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Srimad Bhagavad Gita and a Meaningful Life

Dr K Giridhar

In between birth and death, the life of a human, who shines in many worldly activities and then eventually disappears, raises a multitude of questions. As certain as birth and death are, their nature is equally complex, and for this reason, this question has been central to the inquiries of all seekers, ancient and modern, transcending the limitations of place and time. What are the antecedents and consequences of human life? What is the scope of the laws of creation? How can worldly activities and transcendental practices be harmonized in life? Is it possible for a soul to achieve the grand vision of a life that attains its fulfillment through this divine confluence and moves forward in the universe? Where else can one find a teaching other than the Bhagavad Gita to solve these significant questions, which are as vast as the timeless and endless universe and incomprehensible to mere mortals! The Lord Narayana himself, as the Githacharya, out of compassion for the welfare of the world, bestowed this grand vision in Sanskrit, the language of the gods. It has been translated into hundreds of languages and has become a universally accepted teaching that shows the path to both worldly and ultimate well-being for all humanity.

The feeling of "I" is common in the world, but its philosophy is very profound. What is this "I"? From where and how did I come? Where will I go? Is this life of mine eternal? Or do I have another eternal abode? What is my main goal in life? How do I achieve it? Am I capable of achieving it on my own, or do I need help from others? Who provides such help? What is he like? How can one obtain his grace? What is my duty now for that? These and many other difficult problems have been haunting humanity. When one is born as an animal or a bird, there is no discerning power to solve these problems. This power is reserved for humans. This is the difference that God has placed between animals and humans.

Human birth is not easily obtained. After many animal births, as a result of the ripening of past merits, God gives a human birth. When God has provided such a good opportunity, one must resolve the above-mentioned problems, become duty-bound, achieve the main goal, and make one's birth meaningful.

However, the path to peace cannot be found without understanding the secret of the problems mentioned above, which follow us like a shadow. This secret cannot be unraveled by any means such as experience, logic, economics, ethics, or science. The only way to understand it is through spiritual science, which is hidden in the Upanishads and other texts and is very profound. It is not easily accessible to everyone. Out of compassion for those who are struggling without finding a way to reach the goal of life, Lord Krishna created such a situation for Arjuna, who was nearby, and through him, he taught this Gita to the world. It is like a mine of spiritual principles. All knowable subjects such as the nature of the soul, the analysis of duty, and the way for a human to attain well-being in this world and the next are contained in it. By studying this, a person can open his eyes, open his heart, understand the principles according to his capacity,

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become duty-bound, and live a happy life. Thus, it is no wonder that the Bhagavad Gita, which teaches the spiritual secrets that the whole world longs for and shows the right path, is universally accepted!

Authenticity

The founders of all philosophical schools have not written commentaries on the well-known epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana, or the Puranas such as the Bhagavata, but they have not failed to write commentaries on this Bhagavad Gita alone. In philosophy, the Bhagavad Gita holds a prominent place, just like the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. The 'Prasthan Traya' consisting of the Upanishad Prasthan, Sutra Prasthan, and Gita Prasthan is the basis of philosophy. Many great personalities of recent times, such as Sri Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Babu Aurobindo Ghosh, and Mahatma Gandhi, have also considered the Gita as the basis for their theories. Western scholars like Max Müller, Kant, Duessen, Annie Besant, and Brooks have also praised the Gita as a respectable philosophical text. Thus, there can be no doubt as to whether this text, which has earned the respect of all people, is authentic or not. According to the modern system, the above-mentioned "majority opinion" is the proof that the Gita is authentic. In the past, too, there was a system of determining an issue by a majority. About 1200 years ago, Udayanacharya, the founder of the Nyaya school, when refuting Buddhism and upholding the authenticity of the Vedas, said in his work "Atmatattvaviveka" that "mahanajanaparigrahitatva" (acceptance by the majority of great people) is a proof of authenticity. Since the Gita has the support of a majority, which is considered a valid proof in both ancient and modern traditions, it can be concluded that it is a "paramapramana" (ultimate authority).

