

Essentials of Geeta Bhasya and Tatparya of Sri Madhvacharya

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# **Essentials of Gitabhasya and Gitatparya Of Sri Madhvacharya**

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## I

**Bhagavadgita** is one of the most sacred books of mankind. It is in simple style, imparts practical wisdom and a universal appeal. It sets clearly the philosophy of duty. This philosophy of duty is based on realistic worldview, and monotheistic view of religion. Gita is described as Brahnavidya and Yogasastra i.e. a book that gives knowledge, and also teaches the means to attain it.

Bhagavadgita is not a separate text. It is a part of Mahabharata. A good many verses of Bhagavadgita occur in other parts of Mahabharata with slight verbal changes but with the same hot content. In a way Bhagavadgita constitutes the essence of Mahabharata. Mahabharata, particularly, Bhagavadgita contains the essence of ancient Pancaratra – Bhagavata religion. Thus Bhagavadgita represents a tradition. It is not merely a text but is a tradition. This has to be kept in mind while interpreting and understanding Bhaga vadgita.

Bhagavadgita is also an essence of Upanishads in the colophon to each chapter. It is clearly mentioned that Bhagavadgita is essence of Upanishads. Thus it contains the central teaching of Upanishads. Bhagavadgita mentions Brahmasutra and explains its role as an aid to rationally interpret Upanishads. Thus, Gita teaching is a synthesis of the teachings of Upanishads and Pancaratra – Bhagavata tradition, and has to be understood in this light.

Many expressions, terms, concepts and ideas elaborated in Bhagavadgita have the background of these traditions and any attempt to understand Bhagavadgita ignoring this background is bound to fail. Most of the modern writers on Bhagavadgita have taken it as an isolated text, ignored the cultural and philosophical background of many of the terms, expressions, and concepts, and consequently have failed to arrive at a coherent meaning of Gita. However, they appreciate the general ethical teachings of Bhagavadgita and show great respect for its universal approach.

Among the traditional commentators, Ramanuja and Madhwa duly take in to account the Pancaratra – Bhagavata background of Gita and also the background of Upanishads. They have no difficulty in understanding monotheism, realism and the philosophy of duty. But Sankara finds it difficult to take these as final positions and introduces two perspectives: a perspective of Mandadhikarin and a perspective of Uttamadhikarin. This has introduced a kind of dichotomy all along his interpretation.

## II

**Madhvacharya** has written two commentaries on Bhagavadgita viz. **GitaBhasya and GitaTatparya**. At the commencement of both these works, he explains the importance of Mahabharata, gives the details of Pancaratra – Bhagavata tradition, points out the close relation between Veda and Pancaratra, and brings home the importance of Gita as an essence of this entire tradition of Veda and Pancaratra. He clearly takes a historical view of Gita teaching instead of merely talking the textual view. This makes a vast difference between the understanding of the Gita as a representative work of a tradition or as merely an isolated text.

He also apposes the two perspective views viz. one for Mandadhikarin and the other for Uttamadhikarin, since he does not see any conflict between Karma and Jnana. The philosophy of duty evolved in Gita does not envisage a rejection of Karma at any stage in the spiritual progress and therefore there is no need to envisage any dichotomy in this respect.

Madhvacharya does not give a word-by-word meaning or verse-by-verse explanation. There were already commentators before him. He picks up for comments such verses and expressions which were not correctly understood and needed proper explanation. He brings out philosophical import of Gita verses and discusses the issues that arise from the philosophical statements made in Gita. Thus, his Bhasya has three approaches:

1. Interpretation of select verses and expressions that were not correctly understood.
  2. Clarification of the philosophical statements and the philosophical issues that arise out of these statements.
  3. Formulation of Gita view on these philosophical issues and the connected issues.
- Thus, it is a full exposition of Gita thought rather than mere interpretation of text.

In giving a full exposition, naturally he notices other interpretations, particularly that of Sankaracharya and reviews the same.

GitaTatparya further supplements the interpretational and philosophical points. These two works really constitute one unit in understanding Madhvacharya's exposition of Gita. Gitatparya gives many doctrinal details. In both these Madhvacharya profusely quotes the source passages from Veda, Pancaratrasamhitas, Itihasa –Purana etc, there by establishing a long tradition of Gita thought.

