

Bhagavad Gita Introduction & Dhyana Slokas by Swami Paramarthananda

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<http://bhagavadgitabyswamiparamarthananda.blogspot.com/2008/06/bhagavad-gita-by-swami-paramarthananda.html>

Sunday, 1 June 2008

Bhagavad Gita by Swami Paramarthananda

Dear All,

Humblest Namaskārams to all.

From today, we will start the course of Bhagavad Gītā, presented through talks by Swāmi Paramārthānandā.

Please note that, there is absolutely no substitute for face to face listening of the teachings, directly from a Guru. This method of Shravanam has been emphasised many times in the scriptures, as the best way of receiving Jnānam.

However this blog has been created for the sake of those of us, who do not have the luxury of being at the right time and the right place to be able to listen to the lectures by Swāmiji. His articulation and approach are so brilliant, that even subtle topics of Advaita can be grasped without much effort.

Wherever possible, every attempt has been made to transcribe the lectures verbatim. The main intention is for everyone to benefit from the wonderful teachings of Bhagavad Gītā and this blog is solely devoted for this purpose.

Please note that any inadvertent errors are attributable entirely to the blogger and profuse apologies are offered. However feedback and corrections are most welcome.

May Goddess Sarasvati bless us all with Her grace, in enabling us to complete our study without any interruptions.

Hari Om

Posted by aprameyaha at 20:34

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Sunday, 1 June 2008

Introduction - Part I

Introduction

Everybody is busy pursuing some or the other long term or short term goals. These short term and long term goals vary from individual to individual. Thus goals are different and often opposite. These goals also get revised from time to time. What we may have been searching for frantically a few years ago, we discard later on even when given freely.

Thus we find that the goals are infinite in number, vary from time to time and even age to age. Despite this, there are certain goals common to all human beings. These are universal, basic goals which do not change from age to age. This can be classified into three for our convenience

- a) Security and safety: The need for security, food and shelter is universal. It is there in all animals instinctively and in humans it is a sophisticated trait.
- b) Peace
- c) Desire for happiness & fulfilment & enjoyment

However, different people consider different means for attaining the above goals. E.g. some consider money as providing security whereas other consider relatives for the above. However the end is the same.

With regards to these three fundamentals goals, our scriptures have some comments to be made. The scriptures point out that all these three basic needs are available within ourselves. The next statement which is actually more disturbing is : these three basic needs are available within ourselves only ! The significance of the word “only” is that they are not available outside. Therefore, if you seek them outside, all of them will elude you. According to the scriptures, the fundamental problem is the misplaced searching for something in a place, where it is not available.

Therefore the intelligent approach is to search for it in a place where it is available.

Then why do human beings commit such a mistake of misplaced search and run from one object to another for fulfilment? The Scriptures say that these three basic needs are within but are covered or hidden by layers of covering - just like bore well water. What

is then required to remove these layers and tap into the eternal spring whereby these three needs are fulfilled ?

This process is called **Discovery**.

Layers of impurity

The next question is - what are the layers that are covering the above three needs of mine and how do I uncover them? This is because the instruments for uncovering, depends on the type of layers. The scriptures point out that there are three layers covering the spring of Security, Peace and Happiness.

- a) The grossest : Malam Layer or impure layer
- b) The subtle : Vikshepaha - disturbance caused by extrovertedness or outgoing tendency.
- c) The subtlest final layer : Āvaranam or ignorance or Ajnānam

Malam or impurity refers to variety of mental problems normally enumerated as the six fold impurities, obstacles to discover our inner joy

- i) Kāma - desire
- ii) Krodhaha - anger
- iii) Lobha - greed
- iv) Moha - delusion
- v) Mada- arrogance or vanity
- vi) Mātsaryam - Jealousy or competitiveness

Vikshepaha refers to mental restlessness or wandering or extrovertedness. When the muddied water is turbulent, the bottom of the river is not seen. The water has got Malam impurity and the turbulence has Vikshepaha obstacle.

Āvaranam refers to ignorance of the fact that I am the only source or spring of these three - Security, Peace and Happiness.

