

## Homework Questions for 22. May, 2008

(to be turned in; please type your answers and include the questions)

“God was the exalted father, and the longing for the father was the root of the need for religion.” ~ Freud<sup>1</sup>

“Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists.” ~ Lewis<sup>2</sup>

1) What influence did your parents have on your worldview?

2) What characteristics would you wish God to have if He existed? Are these similar to the characteristics of an ideal parent? How or how not?

3) In Freud’s view, belief in God arises out of a deep-seated, powerful wish for an omnipotent Father: “When a human being has himself grown up...he is in possession of greater strength, but his insight into the perils of life has also grown greater...he still remains just as helpless and unprotected as he was in his childhood....Even now, therefore, he cannot do without the protection which he enjoyed as a child.”<sup>3</sup>  
Does wishing for God mean that He does or does not exist?

4) In his analysis of himself and his patients, Freud discovered ambivalent feelings directed toward the father. “Freud asserts that one’s ambivalence toward parental authority—especially the positive feelings of that ambivalence—forms the basis of one’s deep-seated wish for God.”<sup>4</sup>  
Might strong negative feelings toward one’s father (or parental authority in general) lead to the wish that God not exist?

5) Have we created God in the image of an Exalted Father? Or has God created us, together with our concept of the “ideal” parent that resembles Him?

(Adapted from the discussion guide to the PBS Series, “The Question of God”)

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<sup>1</sup> Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Book III, Ch. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Freud, “The Question of a Weltanschauung,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, vol. XXII, p. 163.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholi, *The Question of God*, p. 25.