In human-authored texts (pauruseyagrantha), only a text written by a reliable person (āptapraṇīta) is considered authentic. A reliable person is one who has a correct understanding of the subjects described in the text, an enthusiasm to describe them, the power to describe them in an instructional way, and a vow not to deceive. It is not necessary to say that all these qualities are abundant in Sri Veda Vyasa, an incarnation of the Lord. Since this Gita was written by such a supremely reliable person and expounds the meaning of the Vedas, the conclusion that it is the ultimate authority is further strengthened.

Refutation of the Doubt of Inauthenticity

The Gita is in the form of sentences. A sentence by itself cannot be inauthentic. It can be inauthentic due to the faults of the one who wrote it. The possible faults of the speaker are error, ignorance, doubt, delusion, and deceit. If any of these are present, the text written by such a person is certainly inauthentic. The author of the present Gita is Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa, who is known to be an incarnation of Lord Narayana from the verse:

कृष्ण द्वैपायनं व्यासं विद्धि नारायणं प्रभुम् ।

कोऽन्यो हि भुवि मैत्रेय महाभारतकङ्क्षवेत् - विष्णु पुराणम्

This proves that Vyasa is omniscient and omnipotent.

Whether the speaker has any deceit or not must be determined by examining the context of the Gita's composition. The context is as follows: Towards the end of the Dvapara Yuga, seeing people suffering in the cycle of transmigration without understanding the meaning of the Vedas and without knowledge of the ultimate truth, the compassionate gods led by Brahma prayed to Sri Narayana to save the virtuous people who were ignorant and suffering from the miseries of worldly life, by teaching them the truth. The Lord listened to this and incarnated in this world, performing many deeds of knowledge like dividing the Vedas, and became known as Vedavyasa. Then Vedavyasa, with the liberal intention that the knowledge of the Vedas alone would not be sufficient for all people and that women, Sudras, and all other people should easily attain knowledge of the truth, composed the Mahabharata, which contains the essence of all the Vedas, and the eighteen Puranas, such as the Bhagavata. In the Mahabharata thus composed, there are eighteen parvas. In the sixth, the Bhishmaparva, he included this Gita, which was taught by Sri Krishna. The Mahabharata is the essence of the Shastras like the Vedas. The most essential part of it is the Gita, as known from the Naradiya Smriti, Mahakurma Purana, and other texts. In short, there can be no suspicion that Sri Vedavyasa, who is a complete being himself and whose heart was filled with compassion as a result of the prayers of Brahma and others, whom he loved dearly, would have lied and cheated in this Gita, which he composed for the upliftment of the ignorant. A consideration of the context in which Sri Krishna taught Arjuna also makes it clear that deceit is not appropriate, as it was a situation of uplifting Arjuna, who was confused about his duty. Therefore, since Sri Krishna, who taught the Gita, and Sri Vedavyasa, who included it in the Mahabharata, are both Narayana himself, there is no room for error, ignorance, or delusion in them, who are omniscient. As it was a context of uplifting the virtuous, there is no room for deceit, and thus the suspicion that the Gita is inauthentic does not arise.

The Gita is a Shastra

The Gita appears to be a small text of 701 verses. Although the form is small, the fame is great. It is not an ordinary poem. Although it appears simple on the surface, when one delves into it, every verse, word, and even letter contains profound and unique philosophical meanings. Therefore, there is no doubt that it is an excellent "shastra". At the end of each chapter, it is explicitly stated as "yogashastre". A "shastra" is defined as:

वक्तृश्रोत्रोरभिमतमनन्यसाध्यं फलमधिकृत्य तद्धेतुभूतं प्रमाणान्तर-
प्राप्तमर्थं प्रतिपादयतांवाक्यानां समूहो हि शास्त्रम् -

विष्णु तत्त्वविनिर्णयटीका

A shastra is a collection of sentences that expounds a special meaning not determined by other means of proof, which causes a desired result for both the speaker and the listener that cannot be achieved by any other means. By understanding the nature of the soul, the path of devotion, and other things mentioned in the Gita and practicing them accordingly, one can attain liberation, which is the most

desired goal. The path described in the Gita is the only way to that; there is no other way. Thus, the Gita, which shows the right path to everyone, is not just a shastra but is universally agreed to be the best of all shastras.