The 3 means to remove impurities

What is then needed is removal of these three layers by appropriate Sādhanā. Sādhanā refers to any discipline or exercise to remove these three obstacles. Each discipline is called a Yogaha. Yogaha means that which unites the seeker with the destination, the destination here referring to Security, Peace and Happiness. The three Yogas that we use are

- i) Karma Yogaha - to remove the first layer of obstacle
- ii) Upāsana Yogaha - to remove the second layer of obstacle
- iii) Jnāna Yogaha - to remove the third layer of obstacle

Karma Yogena Mala Nivritti
Upāsana Yogena Vikshepa Nivritti
Jnāna Yogena Ajnāna Nivritti

These three Yogas do not bring me anything, but it connects me to my own treasure. This is just like claiming inheritance in the absence of a will.

Karma Yoga is a lifestyle consisting of proper action and proper attitude. Any action which will primarily contribute to reduction of Kāma Krodhaha Lobha Moha Mada Mātsarya is termed Proper Action. Proper attitude is the right attitude towards the action and result of the action. This will help me grow in every experience, even through the most painful ones

Upāsana Yoga consists of different types of meditation. All different forms of meditation will help in quietening the mind. The extrovert, turbulent, restless, outgoing, wandering, fidgety mind has to have some relaxation. A stress free mind is the result of Upāsana Yogaha which we call Vikshepa Nivritti.

Mala Nivritti can be positively presented as Chitta Shuddhihi

Vikshepa Nivritti can be positively presented as attaining the steadiness of mind - Chitta Nischalatvam

Jnāna Yogaha consists of enquiry into my real nature. Do I need peace, security & happiness from outside? Or is my very nature peaceful, secure and happy? Jnāna Yogaha is called Atma Vichāra.

Are there any options ?

There is no option in the above three Yogaha. Since we have all three layers, we need to have all the above three Yogāhā. In order for us to go from uncovering one layer after the other, our scriptures help us and these are called the Vedas. The Vedas' only aim is to help us tap our own wealth. Veda means Source of Knowledge. Vid means to know. These Vedas are revelations from the Lord himself which have come down to us through the Rishis. These Vedas have four portions.

- a) Mantra Bhāgaha or Samhita Bhāgaha
- b) Brāhmana Bhāgaha
- c) Āranyaka Bhāgaha
- d) Upanishad Bhāgaha

Of these four Bhāgāhā, the second Bhāgaha - **Brāhmana Bhāgaha** deals with Karma Yoga, hence called Karma Bhāgaha or Karma Kāndam. This helps in Malam Nivritti.

Āranyaka Bhāgaha teaches us Upāsana Yogaha, hence called Upāsana Kāndam. This helps us in Vikshepa Nivritti.

Upanishad Bhāgaha which teaches us Jnāna Yogaha, hence called Jnāna Kāndam. This helps us in Ajnāna Nivritti.

Mantra Bhāgaha deals with prayers or Sūktam which are addressed to various deities. Only if we pray to Lord, we will be able to diagnose our problems and only then will we come to these three Yogāhā. If the Lord's grace is not there, we will not look inwards but continue to be materialistic, eternally searching for peace and happiness through material objects. Mantra Bhāgaha changes the direction from Bhoga to Yoga.

And this Veda is a very voluminous scripture. It has got four branches

- a) Rig Veda
- b) Yajur Veda : comprising Shukla Yajur Veda and Krishna Yajur Veda
- c) Sāma Veda
- d) Atharvana Veda

For many people, the original Vedas themselves are inaccessible. However, the Lord himself has given us a condensed version of the Vedas, consisting of all the three Yogas. This is in the form of the Bhagavad Gītā consisting of 700 verses. This occurs in Mahābhārata in the form of a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. Studying the Bhagavad Gītā will be useful for getting a direction to your life.

Bhagavad Gītā is generally studied after the Bhagavad Gita Dhyāna Shloka. Madhusūdana Sarasvati has written a very beautiful commentary and it is from his commentary that we source our nine prayer verses. This prayer is to ward off obstacles in our quest for learning the Bhagavad Gita.

Posted by aprameyaha at 20:56

Friday, 6 June 2008

DhyanaSloka Recitation – Part II

by Swami Paramarthananda at the blogspot:

<http://bhagavadgitabyswamiparamarthananda.blogspot.gr/2008/06/introduction-part-ii.html>

Introduction - Part III

Gītā Dhyāna Shloka

The purpose of studying the prayer verses is that through the prayer verses, we invoke the grace of the Lord. This is so that we will be able to successfully complete the study of Bhagavad Gītā. The prayer verses were written by Madhusūdana Sarasvati before he wrote his commentary on the Bhagavad Gītā, called Gūdhārtha Dīpikā, a lamp which illumines the hidden and deeper meanings of the Bhagavad Gītā.

