

Discuss as much as you can the various ways of knowing God and explain briefly the difference between the God's physical essence, and metaphysical essence.

### Introduction

Ways of knowing God.

- Causality
- Negative
- Essence.
- Analogical.

God's Physical Essence

God's Metaphysical Essence.

Conclusion.

## INTRODUCTION.

The establishment of the fact that God exists as the first cause of beings raises various questions such as "can the intellect know what this first cause of being is, is it possible for the intellect to arrive by its own natural sources at a true knowledge of God's essence?"

Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica* states that "We cannot know what God is but only what He is not". For him, though it is a negative form of knowledge it is not sterile because it enables us to distinguish God from other beings, it also helps us to do away with many false notions about God.

### The proper object of

Therefore, we are going to discuss exhaustively on the various ways through which man can come to the knowledge of God, and also differentiate between his physical essence and his metaphysical essences.

## WAYS OF KNOWING GOD.

The proper object of man's knowledge is the sensible.

Only the sensible can man know directly, indirectly

and discursively. Since, God is an immaterial being, it follows that man cannot attain to a knowledge of God except by learning upon knowledge of material reality.

In finite beings, there are two distinct types of knowledge, depending on the mode of existence of the object. They are natural knowledge (connatural) or proper knowledge and connatural knowledge, which is obtained indirectly from the knowledge of beings whose modes of existence are proportioned and convertible to the knower. By connatural knowledge or non proper knowledge of man, we mean the imperfect and indirect knowledge of an object not proportioned to the intellect.

There are three major way we can arrive at a true but imperfect knowledge of the divine essence. They include; Causality, Negation and Eminence. There is also analogical way of knowing God.

### BY CAUSALITY.

Here, we can come to the know God analogously

through the way we know material substances through its accidents. Accidents form a composition with their substances. Substance is related to its accidents as potency to act. But there is neither accident nor composition nor potency in God.

Since substance causes its accidents, there exists between a substance and its accidents a proportion of cause to effect. Also, a substance is more perfect and of a higher order of being than the accidents it causes.

Thus, while God has no accidents, we can say that there are certain things that manifest God, and these are his effects or the place of accidents.

### BY NEGATION

This consists in denying God every sort of imperfection and in attributing to him the corresponding perfections in such a manner that they apply to him alone. Even these perfections are found in creatures, but they are always limited.

There is a limitation on all creaturely beings, whether material or spiritual beings because of their

nature. However, there is no limitation in God's substance.

Strictly speaking, we observe the way of negation in many expressions used to designate the perfections peculiar to God alone; for instance, - Unchangeable, uncaused, infinite, immense, unlimited. His perfection is expressed on these negative manner which shows unlimited perfection.

#### By EMINENCE.

By Eminence, it argues that just as all imperfection must be denied of God, so also all pure perfections must be ascribed to God on a specie superlative degree. without any kind of limitation.

Hence all <sup>Pure</sup> perfections in God are without limit and are infinite. Thus, we speak of God as being infinitely good, infinitely wise, omniscient and also omnipresent.

To distinguish the goodness of goodness of God from the order of creatures, we say that God is infinitely good, good without limit because that is what God's

goodness is and is applied to God. This is also applied to knowledge and every other perfections.

### ANALOGICAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Many perfections are in a sense common to God and to creatures, for instance substantiality or intelligence is common to both God and man. However, they differ in degree when attributed to God than man.

A term applied ~~nominally~~, identifies that it is identical in all realities to which it is applied. If it such terms are applied equivocally, it implies that it has different meaning for various realities. However, when a term is applied analogously, it is applied to things that are not alike but related hence its own it need not have a meaning that is partly the same and partly different.

When referring to perfections common to God and creatures, we do not make use of apply the equivocal means of knowing a term nor the nominal terms. They <sup>means</sup> eight terms are analogical since they are partly the same and partly different.

This implies that we can ~~know~~ know God by

analogically apply terms which are partly the same and partly different between the perfections of God and creature.

### DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHYSICAL ESSENCE AND METAPHYSICAL ESSENCE OF GOD

#### - PHYSICAL ESSENCE.

A physical essence is an essence in so far as it is, or can be something on the order of reality, independent of the consideration of the mind contemplating it. The term physical must not be interpreted in the sense of material although it is the sense in which it is frequently used.

The physical essence of an angel is its simple substantial entity, excluding all accidental reality modifying the substance.

#### - METAPHYSICAL ESSENCE

A metaphysical essence is an essence consisting of all those elements which are necessary for the concept of the ~~best~~ being. It is the sum total of the

various grades of Being which constitute a thing in the concept of the mind.

By the metaphysical essence of God we understand God's essence, not as it exists objectively in itself but as Man's mind can signify it by a definition or quasi-definition to it and to all other beings and the element differentiating it from all other being.

### Major Difference

While the physical essence of God refers to a quasi-definition of the essence of God as it exists objectively in itself, Metaphysical essence deals with the reality of God's being which for Man's thought, must be considered to be the root-principle of all realities which can be predicated of God, that is it refers to the primary and foremost characteristic by which man recognizes God as God.

### Conclusion