THE GOD QUESTION AND MAN'S CLAIM TO OMNIPOTENCE*

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A general conceptualization of God's omnipotence is that he possesses illimitable superior power over and above every other thing. Consequently, God is thought of being able to bring about "all" things. Such belief includes that as all-powerful, he does not need to be protected or defended by his creatures, insofar as he "cannot" be vulnerable to the threats or attacks of any creature, except possibly self-inflicted attacks, which would be self-contradictory. Human power, on the other hand, assumes the belief that even though God is absolutely omnipotent, believers in him have the duty to either carry out what they believe is his commandment or each one acts as he should act. This being so, the human claim to omnipotence absolutizes man/woman as being able, with impunity, in fact, with stupendous promise of reward, by acting as the "arm" or "brain" of God. The logical conclusion of such reasoning is to deny either claim of omnipotence by God or man. But how plausible would such a conclusion be to real-life situation?

ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The arguments on the existence of God have continuously engaged the attention of many philosophers of religion as well as theologians. These arguments range from St. Anselm's ontological argument and the Thomistic cosmological argument to Paley's teleological argument with their various variants and criticisms. The question of the existence of God will still continue, as long as there are human problems, especially the problem of evil, which contradicts essentially the belief in a good and omnipotent God. It is partly for this reason that there are different variations of these arguments as human experience of the cosmos continues to result in an undesirable and unsatisfactory feeling (see Onimhawo, Izibili, and Igboin 2006, 5). Of the many proofs of God's existence, I will discuss three traditional ones.

Ontological Argument

Does God really exist? St. Anselm responds to the fool's thought that denies God's existence. In other words, the fool lacks the mental capacity to generate proof for

God's existence. For St. Anselm, God is that which nothing greater can be conceived; at any rate, if something greater can be conceived other than that which nothing greater can be conceived, then that which nothing greater can be conceived is not that which nothing greater can be conceived because it is not possible to think of any being greater than that which nothing greater can be conceived. Not only will God be that which nothing greater can be conceived, existing in the mind only, it must also exist outside the mind; it must exist in reality. To exist both in the mind and in reality is sufficient proof that God exists (Onimhawo, Izibili and Igboin, 2006, 52). St. Anselm hints that the reality of God's existence is a *prima facie* of faith, which Paul Tillich (1957) espouses to be higher than belief. While belief is a commitment to an idea with the hope that it works for one, and does not necessarily warrant a proof, faith is an act of committing oneself to an idea after processing it, i.e., raising doubt, analyzing, and applying it, and providing evidence to substantiate one's claim (Christian 2009, 27-28). But for St. Anselm, the implicit faith he and all those who hold this argument possess the *sine qua non* for the existence of God. In fact, it is this faith that the fool lacks that makes him/her query on the existence of God. Even though this argument has been caustically repudiated as rationally lacking in filling the gap between thought and reality (see St. Thomas 1947 and Kant 1958), many versions (see, e.g., Hegel 1985) evolve that keep the argument going as a proof of God's existence, which many other thinkers consider as only on the basis of faith rather than of reason.

Cosmological Argument

The cosmological argument relies on infinite regress that terminates at God as the Uncaused Cause, the Unmoved Mover, or the Necessary Existent. It has also been criticised. The point is that there is no reason why the regress should stop at God since there is the logical possibility of an infinite regress beyond God. The idea of infinity presupposes that there is no ultimate terminus, and even if there is, there is no guarantee that it must be the God being referred to by theists. Therefore, it is safe to probe beyond the idea of God being inserted to terminate the process. In other words, God should be a part of the process of the regress in that we can ask the question as to who caused God? For example, as Luke's (3:23-38) genealogy of Jesus says, "Adam, the son of God," should be logically followed by, "God, the son of..." It is such an exhilarating probe that elicited Richard Dawkins's rejection of God's existence and subsequent denial of omnipotence. According to him, the idea of God's omnipotence is intricately linked with God's existence. Since they are mutually compatible, the denial of God's existence will automatically mean that there is no such being called "God" who is omnipotent. But if God exists, and he is omnipotent, it will also follow that he is omniscient because it is hardly possible to say he is one and not the other. By being omniscient, he knows in advance what will happen and how he will intervene in human history by deploying his omnipotence. This will mean that he cannot change his mind, and if it is true that he cannot change his mind, then his omnipotence is called into question. Dawkins further buttresses his argument by refuting a stop to the idea of infinite regress. He considers it to be parsimonious to terminate the regress at God. Quoting Karen Owens (see Dawkins 2006, 77-78), who questions: "Can an omniscient God, who knows the future, find the omnipotence to change His future

mind?" Such impossibility makes omniscience and omnipotence less admirable and doubtful, Dawkins concludes.