Namaskārams are offered to Mahābhāratam, Bhagavad Gītā, Vyāsāchārya, Krishna.

We will rearrange the order of the verses while seeing the meaning, so that we can go from one Namaskāra to another Namaskāra.

Seventh Verse

The first Namaskāra is to Mahābhārata itself which comes in the seventh verse.

Bhārata Pankajam Naha Shreyase Bhūyād

Mahābhārata is a work composed by Vyāsāchārya which comes under the scriptural literature known as Itihāsa. Itihāsa is a scriptural literature which is partially based on history. With a mixture of fact and fiction, this work has been created. The main theme is based on history, but ideas are added to make it attractive. Itihāsa means “thus it happened” - “Āsa” means “happened” and “iti ha” means “really in this manner”. Since Mahābhārata deals with Bharatavamsha, the dynasty of Bharata, it is called Bhāratam. Mahābhārata has 1 lakh verses.

The verse says let the scripture be “Naha Shreyase” - let it be a source (Bhūyād) of Shreyas (wellbeing, prosperity, happiness) for us (nah). May the study of Mahābhārata, enrich and transform my personality, help me grow physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually for us (nah).

Parāsharya Vachaha Sarojam

In this, Mahābhārata is compared to a lotus. A lotus is attractive due to its beauty, fragrance and honey. Bhārata Pankajam refers to Mahābhārata Lotus. We should remember that the study of Mahābhārata at home, is good only. The rest of the words are adjectives to Bhārata Pankajam. “Parāsharya Vachaha Sarojam” a lotus is born in a pond. If Mahābhārata is compared to a lotus, then the pond is compared to Parāsharya (Vyāsāchārya or Parāsharaha’s son) Vachaha (mouth). Hence Vyāsāchārya’s mouth is compared to a Saraha (pond).

Amalam Gītārtha Gandhotkatam

Amalam - It is a flower without any impurity. Interestingly one of the words for a lotus is Pankajam - Panka meaning slush or muddied water. So, just as the lotus is pure even though born in muddied water, similarly the Mahābhārata is pure - Amalam - without any Dosha. The word Pure is used with regards to teaching and language.

Gītārtha Gandhotkatam

This Mahābhārata lotus is extremely attractive. Gītā Artha Gandha Utkatam - Utkatam meaning prominent, popular, famous, attractive. Hence the Mahābhārata lotus has a such a powerful fragrance that anybody around, will be attracted. The fragrance is Gītā Arthaha - the teachings. In fact Mahābhārata is attractive only because of Gītā.

Nānākhyānakakesaram Hari Katha Sambodhanā Bodhitam

Any flower has thread like filaments. The Mahābhārata is like a flower, the Kesaram

(filaments) are “Nānā Akhyānakam” - Akhyānakam meaning stories. Lotuses are of two types - bud and fully bloomed ones. And only the latter is beautiful. Similarly the Mahābhārata lotus, is a fully blossomed lotus, expanded (Abodhitam) with narration (Sambodhana) of stories of Lord Krishna (Hari Kathā).

Loke Sajjana Shatpadair Ahar Ahaha Pepīyamānam Mudā

The honey bees are attracted by the deep honey of the flowers. Similarly the Mahābhārata contains deep wisdom on all subjects under the sun - religion, philosophy, psychology, politics, sociology, human relationship etc. Therefore all the students are like honey bees (Shatpada - six legged ones). Sajjana refers to noble people who have an open mind when approaching the scriptures. This line says, the honey of wisdom, repeatedly sucked (Pepīyamānam) happily (Mudā) by enquiring into, analysis of Mahābhārata, day in and day out (Ahar Ahaha).

Kali Mala Pradhvamsi

This Mahābhārata is a literature which can destroy the problem prevalent in the materialistic universe. Kaliyuga is known for predominant materialism. The very word Kali means fight and quarrel. Kali (Yuga)'s impurity (mala) is removed by the destroyer (Pradhvamsi) called Mahābhārata. The psychological problem of today's children are the sociological problems of tomorrow.

First Verse

This is a Gītā Namaskāra verse. The author is addressing Bhagavad Gītā as the mother. Hey Amba, you are Sarasvati Devi, the mother, who will nourish my internal personality. The local mother, by feeding me the right material food at the right stage, will nourish my material personality. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gītā mother, by feeding me with the food of wisdom, will nourish my inner personality. This is, by feeding me with wisdom of Karma Yoga in the beginning stages, wisdom of Upāsana Yoga in the later stages, and also wisdom of Jñāna Yoga when I am substantially grown up.