भारतं सर्वशास्त्रेषु भारते गीतिका वरा।

भारतव्यपदेशेन आम्नायार्थः प्रदर्शितः।

निर्णयः सर्वशास्त्राणां सदृष्टान्तो हि भारते।

इत्यादि – महाकूर्मपुराणम्

Many such authentic sources proclaim that the Gita is the best of all shastras.

Deliberation on the Subject of Proof

There are three types of “pramanas” (proofs): “pratyaksha” (direct perception), “anumana” (inference), and “agama” (scriptural testimony). Subjects are of two types: “indriyagochara” (perceptible by the senses) and “atindriya” (imperceptible by the senses). The first can be determined by pratyaksha. Pratyaksha cannot grasp atindriya subjects. For that, anumana and agama are the means.

The Role of Logic

Even among these, logic alone, without considering other proofs, cannot independently determine any unique principle. Logic is a product of human intellect. A human is not omniscient. There is a difference in the intellect of every person. It is natural for a subject that one person considers to be valid to appear invalid to another's conjecture. Therefore, for determining a principle by inference, the cooperation of other proofs is necessary. In many situations, logic can be found for two opposing sides. For example: Should one desire many children, or should one not? If one begins to deliberate on this, logic can be found for both sides: It is right to desire many children. If there are many children, at least one of them might become worthy and save the ancestors through rituals like Gaya Shraddha. If there is only one son and he is unworthy, the ancestors will not get a good afterlife. In this way, one can give a logical argument for the side of having many children. Logic is also available for the opposite side of not desiring many children. If there are many children, there is a possibility that at least one of them might commit a great sin like drinking alcohol, which would lead to a bad afterlife for the ancestors! Therefore, it is better not to desire many children. When supporting logic is found for both opposing sides like this, how is one to decide? If logic, like perception, is considered an independent means of proof without considering the opposition of other proofs, then even something that contradicts perception can be proven with logic. For example: It is a matter of direct perception that there are two groups in the species of cattle: those with horns and those without. The characteristic of “cow-ness” is seen in both types of cattle. All animals that are cattle should have similar body parts, like a tail, etc. Therefore, using the example of cattle with horns as a precedent, and using the common characteristic of “cow-ness” as the reason, if one proves that cattle without horns also have horns, there is no flaw in that logic. One might mention the contradiction with direct perception. But since logic, like perception, is an

independent means of proof, its contradiction is irrelevant; it is not a flaw at all. Thus, by inference alone, many contradictory meanings would have to be accepted. Therefore, in such situations, one must determine the truth by considering, according to the nature of the subject, that the logic that is in harmony with perception or scriptural testimony is the proof, and everything that contradicts it is not.

Then the question might arise: Does a human not have the power or the right to form an independent opinion? We are not denying independent thought; however, we advise that they should deliberate whether the principle they have determined through their thought is in accordance with the proofs or not and then adopt the conclusion that is in accordance with the proofs.

Tradition

Some modern people pledge to determine all principles by logic alone. That is not possible. In every “darshana” (philosophy) and in every custom, some fundamental aspects must be accepted traditionally. If we look at linguistics, in the English language, in many words like “hour,” the letter “h” and others are not pronounced. Why include these useless letters? The answer to this objection is “tradition”. In the monthly system of the English, there is a variation in the number of days for each month. Why were not all months set at 30 days? Why is there a rule that November has 30 days and December has 31? Why not the other way around? Why do July and August both have 31 days? Why is there an alternative of 28 or 29 for February? The only answer to all these objections is tradition. This system cannot be justified by any other reason. When one cannot abandon tradition even in ordinary customs, how is it possible to not accept some principles traditionally in a philosophy that establishes the meaning of imperceptible things? One should remember that the intellectual power of the ancient teachers who established traditions is greater than ours, no matter how intelligent we think we are. The traditional principles are those that arose from a transcendental brilliance that was not accessible even to their intellect. They are beyond the reach of the conjectures of insignificant people like us. Therefore, it is a foolishness to say that we will abandon tradition and determine the truth by logic alone.