When one rejects the idea of evolution, then the creative power of God is affirmed as a demonstration of his omnipotence and its coherence with his knowledge and will. As Maurice Makumba (2006, 173) contends:

> That God is all-powerful follows from the fact that he is all-knowing and perfect in his will. However, whereas God's knowledge and will are considered in so far as they are God's intradivine or immanent activity, divine omnipotence studies the being of God inasmuch as it is the foundation of creation and the conservation of the world. The omnipotence of God, we can say, is the flip side of his intelligence and will. Whereas divine knowledge directs divine will and divine will commands power, it is the divine power that carries out the divine will. Thus, God's power is logically and not really distinct from his knowledge and will.

Teleological Argument

William Paley's (see Onimhawo, Izibili, and Igboin 2006, 69-76) analogical argument of a watchmaker and an intelligent designer of the world also attracts specific criticisms even though many thinkers have agreed that it is the most plausible proof for the existence of God. Paley argues that if it is reasonable to think of a watchmaker without having seen him or her, then based on the perfect coordination and working of a watch, one can reasonably think that the universe, like a watch, functions in a coordinated manner that suggests the existence of an intelligent maker. This intelligent maker is God, concludes Paley. If one sees the universe the way Paley sees it, i.e., functioning perfectly, then the immediate thought will be that God must be truly "intelligent" and "powerful." But if one juxtaposes the dysfunctionality of some parts of the universe, like the volcanic eruptions that do frequently occur, it is possible to think that either God is not all that intelligent or powerful, conceding that he exists. And if one pushes it further, one can suggest that, considering the function and dysfunction of the universe, it might be that there are two gods responsible for the creation of the universe. This objection is at once rejected by theists, especially the monotheistic theists such as the Judaic, Christians, and Muslims. For them, God must be intelligent, powerful, and solely responsible for the creation of the universe.

Again, their common objection does not rule out the differences of their kind of theism. Despite their being Abrahamic religions, their particular differences in their belief systems have foisted some hostility among themselves in the world. As William L. Rowe (2004, 4) says:

> The importance of not taking theism to include the claims held by only one particular religion among the three major theistic religions of the West is that the inclusion would make theism less likely; for if we identify theism with a particular one among the great theistic religions, then the truth of theism itself is made to depend on all the essential beliefs of that particular theistic religion only.

Rowe notes that there are different versions of theism. So to assume that theism means the same thing for all of them is to be oblivious of the inherent differences that exist among them.

Characteristics of Monotheism

Rolando Gripaldo (2008, 29) delineates the technical senses in which the ideas of religion as a concept in relation to God can be used. He argues that there are gemerally three characteristics which the concept of a monotheistic God may possess: supernatural, personal, and anthropomorphic. But this general description does not necessarily apply to all monotheistic religions. Gripaldo (2008, 29) says that the God in Christianity may be supernatural, personal, and anthropomorphic but the God in Islam may be understood as supernatural and personal, but not anthropomorphic. Gripaldo further clarifies that a personal God is one that maintains a relationship with his human creatures while an anthropomorphic one is conceived as possessing human features since he created them in his own image. The Christian acceptance of a personal anthropomorphic monotheism differentiates it from the Islamic kind of personal nonanthropomorphic monotheism.

In reality when one accepts Carl Olson's (2011, 12) definition of functionalism (the "functionalist position seeks to discern how religion operates in the life of society"), it will not matter whether God is anthropomorphic or not for as long as the Cristians and Muslims believe and tend to act as the brain and hand of God in human society.

