

Swami Omkarananda
**God Experience
Here and Now**



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God is the Eternal and Immediate Presence in the Universe and in Human Experience

With each of us, God is as fully and as powerfully present now, as He was with the great founders of the world's imperishable religions. The space around and within us is as completely lit up with the splendid Light of God, as the space was around and within the greatest prophets, saints, sages, mystics of the ancient world. There is no less of God's Presence, Power, Grace, in this hall here and now with us, than there was in the Italian garden where St. Augustine encountered the Divine, nor than there was on the banks of the Jordan, when Jesus emerged from that river, after being baptized by John.

At no period in human history, at no time in our lives, at no point in space, and no moment in time, is God less present. His absence is purely a work of the limitations in perception of the experiencing individual. It is the function of the original sin, the original Self-ignorance and ignorance of the all-pervasive Being in the Universe.

The sun shines on the world no less brilliantly now, than it did a thousand years ago, and though the sun be shining, the blind see it not. They live in darkness and assert that there is no such thing as sunshine and light. The sun does not cease to be, because some men do not perceive it, on account of a defect in their power of physical perception. God is not today less brilliantly shining in the world nor absent from the world because thousands do not see Him, - even as the thousands during the ancient days of glorious spiritual traditions did not see Him. It takes a person who has freed himself from the limitations in perception, to see God at any time, anywhere. Such free persons of clear-eyed vision are men of universal Love, divine Wisdom, purified Intelligence.

At any period in world-history, and anywhere, we can experience God. God is now here, everywhere. He is present with us, around us, all about us, with all His infinite Beauty, Grace, Love, Perfection.



God in the World Today

Today, there is not less God in the world than there was in the times of Abraham and Moses. Let not the human mind deceive itself into thinking

that there is less God in the world today, because there are so many wars and so much of evil. That is a false idea. At no time God is separated from us, and absent from the world. Have our roses stopped smelling fragrant because there are many wars and much evil in the world? Even so, God has not stopped emanating His Light and Grace to humanity, because there are too many wars and much evil in the world. The assumption that God is away and apart from the world because the world is a victim of many wars, much evil, injustice, suffering, more today than ever before in history, is one of the delusions of mankind. On any day the sun is not away and apart, or withdrawn from the world, but it is only the dreamer who, though lying on a sand-hill beneath the summer sun, is dreaming that he is trapped in a dreadful forest fully covered by pitch-darkness. Nowhere is the sunshine absent except functionally for the dreamer. Even so, nowhere is God absent in the world, or in one's own life, except functionally for the dreamers trapped in pure sense-experience.

Without God, we could not live, there could be no life, no conscious operations of the intelligence, no experience whatsoever. Denial of the Divine is easy, but is the weapon of those who are industrious in seeking sense-pleasure and fulfilling a life that is imprisoned in the body and its immediate needs.

We live, move and have our whole being in God. What force of Nature formed us, and what imperishable essence indwells us? God. Where are we now? In God. Where do we go from here? To God. What is the aim of all life and experience? God, conscious Experience of the infinite Beauty, Power, Wealth, Peace, Delight of God. What are we, in our ignorance of God? Children of God who are functionally separated from the Peace, Joy, eternal Life of God. What are we, when we consciously experience God? Children of God executing our wondrous functions in Knowledge, Power, Grace, Peace, Beauty, Blessedness, Freedom, Perfection.

The world may be old; but God has not aged even by a second since the creation billions and billions of years ago. Time does not affect Him. Space cannot span Him. He is beginningless and has no end. He is ageless Being of infinite Perfection. He is the Truth that was, is and ever shall be. God alone was, is and will always be - God as Light, God as Love, God as Life, God as Beauty and Delight.



God, God, God Everywhere

Something deep in our Soul is always voicing with John the Baptist, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God". Centuries after Jesus declared, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you", Meister Eckhart could assert, "God is at the centre of man". It is a universal and timeless experience. It expresses itself in all ages, and in all cultures.

As a matter of imperishable fact, we live in the Kingdom of Heaven that is within ourselves. God inside man, God outside man, God within, and as all creation, and God transcendent of all creation, God everywhere! "Lift the stone and thou shall find Me; cleave the wood, and there am I", says God in the Bible. Repeated and self-sustaining experience discloses to us God everywhere. There are corroborations of the same experience in all the great and time-tried works of the world.

Where in the ocean is saltiness absent? Where in the entire creation, is the sustaining Essence of the Creator absent? As butter pervades the entire tank of milk, so does God pervade the entire universe. The heavens declare the glory of God no less today than they did in the Biblical times. In the starlit firmament above, God is not less visible to contemporary humanity than he was to the people of the times of Immanuel Kant. Closer to us than our own breath and jugular vein, God is, and can be experienced by any one of us, at any time, if we would fulfil the conditions and gain the equipment.



Here and Now, Any Great Saint Amidst Us Would Experience God

Were there amidst us a dozen of the greatest sages, mystics, saints, prophets, where would they experience God? Here and now. Where did the great sons of the past experience God? Wherever they were, in the vast world, and at whatever period in human history they occupied.



