

# How to Recognize the Divinity around Us

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The non-believers have a smart method to trap the believers. They simply ask the question, if God is there, show me where He is. In fact child *Prahlāda* was asked the same question by his father *Hiraṇyakaśipu* as we see in the *Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇam*. Purāṇās are written in a different style and the message intended to be conveyed is done in a dramatic way. Therefore, when the boy replied that God is everywhere, the father asked him will the God be in this pillar also. We know the rest of the story. The crux of the message in this episode is not about how Narasimha can emerge out of the pillar when *Hiraṇyakaśipu* tore open the pillar with his mighty sword. It is about the fundamental idea that God is everywhere, in every speck of dust. Coming back to the question raised by the non-believer, it is an equally important question even for the believers. It needs to be answered in a convincing way.

Let us ask a different but similar question. If there is electricity, show me where is it? This is an equally difficult question to answer because there is no way we are going to “show” electricity. You cannot bring a bottle full of electricity and give it to me. Nor can you show to a place where electricity is there. In fact we don’t even know if electricity is blue or black in colour, short or tall, light or heavy. The nearest we can go is to put our fingers into a “live” plug point and “feel” for ourselves the existence of electricity. But then the need to show that electricity exists is important and has to be addressed. Therefore, we resort to a slightly different approach.

We switch on a fan and the fan runs, or we switch on the TV and the TV shows the programme in a channel. Now we come to the conclusion that electricity indeed exists. In fact, this is the only acid test we use to recognize the existence of electricity. In these examples, what we attempt to do is to show the “effect” of existence of electricity as a proxy to showing electricity because that is the only possible way. What we need to perhaps do to show the existence of divinity is to take a similar approach and show the “effect” of divinity. Shri Krishna has resorted to such an approach to remind us that divinity is not a product directly available but through the effects of its existence. We shall look at *ślokas* 8 to 10 in chapter 7 to understand this idea.

## Divinity manifests in many ways around us

Shri Krishna has taken a few examples to demonstrate this idea. The culmination of this idea is in Chapter 10 of Gita, where he has taken over 50 examples to show how divinity manifests in the universe. Krishna says, “I am the rasa (*raso’ham*) or the sap (or sapidity) in the water (*apsu*)”. Similarly he says, “I am the radiance (*prabhāsmi*) in the moon and the sun (*śāśisūryayoḥ*), I am Om (*praṇavaḥ*) in all the vedas (*sarvavedeṣu*), sound (*śabdaḥ*) in ākāśa (*khe*) and manhood (*pauruṣaṃ*) in men (*nṛuṣu*)”.

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रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ 7.08

*raso'hamapsu kaunteya prabhāsmi śāśisūryayoḥ  
praṇavaḥ sarvavedeṣu śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṃ nṛṣu*

There is something common to all the above examples; it the very fundamental property or existential aspect of the examples. If we take the “sapidity” from water, the notion of water no longer exists. Similarly, if we take the radiance out of the Sun and the Moon, then these entities cease to exist. Through this *śloka* Shri Krishna reminds us that the very quintessential nature of things and entities in this universe is the first manifestation of divinity.

He then moves on to another set of examples and says he is in all these too. The nice odour (*punyo gandhaḥ*) that emanates from the mother earth (*pr̥thivyām*), which we all pleasantly experience after a light rain is the divinity. Similarly, the brightness and the heat (*tejas*) in the fire (*vibhāvasau*) and the very source of life (*jīvanam*) in all living beings (*sarvabhūteṣu*) are the other manifestations of divinity. Finally he says the very attribute of tapas (*tapas*) among the tapasvins (*tapasviṣu*) is nothing but the manifestation of divinity. In this example, Shri Krishna emphasized the previous idea even strongly by suggesting the very essence of life and existence of living and non-living entities is nothing but the effect of divinity.

पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।

जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ 7.09

*punyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyāṃ ca tejaścāsmi vibhāvasau,  
jīvanam sarvabhūteṣu tapaścāsmi tapasviṣu.*

To conclude the above discussion, Shri Krishna finally declares that the very seed of life (*sarvabhūtānām bījam*) that exists for time immemorial (*sanātanam*) is nothing but the divinity. The smell of the earth and the millions of inhalation and exhalation that living beings undergo as long as they are living are all taken for granted. Nobody seems to think about the primordial source of these processes. Through this *śloka* Krishna is reminding us of the primordial source.

So far the explanation of how divinity exists is at a very fundamental level. However, to provide an even closer illustration, Shri Krishna introduces two more examples. He says, “When you see a very brilliant person (*buddhimatām*), recognize the aspect of divinity in the fine brain (*buddhiḥ*) that the person possesses, which makes him indeed a brilliant one. Similarly, some people are very bright and simply shining with radiance. When we come across such people (*tejasvinām*), recognize the brightness (*tejas*) as the aspect of divinity.

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातनम् ।

बुद्धिर्बुद्धिमतामस्मि तेजस्तेजस्विनामहम् ॥ 7.10

*bījaṃ māṃ sarvabhūtānāṃ viddhi pārtha sanātanam,  
buddhir-buddhimatām asmi tejas-tejasvinām aham.*

## Learning to Understand & Appreciate Divinity around us

If we take these *ślokas* seriously and contemplate on them then we will develop a different understanding of people and events happening around us. Let us take two examples to understand this aspect. When Swami Vivekananda rose to address the Chicago parliament of religions and began by saying “My dear Brothers and Sisters of America” he apparently won the hearts of everyone present there. If an ordinary, unevolved person made a similar attempt, we do not know if it would have cut any ice. This is the power of divinity’s manifestation. Swami *Rāma Tīrtha*, a Mathematics Professor from Lahore turned into a realized soul spent just five years sharing his teachings before he left his mortal body. But the impact he created was so powerful that he was considered the second Swami Vivekananda.

Look at the case of *Ādi Śankarācārya*. A boy who left his home at the age of seven to find his master eventually on the banks of Narmada in *Omkāreśwar* and then the impact begins. Between the age of ten and 32 he did things which are impossible for a human being. It is sheer intelligence and vitality radiating at its best. Otherwise how can we, for example, explain the impact *Ādi Śankarācārya* has created by enormous work done within a life span of 32 years? Who can write detailed commentaries on vedic knowledge and produce new works (running to 6200 printed pages today), establish institutions which live for more than 1000 years, reform and clarify the religious practices by putting sense in the minds of people, to name a few?

Great reformers, spiritual leaders and *tyāgis* have a “Midas touch” to anything that they do. They seem to magically transform people and situations as it comes there way. Not only the spiritual gurus, a number of noble hearted, spiritually evolved common people in the society have the ability to positively and magically touch the people and the society around them. Whenever we see similar things around us, we need to recognize that as the manifestation of divinity. This is the most practical approach to recognize divinity. If we start scanning our society and ecosystem with this lens, we are sure to revel in the company of divinity forever. This can be a life transforming experience for every one of us, which Shri Krishna is pointing to through these *ślokas*.