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Psychoanalysis, Monotheism and Imagination: A View from India

The psychoanalytic view of religion has been almost exclusively formed by an engagement with the monotheistic, so-called Abrahamic religions. This paper will examine two of Freud's basic ideas: God as an enormously exalted father and the illusory nature of the religious belief system, from the viewpoint of Hinduism which, like its cousin Buddhism, cannot be fitted into such easy categories as monotheism, polytheism etc. By concentrating on religious ideas and beliefs, psychoanalysis may have missed what is perhaps central to religion's appeal: its intimate connection with the unitive or connective dimension of human imagination.

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