Hitchens and Dawkins

Christopher Hitchens's (2007) *God is not great: The case against religion*, is an exploration of the limit of God and the pernicious roles religions play in human society. Organized religion, he claims, is "violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry. In a particular treatment of Islam, for instance, Hitchens claims that it is "a plagiarism of a plagiarism, of a hearsay of a hearsay, of an illusion of an illusion." The idea that God is great, he maintains, represents a crass characterization of a theological ignoramus which lacks deep knowledge or understanding of religions. His denunciation of God and replacing it with himself—as Mary Riddell (2007) shows in a review—demonstrates the incurability of the concept of God in the human mind and human life, and by extension, of God's greatness.

Dawkins and Hitchens have hinged their distaste for God, or put their rejection of him, on human activities in relation to God, rather than on God himself. In other words, they took the position *a posteriori* on the basis of the violence we observe in the name of God, that God does not exist or he is not great. Although the volume of human violence in the name of religion is scary in the true sense of it, these authors nevertheless took a simplistic view of religion. Hitchens, for instance, argues that religion is a handiwork of human beings and as such it should apologize for the heinous activities it has perpetrated against humanity. By taking such a view, Hitchens has obviously missed the complex nature of religion. Dawkins (2006, 37) also conflates religion with monotheism and, as a consequence, he said he would not discuss Buddhism and

Confucianism because they are ethical systems or philosophies of life. The truth is that these religions also intensely observe the so-called irrationalities associated with ethical monotheistic religions that Dawkins (see Reader 2008, 138-39) reviles. In attempting to navigate the positive aspects of religion, Dawkins (2006, 37) and Hitchens (2007, 205) argue that the moral values theists claim to be derived from religion and that operate better within the understanding of religion cannot be proven. The secular, religionless society can also effectively muster and foster such moral values even without recourse to religion. But the implicit fact is that they have not succeeded in obliterating religion and its usefulness in human society, even in a contemporary secular society. As Hitchens (cited in Reader 2008, 142) crisply puts it, "we believe ethical life can be lived without religion." Reader (2008, 142), however, argues that a comprehensive assessment of religion that can be credible must asseverate its ambivalences: "'Religion' is imbued with all the varying capacities, traits and ambivalences of the human world…it can be dangerous, irrational, intolerant threat to civilized life—and [can also be] a force for tolerance, understanding and civilized values." He concludes that religion is "morally neutral," reflecting those who shape it.

While the theistic arguments do not essentially raise the question of God's qualities and appellations, but it does raise the question on the ambivalences of religion and, in effect, of God. If God is one indivisible entity, with whom nothing else can, or should be associated with, who is also intelligent, powerful, and responsible for the creation of the universe, to which these adherents subscribe to, then why these allow such ambivalences? It is here that the thesis of this essay is drawn: if God is one indivisible entity as held by these adherents, and yet they disagree on one God in their religious traditions and practices, given that the universe is one which they all claim that is created by one God, how will they correctly respond to the objection that there are many gods responsible for the creation of the one and indivisible universe? Assuming this God, as one indivisible entity, is omnipotent, i.e., all-powerful as traditionally understood, why are his adherents engaged in perpetual defence of his nature? We argue that if their God is the intelligent God, the adherents must be less intelligent than him; otherwise they must be ready to lay hold to the claim that they are co-intelligent with God. If their God is omnipotent, i.e., all-powerful, and they ruthlessly engage in fighting for him, it will mean that they are co-omnipotent with God. But since they will immediately deny these views, the only rational consequence is the view that the adherents are more intelligent and more powerful than their God because it would appear that their God is less intelligent, omniscient, and in fact, impotent. If they further deny this position, in the face of insecurity foisted on the world by terrorists motivated by a religious ideology, then it will be argued that they do not either know God and his nature or they cannot separate God from their type of religion, which means, consequently, that the adherents are necessarily less in intelligence or are limited in knowledge.