The Path of Deliberation

In such transcendental matters, only the “apauruṣeya” (not authored by a human) texts like the Vedas and Upanishads, and the “gita” and other texts composed by an omniscient being, are the proofs. One should not determine any principle without a proof. Following this path is the “path of philosophical deliberation”.

Merely logical reasoning or the stating of principles without proof is not the path of philosophical deliberation. We welcome the “path of independent thought” which, based on proofs and with a refined intellect, deliberates and determines the truth. Our ancient teachers adopted such a well-organized method to determine the truth. But there is no substance in the arguments of those who, resorting to sophistry, have no determination of a fundamental principle,

reject the ancient tradition, and speak whatever they want according to their unrefined intellect. Such a so-called independent path is not worth accepting, according to the opinion of deliberators.

The Order of Meaning

The Gita is a universally authoritative philosophy. It is very profound with many hidden meanings. It is not easy to see its depth. There are plenty of commentaries, sub-commentaries, and translations. But the problem is to what extent its true meaning has been brought out. To find the true intention of a shastra, one must determine the meaning by deliberating the strength and weakness of the six “yuktis” (methods): “upakrama” (beginning), “upasamhara” (conclusion), “abhyasa” (repetition), “apurvata” (novelty), “phala” (result), and “arthavada” (eulogy or condemnation). “Upakrama” is the beginning part of the text. “Upasamhara” is the final part. The same thing being said in many places is called “abhyasa”. Something that is not established by other proofs is “apurvata”. The benefit that comes from the knowledge of the meaning is “phala”. Praises and condemnations are “arthavada”. When a sentence appears to have two contradictory meanings, the real meaning of that sentence is determined as the one that is favorable to these six methods. In all philosophical deliberations, both the ancient teachers and the wise in worldly affairs have followed this procedure.

Translation

There are plenty of commentaries, sub-commentaries, and translations of the Gita. But some have imposed their own philosophical conclusion on the Gita without paying attention to the above-mentioned means of determining the intention. Others have expounded their own desired meaning using plausible logic, claiming it to be in accordance with the upakrama and other methods, and have proclaimed it as the meaning of the Gita. The translations are for the most part shining like a kite with a broken string. Among the translators, the most eminent is Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was an expert in worldly affairs and had also studied the shastras. He, after a deliberation with his refined intellect and some shastric bases, wrote a translation of the Gita in Marathi named “Gitarahasya”. Even he raised the objection that the ancient teachers, who were the founders of philosophical schools, were bound by traditional prejudice and did not do an independent deliberation but wrote their commentaries on the Gita in accordance with it. He proclaimed that he would give the true meaning of the Gita with a critical and independent perspective, and stumbled, saying that the Gita is about the path of worldly action (pravṛttidharmapara). Not only that, but he also raised the doubt, “What is the reason for deliberating on how to attain liberation through Brahmajnana or devotion in a book like the Gita, which was spoken to motivate Arjuna, who was depressed because of the conviction that fighting his own relatives was an evil deed, to fight?” and objected that this doubt was not resolved by any commentary of the ancient teachers. If he had seen the commentaries of Sri Madhvacharya, this objection would not have arisen at all. The reason is: Sri

Madhvacharya has explained that the essence of the Gita's teaching is, “Arjuna! Abandon the doubt that war is unrighteous. It is the duty ordained by the Supreme Lord for a Kshatriya like you. If you do not perform it, you will fail in your duty. Even in fighting, you must follow the prescribed method. The prescribed method is to perform your duty without desiring the fruits, with the contemplation that the war I am fighting is offered to you, Lord, with devotion and knowledge of his greatness. This righteous action performed in this way is not only beneficial in this world; it brings well-being in this world and also leads to liberation through knowledge. Therefore, do the righteous war without any hesitation; not doing it is unrighteous. Do not give in to that.” After knowing this essence, is there any room for Tilak's objection? He showed that the Gita is about the path of renunciation (nivṛttidharmapara) by showing that the war, which Arjuna doubted was unrighteous and would lead to loss of happiness in this world and to hell in the next, is the supreme duty, and by teaching the way in which it should be performed so that it becomes conducive to happiness in this world and the path to liberation. Mahatma Gandhi also adopted this path. The path of renunciation described here is his “anasakti yoga”. He himself explained that karma performed without attachment to the fruit and for the pleasure of the Lord is anasakti yoga, and he proclaimed that this is the karma yoga taught in the Gita. This point is indeed acceptable.

