Know That I Am God

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Psalm 46 V: 1& 10

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. "Be still, and know that I am God”.*

Have you ever thought to yourself in those times of trouble and challenge, “God, where are You? How do I know that there really is a God?”

There are at least two quite opposite and antagonistic viewpoints available to us: The first perspective is from those who believe that we are physical beings living in a physical universe. These are the sciences and non-theist communities. Then there are those who believe that we are spiritual beings living in a physical universe. These are the theistic philosophers and believers in God. Both sides have incredibly gifted people, much smarter than me, ascribing to one theory or another.

One geneticist, Dr. Francis Collins finds no conflict between faith and science, and that there is wonderful harmony in the complementary truths of science and faith. He says that evolution by descent from a common ancestor is clearly true, and that the study of DNA provides the strongest possible proof of our relatedness to all other living things. Collins says that the God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. God can be found in the cathedral or in the laboratory, and that by investigating God's majestic and awesome creation, science can actually be a means of worship.

Sometimes there is a blend of both attitudes. Einstein believed in God as Espinoza described: a God who reveals Himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, and plays no part directly in the fates and actions of human beings.

Theoretical physicist, Steven Weinberg, in his book *Dreams of a Final Theory* says that according to his thinking we are beginning to understand that everything in existence unfolds from its primordial beginnings according to a simple plan, a set of inevitable laws. It becomes nearly irresistible, he says, to speak of these laws as “the mind of God”. But then he asks why do so? If God can be defined so broadly that He can be identified with impersonal laws of nature, why do so? Why substitute the name God for ‘harmony’ or ‘order’. What’s the point in describing God as ‘energy’?

If God were only order and harmony, if God were only energy, the point would still be this: instead of God being something that we observe and measure, God becomes something that we experience; God becomes an ally that we can draw upon, embrace, and recognize our oneness with, and then allow to express through our own being.

But I think God is more than impersonal laws of nature; God is more, much more. I believe God is also consciousness, universal awareness. God is all, and all is in God; God of the broad and general, and God of the specific and personal.

I once saw a discussion between an atheist and a Christian on PBS where the atheist presented strong, reasonable, and logical arguments; tough arguments where the inquiring mind would say, “Yes, what about that?”

Such arguments as these are doomed to polarize people because they come from two extraordinarily opposing perspectives. To my mind, the atheistic argument is derived from a false premise: that everything can be explained physically – it can be measured, monitored, tested, verified, and proven. This is the logic: We cannot measure, test, or verify that there is a God, therefore God doesn’t exist -- or as the agnostics would say…we don’t know if God exists.

The other perspective says that not everything in existence is physical – some things cannot be measured or tested physically. For instance: How do you measure consciousness? You can measure brain activity – the bioelectrochemical activity of the neurons, synapses, and dendrites. But what of the power that is prayer? Not the power of prayer, we can measure those results. But what is the power behind prayer?

Sadly, the science-perspective will often dismiss healings that occur through prayer as regressions, or anomalies, and give no credence to self-healing or any other alternative process.

Yet, there is progress along those lines as the scientific world opens its mind to the power of prayer and positive thought on disease and other situations. Quantum physics has demonstrated that as we observe a situation, we change it. Our mere presence alters things. But as far as science has come, they still cannot prove that there is a God.

I do not want to diminish the important role that the sciences play. We do live in a physical universe. While walking on earth we do have a physical body. I am constantly in awe of the discoveries that science uncovers – how it can help our bodies and lifestyles and educate us in the Universe in which we live.

But because science only concerns itself with the physical plane, these questions are not addressed by the traditional sciences:

What is consciousness? Is there a God?

What happens after death?

How do we know what we know?

What does it mean to exist?

Can love be measured?

How does consciousness interact with matter and energy?

For what purpose, if any, are we here?

Why do humans have a moral sense?

These questions are left to philosophers and other inquiring minds that do not require physical proof to know something exists.

As believers in a spiritually based universe, we believe that as the Supreme Creator, God initiated the process that created a physical universe but God is not a physical being. God is a spiritual being – non-physical –and therefore cannot be measured or proven to exist through any physical means; it is futile to try. But He can be proven to exist through spiritual means.