CONCEPT OF GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

The scriptures of various religions do not set out to define God. His existence and goodness are taken for granted, but efforts are geared towards making his creative prowess known, as well as his attributes. Richard Swinburne (1977, 3) understands God

as a "person without a body (i.e., a spirit) who is eternal, free, able to do anything, knows everything, is perfectly good, is the proper object of human worship and obedience, the creator and sustainer of the universe." Swinburne embodies both the nature and attributes of God, delineating among others that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and "omnibenevolent." God's nature and attributes are a matter of philosophical debates: while the theists insist that these are irreducibly true, the atheists deny the existence of God and his attributes altogether. The attributes of God as good, omnipotent, and omniscient are a constant invitation to controversies, most especially within the purview of the problem of evil. The defence of the compatibility of a good God with the prevalence of evil has some logical problemsthat theists try to overcome through the gristmill of functionality of evil. But the nonbelievers argue that the attributes of God do not logically cohere with the reality of evil.

The traditional understanding of omnipotence is that God has illimitable power such that since he exists he can do all things. William Rowe (2005, 16) argues that the history of the three Western monotheistic religions does not suggest that omnipotence is a fundamental aspect of God's divine nature. In other words, the omnipotent attribute of God should be viewed squarely from evolutionary accretion, a later development in the course of the history of these religions. (To accept this means that God is denied the attribute of immutability). According to Rowe, the heinous actions carried out in God's name, or at his prompting, for example, the charge given to King Saul to annihilate all the Amalekites, gives an impression of a tribal God, who is limited in power, knowledge, and goodness. Rowe (2005, 16) continues:

> And just as in the youthful periods of these three great religions one can find indications that God was then thought to be something less than an omnipotent, perfectly good, omniscient being, so too in the modern period one can find views of God, even among prominent theologians, that are clearly departures from the dominant conception of God in the great religions of the West.

In fact, just as the Israelites fought for and in the name of God, resulting in the argument of God's impotence and limitedness, so this argument is with those today fighting for and in the name of God.

John Mackie (1955, 200-12) argues that omnipotence is logically inconsistent with the existence of evil. As long as the problem of evil exists, he argues that theologians must forego one of the essential qualities of God. To insist that omnipotence, omniscience, and goodness are perfectly inseparable is practically and logically impossible. In his argument on the paradox of omnipotence, Mackie makes it clear that what is being fronted is not the functionality of evil—that there is even a modicum of evil that eventually will result in some good, which in itself is a limitation of God's power—but that the problem is a logical one that the theologians have not been able to adequately (logically) respond to. Until the logical logjam is clear, he concludes, it is not possible for God to enjoy an unqualified omnipotence.

Rowe (2001, 26) argues that the problem of evil is a serious indictment on the claim of the existence of God. According to him, evil is immediately incompatible with any God, let alone a good one. If the God who loved the Israelites so much as to order them

to destroy the Amalekites and others is omnipotent, one should think that he should have prevented the death of six million Jews in the Holocaust. But he did not; there is simply no justification for it and, therefore, it is only probable that God exists. In another breath, Rowe steps up his argument that if God exists and he is omnipotent, given that omnipotence implies the ability to do all things, God's inability to do what is logically impossible is clearly a limitation of his powers. In other words, God can only do what is logically possible and not otherwise. In his (2001, 20) own words:

> So, God is not omnipotent. Various solutions to this paradox have been offered. The solution favored here is perhaps the simplest. Given that God is omnipotent, it is impossible that there should be an object so heavy he cannot lift it. Therefore, a solution to the paradox is that God cannot create a stone so heavy he cannot lift it, for it is logically impossible for there to be a stone—or any other object, for that matter—that God is unable to lift. And, as we have seen above, it is no limitation of power to be unable to bring about something that is logically impossible. For power extends only to what is possible.

Gbenga Fasiku (2010, 78) opines that one logical way to rest the argument of a good, knowing, powerful. and loving God in the face of evil is to argue that omnipotence implies in itself the ability to bring about both good and evil. God, he argues, is not fully known by the theists except what they claim he does or reveals to them. As such, there are relativistic conceptions of God from different theistic religious traditions. Since God is not totally known, and there are relativistic conceptions of him, it therefore means that "there is no argument to show that God is certainly or necessarily a good God who will not admit evil." He points out that if the theists reject this argument they must be prepared to accept to withdraw the logically inconsistent attributes they hold on to. As he (2010, 78) puts it:

> ...if this conclusion is denied, then we must be ready to withdraw the three attributes ascribed to God: he has no power of his own to do and undo, given his infinite cognitive capacity, he cannot know beyond the sphere of human knowledge, and we must also accept that he is not the creator of all that exists. Since no theists would accept these conclusions, a safer conclusion is that God is a God of "evil."

