

What God Is

by Lionel Goulet
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The problem with words is they are limited and limiting, and God is neither.

Introduction

When I was a boy, I was driving home with my father from the stationery store where he had just bought me my first dictionary. He told me a story about a dictionary he had when *he* was a boy.

If you looked up “camel,” it said, “See ‘dromedary.’”

If you looked up “dromedary,” it said, “See ‘camel.’”

Defining God is like that.

Defining God is difficult if not impossible.

Defining God is the goal of human endeavor. Go figure! ☺

In order to “define” something, we need to express that *something* in words *outside of* that something, words that we understand already. For example, “electrical current is the flow of electrons in a wire.” Defining “current” requires an understanding of three other words: *wire*, *electrons*, and *flow*. If we understand these three terms, then we understand and have defined “current.”

In the same way, defining “God” requires terms that are *outside of God*. For example, ... Oops. There are no words outside of God.

The fact that human reason can even stab at the question, “What is God?” is proof that humans are divine.

There are those that sincerely, even fiercely believe that one cannot know God. Yet even the *smallest* piece of God-knowledge makes the walls of the mind expand. The box gets bigger, to fit the new larger concept.

Close-minded becomes small-minded. Small-minded becomes open-minded.

The attempt at defining God is worth doing even if it’s impossible, which, it’s not.

I am also *not* saying this is the right way to see God and all other ways are wrong. This is just *another* way to see God; *my* way actually because I have never come across this sort of thinking anywhere else.

If it turns out this is the exact doctrine of *Omnibuddahwiccaterianism*, please let me know.

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What God is Not

I see a different God than most; a very much bigger God, a very much closer God.

However, we have to first sweep away what God is not.
Then that will leave room for the new idea.

Here's the big *Not*: God is not human nor does God possess any human traits.

- God does not have hands, eyes, a face, or any other body parts.
- God does not get angry, merciful, pleased, loving, or any other emotion.
- God does not smile. God does not laugh. God does not talk.
- God is not our father. God is not our mother.
- God does not have a will. God does not act.
- The Lord is not a lord.

All these are human qualities, and God is not human. God is *way* bigger than that.

God is not anything you can name.
Yet God is *everything* you can name. We'll come back to that.

The tendency to anthropomorphize God is a very useful tool, but only up to a point, and the time has come to pass that point. Not only is God not human; God is not even *like* humans. When we quote from the Bible about people being "made in the image and likeness of God," that does not mean God looks like us. God is not like us.

God is not love. Toss it out. The problem with "God is love" is: *What about all the crap in the world?* Is God loving sometimes and sometimes not? Does God love only *some* people? Lots of people think that. If God is love, what about Hiroshima, Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Rwanda, slavery, poverty, AIDS, and sixty other problems I'm sure you can name. Rather than make up some logical reason to explain why God is love in a world that clearly shows otherwise, I'm calling for a slight re-tooling of the idea. More on this too in a minute.

I understand if this all seems like a lot to throw out, an entire human tradition of God images, but the whole idea of God needs to be brought into the 21st century.

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With the old ideas cleared out, let's move in some new ones.

Humans are very much closer to the divine than people usually think, and the divine is very much closer to us.

There is nothing in all the universe that one can point to and say, "That is God," yet every word in every language is a word for some aspect of God. Every sunrise, every chord of music, every baby, every flower, every drop of clean water, every smile: God.

Everything that *is* is *in* God and *of* God.

God is the "container" that holds the universe.

What is outside of everything that exists? Why, existence itself.

God is existence.

God is *is*.

God is "is-ness."

God is what makes "is" possible.

God is what makes be *be*.

God is the *act* of being. Not "supreme being," being-ness.

Do you exist? Of course you do. And since you do, **you are like God.**

God is not like us. We are like God.

It is interesting to note that in Exodus when Moses asks God what God's name is, God answers, "I Am."

You've heard of the field of gravity? A magnetic field? An electric field, perhaps? God is the field of existence.

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And That's Enough

Being being-ness is enough to make God God.

Being-ness is a big deal. The leap from *nothingness* to *something* is far greater than any leap from *something* to *something else*.