Tvām Anusandadhāmi : I meditate upon you.

Pārthāya Pratibodhitām : A teaching which has been taught (Pratibodhitām) to Arjuna (Pārthaha) by Lord (Bhagavatā) Nārāyanā (Nārāyanena) himself (Svayam). Complied (Grathitām) by Vyāsāchārya (Vyāsenā) who is supposed to be an Avatāra of Vishnu. Vyāsāchārya, the Muni who has given us the Purānas (Purāna Muninā) has given Bhagavad Gītā which is occurring in the middle of Mahābhārata (Madhye Mahābhāratam) in Shānti Parva when Arjuna faces a crisis. Bhagavad Gītā (Bhagavatīm) showers (Varshinīm) the wisdom or nectar (Amruta) of Non-dual infinite truth (Advaita) and is eighteen chapters (Ashtādashadyāyinīm) and Samsāra's (Bhava) enemy or destroyer (Dveshinīm).

Samsara means self-dissatisfaction, which alone drives a person to go from one activity to another. Moksha is complete satisfaction with who I am and what I am. Bhagavad Gītā is destroyer of Samsara.

Fourth Verse

This is another Gītā Namaskāra verse. Gītā is not the philosophy of Lord Krishna or even Vyāsāchārya. It is the teaching which is contained in the Vedas. Vedas are the original scriptures which have been existing in our culture from beginningless time. The end portion of the Vedas is called Upanishads which alone gives us the self knowledge and Bhagavad Gītā is the essence of the Upanishads. To convey this, the author gives us an analogy. All (Sarvo) Upanishads (Upanishado) are like cows (Gāvo). The expert milker (Dogdhā) of the Upanishadic essence, is Krishna the son (Nandanaha) of Gopāla (Gopāla).

When the cow has to give milk, generally the calf is kept in front of the cow. Arjuna (Pārtho Vatsa) is like the calf and milk (Dugdham) to be enjoyed (Bhoktā) is the great and glorious (Mahat) Gītā Amrutam (Gītāmrutam).

Second Verse

O Vyāsāchārya, the great erudition in terms of vastness (Vishāla Buddhe) and depth. The one who had beautiful eyes (Netra) like the petals of a fully bloomed lotus (Phulla Aravindāyata Patra Netra).

You (Tayā - through you) are so great because you have lighted (Prajvālito) the lamp (Dīpaha) of wisdom (Jnānamayaha) with the help of oil of Mahābhārata (Bhārata Taila Pūrnam). Therefore I offer you a Namaskāra.

The word Vyāsāchārya means the one who has divided the Vedas into four and expanded the Vedic teaching through the eighteen Puranas. Originally the Vedas were one. Before this, Vyāsāchārya's name was actually Krishna, because he was of a dark complexion. To differentiate between Vyāsāchārya and Lord Krishna, Vyāsāchārya was actually called Krishna Dvaipāyanaha - the island born Krishna.

The other verses are in praise of Lord Krishna

Third Verse

Our Namaskāra to Lord Krishna who is of the following description. Krishna is compared to the Pārijāta Vruksha for those people who surrender to him (Prapanna). Having the handle (Vetra) of the whip (Totra) holding in one (Eka) hand (Pānaye), the Lord acts as the charioteer of Lord Krishna. This indicates that despite being the Lord of the universe, he does not consider any job too menial for him. Pārijāta is a wish granting mythological tree in the celestial world.

With the help of the other hand, the Lord was wielding the Jnāna Mudrā or Chin Mudrā. Chin Mudrā is a symbolic representation of the philosophical teaching contained

in the Gītā contained in the Upanishad. This Chin Mudrā indicates Jīva Ātmā Parama Ātmā Aikyam. The index finger represents the Jiva Atma of the individual, who is at the moment a limited entity. This is also a finger used to threaten others. This finger is called Tarjani in Sanskrit. So this Jīva Ātmā is not only a threat to himself as well as to the society. This Jīva Ātmā is unfortunately associated with the others three fingers, whereas the thumb is naturally away. The three fingers represent Sattva, Rajas, Tamo or the three Sharīrams - Sthūla Sharīram, Sūkshma Sharīram, and Kāraṇa Sharīram - associated with the material body. Spiritual Sādhanā is to separate the Jīva Ātmā from the material vesture. The thumb represents the Parama Ātmā because only with the help of the thumb, the other four fingers can function. The Jīva Ātmā is to detach from the material vesture and join the Parama Ātmā thumb. When Jīva Ātmā Parama Ātmā Aikyam takes place, a circle is formed. The uniqueness about a circle is that it does not have a beginning or an end. Once this Aikyam takes place, the mortal Jīva Ātmā becomes the immortal Parama Ātmā. This wisdom of immortality is being symbolically conveyed as Chin Mudrā. Hey Krishna, to you (Duhe) I offer my Namaskāram (Namaha).