### III

**The** issue with which Gita starts in this i.e. whether to destroy the entire race of Kurus for the sake of acquiring kingdom is dharma or adharma? Whether to kill the teachers, elders, and all other kith and kin for the sake of Kingdom is dharma or adharma? This consequence of was, though, was known to Arjuna before he came to the battle field, he felt the intensity of it when he actually saw his teachers, elders, and other kith and kin before him. It was both moral and an emotional issue for him. Emotionally to kill his own kith and kin, to see such a large scale destruction was heart breaking. Morally, it was wrong to kill one's own kith and kin for the sake of kingdom and luxury. Therefore on both accounts Arjuna thought it was adharma. On the contrary by withdrawing from the battlefield, Arjuna thought he would be sacrificing his personal interests for the sake of larger interest. He will be saving a great destruction. This, he thought is the right course of dharma. Therefore the issue posed at the start of Gita is, whether fighting the enemy is dharma? Whether to avoid large-scale destruction is dharma?

It is this issue that Madhvacharya takes up at the commencement of his GitaTatparya. What is dharma for Kshatriya? Destroying the evil men and evil forces is dharma for Kshatriya. If such evil men and evil forces constitute teachers, elders and one's kith and kin that should not detract a Kshatriya from his dharma of destroying evil. To yield to such emotional pressure is emotionalism. It is adharma. Neither the magnitude of destruction nor the personal relation with the evil men are sufficient ground to evade one's responsibility. Entertaining Pity for such evil persons is not dharma. It is actually adharma. Therefore, fighting the evil men is clearly dharma. It is the moral duty of a Kshatriya. Emotions have to be controlled while discharging one's moral duty. This central teaching is clearly brought out by Sri Madhavcharya right at the commencement of Gitatparya.

Gita is the theistic document and Sri Madhvacharya is a theistic commentator. Therefore, the central teaching is put in a theistic terminology, which is most appropriate way of putting the central teaching of Gita.

It is a paramount duty of Ksatriyas to destroy those who oppose God and also those who support such persons. Performing one's duty in dedication to God with deep devotion to God is the Supreme dharma. Anything different or opposed to it adharma. Everything is entirely dependent on God.

Arjuna did not realize this on account of his attachment to his kith and kin and hesitated a little to fight. Therefore Lord Krishna unfolds the above dharma.

Having thus set the central teaching, Madhvacharya elaborates it quoting the relevant verses from the entire Bhagavadgita supporting each point stated in the central teaching. The main points made in the central teaching are: 1. Fighting to destroy the evil is the duty of a Ksatriya. Those who oppose God and those who support such persons

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constitute evil men and evil force. 2. One has to one's duty and not the duty of someone else. For Arjuna to fight the evil is the duty but not taking to mendicant's life, etc., as felt by him. 3. One has to perform one's duty in dedication to God and with deep devotion to God. Mere discharging one's duty with out dedication and devotion to God does not make it a dharma. 4. God is supreme and everything else is entirely dependent upon him. 5. Devotion is the highest means to know God. 6. Everyone has to discharge duty and there is none who is above duty. 7. Arjuna does not belong to a lower level of Adhikarin. He is Uttamadhikarin.

This statement of central teaching in Gitatparya sums up the entire Gita message and puts Arjuna's duty of fighting evil in the right perspective.

#### IV

The above gives a clear guidance so far as the moral aspect of Arjuna's problem is concerned. Fighting evil being a duty of Arjuna as a Ksatriya it is his dharma. But, what about the emotional aspect? How to overcome the grief and pain consequent on the killing of his kith and kin? It is this question that Krishna deals with first at the commencement of second chapter. This involves the basic question as to, under what circumstances the grief for the kith and kin is justified and how much man has control over these circumstances. The mere contingency of death is not sufficient ground for the grief. The death is inevitable. It affects only the bodies but not the true self of a person. Change of body is as normal as change from youth to old age or as changing cloths. The true self is eternal. Therefore, mere death of dear person need not cause any grief come in the way of discharging one's duty. What causes pain and grief is not so much death or injury to the body of a dear person but the attachment one has for the body, etc, It is this attachment that has to be weakened if one has to overcome grief. This is the solution for the emotional problem of Arjuna. Emotions should not be allowed to sway over our sense of duty.

While pleading to withdraw from the battlefield, Arjuna clearly displays the sway of emotions over his sense of duty. He is greatly depressed, he is shivering, he becomes conscious that the people before him to fight are his teachers, elders and close relatives. These are the very people with whom he would have normally shared his kingdom and royal luxuries. If these are killed and the whole race is destroyed, there will be social chaos. What is after all the objective or gain of this deadly war? It is acquiring a petty kingdom. Better to accept a mendicant's life than to destroy the whole race for the sake of kingdom. This line of argument of Arjuna clearly indicates the emotional stress on his mind. Therefore Sri Krishna removes this burden on his mind first.