Is it appropriate to interpret the sublime teaching in the supremely sacred Gita in this way, or is it appropriate to interpret the Gita as being about the path of worldly action, which is of little benefit and not worth accepting for all? The readers can decide. When the truth did not appear exactly as it is to the intellect of great people like Tilak, what is the fate of other ordinary people?

Some translations are running wild. Whatever the original text may be, they expound the meaning that they desire. They do not care about the nuance of the words or the context. They have arbitrarily expounded many modern concepts used in worldly affairs, such as nationalism, as being taught in the Gita, Vedas, etc. Sri Aluru Venkataraya, in his book “Gitabhavapradeepa”, started with “Gita and Nationalism” and said that the concept of nationalism is present in the Vedas too, and for that, he quoted the verse “अहं राष्ट्रं संगमनी” etc. from the Ambhrani Sukta of the Rigveda, and said that the word “rashtri” there suggests the concept of nationalism. He himself explained that the concept of nationalism means the idea that Hindustan is one. Isn't it ridiculous to connect this concept with the word “rashtri” in the Veda? Let the readers decide. Further in the same book, he said that the concept of “mine” is “ahankara” (ego). It is clear that “I” is ahankara and “mine” is “mamakara” (possessiveness). Despite such illogical and inconsistent writings being abundant, it has become a constant refrain for them to insult the wise ancient scholars and tradition.

Our purpose is to show the philosophical meaning of the Gita. We do not have the intention of churning the situation of modern texts. However, we had to explain one or two points here so that people do not become misled about the truth by reading such books.

The Gita and Philosophy

As the saying "मानाधीना मेयसिद्धिः" goes, philosophy is the science that determines the truth based on proofs. It is of two types: "astika darshana" (theistic philosophy) and "nastika darshana" (atheistic philosophy). The founders of these schools, before expounding their principles, have deliberated on the fundamental proofs, determined the proofs they favor, and then determined the truth from them. Among the atheists, the Charvakas believe that direct perception is the only proof, and that the material objects that are perceptible by it are the only reality, and that there are no transcendental objects that are not perceptible by the senses, such as virtue, vice, heaven, hell, or a creator like the Supreme Lord. The Buddhists accept two proofs, pratyaksha and anumana, and they accept some imperceptible things like virtue and vice, which are established by them. They do not consider the Vedas to be a proof. They say that the whole world is momentary. Among them, some accept that this world is void, and others accept that it is in the form of consciousness. Then what is the reason for the external world to appear as real? They say that a mysterious power called "samvriti" (illusion) shows the void as real. They call this "samvrita satya" (conventional truth). It is not the ultimate reality. All worldly activities happen because of it. The ultimate reality is the void. In this way, they propagated a non-Vedic philosophy.

When expounding the meaning of the Gita, it is not appropriate to consider the philosophies that do not accept the Gita as a proof. The Samkhya darshana also belongs to that category. If we consider the remaining Nyaya-Vaisesika, Purva Mimamsa, and Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta) darshanas, the philosophers of those schools believe that the Gita is favorable to their respective philosophies.

The Gita is a spiritual science. Its main purpose is to deliberate on the nature of the soul and to determine and state the path of well-being for all living beings. The Charvaka darshana does not accept the existence of a soul separate from the body, so it is not appropriate to consider it in the context of spiritual deliberation. It is appropriate to consider the deliberation on the nature of the soul in the remaining Samkhya, Nyaya-Vaisesika, Purva Mimamsa, and Vedanta schools. Even in Vedanta, there are three schools: Advaita, Vishishtadvaita, and Dvaita. Of these six schools (Samkhya, Nyaya-Vaisesika, Purva Mimamsa, and the three Vedantas), five schools, except for Advaita, accept many principles with the same kind of reality and uphold the theory of multiple souls.