Mackie's, Rowe's and Fasiku's argument on the incompatibility of evil with a good, loving, and powerful God is not new, however. The logical problem that this argument has drawn has also been substantially resolved such that most atheists have come to realize the frailty of stressing the logical inconsistency of a good God and the existence of evil. Largely, it has been shown that evil does not rule out the existence of God in the scheme of things but rather it affirms his existence. J. P. Moreland and William Craig (2003, 552) have suggested that the intellectual problem of evil has been "solved," i.e. "philosophically resolved." Those atheists who still pursue this aspect of the problem of evil may yet come to realize that the burden of proof rests with them. They (2003, 552) assert:

Today this version of the problem has been almost universally given up because the burden of proof of demonstrating that there is no possibility at all of the existence of God and the (observed) evil is just too heavy for the atheist to bear.

In fact, Daniel Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann (2004, 13-25), using the "Noseeum" logic dispel Rowe's argument that the presence of evil negates the existence of God. According to them, that there is no seeable reason for suffering, which the atheist counts against the existence of God, does not imply that there is actually no good reason even though such reason may not be obvious, nor that human logical argument for the presence of evil put paid to the existence of a good and powerful God. As Moreland and Craig (2003, 552) point out, the concentration should be more on the emotional impact of evil when someone truly suffers and knows where it hurts. Again, they are quick to offer to those in this category that what is important is not simply pursuing "why" the suffering occurs, but "how" to overcome it. This is obtainable through sharing and counseling, on the basis of Christ-events, and lays to rest the argument of gratuitous evil.

Makumba (2006, 174) distinguishes between active and passive potency. *Passive potency* is understood as the capacity to be changed by another's action (which clearly does not relate with God), whereas *active potency* depicts "the principle of movement in another as other," i.e. , "the capacity to operate." It follows, therefore, that active potency is the capacity of God to act on others. From here, Makumba (2006, 175) defines God's omnipotence as the fact that there is an active capacity in him to act on others. Because he is all-powerful, he can do all things, i.e., all possible things "without falling into absurdities." In its infinite sense, it means that there is no limit to the effects of the active potency of God. He (2006, 175) says: "God's omnipotence is not in reference to his being but to whatever things that are possible to his power absolutely speaking." In order to avoid the contradiction inherent in being able to do only possible things, Makumba illuminates that God can do those things that fall beneath his divine power, i.e., "any object that has the intelligibility of being is among his absolute possibles." Since God's being is not limited to any class of being, his power extends to all beings that have the nature of being. It is only nonbeing that is opposed to being. Therefore, God being omnipotent, his power does not extend to objects that involve contradiction, "not because there is any defect on the part of God but because there is a defect on the part of the object. God cannot make what is absolutely impossible not because of lack of active power but because of the impossibility of the thing itself."

Finally, Geoffrey Bourton Keene (2013) defends the omnipotence of God. According to him, the negative response to the question "Can God create a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it?" is consistent with divine omnipotence. Put differently, a being that is unable to create a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it might nevertheless be omnipotent. What Keene does is to understand that the negative answer to the question can be recast in many ways apart from the atheist framing of it. For example, "God cannot create a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it," "There is no rock such that God can create it but cannot lift it," and "Any rock that God can create, God can lift." Since each of these statements is logically equivalent, and they do not all mean less the same thing, the negative answer to the question "Can God create a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it?"

is inconsistent with divine omnipotence merely because of its grammatical format. It is only because this answer begins "God cannot…" that it seems to deny a power to God. When the answer to the question is recast in a negative format, it exposes its true linguistic appearance. Nevertheless, "God cannot create a rock so heavy that he cannot lift it" apparently denies God a certain ability, namely the ability to create a certain rock, "Any rock that God can create, God can lift...clearly attributes to God a wide-ranging ability, namely the ability to lift any rock that he can create. It affirms, rather than denies, God's power"

IS MAN ALSO OMNIPOTENT?

