

## **DIVINITY in Hinduism**

### **An Inter-Faith Presentation**

Recently, a local Inter Faith organization I belong to, which has as its members some of the Prominent Clergy of Christianity, Protestants & Catholics, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism & Hinduism, of the local religious institutions. It was requested if I could present the ‘**Hindu concept of DIVINITY**’ to the group. It struck me as a challenge and an opportunity, to teach and learn.

This topic takes volumes of Vedas, Puranas, a large part of Gita, and it took a nationwide campaign of Adi Shankaracharya, and yet the concept is hard to understand. But when you look at the topic through the glasses of modern science, energy-matter equivalence, the concept is not only a lot easier to understand but leaves one struck with an awe - how did the ancient Hindu Saints, grasped so well the modern scientific concepts, without the aid of any instrumentation, except for the sheer intuition, imagination, and logic?

In the process our ancient Saints, Rishies, and Yogies showed the ways via which the human being becomes capable of acquiring the “TRUTH” through the power of Intuition. The seers had developed the techniques to acquire such knowledge, as a part of Sanatan Dharma.

And that puts the followers of Hinduism and those of other major Faiths far apart. I saw herein an opportunity for all Hindus, young and old, and the Hindu Temples to learn, be proud of, and present so critical a knowledge to the communities around them, as to what is so special about Sanatan Dharma.

#### **“THE PAPER”:-**

“The Hindu concept of Divinity is explicit in the most common Hindu Greeting of “Namaste” which people express whenever they meet each other. The word is a derivative of joining two Sanskrit words ‘namah’ (I bow) and ‘te’ (to you). Simple? Not so.

The word “Namaste” is expressed with a gesture of bowing when two people meet. Each joins the palms of the two hands, bows, and states the word “Namaste”. In this gesture the left palm represents the heart and the right the soul, and the words welcome. The joining of hands means ‘from my heart and my soul’.

Through the spiritual meaning of the gesture and the words, each is expressing to the other: “The Divinity in me bows to and greets the Divinity in you.” This concept of Divinity is explained in great details in the Hindu scriptures known as Vedas, Puranas and Bhagvad Gita that: **All beings are Divine.**

One wonders, what is the **basis** of the philosophy that all beings are Divine, and does the definition of beings include non-humans too?

**The BASIS:** According to the Vedic concept of ‘monism’, the answer would be implied affirmative. However a more Vedic and Scientific rationale is presented hereunder.

Monism is found in the Nasadiya Sukta of the Rigveda, which speaks of the Creator as ‘One being-non-being that breathed without breath’.

Due to the presence of a strong ‘ego’ in humans, monism was not easy to follow and accept. As a result, systems began to develop that were based on the concept of duality, and the followers of such systems were known as ‘Dvaita Wadi’. They separated God and Humans, as two different parties, exclusive of each other. They claimed that Aatma (Soul) and Permatma (God) were two entities. Yet true and pure monism is contrary to duality.

The Vedic scholars found ‘Dvaita’ to be unsustainable to the Vedic rationale and scientific principles of monism. Of those, Saint Shankaracharya was the most brilliant scholar and Philosopher. His approach relied on the Vedic knowledge of the scientific fact that everything in the cosmic system is pure energy. His writings and discourses unequivocally explicated absolute monism. Thus the non-dualist philosophy of Advaita Vedanta stood the test of logic and prevailed. Upholding that:

“All is Brahma, the ultimate entity, a formless ‘Divine’ ground of all that exists.”

The Vedic scholars understood the evolutionary process of the universe very well, and exactly how it evolved, and how beings came to be, including humans.

The state from which the universe started is explained in the Vedic statement:

Prajapatir vai idam asit:      In the beginning was Brahma.  
Tasya vag dvitya asit;      With whom was the Word.  
Vag vai paramam Brahma;      And the word was Brahma.

One of the fundamental concepts of Hindu Dharma is that "**the Reality is one without a second. This reality is beyond description by the human mind**". Hence it is indicated by a single word, "Brahma"; That is, "Infinite, eternal, changeless existence is the All; from that All, All comes forth; to that All, All returns." **Chandogya Upanishad** (vi.2.1)

**All is Divine Brahma; because from that all emanates and unto that all merges.**

At one level every religiously enlightened self-realized Hindu sees his/her self being one with the **Universal Self**. The objective of attainment of ‘self-realization’ in yogic philosophy is to understand that we all are it and it is us, i.e. the ‘Divine’. The technique of achieving ‘self-realization’, oneness with God, the sense of divinity in ourselves, via practice of deep meditation, is available to all. It is explained in details in Ch: 6 of Gita. Some parts of this technique you may find in the teachings of Christ, and Gospels of his disciples as well. He had learned it well during his 18 years of educational studies in India.

