

A CRITIQUE OF A THEISTIC PARADOX

The Illusion of God's Necessities and Nature



Emrah BOZKURT

May 2025

Abstract

This article discusses the ontological and epistemological limits of the human attempt to understand God and existence in general. The human mind is confined to its own perceptual tools when accessing knowledge, and this limitation becomes especially apparent when reflecting on a transcendent being such as God. The concepts we use in reference to God—such as “will,” “consciousness,” and “power”—are anthropocentric; they correspond not to God’s true nature but to the limits of our understanding.

Rejecting views that depict God as being in a state of continuous creation, the article argues that God’s creative act stems not from His nature but from His will. Attributing a “nature” to God reduces Him to a necessary and determined being; yet God is a “formless ground” existing in a state of absolute freedom, beyond all forms and necessities. Consequently, every thought we form about God is merely a representation shaped by our limited comprehension, not God Himself.

Keywords: God, God’s Nature, Concept of God, Metaphysics, Philosophy, Truth, Ontology, Epistemology, Anthropomorphism, Theism, Will, Consciousness

Introduction

In the human effort to understand existence, one always confronts two fundamental dimensions: what existence is (ontology) and what, and how, one can know about this existence (epistemology). This distinction is not merely the subject of abstract philosophical debate; it is also a basic framework that reveals the limits and inclinations of the human mind. For in reaching knowledge, the human being depends not only on the objective reality of the external world but also on their own modes of cognition—that is, the mental instruments that make understanding possible while simultaneously limiting it. These limits become even more pronounced when reflecting on a transcendent being such as God. The idea of God brings together both the highest level of the search for meaning and the deepest boundaries of knowledge. Therefore, every discussion conducted about God is not merely a portrayal or claim concerning Him; it also reveals the human mind itself and its capacity to know.

The Limits of Human Consciousness and Comprehension

The human being's relationship with existence is shaped fundamentally along two main axes: the ontological (concerning being) and the epistemological (concerning knowledge). Yet the human effort to understand existence mostly remains within an epistemological boundary. Human beings attempt to grasp the external world through their senses, language, concepts, and reason. This effort is limited by nature, for the formation of knowledge is always dependent on the structures, languages, and presuppositions of the human mind. We grasp the ontological—*“what it is”*—not directly, but by interpreting the traces it leaves in our minds.

This becomes especially evident when approaching the concept of God. In theistic traditions, God is generally defined as a transcendent, absolute being, independent of time and space. However, our understanding of this notion is shaped entirely by our epistemic capacity. The concepts we use when speaking about God—such as “will,” “consciousness,” “power,” “to will”—are all anthropocentric and necessarily representational. They correspond not to God's nature but to the limits of our capacity to understand. Therefore, attaining any absolute knowledge about God is impossible; what we can attain are merely limited representations.

This awareness requires acknowledging that every theory about God—whether theistic or atheistic—is a representational system. In this sense, every conceptual framework we develop concerning the nature of God is actually a reflection of our own way of relating to existence.

It is at this point that a problematic tendency within theistic thought becomes particularly noticeable: conceiving God as a being who is in constant creation, intervening, planning, and acting. This perspective often, and usually without awareness, transforms God into a kind of mechanical system operator, attributing to Him a human-like consciousness and intentionality. A conception of God who continuously creates new universes, sends revelation at certain times, and selects prophets implies a God bound to a temporal sequence and acting due to external causes.

An example of this can be found in certain cosmological theistic theories. Especially within modern theism, views that associate God with a continuous process of creation—such as the *“Multiverse Theodicy”*—position God almost like a system administrator. Each universe

is interpreted as a deliberate creation of God; every event is seen as His direct intervention. This inevitably portrays God as a being who operates within a time and order external to Himself, almost as though He has tasks to perform.

Yet such understandings reduce God to the frameworks of our own comprehension. The idea of a God in a constant state of creation leads to the perception that creation itself is an inherent necessity for Him. The critique here is not a rejection of God's creative act; rather, it is a critique of conceiving creation as dependent on a cause external to God, thereby imagining Him within an external system. This removes God from being a transcendent being and assigns Him a mechanical, systematic structure.