Sri Krishna frankly tells Arjuna that his arguments are unwise; His way of thinking is not the way that is followed by the wise. It does not lead to anybody's good or bring any credit to anyone. It only shows the weakness of his mind the great depression that has overtaken him.

This emotionalism is due to the lack of proper knowledge of self as indestructible and the body as changing. The lack of such knowledge results in attachment to the body and grief at the perishing of body. Therefore, one has to know the truth about the self.

This knowledge involves much more deeper probe than merely knowing the self as non-destructible. One has to know as how it functions. Is self independent in its functioning or is it guided by God? If it is guided by God what is the nature of God who guides? What is the relation between God and Individual self? What is the nature of the world in which the self functions? How the self is regulated by God? All this knowledge is termed as Sankhya in Gita. The term Sankhya does not refer to popularly known Sankhya system of Kapila in Gita. Sankhya is knowledge, particularly knowledge of God. The means to attain this knowledge is termed as Yoga. These two viz. Sankhya and Yoga are discussed

in the second chapter so as to enable Arjuna to develop the correct perspective in respect of his dharma and overcome his emotions.

## V

### **Sankhya and Yoga**

In the second chapter, from verses 12 to 39, there is detailed account of Sankhya or knowledge. The main points that constitute the ingredients of this knowledge are: 1. The souls are eternal and many (II-12). 2. Bodies go on changing (II-13). 3. The cause of suffering is attachment (II-14). 4. Performance of good deeds does not lead to misery. Wrong deeds do lead to misery (II-16). 5. The prakriti or primordial matter is eternal and Brahman or God is eternal (II-16). 6. Jiva can not act independently, God alone is independent (II-19, II-20 and II-21), 8. The creation, etc., activities of God are real. His attributes are real. He is supreme (II-24). 9. He is avyakta, he is achintya (II-25), 10. One has to discharge one's svadharma without any hesitation. To discharge one's svadharma is a great opportunity in life. While discharging one's svadharma one should be unmindful of pleasure and pain or loss or gain (II-31, 32, 38). This is the essence of right knowledge. This is Sankhya.

This knowledge enables one to realize the following facts, which are very relevant to the present context:

1. The self is eternal. It is only the body that is destroyed.
2. It is attachment to the bodies, etc., that causes the grief.
3. One should discharge one's duties unmindful of pleasure and pain.
4. One is entirely dependent upon God. God is supreme and regulator of all. It is the realization of this fact that removes attachment, which is the root cause of all misery.

It is the realization of supremacy of God that is Sankhya or knowledge. One who acquires this knowledge will not hesitate to discharge his duty in dedication to God with deep devotion to him. This Sankhya happens to be the foundation of Yoga or Karmayoga and its discussion right at the commencement of the Gita is very relevant to the issue of on hand viz. whether to fight or not?

## VI

### **Nature of Nasha and abhimaana**

In the context of Sankhya, a little more elaboration of some of the points made here is necessary. Firstly the concept of eternity or non-destructibility has to be explained.

Destruction or Naasha is of four types:

1. Svarupanaasha: The destruction of very entity
2. Dehanaasha: The destruction of the body only
3. Dhukapraapthi: Being affected by sorrows
4. Apurnata: Finiteness or limited nature in respect of time, space, attributes, etc.

God is free from all these four types of destructions. Jivas are free from only the first type of destruction, i.e. svarupanaasha. The jivas have dhukha and apurnata. Their bodies perish. Besides God and Jivas, Chit Prakriti, Achit-PrakritiVarna and avyaktha aakasha are also eternal. But these have apurnata. God alone is eternal in the full sense of the term, that is why he is described as “nityo nityaanam”.

The next point of to be noted is the nature of abhimaana or attachment. It is not merely the contact between the body, senses and the objects that is responsible for the pleasure and pain, it is abhimaana or attachment that is responsible for pleasure or pain. This abhimaana is of three types: 1. Considering the body, senses and anthakarana as self and getting attached to them. 2. Considering the property, relatives, etc., as belonging to oneself and getting attached to them. 3. Considering the objects around as of highest value and getting attached to them. In these attachments the notion that I am a free agent and I can freely own things is involved. The realization that God is only the freely agent and everything primarily belongs to God is absent here. This leads to misery and sorrow when these things are lost or destroyed. Therefore, this kind of emotionalism has to be avoided, and one has to discharge his duty in dedication to God and deep devotion to him. This theistic approach to life removes our ego and misery. The other points mentioned here as part of Sankhya or right knowledge will be elaborated in Gita itself later, and we will narrate the same in relevant places.