Generally, the idea of human omnipotence has been dominating in vociferous attempts by scientists to play God by delving into God's awesome secrets and trying to create human beings, though not *ex nihilo*; or by politicians who have created a political myth whereby they do not just make reference to God but practically and insidiously assume God's position over their subjects; in fictitious movies in which actors achieve weird feats by creatively assuming omnipotence (Igboin 2013, 159-74). This present enterprise is focused on how religious fundamentalists and fanatics have displaced God and assumed omnipotence. Makumba (2006, 14) presents another sense of the assumption of being or playing God. He contends that contemporary philosophy tries to undermine God and in the process assumes his position. Critically viewing such philosophical ideologies as Marxism, existentialism, structuralism, etc., "there has been witnessed a passage from God as the Absolute and Eternal, to the human person, who on attempting to take his place, wants to become the key player and basis of the meaning of being and the basis of value." Makumba's (2006, 14) position here may be referred to as interstruggle to assume God. Put differently, Makumba (2006, 16) observes that there is a steady move for secular ideological strands to take over the place of God in the heart and consciousness of humans. This struggle is coming from outside; it is a rejection of the God of religion and a projection of the God of ideology as the new bearer of omnipotence, where omnipotence in the latter sense enjoys the attributes being denied to the former. This can be gleaned from Nietzsche's declaration of the "death of God" and the "rain of gods." By this event is meant the disappearance of the idea and reality of God among peoples. This is an ideological pursuit. And that is why he says that "the problem of God is a human problem. It belongs to human nature to seek the Absolute." But the sense in which human omnipotence is manifested in our discourse here is in an intrareligious realm, i.e., within a religious space or a "religio-sphere." Hence it is not a contention between religion and secularism.

So, when one talks about human omnipotence, one talks in the context of power since by omnipotence we mean illimitable quanta of power at the disposal of a being to do anything. Invariably, by human omnipotence there is an assumption of power by those who believe and exercise such power, an idea of unlimited and unquestionable power capable of doing any conceivable thing, which in political parlance would be referred to as "absolute power." But this is not without implications. Since God is traditionally believed to be omnipotent, and now the fanatics assume such attribute, they may be said to be playing God. Broadly, "playing" means acting like someone else or imitating another; in another sense it means practically taking the role of the other or

performing the role reserved originally for the other. "Playing God" would then mean that either one was imitating God or doing things God did or does. The epistemological query that some scientists have posed is: how do we know those things reserved only for God to perform? Joseph Fletcher thinks that there is nothing reserved for God exclusively. According to Fletcher (1997), as cited by Crispinous Iteyo (2009, 74):

> ...the old God's sacralistic inhibitions on human freedom and research can no longer be submitted to…. The old God who was believed to have a monopoly on control of birth and death, allowing for no human responsibility in either initiating or terminating life was a primitive "God of the gaps," a mysterious and awesome deity who filled the gaps of our knowledge and of the control which our knowledge gives.

In the context of this enterprise, playing God has to do with acting as God in the determination of those believed to be lesser children of God and are, therefore, fit only for annihilation. The religious epistemological question that immediately comes to mind is whether God is omnipotent in the light of the reality of inveterate religious recrudescence in global space. This question is relevant as we shall show later because to insist that God mandates a small fanatical or fundamentalist group to haul to death thousands of God's own children who belong to a different faith other than theirs means first and foremost the denial of God's infinite and omnipotent attribute. Put differently, if God is infinite and omnipotent, his creatures must necessarily be finite and powerless; to claim otherwise is to deny God infinity and omnipotence, and to assume these attributes. Or one asks whether creating insecurity, using one's God-given capacities on the basis of belief in a God, amounts to playing God. In fact, playing God generally demonstrates a context of power, whether subtle or raw.