Therefore, the central emphasis of this section is the following: No matter how much we conceptualize God, our effort is shaped by our epistemological limits. Certain theistic approaches, unaware of these limits, attempt to explain God through processes of creation and intervention, thereby reducing Him to an anthropomorphic and system-bound being. Such approaches must be critically re-evaluated.

The Question of God's Nature

A frequently encountered claim in philosophical discussions about the concept of God is this: that God must, by His very nature, be in a state of continuous creation. In this view, God's act of creating is understood not as the result of His will but as an action that necessarily occurs due to His nature. Thus, God's act of creation ceases to be a voluntary, will-based decision and becomes an inevitable consequence of His existence.

We object to this approach. For this view produces a contradiction between God's creative act and His other will-based actions (such as choosing a prophet or sending revelation to a community). For if God is in a state of continuous creation by necessity of His nature, then this means that the act takes place outside His will—compulsorily. But such a state of necessity would imply that God cannot perform any other action voluntarily. In other words, expecting both necessary creation and choice-based intervention from the same essence is contradictory.

To claim that God has any kind of nature is, in fact, to unknowingly place Him within a particular form, a particular structure, or even a temporal process. Yet we argue that God is beyond all such conceptual forms. God does not possess a "*nature*" because to have a nature means to possess a specific property, form, potential, or restricted mode of operation. And this would impose a limit within God Himself. However, God exists prior to and beyond all forms; He is the "*formless ground*" that exists before the emergence of time and space, encompassing and containing all things.

At this point, we must emphasize that all the concepts we inevitably use when referring to "God" are nothing more than representations. Concepts such as "*will*," "*consciousness*," "*power*," "*to will*," "*mercy*," "*to create*" do not reflect God's essence but only the modes we are capable of perceiving. With our limited minds, we can think of God only through such representations. But these representations are not God's reality; they are meanings we construct about God.

This understanding allows us to conceive God as a formless ground. Formlessness here does not mean "*being nothing*." It means being within and beyond everything, not being

confined to any form, being the source of all forms and possibilities. In this respect, God is a *state* that grounds both being and non-being, that stands above time and space, that contains everything yet is reducible to nothing.

For this reason, God's act of creating becomes possible through His will, not through a necessity arising from His nature. God creates if He wills; He does not create if He does not will. He decides something or does not decide it. Everything falls under His absolute authority; but this authority depends not on any external or internal necessity—it depends on His absolute transcendence beyond all forms.

Here, language becomes insufficient; because to define God “as a being” is itself an incomplete representation. Hence we say “a being,” but what we truly mean is God as the ground that precedes and transcends all beings, that sustains and encompasses them. To speak of being “before” something is also expressed through temporal language, yet God exists in a state prior even to time itself. Therefore, His nature is not a “nature” in any sense we can understand.

The point we defend in this section is this: attributing a nature to God transforms Him into an inevitable and determined being. Yet we conceive God as a formless ground existing in a state of absolute freedom, beyond all forms, making creation possible solely through His will. This approach offers a model in which God encompasses reality both transcendently and immanently—but this model is, ultimately, a representation produced by our limited language and comprehension. God remains beyond representation.

The Theistic Paradox

One of the most fundamental mistakes made about God is attributing a “*nature*” to Him—meaning the belief that God possesses some unchanging and necessary properties in His essence, and that these properties require Him to be in a state of continuous creation. Although this approach may seem at first glance to exalt God, it actually produces a profound contradiction that limits His absolute freedom and transcendence.

Theists often argue that God is in a continuous state of creation by necessity of His nature. For them, this creation arises inevitably as a result of God's power, mercy, or existence. However, the idea of necessary, continuous creation directly contradicts His conscious and will-based actions—such as sending revelation to a particular community under particular conditions. If God must constantly create, then this creation is not based on His will but on a compulsory mechanism. In that case, God cannot create by choosing and when He wills. This would nullify His will altogether. Thus, a major contradiction emerges between the idea of *continuous creation* and the idea of *conscious action*. And this contradiction constitutes a paradox at the very heart of theistic thought.

At the root of this contradiction lies an even deeper illusion: what is called God's nature is often confused with the nature of the universe. When humans look at the universe, they observe certain regularities, laws, and causal patterns. These structures give the impression of rationality, system, and coherence. But this impression belongs solely to the human's limited epistemological perspective. Humans can understand the nature of the universe only through observation and experience. But God is not an entity that can be observed or experienced.