In the Advaita darshana, only some great sentences like "'tat tvam asi'" are the ultimate proofs. The ultimate truth is what is established by them. Other parts of the Vedas and other proofs like pratyaksha are not the means of knowing

the truth. They believe that Brahman alone is real, the whole world is unreal, and there is no difference between the individual soul and God. There is a strange power that is referred to by words like "maya", "avidya", and "ajnana". It is this that makes the difference appear. Although not ultimately real, because of maya, the world appears to be real, and the individual soul, which is not different from Brahman, appears to be different from Brahman. This is called "vyavaharika satya" (conventional truth). Even what appears in a delusion is a kind of reality. It is called "pratibhasika satya" (illusory reality). In this way, they have established the theory that reality is of three kinds.

This philosophy is the only one that teaches non-duality. The other five philosophies are dualistic. Therefore, in general, the theistic philosophies can be divided into two groups: the "bhedavada" (dualism) or "dvaitavada", and the "abhedavada" (non-dualism) or "advaitavada".

The Secret of the Gita

Let us leave the deliberation of the different philosophies aside and consider what the secret of the Gita's philosophy is. No living being can remain without performing karma even for a moment. Karma is a bondage, but it can also become a means of knowledge and lead to liberation. The secret of the Gita's teaching is that everything is under the control of the supremely excellent God. "The individual souls are different from each other and from God, are of different grades, and are controlled by God. No one can do anything or stop doing anything without his motivation. The duties of the varnas and ashramas are ordained by God himself. Every person should, with devotion to God, perform the duties prescribed for them and contemplate that God may be pleased by it. One should not desire any fruit." This karma, which is performed with this kind of contemplation, is the "nivṛtta dharma" (path of renunciation). It is a means to liberation through knowledge. This is the "karmayoga" desired by God. For one who performs it with the above-mentioned contemplation, all well-being in this world is attained, and in the end, liberation is also attained. Therefore, karma performed in this way leads to liberation. The karma which is performed with a sense of ego, thinking "I am doing this karma independently," with the desire to attain some fruit, is the "pravṛtti dharma" (path of worldly action). For one who performs it, only the desired fruit is attained, and in the end, another birth comes, and the cycle of transmigration continues by performing karma in this way. Thus, karma performed in this way leads to bondage. This is to be abandoned. The nivṛtta dharma is the acceptable karmayoga. Even the knowledgeable must perform it. The present war is the act of destroying the wicked, who are enemies of the Supreme Lord and their relatives. This is a righteous duty for a Kshatriya. Arjuna! Abandon the doubt that it is unrighteous. The secret of the Gita is to consider this as the worship of God, to perform this righteous war that has come your way without desiring any fruit, and with the contemplation that God may be pleased by it, and become a partaker of well-being.

The following subjects are elaborated in the Gita:

1. The nature of the soul: the souls are eternal without beginning, they are distinct, they have different grades, they are dependent on God, and they are constantly performing karma naturally without remaining silent even for a moment.
2. The pravṛtti dharma is to be abandoned, and the nivṛtta dharma is the acceptable karmayoga. It is to be performed even after attaining knowledge. Even among these, performing one's own duty is the way to worship God, and one should not accept the duties of others.
3. The duties of the varnas and ashramas, and war is a righteous duty for a Kshatriya.
4. The greatness of God: Sri Krishna is God himself, he is full of all good qualities, he is real, he is the creator of the entire universe and so on, he is different from the soul and the universe, he is independent, he is the Supreme Person, and all the goals of human life like liberation are to be attained only by his grace.
5. Devotion to God is the best of all means.

