

How Do We Realize God?

Our late revered Vedānta teacher, Swāmī Brahmānandajī, used to say that it is not too bad if you don't understand a truth, the trouble comes when you misunderstand it. For example, Gurudev constantly said that the goal of life is God-realization. That is meant to be understood according to the scriptures which declare that Brahman alone is without a second. God-realization means to make God real. It is not something that the ego accomplishes, something new, rather it is to be understood that we are to make Brahman—who alone is without a second—real in our present experience. If Brahman alone is, whatever we are thinking, whatever we are feeling, whatever we are knowing cannot be anything else except that Brahman alone.

We also quote passages like “Be still and know that I am God.” Be still means the cessation of everything. It doesn't mean knowing a God that we can grasp. It means that the Brahman we see in all these names and forms, that has no second, is actually totally ungraspable. The names and forms that we see are still names and forms. They don't glow with some sort of divinity. Rather, it is more like the blue in the sky. We know that there is no blue in the sky, and yet knowing it, we still see it.

Therefore, to see God in all is not with our outer vision, rather with a vision that knows that God is the essence and fact of all things knowable. It is a conviction, a knowledge. Ultimately, all doubt vanishes, because the ego, the doubter, vanishes. As long as the ego is there, the ego will see differences, but it can be convinced that there are no differences just as it can be convinced that there is no blue in the sky.

Thus, when Gurudev says that God realization is the goal of life, it means to see God, to make God real, in our normal experience. Our normal experience will continue to be as it is, but we are convinced that it is all divine. It is that unknowable God that we discover when we are still. Therefore we do not expect to see it visibly. We know it by conviction. We know it by understanding. We know it by faith. Ultimately, we know it by experience.