

## Essay

# Finding God in the Universe

Robert H. Kettell\*

### Abstract

Maybe the solution lies with our consciousness. It seemed that while consciousness must be based on the brain's functions, it might hold the possibility of communicating beyond our brain and body. If this is the case our consciousness may be the link to God I was seeking.

**Keywords:** God, universe, everything, designer.

Is there a God? The answer depends on how you describe God.

- 1) If you think that God *is* the universe then, of course, there is – God is everything.
- 2) If you think of God as something in addition to the universe that we see, feel, touch, taste and smell, then the question becomes more interesting.
  - If you see God as starting the universe there is place for something/somebody to initiate the Big Bang. The other option is that the Big Bang began as a random fluctuation in nothingness - not a very satisfying answer.
  - You could see God as the “designer” who set all of the laws of nature so we could be here. Admittedly it is nearly impossible for all the particles of matter and all the forces of energy have the exact values needed for this universe to exist. However it can also be argued that given an infinite amount of time other potential universes with other particle and energy values tried to start but failed; we were just the lucky one. This argues that it *is* possible for this universe to exist without a careful designer.
  - If you see God as the thing that started the first life there is some room for God here. We have not yet come up with a good explanation of how life began without some sort of “outside” help.
  - If God is supplying the energy needed to drive complexity and evolution we might solve a major problem in physics. In a closed system everything should work toward greater disorder and entropy. If the universe is not closed and there is a supply of “outside” energy, then God might fill this role. At the level of galaxies the physicists have dreamed up “dark energy” and “dark matter” to fill this role, but they do not have a clue what these things are. At the level of our earth physicists see the energy needed for our ever-increasing diversity as coming from the sun, but there are no numbers to justify this claim.

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\* Correspondence: Robert H. Kettell, <http://kettell.org> E-mail: [robkettell@aol.com](mailto:robkettell@aol.com)

- If you think of God as creating the “divine” attributes of the universe, such as beauty, truth and goodness, then you also have to blame God for the ugly, the misconceptions and the bad things in the universe. This may be a powerful God, but not necessarily a likeable God.

These rolls for God may help us explain aspects of the universe that we currently do not understand, but what happens to God if we come to fill these gaps in our knowledge. In these visions God that gets things started then lays back and watches the universe from a distance. This is not a personal God. When we start looking for a personal God we tend to give God some of our more desirable human characteristics; we seek a God we should strive to be.

- If you see God as the personality who grants wishes/prayers and performs personal miracles it is hard to see why this type of God ignores all of our other wishes and fails to perform other needed miracles.
- Some think that God allows some people to survive near-death experiences, however they might be defined. Again, if this is God’s work it seems a bit arbitrary.
- Some see God as the giver of our moral/religious laws. Given the wide diversity of religions on this planet, this type of God must have multiple personalities.

None of these views of God are particularly satisfying if one is seeking a personal God - a God that takes an interest in each of us, a God that tries to help us help ourselves. In seeking this type of God I found a starting point in an unlikely place. A small book called *The Little Zen Companion* (Schiller, David, editor (1994) New York: Workman Publishing) had a quote from Wallace Stevens that said: “God is in me or else is not at all.” Could it be that God has chosen to work through individuals, rather than on grand schemes? Might we see God as a quiet voice in our background? Then if this small voice is different for each person it does not mean that God has multiple personalities, but that God tailors conversations to fit each individual.

While this type of God feels better to me, my rational mind kept asking: how does this work? How can God influence my thoughts? Can an immaterial God communicate with my material brain? Wasn’t there a neurological explanation for my thinking? Does God mess with the neurons in my brain?

Maybe the solution lies with our consciousness. It seemed that while consciousness must be based on the brain’s functions, it might hold the possibility of communicating beyond our brain and body. If this is the case our consciousness may be the link to God I was seeking.

In focusing on consciousness I discovered that few scholars had a perfectly clear definition. In fact, there were many thoughts on consciousness yet no framework for comparing theories – often people seemed to be talking past each other when speaking of consciousness. As a result, I attempted to develop an overarching model of consciousness. It turned out that consciousness could be seen as having three dimensions - not the three dimensions associated with Cartesian space: height, width and distance - but the dimensions of breadth, time and depth. The conclusion of this effort was a 2010 paper titled *A Model of Human Consciousness* (Kettell, 2011).

As you will see in the paper I still wasn't able to determine if there is an immaterial and personal God or not, but if there is I can see how God might work through people. It could be that God is to gradually improving our universe (that is primarily ruled by natural laws) through people such as you and me. This is the type of personal God I was seeking.

## Reference

Kettell, R. H. (2011), A model of Human Consciousness, JCER V2(4), pp. xxx-xxx.