## VII

Mere performance of rituals does not lead to any good.

With this foundation of Sankhya or knowledge Yoga has to be undertaken. Yoga refers to the means of right knowledge and the fulfillment of life's goal. There was a wide spread belief that it is Vedic rituals that lead to various results and obtaining the same is the highest objective of life. The belief had to be first removed. Therefore, Gita takes up this issue before Yoga is explained. Some people without going deep into this purport of the Vedas, believed that Vedas teach only rituals. These rituals lead to the heaven, etc. These give happiness and luxuries (II-42-44). These people are known as Vedavaadarata or those who are interested in the superficial meaning of the Veda. Really speaking the Vedas advise us to not to be content with rituals and their avrga etc., results that belong to the area of trigunas, i.e., satva, rajas, and tamas. One has to transcend these trigunas and concentrate on God (II-45). Performing these very rituals and other prescribed duties with dedication to God will lead to much higher fulfillment of life than mere svarga, etc. A person who has a benefit of a large lake has certainly the benefit of a small pond (II-46).



## VIII

### Philosophy of duty

One is enjoined to perform one's duties only; but not with the expectation of results. No duty be undertaken with the motivation of results. Nor, one should be indifferent towards one's duty on the ground that he is not interested in the results (II-47).

This philosophy of duty is a turning point in Indian cultural history. It is directly in contrast with the view of vedavaadaratas mentioned above. While the Vedavaadaratas or those who went by superficial meaning of the Vedas insisted that deeds are to be taken for the respective results, the philosophy of duty held by Gita insists that deeds that are svadharma be undertaken as svadharma without the motivation of results. Performance of one's duty in dedication to God with deep devotion is an end by itself and not a means excepting the knowledge and grace of God. This theory of deeds is known as nishkaamakarma theory or nivrttakarma theory as against kaamyakarma theory of mimamsakas. Three important points are involved in this theory: 1. One has to undertake one's duty because it is a duty. 2. Results should not be the motivation for undertaking any deed. 3. None should give up or be indifferent towards his duty on the grounds that he is not interested in the results or there are no results. Such performance of duty has to be in dedication to God with deep devotion to him. This is the Gita theory of Nishkaamakarma.

### Yoga of Gita

Being unmindful of presence or absence of results is Yoga. This is possible only when one acquires right knowledge. This knowledge is superior to mere karma. Knowledge that leads to the surrender at the feet of God is the highest knowledge. Therefore the wise will give up the interest in results, performs the deeds in dedication to God acquiring the knowledge of his supremacy and developing deep devotion for him, and ultimately attain the final goal (II 48-51).

When one gets out of all his doubts in respect of correct import of Vedas, and performs Nishkaamakarmas, he will attain samaadhi state. Attaining such a state through nishkaama karma is the result of yoga.

### Sthithaprajna or Aparoksha jnanin

Gita concludes this chapter on Sankhya and Yoga with a moving description of SthithaPrajna or Aparokshajnanin. We may not some of the special features of Aprokshajnanin here:

1. Aprokshajnanin will have given up all undesirable desires. He will always concentrate on God and will rejoice in obtaining his grace. (II.55)
2. He will not be affected by pleasures and pains and will be free from passion, anger, fear, etc. (II-56)

3. He will have no likes and dislikes. Not only he will keep away from sensuous objects but even from a mental relish of these (II-58, 59). He will keep all his senses under control (II-61). His mind will attain a state when it will not proceed towards sensuous objects at all (II-65).
4. Aprokshajnanin will be awake in respect of God about whom others are asleep. He is asleep about the worldly things about which others are awake. This is to say he will have Aprokshajnana or vision of God but he will be indifferent about the worldly objects (II-69).
5. The state in which the Aprokshajnanin is viz. concentration on God eliminating all undesirable desires, is known as Braamhi Sthithi. Once one attains it, one will not return to the mundane world. One who is in this state at the time of leaving his body will attain Brahman who has no prakrta body.