And this proof is available to anyone with the desire to spend the time and spiritual effort to achieve the oneness with God that is required. The enlightened ones over thousands of years have shared their spiritual experiments with us. Many yogis and monks of the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Sufi, and related faiths have demonstrated that God exists. As Christians, we use Jesus as our way-shower. Through exhaustive prayer and meditation Jesus demonstrated the power of the Christ – the individualized essence of God within.

Paramahansa Yogananda, wrote the book “*Autobiography of a Yogi*”, which describes almost unbelievable accounts of monks doing things outside of physical explanation. Thousands of people have learned to meditate and use contemplative prayer to experience the oneness, joy, peace, and love of God.

Now, either the Christ, Yogananda, all the other yogis, saints, and enlightened folk are lying about their experiences, or they are telling the truth. Any scientist has the ability, and the plan has been laid out, to move into meditation and experience God personally. But the proof will always be spiritual, not physical. We must come to know God through Spirit. We are told in John 4:23-24 *“The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

God asks of us, “Be still and know that I am God.” What does this mean? In the context of Psalm 46 from which I read it means to stop all the warring, and destructive activities. Of course, it will mean something different to every person.

To ‘be still’ might mean to stop our own negative, destructive activities and find some time to rest. Set those interruptions aside and be still physically.

It could mean to be still mentally – to find a quiet place and release all our thoughts and tune into the Mind of God. This could be by embracing nature and feeling the beauty, power, and peace of Creation. It could mean sitting and being still, letting all our worries and thoughts of the day melt into the peace of God.

It might mean to some to become spiritually still – to let go of the small-self, and become absorbed in the consciousness of the One Power and Presence, the Infinite Consciousness.

It might mean to abandon ego and become involved in the service to others. I heard a story about Mother Theresa: she was tending to a leper in India when a man walked by and said, “I wouldn’t do that for a million dollars.” She replied, “Neither would I. I do it for the love of the Christ.”

It is impossible to know God in totality. There are no words, not a clear concept. As Paul said, “we see in a glass, darkly”, unable to perceive clearly the truth of God. We can only describe what we have experienced or have been taught by someone else. There is more to God than we can ever know; always more.

It is like the folk-story of six blind men encountering an elephant for the first time. One day the villagers told them, "There is an elephant in the village today."

The blind men had no idea what an elephant is. They decided, "Even though we would not be able to see it, let us go and feel it anyway." They went to the elephant and each of them touched it.

"The elephant is a pillar," said the first man who felt its leg. "Oh, no! it is like a rope," said the second man who touched the tail. "Oh, no! It is like a thick branch of a tree," said the third man who touched the trunk of the elephant. "It is like a big hand fan" said the fourth man who touched the elephant’s ear. "It is like a huge wall," said the fifth man who pressed his hands against the side of the elephant. "It is like a solid pipe," said the sixth man who tapped the tusk.

They began to argue about the elephant and each of them insisted that he was right and admonished the others. A wise man passing by heard the argument and asked them, "What is the matter?" They said, "We cannot agree to what the elephant is like." Each one described their impression of the elephant. The wise man calmly explained to them, "All of you are right. The reason each of you is telling it differently is because you touched the different parts of the elephant. So, actually the elephant has all those features that you individually have experienced." "Oh!" everyone said. There was no more fight. They felt happy that they were all correct and that together they had a greater idea of the elephant’s nature.

There may be some truth to what someone says. Sometimes we can see that truth and sometimes we cannot, depending upon our own perspective. But rather than arguing like the blind men, the Christ teaches us to ‘love our neighbor’, which includes allowing them to have their perspective.

We are asked to be still and know God. As we know God more fully, and accept ourselves as a Child of God, we develop a larger picture of the life we enjoy and develop tolerance toward opposing opinions. We learn to live in harmony and peace with the people who think differently, believe differently, and act differently than ourselves. We learn to appreciate our differences culturally, socially, religiously, and ethnically. We learn that we can grow, change, evolve, and transform under the loving guidance of Christ.

We will experience vast miracles, challenges, and joyous moments through the blessings of God, but our direct and personal experience of God magnifies as we follow this simple call of Spirit: Be still and know that I am God.

Let us pray….