Therefore, the concept of divine nature constructed by theists is essentially a projection of the universe's structures onto God. In other words, theists mistake the nature of the universe for the nature of God.

Here we encounter a serious confusion. God is the ground that precedes the universe, that creates the universe itself, and that even initiates time and space. From our standpoint, God is a reality outside forms, laws, structures, and all causal relations. Thus, attributing a nature to God means binding Him to something and imposing limits upon Him. Yet a being that is formless and absolute cannot be defined by an internal necessity such as a nature. For nature implies having a specific structure by necessity. And this directly contradicts God's being free, transcendent, and without limitation.

Seeing God as the source of universal laws is one thing; thinking that God Himself functions like those laws is something completely different—and problematic. This problem arises from the tendency to approach God using concepts familiar to the human mind—nature, law, order—in an attempt to make Him more understandable. But such an approach does not reveal God's absoluteness and transcendence; it merely transforms Him into a mirror reflecting the boundaries of the human mind.

Therefore, saying that God has no nature does not mean that He is random or chaotic. On the contrary, it expresses that God cannot be confined to any limit, necessity, form, or structure—that He is absolutely free and all-encompassing. God is a formless ground beyond time and space, above all possibilities and modes of existence. He is the source of everything, yet resembles nothing. All definitions we construct about Him are mere representations—products of our attempts to explain with the mind. On the level of reality, none of these representations can fully express God Himself.

This is precisely the paradox into which theistic thought falls: while attempting to define God, they actually pull Him into human limitations. Thus they lose His transcendence and also become unable to explain His will-based actions. A being in a state of constant necessary creation cannot be reconciled with a God who makes conscious choices. This inconsistency is the fundamental logical flaw created by attributing a nature to God.

Consciousness and Will

When speaking about God, it is inevitable to say that He is a being with consciousness and will. However, at this point, there are significant differences between what we understand by the concepts of “consciousness” and “will,” and God's absolute consciousness and will. To grasp this difference, we must first consider the epistemological gap between the human mode of knowing and God's level of existence. As human beings, we perform the act of knowing within the limits of a finite mind and within the conditions of time and space. Our consciousness depends on experience, perception, and formed beings. God, however, is beyond all these conditions.

When we speak of “consciousness” here, we are not referring to any process of thinking or perceiving. This consciousness is one that is identical with truth itself. The essence of all beings lies within this consciousness. This consciousness is not only the knower but also the creator, the transformer, and the all-encompassing reality. In other words, God's consciousness

is an absolute consciousness that encompasses the entirety of existence, lying at the foundation of everything material and immaterial. He is like a ground that lacks form but makes the existence of every form possible. Even the word “*ground*” is a representative expression here. For it is impossible to explain God using any physical concept. This ground is not matter, not energy, not space, and not time. All of these come *after* God. He is the absolute being that depends on none of them and is the source of them all.

The concept of will must likewise be used representationally. Human will often arises from needs, emotions, or external causes. We desire something because we need it or expect some benefit from it. God’s will, however, depends on no cause, no external factor, and no temporal process. God does what He wills simply because He wills it. This state of “willing” does not resemble the desires or goals we are familiar with. When He wills something to be, it comes to be. This willing is based not on need but on absolute power. Thus, creation or action is not a necessity for God, but a voluntary manifestation.

Therefore, although God’s consciousness and will appear to resemble our own concepts, they in fact represent a much deeper and more transcendent reality. Every concept we use can only be a representation. For we are not beings capable of fully comprehending or encompassing God in an absolute sense. Everything we do when defining Him consists of representations produced from the conditions of our own existence. These representations do not directly reflect the truth but point toward it. God should be understood as a formless ground of reality that is independent of all forms and limitations and encompasses the entirety of existence.

Creation and *Tekâmül*

When speaking about God’s creation, the first thing we must understand is that all our thoughts and interpretations on this subject are attempts to read God’s intention. This inevitably leads us to representational narratives and limited modes of understanding. For we are not beings who can directly know God’s absolute reality. All our conclusions are shaped within the limits of the human mind and through experiences embedded in time and space. Therefore, everything stated in this section is an attempt to represent and understand God and creation—*not* absolute truth.

