

**Essay**

## **God & the Invisible Mountain**

Alex Vary\*

### **Abstract**

It is contended that Albert Einstein's greatest contributions were not his renowned accomplishments in quantum physics or his relativistic mathematics of space-time and gravity but his convictions about an ultimate transcendent reality, a spiritual reality, beyond the bounds of our mundane material reality.

**Keywords:** God, spirit, soul, mind of God, transcendent reality, infinite consciousness.

### **Dialogue with Einstein**

Through intense meditation, Alexis succeeded in attaining an astral venue for an interview with Professor Einstein's spirit. Alexis relays the content of the dialog with this disclaimer: It is a translation from Astral to English. Because communication in the astral plane is nonverbal and flashes by instantly, Alexis needed to create a humanly understandable version. Therefore, his translation includes quotes attributed to Albert Einstein during his earthly tenure so that Alexis can verifiably report the gist of Einstein's responses:

Alexis: Count Kessler once said to you, "Professor, I hear that you are deeply religious." I wonder if you recall what your reply was.

Albert: I replied, yes, you can call it that. Try and penetrate with our limited means the secrets of nature and you will find that, behind all the discernible concatenations, there remains something subtle, intangible and inexplicable. Veneration for this force beyond anything that we can comprehend is my religion. To that extent I am, in point of fact, religious.

Alexis: Max Jammer, a former colleague of yours at Princeton University, noted that according to your understanding, physics and religion are profoundly bound together and that nature exhibits traces of God. According to him, you believe that with the help of natural science the thoughts of God may be tapped and grasped. Your friend Friedrich Dürrenmatt once said that you spoke of God so often that he almost looked upon you as a disguised theologian. Please tell me your idea of the nature of God.

Albert: My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior Spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. The deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning Power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.

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Alexus: I learned that you spoke of a 'cosmic religious feeling' that inspired your reflections on the harmony of nature. Some scientists believe that regular mystical insights achieved by quiet meditative practices can be a useful guide in formulation of scientific theories. Still, most scientists have a deep mistrust of mysticism and religion mixed with science.

Albert: Although I am a typical loner in daily life, my consciousness of belonging to the invisible community of those who strive for truth, beauty, and justice has preserved me from feeling isolated. The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavor in art and science. He who never had this experience seems to me, if not dead, then at least blind. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection, this is religiousness. In this sense I am religious. To me it suffices to wonder at these secrets and to attempt humbly to grasp with my mind a mere image of the lofty structure of all that is there.

Alexus: I understand that noted cosmologist Fred Hoyle believed that the organization of the cosmos is controlled by a superintelligence that guides its evolution through quantum processes and directs the world toward a final state in the infinite future. Hoyle also believed that this superintelligence can implant thoughts and ideas, ready-made, into the human brain. He suggests that this is the origin of both mathematical and musical inspiration. Professor Paul Davies, on reviewing your work and the work of many other scientists and philosophers, concluded that the universe is "no minor byproduct of mindless, purposeless forces. We are truly meant to be here."

Albert: A human being is part of the whole, called the universe - a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest - a kind of delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a sort of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening the whole circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole nature of its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely but the striving for such achievement is, in itself, a part of the liberation and basis for inner security.

Alexus: A Nobel laureate in chemistry, Henry Schaefer at the University of Georgia, once said the significance and joy in his science comes in the occasional moments of discovering something new and saying to himself, "So that's how God did it!"

Albert: Indeed, overall . . . I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon. I want to know His ultimate thoughts, the rest are details.

Professor Einstein's illuminating answers and commentary clarified Alexis's thinking, confirming his notions about the nature of God, the Mind of God. Alexis now believes that Einstein's greatest contributions were not his renowned accomplishments in quantum physics or his relativistic mathematics of space-time and gravity but his convictions about an ultimate transcendent reality, a spiritual reality, beyond the bounds of our mundane material reality.

## Philosopher-Scientists find God

In *A Brief History of Time* Stephen Hawking, regarding a 'theory of everything' writes, "If we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason for then we would truly know the mind of God."

Today, among the most noteworthy exponents of the rational approach to God are Bernard Haisch (*The God Theory*), Paul Davies (*The Mind of God*) Jacob Needleman (*What is God?*). There are many other past and contemporary scientists, theologians and philosophers who deserve similar recognition. For profound brevity I simply cite Albert Einstein to whom it seemed that "nature exhibited traces of God" like "a natural theology" and that with the help of natural science "the thoughts of God may be tapped and grasped." (Max Jammer in *Einstein und Die Religion*).