But Not All

To understand God as existence may not fully encompass all of God, but it's enough to work on for now. "What's outside of existence?" can wait until existence is more fully understood. Once we've fully explored the closet we're in, we can leave it and explore the bedroom outside the closet door.

What Does God Look Like?

It's an interesting aspect of human beings: everyone knows what God looks like. To them.

People are fiercely loyal to their image of God, usually the one they were given as children. This loyalty to an image is exactly what the First Commandment warns us not to do, so be careful. Devotion to an image limits God, and God is limit-less.

God is love?

The concept that God is love is the very core of the Christian and Muslim religions. They would have us aspire to an understanding of God as love, but I think it falls slightly short of the mark.

Whether or not God is love is entirely up to us. God is "Our Loving Father" only if we so conceive God to be. In other words, God is love when we express God that way. God is not love without us.

God is love *through* us. We are very much a part, essential in fact, to bringing love into the world. To every phrase used to describe God: God is love. God is merciful. God is patient. God is kind. God is beautiful...add the phrase *through us* or *through you*, and you are there.

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The Need to Pray

Prayer is a great thing. Prayer is how people commune with the divine.

The problem is the standard way to pray is a mess, wrong-headed, and almost a total waste. The standard mechanism in prayer is to ask God “in heaven” to intercede for us or give us something.

Or, when we are in a better mood, we might send out thank-you’s to God.

The problem is the implied separation between God and us.

We think of God as apart from us. That is *so* not true. We are woven into God and God is woven into us. God is all, and all is God, and that *all* includes us: you and me. There is no separation.

But the problem with prayer goes deeper than that.

When we pray for something, we are asking God to act on our behalf.
God does not act.
We act.

When we ask God to hear our prayers, we are asking God to listen.
God does not listen.
We listen.

When we thank God for prayers answered, God does not need the gratitude.
God does not need. God does not want.
We need. *We* want. *We* need the gratitude.

By positing an all-seeing, all-powerful, all-loving God “out there” that listens to our prayers and acts on our behalf, we are shooting our prayers in the wrong direction to a God that is not there.

To contact God, pray *inwards*. Tell *ourselves* that *we have* the resources. Tell ourselves that *we can do* what needs to be done. Tell *ourselves* that *we are* loving and loved. Tell *ourselves* thank you. God is within. Address God so.

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I saw a calendar recently. Its title was *Paths to God*. I am sure the author of this calendar meant no harm, but to proclaim “there is a path to God” is to proclaim that there is a separation between me and Thee.

There is no path to God but to be. You are; you are of God; you are in God. That’s it. Welcome home.

*Speak to him thou for He hears
And Spirit with Spirit can meet.
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet.¹*

¹ Tennyson.

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The Allness of God

If God is all and all is God, why don't we see God?

We don't see God because we're looking for God with the wrong eyes. We don't see God because we *always* see God. We don't see God because everything we see *is* God and there's no contrast. Let me explain.

To see a chair, say, at the table, is to see that chair *not* next to the window. To see God in one place means we see God not in another place. And that's not possible.

God is all; not polytheism, *omnithesism*. We see separate objects: tree, sidewalk, grass, sky, face, hands... We see them and name them as separate objects because that's what our brains need to do in order to comprehend stuff. But does not the tree touch both the soil and the sky? The tree and the soil and the sky are all one. This separation of objects is an artificial one for the convenience of thinking.

By naming a thing, we "embox" it. We place it in a reality separate from other things it touches. Yet everything is connected to everything else. This boxing up of things is precisely why the ancient Hebrews refused to write out the name of God. They did not want to put God in a box. Nor should we.

Reality

Be purposeful in your vision of God. If your reality is "God is Love," then God is loving; God will be love to you. Put a loving God inside your reality and it is so!

But

Put a vengeful, hateful, stingy god inside your reality and it is so too.

Put *no* God inside your reality and again, it is so.

Reality then, is what you accept as real. Accept only the best.

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Summary

- God is existence, being-ness; that which makes be *be*.
- God is not like us. We are like God.
- God is each and all; and all and each is God. A Buddhist might say everything has “Buddha-nature.” All this is that. All this reality around us is that of the divine.
- God is closer to us than the air we breathe. We think of God as in heaven, far away, or at least not right here. Yet we exist *in* God. We could not be closer.

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