

### **Commentary on *The Personality of God***

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty,  
the Only Being, United with All the Illuminated Souls  
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

GATHEKA: That ethical view of God which conceives Him as a personality is really a conception of the self; the divine love, power and inspiration are really within oneself.

TASAWWUF: Conception of God is the reflection of the light of intelligence upon the mind, which according to the state of the ego and the general evolution of the personality, makes or accepts a concept which appeals to it. As God is regarded as Ideal or Perfect, the ego-mind will hold the concept of that which appeals to it as ideal or perfect.

Now the ego-mind knows about love, knows about power and knows about inspiration, without always knowing the source of these things. Love, power and inspiration are not created by the mind; they come from the depths of the self and are means whereby the soul affects the mind. What the mind calls God may be nothing but the soul, only soul as extension of time, space or quality seems bear. So the ethical view clothes God with all of the finest conceptions.

GATHEKA: But when a person who has not truly studied and understood the subject of God's personality begins to talk about it, he is apt to destroy the religious beliefs of many besides his own. Not only is he apt to go astray himself through failing to assimilate the knowledge from the ethical point of view, but he will also confuse others in their faiths and beliefs.

TASAWWUF: The mind can only reflect that which it receives from the light of intelligence and the tongue can only speak what the mind clearly conceives. If the conception of the mind is not clear, the expression of the tongue will not be clear. Therefore when one has no clear concept, he tries to convince others without convincing himself first. If he has a strong will he can only turn others from their view and if he is weak he will antagonize them.

If, however, he had assimilated the ethical point of view rather than the metaphysical or theological view, he would have recognized goodness, beauty, love, mercy and all qualities and he would have acted in the light of these qualities. Many persons have not been able to reconcile the God-Ideal with the trend of affairs in the world and deny God because He cannot, in their conception, be all good and all powerful. Such persons make from the beginning the assumption that they have the wisdom and foresight and larger view.

GATHEKA: After reading a few ethical books and after considering the Christ-idea from an ethical point of view, and the idea of God from that point of view, a person may go and tell a friend who has simple faith in Jesus Christ and has never considered “ethics” or science or philosophy, but has always held a picture of the Lord before him (or her), fearing the displeasure of the Lord by doing this or doing that, devoted to her Lord—such a person may go and tell his friend, “there is no such thing as Jesus Christ; He never came on earth; it is a myth; it is an idea: it is an ethical ideal.” What happened? The plant of devotion, the ideal in the heart, the plant that leads further and further in development, is broken by him, and his friend is driven either to shut the doors of her heart (which should be protected) or she must give up her faith! To yield is to go astray, and yet not to yield may be to go astray also!

TASAWWUF: The simple view may be said to be one which does not depend upon facts. People begin by confusing truth with facts, the facts being the single events or experiences of life which are derived by personal acts. Nevertheless man often calls opinions facts also; he expresses what he does not know, he says what he believes and he calls it reason. But reason is not fact, and when reason builds out the conceptions of ideals, under the reflected influence of heart, we have ethics; only strictly speaking each person will have their own ethics, owing to the state of mind and heart.

GATHEKA: There is a danger, then, of an ethical point of view destroying one’s religion and understanding; and there is a greater danger of its doing so in the case of the religion of others.

TASAWWUF: The ethical point of view is not the spiritual view. The ethics belong to dualism, divide the world into the good and bad, light and dark, friendly and unfriendly, simple and complex, and make all sorts of divisions. The spiritual point of view does not deny goodness, only it does not separate goodness or any quality from life itself.

The ethical point of view divides one person’s ideals from another, one standard from another and thus has the tendency to divide men, men who may be equally zealous in their idealism, equally lofty in their hopes. The spiritual point of view stresses idealism, loftiness and hope; it is not concerned with the mental content, only with the attitude. Ethics demands right views; spirituality right attitudes.

GATHEKA: The Sufi always tries to keep the Ideal of God, not only as a philosophy, but as a religious philosophy. It has always been garbed with religion that it might not be a bare truth of the ideals of a Master, a Saviour, a God.

TASAWWUF: By bareness in the philosophy aspect is meant the formulation into words of the ideals offered about the Ideal. When the philosophy is not associated with religion it has generally resulted in being the work of one person so that we speak of the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Averroes, Kapila, Kant and Spinoza. This has the tendency to divide the philosophers into innumerable camps, all emphasizing differences.