Baruch Spinoza declared: nothing exists but God. The spirit, principal theme and assertion of Spinoza's foundational work *Ethics* is: "God is one, that is, only one substance can be granted in the universe. Whatsoever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or be conceived. God is the indwelling and not the transient cause of all things. All things which are, are in God. Besides God there can be no substance, that is, nothing in itself external to God." I adopt Spinoza's assertion as 'the God postulate'.

Bernard Haisch (*The God Theory*) adds a corollary to the God postulate: ". . . our consciousness is a part of the Creator's consciousness: We are not fully aware of this, however, because the experience of physicality retains its infinite potential only when it is not fully defined. Our incomplete knowledge of physical reality enriches our human experiences maintaining its novelty, its unanticipated outcomes, its newness. It allows us each to live our lives as a great adventure." I agree with Haisch's summary: (1) Human beings are *immortal spiritual forms* that evolve through temporary bodies. (2) There exist *realms of reality* beyond the presently known particles and forces of modern physics, and that (3) Individual consciousness is somehow linked to or a part of an *infinite consciousness*.

## Job and Doctor House

It is interesting to contrast believer Job to atheist Dr. Gregory House in the context of the previous essays. The Book of Job, one of the books of the Hebrew Bible, describes an extremely pious man named Job who upon suddenly experiencing extreme misfortunes and debilitating disease virtually cried out 'Why me, why one who rigorously abides by all God's commandments and religious laws?' Dr. Gregory House is arguably the most complex and challenging antihero in the history of television, but there is more to this fictional self-important medical genius than gray matter and ego. He is afflicted with profound debilitations that make it impossible for him to function without considerable mental anguish and physical pain. Dr. House could justifiably claim the 'why me?' syndrome except that he refuses to address that question to God. According to House: "If you talk to God, you're religious; if God talks to you, you're psychotic." He's neither.

The Book of Job, often called the most profound and literary work of the entire Old Testament addresses the problem of evil, the problem of reconciling the existence of evil or suffering in the world with the existence of God. All of Job's possessions are destroyed and all of his family are killed. Job does not curse God after this but instead shaves his head, tears his clothes and says, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: the Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all of this, Job doesn't sin by cursing God. Job, confident of his own innocence, maintains that his suffering is unjustified as he has certainly not sinned, and is undeserving of God's punishment. However, he does not curse God or accuse God of injustice but rather seeks an explanation of his wrongdoing, if any.

The story of Job presumably exemplifies God's alleged indifference and perceived cruelty when lives of people are devastated or their health is ruined, apparently deliberately by the 'hand of God'. It should be obvious that the worlds created by God are imperfect and that living creatures that inhabit those worlds are designed to evolve and cope with those imperfections, to adapt to their circumstances and to overcome adversities. God simply let Job be dealt with by natural often unfriendly blind forces. Punishment wasn't a factor: Souls sent to worlds should *expect* to be in the thrall of those forces.

According to Maimonides, the correct view of providence teaches that Job must examine his religion. This view corresponds with the notion that the only worthy religion is an *examined* religion. A *habit* religion, such as that originally practiced by Job, is never enough. One has to look deep into the meaning of religion in order to fully appreciate it and make it a genuine part of one's life. According to Maimonides one has to practice religion in a rational way. The more one investigates religion, the greater the reward. Job was an uninquisitive, pious man, not a philosopher. He was unwise, simply grateful for what he had. God did not single out Job for punishment, but let him be dealt with by natural forces.

House the self professed atheist has not really abandoned his soul nor disconnected himself from his motivating spirit. He has in fact focused quite intensely on executing the duties his soul assigned itself in choosing and acquiring its mortal integument. His spirit is ever present and functioning as the intermediary between his body and soul. House simply chooses to remain indifferent to this interplay while he works his way through life in a body racked with pain and while enduring life's foibles and vicissitudes, as we all should accept and endure them while living on earth. House manipulates and torments his friends, associates and colleagues by playing 'head games' that are apparently meant to remind them of their own mortal failings and foibles. At the same time he prods them Socratically to question, examine and reexamine themselves and their thinking as the path to their fulfillment. Of course, House prods and torments himself the same way for the same reason.

The book *House and Philosophy*, edited by Henry Jacoby takes a deep look at our protagonist House to reveal the philosophical underpinnings of this popular television drama. It may be that God has a grand plan, and that our lives are meaningful to the extent that we purposefully help realize that plan. Jacoby explains that according to the *Kabbalah*, the mystical writings of Judaism, we're supposed to be helping God. We may in the process lead a meaningful life, even if we believed that life has no meaning. We might be doing God's work without realizing it. Could this

be the sense in which Gregory House is leading a meaningful life?