Choan Seng Song (1982, 110) suggests that the power-conception of God by adherents has a serious influence on human behaviour. According to him, a conception of a "high-voltage God" or "high-voltage theology" gives the impression that "power has been stored up, and we must be on our guard" because ours is "a highly charged deity, a dangerous God." This accentuation of power means that its exercise is inevitable. Song submits further that such conception of power creates critical boundaries between believers and nonbelievers. Its usual consequence is "a militant theology that defends God from pagan gods and draws a clear line between salvation and damnation." Only few lucky pagans can escape from such aggressive theology and mission. The result is the widespread insecurity that has engulfed global space.

Douglas Hall (1986, 96-98) notes that the conception of unqualified "conquest" is resonate in all religions. The power mentality creates a macho kind of God, conceived characteristically in masculine terms. This conception of power is culturally conditioned such as the socialisation process stresses in a boy, for example, to be bold, physical, self-confident, leading, intellectual, and imposing. Such approach immediately regards compassion, gentleness, meekness, humility, etc., as weak and belonging to the feminine mystique. "The masculine mystique" does not accentuate "the courage of thought" but rather gravitates towards "might is right." The power mentality deliberately or ignorantly rejects the fact that there are such problems that power alone cannot solve. And when one delves deeper, one can find out that the

drive behind such power mentality is a deep-seated frustration. Hall (1986, 96-98) continues:

> Even the most macho of males (and females) experience such situations, and it may well be asked whether their resort to power and brute force is not frequently a consequence of their frustration over knowing in the depths of their souls that power does not change anything but usually only complicates existing problems.

But why do they find joy in exacerbating the problems?

One bold thinking here is that believers uphold the belief that it is only God that is omnipotent. In other words, they concede to God the attribute of omnipotence. They will therefore contend with any idea that equates them with God, though this seems now to be only theoretical. Since God can do all things, then they cannot do all things. Therefore, if they believe that only God is omnipotent, it means he does not need human intervention to achieve his purpose whatsoever. But if omnipotence would imply that God can be helped to achieve his purpose, as in killing for and in his name, it means that an omnipotent God does not exist. But the religious terrorists will not accept this conclusion. Then let us see if they can completely and successfully refute it.

HUMAN CLAIM TO OMNIPOTENCE AND DEFENDERS OF GOD

We start by making certain assumptions: (1) There is only one God; (2) There is only one universe created by one God; (3) All people in the universe belong to one God, the creator; (4) Therefore, all people irrespective of their religious inclinations and affiliations constitute the family of God; and (5) family members generally love or ought to love each other. It seems that these assumptions will work only in a monogamous sense. But the reality of intra-religious, inter-religious, and global religious terrorism hardly encapsulates these assumptions. In fact, assumption (1)-(5) will only be valid if and only if there is no intra-religious violence as, for example, in Northern Ireland where Catholics and Protestants engaged in fatal mistrust, or in Rwanda where members of particular churches killed one another because they belonged to different ethnic groups. Instances of inter-religious violence abound in places such as in the original India, where the country was later divided into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan, and recently in Sudan, where the north is predominantly Muslim while the south, predominatly Christian. The inveterate inter-religious recrudescence that has characterized the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria also clearly depicts an idea of a polygynous conception of God's family. This line of thinking can be sustained only if we assume that God is one and various religions are just manifestations or ways of reaching him. But this idea is hardly pragmatic when we juxtapose and contextualize the fact that there are irreconcilable claims to different Gods with the same or similar characteristics. The assumptions of the latter polygenous concept are: (a) My God is the one and only God; (b) My God is the creator of the one and only universe; (c) All people in the world originally belonged to my God; (d) Those who have strayed from the family of my God must be brought back either by persuasion or violence; and (e) it is

only then that there can be a unique and comprehensive family of God, that prevails in interreligious interaction or "a religio-sphere." We can further assume on the basis of the inter-religious and intra-religious violence that (i) There is more than one God, (ii) There is one universe whose map has been demarcated by the adherents of the different religions, (iii) This universe of adherents of different religions is fluid depending on conversion by whatever means, (iv) There are families of god(s), and (v) there is no love in the families of god(s).

