized that there is no God, Nietzsche thought, human life will lose all significance, all values will be "disvalued", there will be no cardinal distinction between man and animal, and "an age of barbarism" will begin. A Godless world, he felt, would be a world of madness, agony and suffering. This line of thinking is similar to that of Ivan Karamazov. But what is the consequence of a belief in God? Belief in God and divine government of the world, Nietzsche thought, could also diminish the value and significance of man and this world: the glory and majesty of God could devaluate these — this world and human life. This was a great problem for Nietzsche. Acceptance of God's existence may rob this world of ultimate significance, while denial of it may make everything meaningless. Whether through his "revaluation of all values" Nietzsche has been able to offer a solution to this, I shall not now consider. Regarding God and values, atheism and morality, I have said enough in the previous annexe.

Did Nietzsche dispense with God and the Absolute in all its forms? Some scholars think he has eliminated the self-subsisting supersensual world and removed God from the realm of objective being. Others think differently. It may be remembered that while he said "the Christian moral God is untenable", he added this did not lead to atheism "as though no other kinds of gods could exist." And, a section in his *The Gay Science* was entitled: "How far we, too, are still pious".

Lastly, a brief reference may be made to Radical Theology or Death of God Theology which made quite a noise in USA in the sixties, though its appeal appears to be on the decline now. This theology considers Death of God as an "event", accepts it as its "first axiom" and "responds" to it. It claims to be "authentically contemporary", "dialectical" and "eschatological". Of these terms, the first in this theology means to accept the Death of God, the second is left undefined

and the last is sometimes equated with "non-religious". It cares little for history and rejects reason, claiming to be based on Jesus and the Bible; it sees itself as a revolt against Greece and a revival of Palestine. It seeks to exalt the Son, Christ, and tends to "rebel" against the Father, God.

Now what is Death of God according to this movement? The phrase, we find, is not given a single definite and precise meaning, but a number of mutually incompatible meanings, and "clarification" of its "possible meanings" is said to be an important theological task. The poignant awareness of the loss of the sense of the divine, the feeling of despondency and desolation due to loss of faith, the sadness and anguish caused by the inability to believe, and resentment that man is in a deprived and forlorn state in "this terrible world"—all this is taken to be expressed by this phrase. God is also what religion posits, so for this theology which is not religious (so it avers) God is dead. It is made out that the idea of God as entertained by people (including philosophers and theologians)—i.e. by everyone who is not a Radical Theologian!—is dead; so God is dead for them. God thus conceived is dead to these radicals also; so, it seems these like others are atheists. But these profess to be Christians, for Jesus Christ, they say, remains their exemplar. God has passed away, this bewildering contemporary world of massive industrialization and technology is bereft of him; he is no more here to befriend and guide man. He has at last left man free; now man has to become fully responsible for himself, he has to make or mar his own world in the way he can. For all his behaviour man should take Jesus Christ as the model. In such a way the position of Radical Theology may be summarized. Notwithstanding all this, radical theologians also talk of the need to question God and rebel against him, so that he may be known better. So, really God is not dead, he is alive; but this living God is the God of the Bible and Jesus, as Radical Theology understands them. (The words in quotes in this and previous paragraph are from the writings of T. J. J. Altizer and W. Hamilton.)

What, we may now ask, is great and original in Radical Theology? Repudiation of reason is at least as old as Tertullian; Death of God was announced as a "tremendous event" by Nietzsche; many atheists accepted Christian values and ethics, which hardly differ from those of the Greek and Roman philosophers; men like Blake organized "a holy insurrection" against Jehovah but surrendered themselves to Jesus assuming him to be the direct and absolute divine type; and men like Kierkegaard had already "attacked" Christendom. We have considered deicide earlier in this annexe and the phenomenon of death of God and God-man as the case may be in early Indian and mystery religions and Christianity in the previous chapters. The standpoint of Barth that only Christianity is response to God and is Faith, that all religions (for him Christianity is not a religion) constitute resistance to God and are unfaith and that God cannot be known apart from Christ, is wellknown. I have discussed this and allied questions in another book, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta*.

One can understand, appreciate and respect the position, There is no God. But the phrase God is Dead is meaningless, though it has been metaphorically used to describe a certain situation supposed to be prevalent in the modern West. I do not think that now a lesser number of people believe in God than ever before; at no time did all men in any country believe in God. In no country and at no time have all people been without a sense of the Transcendent. Unlike in former ages men today do not have the need to proclaim themselves to be believers, *āstikas*, even when they happen to be sceptical. Institutional or organized religion today is not as powerful as it was some times in the past in some countries; but religion continues to be a major force in the politics of many countries and in the private lives of millions all over the world. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is still living and speaks. Nor is the God of philosophy dead. Considering the important, extensive and continuous work that is being done in metaphysics and philosophical theology in Europe, America and India, he is very much alive. We may further remember

that many thinkers and ordinary religious men as well who are not theists at all (e.g. Buddhists, Jainas) are actively concerned with the unconditioned Being or State. The Transcendent still triumphs.

*

"But one will have gathered what I am driving at: namely that it is still a metaphysical faith upon which our faith in science rests that even we devotees of knowledge today, we godless ones and anti-metaphysicians, still take our fire, too, from the flame which a faith, thousands of years old, has kindled: that Christian faith, which was also the faith of Plato that God is truth, that truth is divine".

— Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 344,
W. Kaufmann's Trans.

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