God’s creation depends on His will. As previously stated, this will is not like ours; it does not arise from any need, external influence, or deficiency. He creates simply because He wills to create. This state of willing is not the remedying of a lack, but the manifestation of absolute power. In this context, questions such as “*why did He create?*” or “*why did He create in this way?*” reflect a natural tendency of the human mind. For we seek to understand everything through a cause-and-effect structure. However, when thinking about God, this search for causes is often misleading. What we call a cause is a conceptual tool constructed within time and space. God, however, is a being beyond these boundaries. Therefore, when speaking of God’s creation, it is more appropriate to say that He created “because He willed,” not “because He had a reason.” And there may be no reason for Him *not* to create.

At this point, we must also address the creation narratives found in sacred texts. Of course, these narratives are sources of faith and value. Yet it should not be forgotten that they too are constructed through symbols and analogies that can speak to the human mind. Thus, we

should see the expressions in these texts not as absolute reality itself but as explanations suited to human understanding that point toward that reality.

The idea of *tekâmül*—the gradual development and transformation of being—arises after creation and is considered here in a different context. *Tekâmül* is not independent of God’s creation; it is an extension of His conscious and volitional process. In this sense, *tekâmül* is not a random process nor one that can be explained solely by material evolution. It is a conscious, systematic, and purposeful progression. This is my view, and it is the only absolute assumption in this section: existence is not merely created; it also advances according to a direction, an order, and an orientation. In this progression, all beings—including the human being—are in a state of transformation. Yet this *tekâmül* should not be evaluated through moral categories of good or bad. For *tekâmül* is a process independent of value judgments.

What we call good or bad often changes depending on context, culture, time, and human perception. But God’s creation and *tekâmül* lie far beyond these relative judgments. Thus, the fact that a being or event appears “evil” does not mean its place in *tekâmül* is without value. Perhaps it is a crucial link completing the whole. For this reason, the process of *tekâmül* must be evaluated not through human value criteria but through the holistic structure of existence.

In conclusion, God’s creation and the *tekâmül* of existence are not phenomena we can fully comprehend with our limited mental structure. When thinking about these matters, we must remain aware of the representational nature of our descriptions and of the fact that we do not possess absolute knowledge. Only with this awareness can we approach thinking about God.

Conclusion

A large part of the discussions about God unknowingly conflates two distinct domains of knowledge: knowledge of *God’s existence* and knowledge of *God’s essence*. These two are not the same. The human mind does not struggle greatly in grasping that God exists; for existence, causality, order, consciousness, and meaning incline humans toward a transcendent principle. This inclination can be grounded rationally; God’s existence is a position that can be defended through logical and ontological arguments.

However, God’s *essence*—that is, what He is—remains on a plane the human mind can never fully comprehend. The limit we encounter here is not related to the question of whether God exists but to *what kind of being* He is. When we attempt to comprehend God, we necessarily use our own conceptual tools, language, and limited modes of thought. Everything we articulate with these tools reflects not God Himself but only the representations of Him formed within our minds.

For this reason, our inability to fully grasp God’s essence does not invalidate our knowledge of His existence. Our failure to reach His essence does not mean He is “nonexistent.” On the contrary, this state of incomprehensibility may itself be a sign of His transcendence and absoluteness. God is beyond the forms with which we try to represent Him. We speak of Him using concepts such as “will,” “power,” and “consciousness,” but these concepts reflect not God’s true reality but only the forms in which we are capable of understanding. Thus, there is a fundamental distinction between knowing that God exists and knowing what God is: the former is possible and can rest on rational grounds; the latter is absolutely impossible, for every

expression of knowledge is shaped by the limits of human epistemology and therefore can only apprehend through representational models.

This distinction is not merely a theoretical subtlety; it requires awareness of the limits of all theological and philosophical models developed about God. When speaking of God, knowing that we are representing His essence rather than grasping it fully forms the basis of a humble approach that acknowledges the limits of human knowledge while aiming to know God better. This also strengthens the philosophical grounding of a model that conceives God as absolute formlessness and freedom: whatever we say about Him, He is always more than what is said.