

# Appreciating Divinity in several worldly things

*B Mahadevan<sup>1</sup>*

The current training that we have is to know everything by physical checking, seeing it with our own eyes or hearing it first hand, obtaining hard core evidence and personal verification. Anything that does not fit into this scheme is to be dismissed as non-existent, fantasy, religious dogma, blind faith etc. We can even go one step further and laugh at these unacceptable ideas and things in life and ridicule those who seem to believe them. This will be a perfect fit into “scientific” scheme of things. The existence of other worlds, life after death, reincarnation, notion of God as an omnipresent and omnipotent entity are examples to include in this list. *Sanātana Dharma* talks about these aspects and these ideas are alien to Semitic religious faiths.

## Basic issue of knowing something

Let us first address the issue of knowing by the means suggested above. If we need to go by the above methods of knowing a thing, the first important assumption that we are making is that the thing to be “known” is totally different or distinct from the “knower”. By this what is meant is that these two are physically separate entities in all respects so that there is an unambiguous subject – object relationship possible. Therefore one can use one’s own sense organs (*indriyās*) to know about the other. Where there is no subject – object relationship then the knowing process does not benefit from the existence of *indriyās*. For instance to know whether we are there or not in a pitch dark room, we do not need the help of the sense organs.

Suppose the subject – object duality is not there in a “knowing process”. What are we supposed to do in this case and how do we develop some knowledge that we are seeking for? Just to give an example, suppose we are in a place where there are several objects. Let us assume that everything is blue in colour (including ourselves). Whichever direction we turn we see only a Universe of blue. What will be our description of the reality around us and what will be the vocabulary? First of all we may not be able to say anything as there will be no contrast to recognize what is going on. We may merely end up with nothingness. Therefore we may assertively say that there is practically nothing around. This is simply because the sensory organ called eye has no utility in this situation and we are only as good as a blind person. If we still want to explore the existence of objects and entities around us in this “blue world”, we look for some other means of sensing it. In this case, perhaps we will keenly watch for sound etc.

Our journey to know what is around requires some methods of knowing that is based on things beyond our sensory organs if there is no perceptible separation in the normal sense. If we somehow, over years, developed a method of recognizing things in this “blue world” of ours, we may begin making a few statements. For example we may say, “there was a 5.5 feet blue doing something on a square blue, it was pouring two spoons of blue into a blue bottle etc.

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<sup>1</sup> *B Mahadevan, a Professor at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore is currently the Vice Chancellor of Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth, a University for Sanskrit and Indic Traditions.*

Our efforts to know Divinity suffers from a similar limitation as the “law of conservation of divinity<sup>2</sup>” ensures that the world is nothing but manifestation of the Lord. Where are we going to see the divinity and how are we going to recognize it when everything is only divinity? Will divinity be like what we see in the movies? A dramatic event and an unbelievable superhuman wonder happening around us cannot be the manifestation of divinity as we see it in some of the movies. Shri Krishna offers us some ideas to help us recognize and understand divinity. We shall see some ślokas from chapter 9 of *Bhagavad Gītā* to understand this.

## Means of discovering divinity around us

Shri Krishna says, “I am the vedic ritual (*aham kratuḥ*) in the sacrifice, I am the sacrifice itself (*aham yajñah*), I am also the sacrificial offering called *svadhā*<sup>3</sup> (*svdhāham*), I am the material that is offered in the sacrifice (*aham-auśadham*), I am the mantras uttered during the sacrifice (*mantra’ham*), I am the ghee offered in the sacrifice (*ahamevājyam*), I am the fire (*aham-agniḥ*), which is the medium for the sacrifice and finally I am the act of offering itself (*aham hutam*).”

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहममौषधम् ।  
मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ 9.16

*aham kraturaham yajñah svdhāham-aham-auśadham*  
*mantra’ham-ahamevājyam-aham-agniraham hutam*

This śloka beautifully brings the concept of the “blue world” example that was mentioned above. Every aspect of the sacrifice is taken as an example to bring this idea. A sacrifice involves mantras, the doer, the fire as the medium, specific offerings, the mantras accompanied with the act of sacrificial offering and ghee, which is the main material to sustain the sacrifice. By repeatedly saying “I am all these”, Shri Krishna is trying to help us develop the perspective of seeing the God everywhere. Since everything is God, our normal methods of knowing or inferring using our sensory organs may not give us much help.