Here and Now, God-Awareness Can be Obtained in the Higher Grades of Our Consciousness

There are many grades and types of the experience of the Divine Consciousness, that are accessible to the most earnest of spiritual aspirants.

A portion of consciousness at the back of the angry person is not involved in the emotion of anger. It is calm, peaceful, luminous and counsels him, "Don't be angry, forgive". This is, at the present stage of his development, a representation of the Light of the Divine. Later, when he rises to yet higher states of such consciousness, he has an immediate touch of the Divine.



Grown in Purity, Goodness, Love, Faith, Knowledge, a Ripened Soul has God-Experience Here and Now

Even as the bud unfolds, as it blooms in its colour and fragrance, the soul in man, being nourished by inner moral and spiritual qualities and deep reflection and discrimination, unfolds its capacities for experience of God.

The more is the inner equipment for the experience of God, the sooner one has it.

God, or the Truth, is pure Consciousness, and is therefore, to be approached in, and through, the consciousness liberated from the limiting physical and mental experiences.

God is not a mental concept, nor an object of mental search, but the supramental infinite Being that transcends all mental phenomena while supporting them; even as man is infinitely more than, and transcends, any thought that may rise in him, and that he may witness, deal with and dismiss. Like the ladders used for climbing over the roof of the house, the mental instruments have served their purpose, and are no more helpful for knowing the Truth. Truth is to be known, experienced, in Truth and by Truth itself.

God is Spirit, and is to be known, adored, experienced, in Spirit, through Spirit, and as Spirit. Thoughts and feelings, however helpful in the preliminary stages and states of progress, are only helpful to lead us into an experience of the Truth. We have to go beyond thoughts and feelings. We cannot see the face of God through the veils of our worldly thoughts and emotions. So long as such thoughts and such emotions are in us, we see them, not God. To see God, our mind and heart are to be rendered luminous, calm, still, with the nameless, formless, radiant divine Love. God is not emotion, and cannot give all of Himself to us in emotion, unless it be devotion, or divine Love. We have to go beyond emotion. Emotion was a help, in the process of attaining freedom, and has now to disappear into something other than itself, the Spirit. God is to be known and contacted in God, by God, and for God's own sake - which is the same as contacting God for the sake of everything else and more than everything. God is not sensation, and cannot be known by any kind of nervous excitement and pleasure; though, in the beginning stages, nervous pleasure and knowledge by sensation is your way. Stop not here. Proceed forward until your consciousness, liberated of emotion, thought, and every other limitation, knows itself and everything directly, with, and in, the unlimited Light of Consciousness. Through good emotions, conquer negative emotions. And, conquer the good emotions, by the Love that is divine, all-inclusive, persisting, permanent, and transcendental.



Here and Now We have God-Knowledge through Our Self-Transcending Capacities

We can detach a portion of consciousness and observe the activities and experiences of our mental, or emotional, or psychic, being. We carry in ourselves the capacity to stand back from the thoughts that arise in us, and watch them. We can, in consciousness, transcend the field of thoughts and observe the observer of the thoughts. In this process of transcending the field of the experiencer and the object experienced, we rise into the unobserved, all-observing Consciousness which is infinite, eternal, unchanging, Truth, God. To the extent we perceive and experience this, we have an experience of Truth, here and now. With sufficient self-discipline and self-training, we can learn to use to the optimum our self-transcending and all-exceeding capacities.



Here and Now, God-Experience in the Form of a Direct and Deepened Awareness of the Infinite Divine Subjective Being Within Us

Our knowledge and experience of the outer world are not direct, as they are obtained through the instrumentality of our senses. If the senses are defective, our knowledge and experience concerning the world are also defective. We can have no direct experience of anything except that which is within ourselves, and is the experienter himself. Our experience of any fact, or thing, is a dependent experience; it is dependent upon the instruments of knowledge employed, and the defects of the instruments infect with defects the knowledge thus obtained. Not even of our own body, of our own thoughts have we any direct experience. Indirect experience obtained through physical, or psychological, instruments of knowledge is subject to change and contradiction, and is ephemeral. Of the experiencing and observing Consciousness in us alone we have a direct experience by identity, oneness, unity. We know it directly, by, in, through itself. Without it we are nothing. It is the Kingdom of unending Peace and Happiness, the foundation of all knowing and experience. When we are rooted in a deep and dynamic awareness of this infinite subjective Being of Light and Love, we have an experience of God.

In Nature and its beauty, in the human individual and his aspirations, in the intelligence and its operations, in the goodness and its works, we have the eloquent presence of God. One may not be able to see God directly, but one is able to see Him in the luminosity of your intelligence, in the sparkle of your eye, in the noble affections of your heart, in the works of your love, in the manifestations of your genius.



Indirect God-Knowledge and God-Awareness Here and Now, through the Study of High and Rich Spiritual Literature

Through the inspiring and illuminating works of the greatest men of the world, God speaks to us. We have an effective indirect knowledge and awareness of God, by a deep study of the great works of mystics, men of transcendental experience, sages who have transcribed their experiences of God. As long as our mind and heart are absorbed in such works, our state is one of indirect contact with God-experience.