These and other topics are explained in detail in the Gita. The explanation of which subject is described in which part of the Gita can be found in the introduction part of the "Gita Tatparya Nirnaya" written by Sri Madhvacharya. It is also determined there, with deliberation, that this is the essence of all philosophical schools. This is the true meaning of the Gita. No other philosophy that contradicts this can be the meaning of the Gita. All the intention-determining methods like "upakrama" mentioned earlier also corroborate this meaning.

Other Interpretations

It seems that among the ancient teachers as well, many did not pay attention to the truth without any partiality. They too determined a theory of their own and, with their intellectual skill, explained it as being taught in the Gita. This opinion is clearly seen in the following words:

यथा चायमर्थः तथा प्रकरणांशो विभज्य तत्र तत्र दर्शयिष्यामः -

शांकर गीताभाष्यम्

In the Gita, in verses like:

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।

शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥

भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन ।

ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥

It is stated, with the negation of other means, that devotion to Vishnu is the best of all means. Devotion is a firm love preceded by the knowledge of his greatness. There is no place for such devotion in the theory of the identity of the soul and God. The reason is: in the philosophy where the soul is the Supreme Lord, where there is no other real object, and where Brahman is the only reality, who is the one who is devoted and to whom is the devotion directed? In the theory where the Supreme Lord is without qualities, without form, and is only a pure existence, how can one contemplate greatness in a Supreme Lord who is like a

void? The Advaita philosophy says that the acts of creation, etc., which are the basis of his greatness, are all false. Such illusory acts of creation, etc., cannot describe his greatness. It is well known in the world that even ordinary people can create illusory things with the help of mantras and medicines. Thus, in the philosophy of a qualityless God, no greatness is attributed to the Supreme Lord. After that, where is the place for devotion, which is a love preceded by the knowledge of his greatness? In this way, all the above-mentioned principles taught in the Gita are contrary to the theory of identity. However, some verses appear to teach identity on the surface. If one goes inside and deliberates according to the method mentioned above, the true meaning will not be hidden from the deliberator. In our translation, under such verses, we have deliberated on the appropriateness of the meaning of the verse and shown the conclusion in the footnotes. Therefore, we will not discuss that subject here again. Seekers can read this book and understand.

Sri Madhvacharya is the only one who has upheld the philosophy taught in the Gita. He has written two commentaries on the Gita, "Gita Bhashya" and "Gita Tatparya Nirnaya". Ancient teachers have written sub-commentaries and notes on both of them. Srimad Raghavendra Tirthaguruvarsarvabhoutma has written a commentary called "Vivriti", which summarizes the essence of these profound texts and, with a clear and serious style, deterministically explains the meaning of the Gita that is derived from them.

Multiple Meanings

The Gita is a part of the Mahabharata. How can one say that this is the only meaning and no other is the true meaning? When many authoritative sources proclaim that the entire Mahabharata has multiple meanings, isn't it appropriate that the Gita, which is the most essential part of it, also has multiple philosophical meanings? True, the ancients also accepted multiple meanings. All of them are for different types of qualified people to understand and are not contradictory to the meaning mentioned above. Such meanings are authentic. We are only saying here that no meaning that contradicts the meaning mentioned above can be the meaning of the Gita.

That the Mahabharata has multiple meanings that are not contradictory has been established as follows:

ब्रह्माद्यैः प्रार्थितो विष्णुः भारतं स चकार ह

यस्मिन् दशार्थाः सर्वत्र न ज्ञेयाः सर्वजन्तुभिः - नारदीयं पुराणम्

दशावरार्थं सर्वत्र केवलं विष्णु बोधकं

परोक्षार्थं तु सर्वत्र वेदादप्युत्तमं तु यत् - स्कान्दपुराणम्

मन्वादि केचिद्भूवते ह्यास्तिकादि तथ परे

तथोपरीचराद्यनै भारतं परिचक्षते - महाभारतम्

The Mahabharata has many meanings. All of them are not known to all. The Mahabharata contains three meanings: "manu", "astika", and "uparichara". "Manu" means: the ten qualities of dharma, devotion, knowledge, dispassion, intelligence, retention, courage, steadfastness, yoga, vital

breath, and strength; and the six meanings of listening, contemplation, character, humility, Vedas. Of these, Dharmaraja is the embodiment of dharma, Bhimasena of the ten qualities like devotion, Arjuna of listening and contemplation, Nakula of character, Sahadeva of humility, and Draupadi of the Vedas. It is a custom to refer to the object of worship by the word for its worshipper, and to refer to the worshipper by the word for the object of worship. The meaning of the term “manvarthaka” here is that the greatness of the five Pandavas and Draupadi is expounded by referring to the said dharma, devotion, etc., which are their objects of worship, by the words Dharmaraja, Bhimasena, etc.