## IX

### Karamayoga of Gita

After discussing Sankhya or right knowledge and yoga the means to attain it, Gita takes up the specific question of Karma Yoga in the third chapter.

The expression Karmayoga should not be taken in the restricted sense of mere Karmanusthana. Mere performing rituals and other duties is not Karmayoga. A good deal of confusion in respect of the relative position of Jnana and Karma, Karma and Sanyasa, Kamyakarma and nivrttakarma has arisen because of the confusion between mere karmanusthana and karmayoga. The impression that the jnanayoga and karmayoga are exclusive to each other also has arisen because of the confusion. All these are cleared by rising the question whether jnana is superior to karma, and if so, why insist on undertaking Karma? This question is obviously based on the confusion that by karma mere Karmanusthana, that too, Kamyakarmanusthana is intended. But Gita concept of karmayoga has much wider scope. It includes jnana. It does not conflict with jnana. It is the performance of karma with the necessary foundation of jnana that is karmayoga of Gita.

This karmayoga has four aspects viz.

1. Karmanusthana or performance of prescribed duties.
2. Jnana or acquiring right knowledge though sravana, manana etc.
3. Sanyasa or motiveless ness in one's undertakings i.e. sankalpa sanyasa, and eschewing raga, dvesa etc. wrong emotions
4. Tyaga or offering the fruits of one's activities at the feet of God i.e. Bhagavata phalasarpana. This wider concept of karmayoga includes right action, right knowledge, right motivation, and right goal. Such a concept of Karmayoga does not clash either with jnana or with sanyasa. The meanings of the expressions jnana and sanyasa also have much wider import in Gita.

To understand the full implications of this karmayoga, a few intricate questions raised in Gita, and a few important observations made in respect of karma have to be noticed. Gita clearly states:

1. Nobody can remain without any activity. To be inactive is impossible
2. To be satisfied with only such activities that quench one's hunger, thirst and such other impulses only is to waste one's life and to shirk one's responsibility. It amounts to committing the sin of evading one's responsibility.
3. One will not attain the goal of life by abdicating all activity. Merely abstaining from the Kamyakarmas also will not help one to attain the goal of life.
4. One must do one's prescribed duties.
5. One who suppresses his senses but mentally goes on thinking the objects is a hypocrite. Therefore, the better course would be to discharge one's duties duly regulating the senses and without being attached.
6. Activities result in bondage only when these are undertaken without dedication to God.
7. Great persons like Janaka attained the goal of life by discharging their duties and thereby obtaining the knowledge and grace of God. People follow the great persons in the society. Therefore, to set a lesson to others it is necessary to discharge one's prescribed duty. Even God undertakes activities to set a lesson to men. It is not desirable to mislead the people interested in doing their prescribed duties.
8. God created the people and the activities. He formulated a cycle of their mutual help and co-operation between men and deities. This has to be respected.
9. While discharging one's prescribed duties, one should not arrogate independent agency to oneself.
10. One should dedicate his activities at the feet of God, realizing the supremacy of God, without the motivation of any results excepting the God's knowledge and grace, realizing that God is the real agent, and he is only an instrument.

### **Interpretation of the verse 'yastu atmaratireva' etc.**

In the context of Karmayoga, a statement is made that 'One who is completely absorbed in God, has the joy of the vision of God, and being fully satisfied with the grace of God is not interested in anything else, need not undertake any activity. This verse describes the position of one who is in asamprajnata Samadhi and also one who is liberated. These two need not undertake any activity. This verse does not apply to jnanin in general.

Therefore, it is not correct to interpret this verse as advocating the absence of Karma for jnanin in general, and restricting karmayoga only to karmins. Jnanayoga and karmayoga are not two exclusive paths. Karma is as much necessary for jnanins as jnana is essential for karmins. It is only a matter of degree. Sanaka, Sanandana etc. great jnanins have less of karma, while others have more of karma. In any case both jnana and karma are essential for both. Therefore, the verse 'yastu atmaratireva' etc. does not envisage jnanins as against karmins in the context of karmayoga. Its purpose is altogether

different. It describes the state of a person who is in asamprajnatasamadhi and one who is liberated.