Therefore, Shri Krishna further reiterates, “I (*aham*) am the primordial father (*pitā*), the mother (*mātā*), the grandfather (*pitāmahaḥ*) and the supporter and nourisher (*dhātā*) of this universe (*asya jagataḥ*). I am the ultimate one to be known (*vedyam*), the pure and the sacred syllable Om (*pavitram-omkāraḥ*), I am also the entire body of knowledge represented by the three vedas, *R̥k*, *Sāma* and *Yajus* (*r̥k-sāma yajureva ca*).”

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।  
वेद्यं पवित्रमोकार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥ 9.17

<sup>2</sup> The notion of the “Law of conservation of Divinity” was introduced in chapter 7 of the *Gītā*. This has been discussed in another write-up.

<sup>3</sup> *Svadhā* is the offering made during sacrifice for ancestors and *Swāhā* is the offering for devas.

*pitāham-asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ  
vedyaṃ pavitram-omkāra ṛk-sāma yajureva ca*

God is not to be recognized only in physical aspects of life. The creator of the Universe, the creator of the creator itself, and all forms of knowledge available to us are indeed nothing but manifestations of God only. Even the very sound of OM must immediately bring us to the context of divinity. Thus even intangible aspects of life are also aspects of Divinity only.

If everything around us is nothing but divinity, then several things, people and events that we see around us every day must also be nothing but divinity only. Shri Krishna reiterates this point further by saying, “I am the ultimate goal (*gatiḥ*), the life companion and sustainer (*bhartā*), the lord (*prabhuḥ*), the everlasting point of reference and witness for an individual (*sākṣī*), the ever present abode for an individual (*nivāsaḥ*), the ultimate source for surrender (*śaraṇaṃ*), the good hearted companion (*suhṛt*), the cause of origin (*prabhavaḥ*) and destruction (*pralayaḥ*) of the universe, the sustainer (*sthānaṃ*) and the resting place (*nidhānaṃ*), and the everlasting primordial seed (*bījam-avyayam*).”

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।

प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥ 9.18

*gatirbhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṃ suhṛt  
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṃ nidhānaṃ bījam-avyayam*

The above *śloka* takes the discussion to another level where many happenings around us and entities engaged in the process are pointed out to be aspects of divinity. To make things as unambiguous possible, Shri Krishna takes one more illustration to show how omnipresent the notion of divinity is.

Shri Krishna says, “I radiate as the source of heat, the Sun (*tapāmy-aham*), I also take the role of withholding (*nigrhṇāmy*) or pouring out (*utsrjāmi ca*) the rain (*varṣaṃ*), I am the form of immortality (*amṛtaṃ caiva*) as well as all forms of mortality (*mṛtyuśca*) and the sentience (*sad*) as well as the non-sentient (*asacca*) aspects of every conceivable forms and entities in the world.” In other words the larger cosmic cycles and the all imposing majesty of the nature and the events in this universe are all nothing but direct recognizable forms of divinity.

तपाम्यहमहं वर्षं निगृह्णाम्युत्सृजामि च ।

अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च सदसच्चाहमर्जुन ॥ 9.19

*tapāmy-aham-aham varṣaṃ nigrhṇāmy-utsrjāmi ca  
amṛtaṃ caiva mṛtyuśca sad-asaccāham-arjuna*

In this manner through the four *ślokas* Shri Krishna has prompted us to deeply contemplate on the meaning and implications of the messages contained in these *ślokas*. Indeed Shri Krishna has simply shown us a method to step out of the limitation of the “blue world” that we are in and see the patterns emerging out of it and link them to divinity.

## **Divinity – A practical idea to live**

The message contained in the above *ślokas* are both subtle and profound. The first *śloka* reminds us that the world of action involving people, entities, resources and knowledge are the grosser aspects of divinity at play. The other two *ślokas* suggest to us that one needs to carefully contemplate on these to understand the notion of divinity. When we see very good things happening around us and acts that sustain and protect the society for a larger good, we must feel a strong force of divinity. People who are pure in their thoughts, acts and words, with their sense of goodness and charm and unconditionally offering support and refuge are direct manifestations of divinity. Every act of creation and destruction, death and birth, origin and dissolution that we come across is a reference point for us to see divinity in action.

Why should we contemplate on this idea? It will simply transform our personality and provide a new dimension to construct relationships with people around us. It will also provide us a renewed context to engage with the world around us. The events we witness and go through in our lives will no longer be the cause for anxiety, distress and pain. Rather they will perennially become an opportunity to remind us of the numerous data points of divinity and encourage us to revel in the divine play. The life game that we will play will not only become more meaningful but also rewarding at the end of the day.