Fifth Verse

Krishnam Vande - I offer Namaskāra to Lord Krishna who is great at three levels. Firstly as the son of Vasudeva (Vasudeva Sutam) and a great source of joy (Paramānandam) to Devakī, Lord Krishna is great as a member of a family. Next as the killer of Kamsa and Chanūra (Kamsa Chanūra Mardanam) he did good to the society. Finally he helped the posterity by being a Guru to the world (Jagat) by teaching Bhagavad Gītā through Arjuna. Mahābhārata war is supposed to have taken place in 3102 BC. Next is Verse is 6

The expression, Kaivartakaha Keshavaha refer to a boatman Krishna - who is able to steer the boat even in the most tempestuous of situations. In this verse, the Mahābhārata war is compared to a treacherous river with so many varieties of dangers lurking. The Pāndavāha had to cross the river to save themselves and this was the biggest challenge of their lives. A person who is caught in such a situation is called Ārtha Purushaha - helpless man. In this river like situation, Bhīshma and Drona were the two shores or banks which determine the direction of war (river). The waters were none other than Jayadratha, the Sindhu King. The King (Subala) and Prince (Shakuni) of Gāndhāra Desam were compared to blue lily (Nilotpālā), which is very attractive but when approached the slush traps you. Salya, a King of Madra Deshaha (Madri, Pāndu's wife, comes from Madra Deshaha) was like a crocodile (Grahavati). Krupāchāryā, (a great archer who was the teacher of Pāndavāha) was like the powerful undercurrent (Vahani). Karna was like a turbulent (Akula) waves (Vel) in the waters. Makara is a type of man-eating fish and Asvatthāma (son of Krupāchāryā) and Vikarna (brother of Duryodhana) was compared to these horrible (Ghora) fish. Duryodhana was like a whirlpool (Avartaha) in the river (Nadi) of war (Rana).

Eighth Verse

Paramānanda Mādhavam Vande - I salute Mādhava (Mā - Lakshmi, Dhavaha - consort) the source of prime happiness (Parama Ānanda). That Lord, makes (Karoti) a mute (Mūkam) talk (Vāchālam) if only he surrenders to the Lord. Also a lame person (Pangum) is made to climb (Langhayate) a mountain (Girim). That grace of Mādhava (Yat Krupa) makes all this possible. That (Tam) Mādhava, I (Aham) salute to (Vande). For a Gītā student, the mountain is the Gītā study only.

Ninth Verse

My prostration (Namaha) to that (Tasmai) Lord (Devāya) which God is glorified (Tunvanti) by divine hymns (Divyaihi Stavair) by so many other deities like Brahma (Creator), Varuna, Indra, Marut. Even here on the earth, All the devotees of the Lord glorify and sing (Gāyanti) him like chanters (Gāha) of the Sama Veda (Sāma). Sāma Veda is specifically mentioned since it is in musical form. Not only the Vedas, but the secondary Vedic scriptures (Veda Anga) meant to elaborate the Vedas and types of chanting the Vedas (Pada and Kramaha, others being Jata, Ghana). Who (yam) the great meditators (Yogino) see (Pashyanti) with a mind (Manasa) which is concentrated (Gatena) on the Lord i.e. one pointed mind in the state of meditation (Dhyāna Avasthita). Devotees see the Lord outside, while yogis see the Lord inside. Even though God takes a personal form for the sake of devotees, the real God is not a person. This is because a person is limited by spatial and time wise limitations which the Lord is not. Even the Gods (Sura) and Asuras (Asura) do not know (Na Viduhu) the limit (Antam - space-wise and time-wise) of (Yasya) that Lord. To (Tasmai) that all pervading Lord, I offer my Namaskāra (Namaha).

Hari Om

Posted by aprameyaha at 08:04



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