“Astika” means: The five Pandavas and Draupadi. The “astika artha” is the meaning that describes their origin, life story, war, etc., by explicitly referring to them by their names.

“Uparichara” means the supremely excellent Vishnu. The “uparichara artha” is that the intention of the Mahabharata is to describe the greatness of the supremely excellent Vishnu in all parts, with a primary meaning in every letter, word, and tone. This meaning is not known to all; it is only accessible to the highest knowers. In this way, one should know from the shastras that the Mahabharata has many non-contradictory meanings.

Benefit

In the past, different groups of people used to do different jobs. Agriculture, weaving, pottery, sculpture, machine manufacturing, etc., industries, trade, governance, Vedic and Smarta rituals, worldly and Vedic education, and other life-supporting activities were being done by their respective groups from time immemorial. The experience of this was flowing in their bloodline through generations. As a result, those activities were carried out with enthusiasm and were fully fruitful. No one interfered in the work of another. Although everyone needed everything, they obtained everything they needed through mutual cooperation. Everyone knew the limits of their own capacity and acted with the belief that it is righteous to remain within their own boundaries and unrighteous to transgress and interfere in the duties of others. Theistic mindset was strong. Generally, no one did any work that would harm others. They spoke the truth. Those who lied were immediately punished by the king. People did not pay much attention to unrighteous conduct, excessive greed, selfishness, and harming others. Due to such a high culture, peace prevailed in society, and life was happy.

Even today, people desire peace and happiness. But this is the age of science, the world of industry, new inventions, the desire for freedom, the competition to outdo each other. If one person makes an atom bomb, another's attention is on making an even greater hydrogen bomb. Others think of

submerging both. In this way, flying up and up, falling down, getting burnt, and suffering has become the daily routine. There is no end to science. What was considered valid yesterday is proclaimed as invalid today by new research. No human is omniscient; yet they pretend to be omniscient. They do not care even if it harms society. They think it is enough if their selfish purpose is achieved. When they are on a stage, they speak of the welfare of the world, propagate selflessness, and express a service-oriented mindset, but when they are working, there is no trace of these; they act in the opposite way. Thus, restlessness is rampant in the country. The land that was the birthplace of righteousness is now deprived of it and is suffering in a life full of misery. The root cause of this miserable state is that by pushing aside the teachings of the omniscient ancient teachers, moving away from the high-level ancient culture, and in the name of modern civilization, people are moving on a path of unrighteousness, not knowing "from where did we start? Where are we now? Where will we stop? What is the eternal abode? What should we do now?" and are moving independently as they please. The only means to uproot this root is the shastras. They are the foundation of high culture. The most essential of them is the Gita shastra. "Since everything is dependent on God, performing righteous duties with devotion to God, the master of all, and without attachment to the fruit, is the worship of God. That is the ultimate righteousness and brings well-being. Everything that contradicts it is unrighteous." This is the essence of the Gita. Its explanation has been given before. This is the way to solve the problems that have been haunting humans, as mentioned in the beginning. By understanding and practicing this, all the turbulent feelings that have arisen now will be removed, and peace will prevail. We will become pure through high culture and will see a happy life. God will also grant us true happiness that never fades away.

The teaching of the Gita is the ultimate medicine for the atmosphere of unrest that has spread in the country today. By it alone, the people should be uplifted; the country should shine as an abode of peace; it should be glorious with high culture. It is seen that many people, who have mostly studied worldly subjects and have some knowledge of the Sanskrit language, have translated the Gita into other languages..