Jacoby writes "In Plato's dialogue *Apology*, which describes the trial of Socrates, we hear Socrates utter the famous phrase 'The unexamined life is not worth living.' The examined life is the life of the philosopher, a life of reason. And reason is what is distinctive about humans. When Aristotle said that 'man is a rational animal' he didn't mean that we are always rational and never emotional or instinctive. He meant that humans alone have the *capacity* for reason . . . Socrates's point, then, is that a person who doesn't use reason, who doesn't lead an examined life, isn't realizing his potential as a human being. A life without reason and curiosity, a life where one doesn't seek the truth, is therefore a life no greater than the life of a lower animal."

I reflect regarding Job and Doctor House, that shallow people need God not only to praise when things go well but to blame when misfortunes strike. People like House get along without God, even to the point of denying God's existence, because they assume responsibility for their situations, they simply "*accept and endure*" - as advised by Ludwig Wittgenstein in summarizing his philosophy.

## Joe Eszterhas finds God

In the first sentence of his book *Crossbearer*, Joe Eszterhas says: "This is how I found God . . . or how God found me." It happened on an oppressively hot April day, after eighty percent of his larynx had been removed because of throat cancer. He asked for God's help to change his life to help him immediately and completely quit the smoking and drinking that led to his physical demise. Joe had already quit the reckless life of the past forty years, but knew he desperately needed help to break the habits that imprisoned, poisoned and devastated his body. Joe knew he needed to address God to ask for God's help. He wrote, "I didn't even really know how to pray . . . I tried speaking directly to Him . . . but I felt too self-conscious and clumsy . . . I felt myself to be presuming God's favor in our new relationship . . . after forty years of not just ignoring Him but of trashing Him in my writings, I'm suddenly back and talking to Him as though nothing had interrupted our relationship, saying, How ya doin', God? Haven't seen you in a while, what up? Everything cool?"

Joe decided to approach God directly. His upbringing taught him that his relation with God is immediate. The transcendental domain, Heaven if you prefer, likely consists of innumerable, perhaps an infinitude, of individual souls that spiritually interact with God and one another - each soul a distinct self-aware entity that persists as an attribute of God, unlimited in time and space. The body, the soul's material vessel, is limited in time and space: It experiences itself, its thoughts and feelings as something isolated from the soul; a palpable but transient individual consciousness and self-awareness.

Just how does one overcome the barrier between body and soul and God? Joe Eszterhas provides believable examples of the process when he writes, "Eventually, praying became easier for me. I felt more at ease speaking to God. While I didn't hear Him say anything in response to me, didn't hear anything coming from a mountaintop or a burning bush, I thought I saw Him shaking His head sometimes, or scowling at me, or looking away in disapproval. But sometimes I thought I

saw Him smiling, too, grinning a godly grin." (*Crossbearer*) . . ."I was wrestling with my life. Would I be able to continue to resist my addictions? Would my cancer return? Would I live or die? Would I ever write anything again? . . . As he walked down the aisle after Mass one day, Father Bob stopped where I was standing in my pew and, out of the blue, said this to me: 'The best part of your life is still ahead of you!' He said nothing else, his eyes blazing away at me, and then he walked on . . . I stood there for a few moments, dumbfounded, and couldn't stop thinking about what he'd said. I kept thinking about it all day. It was as though Father Bob had read my mind. How did he know that by saying that to me, he'd answered the question that was keeping me up at night? Who was this priest who could read my mind and whose eyes seemed to zero in on my heart and soul when he looked at me? "

The first example is typical of the kind of intuitive feeling one has during prayer. You already know what God knows about you and therefore you imagine God's anthropomorphic response. The second example is more profound because it involves *the other*. The other manifests as a compassionate person, someone close at hand or a spirit guide that acts through the subconscious of proximate individuals.

Postscript: Father Bob was right when he said to Joe Eszterhas, "The best part of your life is still ahead of you! " Joe wrote *Crossbearer* as testimony to his recovery. He celebrates his successful liberation from a disabling past persona, the reacquisition of health, the reestablishment of his family and the beginning of a new life. He acknowledges all as being granted by God.

Some unanswered, perhaps unanswerable questions, that arise here and which incommode me are: When Joe Eszterhas found God did he also reclaim or rediscover his soul? When was Joe Eszterhas first imbued with a soul? When did a soul inherit him? Are all living beings or only some imbued with a soul? Are there soulless ones among us? When and to whom does God or an agent of God assign souls?

## Conclusion

Perhaps the best way to find and appreciate God is to invoke Jacob Needleman's metaphor of *awakening to the presence* of ". . . the invisible mountain around which light curves so that the mountain is invisible and untouchable - until . . . the mountain chooses to touch us, to draw us toward itself only because we wish to find it . . ." In his journey from atheistic 'godlessness' to 'experiencing God' Needleman explains, in his exploration *What Is God?*, that he *awoke* by directing his *attention* inwards.