Each of the three sets of five assumptions leads us to ask if Allah, God, Olodumare, Buddha, or Yahweh is a Muslim, Christian, Traditionalist, Buddhist, Jew? If he is one or all of them, who was he before his revelations in history? These questions may lead to the answer that God is limited in his knowledge of the history of the various adherents, and each individual god assumes his omnipotence on the basis of the belief of their adherents. If this is so, then God cannot be one and therefore he cannot be a universal being, nor an omnipotent one. It will also mean that the areas of jurisdiction of each god expand in the only universe on the basis of conversion through whatever means employed by their adherents. This clearly is a limitation of a one true God.

Segun Gbadegesin (2012, 64), while reacting to the gruesome murder of Chris Stevens, the American ambassador to Libya and others, questioned the logic of deity defenders and prophet protectors thus:

My God has been abused or demeaned.
It is right and proper to defend the defenceless.
My God is defenceless.
Therefore, it is right to defend my God.
Defending my God requires inflicting harm on the abuser.
Therefore it is right to inflict harm on the abuser.

Gbadegesin argues that the above conclusion may not be acceptable to the religious fanatics. But to pursue a rational argument implies that we follow the argument to its logical conclusion. In doing so, the claim of ignorance cannot be substantiated or accepted. That is why he believes that the fanatics are "as rational as everyone else" because their operations suggest systematic plan and execution. As he (2012, 64) argues:

…let the truth of the first premise be assumed—God has been abused and demeaned. And let us grant the truth of the principle that it is right and proper to defend the defenceless. The third premise of the argument which appears to present God as a defenceless being is one of two premises that appear to violate the logic of good judgement. Stating that God is defenceless, for all intents and purposes, appears to be more blasphemous than the original act of blasphemy that the deity defender is determined to protest. For it detracts from the omnipotence of God and presents human pretenders to power and strength as superior to the deity.

The picture of God painted by fanatics is one of a weak God. If the conclusion is true that God is a defenceless God who needs human edifice and arsenals to defend him, it stands to reason that confidence in such a God is misplaced; therefore, it is absurd to

believe in a weak, defenceless God. But if this is rejected as false, and it is assumed to be really false, then it will mean that the religious fanatics are doing work which God can do for himself. Therefore, they are playing God, by creating a self-serving image of God or making God in their own finite image.

On the second premise, Gbadegesin (2012, 64) points out that the means and instruments of defending God betray an omnipotent God: "...defending my God requires inflicting harm on the abuser." If you wonder why this statement is assumed, the answer is that it is the only way to make sense of the violence that has become an integral part of any protest against what deity defenders and prophet protectors consider an abuse of their God. One wonders further whether it is not absurd to inflict harm or injury on the innocent who are not responsible for the abuse of God. Or, it can be said that such an act is a violation of the principle of justice, which is a limitation of omnipotence. To believe otherwise, the fanatics must leave to God the sole omnipotence!

CONCLUSION

The foregoing arguments on the omnipotence of God point out some salient facts that the theists must contend with if the resolutions proffered thus far must be sustained. First, more often than not, the rejection of God's omnipotence is hinged on human wickedness towards its kind on the claim that God has commanded such acts of wickedness. Second, the actual performance of such wicked acts suggests that there is a limitation of God's power; that God cannot perform such acts without human intervention. Third, such wicked acts therein performed by human beings, which God (supposedly) cannot perform suggests that God is less powerful than human beings. Fourth, therefore, it can be suggested that human beings are the "brain" and "arms" of God, who think for God and actually defend him, leading to the conclusion that God, the creator is weaker than his creatures. Fifth, human beings can, consequent upon the foregoing, lay claim to omnipotence while God cannot. Or, sixth, human beings are coomnipotent with God since they share in the power of God.

The only way that the omnipotence of God can be maintained exclusively is described in Judges 6:29-32 of the Bible. Gideon is accused of iconoclasm and the penalty for this is death. The people demand Joash, Gideon's father to bring out his son, who has destroyed the grove of their gods. Joash suggests that since God is omnipotent, he should be allowed, and able to defend himself (through Gideon) since by understanding and belief an omnipotent being must and should be able to defend himself against abuse or attack. Hence the religious or spiritual war should be among the gods assuming that there are many who created the same one universe. By accepting this, omnipotence will have been ascribed to God while adherents assume their rightful powerless state before God.

NOTE

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