At a more worldly level, a Hindu also understands more than any other religionist in the world, the concept of a harmonious global society that should unite, prosper, love and live in peace with each other. '**Lokasasmasta sukhino bhavantu**'- meaning --**Let happiness be to all the human beings**: and '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' - meaning -**World is one family**.

These are not mere empty words spoken by Saints a long while ago. They are the derivatives of the same **basic** philosophy of Vedas, that the Divinity exists everywhere and in all. The questions could be, 'how to understand this '**Vedic Basic**'?

For the common man, the answers to such questions are very well explained, rationally and logically, in 'Bhagvad Gita', which contains a gist of Scientific Concepts and Philosophy of Vedas. Gita simplifies the ideas via a set of questions and answers through the dialogue of a prince Arjun and his friend Krishna, an incarnation of God.

**The BASIC** : First and foremost, how did the Universe start, and who is maintaining it?

In Gita, Krishna Says: regarding the creation of the Universe (Gita Ch-10: V-42):

Sanskrit- विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ।।10.42 ।।

English - "Vishtabhyahmidam, kretsnmekashen sthito jagata."

Meaning: "I pervade and sustain this entire universe with an **infinitesimal fraction** of My Self."

The modern scientific concept of the birth of our Universe, starting from a **small singularity**, is same as stated above in the verse 10:42. **infinitesimal fraction** of Om. Modern Scientists are amazed to see the similarity between Science and Ancient Gita on the subject of 'Cosmic Origin'. Today this concept is easy for any Science students to understand.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम् पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Meaning: That is whole; this is whole; From that whole this whole came; From that whole, this whole removed, What remains is whole.

Any mathematician can explain that if you take any part or whole of INFINITY from INFINITY, remainder is still INFINITY. Applying this principle to the INFINITE BRAHMA the DIVINE, of which we are creation, including any and all parts of this UNIVERSE, would be DIVINE.

According to Vedic Philosophy, the world started about  $16 \pm$  billion years ago. Carl Sagan, the western cosmologist, explains the Vedic concept of Cosmology, its cycles, and its age in a video of a TV series. To see the video of Carl Sagan, open the

URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xo4b8EiY9Vk>"; (Right click at any part of this internet address and select 'open hyperlink'). Sagan explains Vedic ideas very well.

Since the beginning of this cycle, starting from the Big Bang, the Universe is undergoing a seamless activity of changes of forms shaping the world (for us this earth) as we see it today. This all space in which the Universe is contained, with all its content, is in and a part of Divine Brahma,

According to Vedic concept, the three basic forms of “OM” were there prior to the start of the formation of this Universe. The 4<sup>th</sup> is a derivative of the first 3:

1. **Shakti**, i.e. Energy, is OM
2. **Prakriti**, i.e. Laws of Nature or of Science, is OM.
3. **Akash**, i.e. Space. That contains the Universe, is OM.
4. **Leela, Cosmic Script**. (basis of Omniscient). The transitory state/drama, of changing (ever transforming, yet fixed) universe, is also OM.

The **Divinity** of all is based on the fact that all are a result, i.e. the **Cosmic Drama** is a result, of the interaction of **DIVINE** factors “**Shakti**”, “**Prakriti**”, in “**Akash**”, starting from an **infinitesimal fraction** of the **DIVINE Brahma**.

From the beginning of this Universe, and the earth contained therein, the **DIVINITY** of everything within is unchanged.

Thus all that we see, happening all around us, is by and in accordance with the rules of the Divine -**Prakriti**; in the Structure of the Divine - **Space**; by the forces of the Divine - **Energy**; from the content of the Divine, **Matter**, in accordance with the script of Divine **Leela**. In other words, the Divine **Brahma**. The Divine beings thus created, are playing their roles, without any control of one’s own, except that of Divine Brahma.

And that is very succinctly clarified in Gita, chapter 18.

**18.60** - स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।

कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ।।18.60 ।।

**O Arjuna, bound by thy own duty, born of thy own nature (Prakriti), that which from delusion thou wishest not to do, even that thou shalt do helplessly.**

And further it states in the next verse:

**18.61** - ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशोऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ।।18.61 ।।

**The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His power of Prakriti (laws of nature) to act, as if the soul is mounted on a machine.**

In simple words, ‘**all are Divine, carrying out the Divine will**’. Surprisingly all major religions have similar concepts. Explained in the next paper with what we learned. Part One. Tej Tanden.