### **The concept of Yajnachakra:**

Another point that is especially stressed in the context of karmayoga is the concept of Yajnachakra. In the course of this yajnachakra it is shown how all the activities in the universe rest upon the mutual co-operation of Nature, man, deities, rituals, and ultimately God. It is a unique approach of understanding all activities in the universe in an integrated way on the foundation of the guidance and direction of God. This will eliminate our ego and pride in undertaking our activities and also eliminate our indifference and apathy in respect of our duty. We are a part of a vast set up which moves on, and we shall derive the joy of playing our little role in it in dedication to the central principle of this vast set up i.e., God, is the lesson behind the concept of yajnachakra. The main steps of Yajnachakra are as follows: From the food the embodied creatures are born, the food is born from the rain, the rains are produced by the sacrifices, the sacrifices are organized by the relevant activities of man, God enables men to undertake these activities. God is revealed by Vedas. God is everywhere and he is especially present in sacrifices. He who does not follow this Yajnachakra by performing his prescribed duty lives in vain. He has wasted his life. A correct understanding of the implication of this Yajnachakra will enable one to take an integrated view of life and correctly identify his role in life.

### **Karma, Akarma and Vikarma :**

While explaining Karma, Gita talks of akarma and vikarma also. One has to clearly distinguish the action, inaction and wrong action. Vikarma is wrong action while akarma is inaction. One should not indulge in either wrong action or be inactive.

Actions consist of bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions. All these are satvika, rajasa or tamasa. Yajna, dana, tapas etc, are different form of activities. There are many forms of yajnas: dravyayajna, yogayajna, svadhyaya yajna, jnanayajna etc. All these involve various kinds of activities. Thus, Gita concept of yajna is not confined to rituals only.

Cultivation of sama, dama etc. is as much an activity as the performance of rituals. Performing one's varnasrama duties is a part of one's activities. Service to the people at large in all possible ways is also one's duty. Thus, Gita concept of karma consists of all such activities that are essential for the physical, moral and spiritual progress of an individual and society. Any slackening or abandoning of one's duty is adharm and executing the same is svadharma. Transgressing into some one else's duty is also adharm.

**Karma and Jnana:**

From the above explanation of karmayoga concept of Gita, it is clear that karma and jnana are not opposed to each other. Both help the spiritual progress. Certain remarks in Gita give an impression that karma is inferior to jnana and therefore, one has to resort to jnana rejecting karma. The remarks like 'Durena hi avaram karma', 'Jnanayogena sankhyanam', 'Buddhuau saraman anviccha' etc. are understood in this way by some commentators. This is not the correct appraisal of Gita in respect of the relation between karma and jnana. Wherever Gita talks of the inferiority of karma, it only talks of the inferiority of kamyakarma. Karma founded on the basis of sankhya or right knowledge is never declared as inferior. Whenever jnana is Praised it is not the jnana that is divorced of karma but that gives right perspective to karma. No doubt jnana and karma are not equal partners for the spiritual progress of a man. But these are not opposed to each other either. Progress in jnana does not need rejection of karma. The idea that karmins are inferior or Mandadhikarins and Jnanins are superior or Uttamadhikarins is not at all envisaged in Gita. It is kamyakarmin who is censured in Gita but not karmayogin who has sound foundation of jnana. Karma finds its fulfillment only when it is accompanied with appropriate jnana. Karmas are made holy by jnana, and all doubts are removed by jnana. Karmas accompanied with appropriate jnana will not be binding. This a close co-operation between jnana and karma is envisaged in Gita. To introduce the idea of rejection of karma in Gita is to go against the very spirit of Gita, and defeat the very purpose of Gita teaching.

**Karma and Sannyasa:**

Another vexed question in Gita is the relative position of karma and sanyasa. The sanyasa is ordinarily understood in the sense of adopting a mendicant's life and cessation of all activity. It is understood in a very restricted sense of sanyasa asrama. But Gita has invested this word with a unique and rich meaning 'Kamyanam karmanam nyasa sanyasam kavayo viduh'. It is the abdication of desires while performing karma that is sanyasa. The prescribed activities should be undertaken without the motivation of results. It is the abdication of motives that is sanyasa. Sanyasa means sankalpasanyasa. Taming the wrong emotions kama, krodha etc. is also sanyasa. Merely adopting a mendicant's life or cessation of all activities is not sanyasa. Sanyasa in the sense of sankalpa sanyasa is a part of karmayoga. Keeping this in view, Gita sometimes equates sanyasa with yoga. Motiveless ness and subduing kama, krodha etc, is the true meaning of sanyasa. No naiskarmya or actionless state can be achieved by abstaining from prescribed duties. Sanyasa in the sense of complete cessation of activity is not acceptable to Gita. It is only un-dedicated and ill conceived activity that is bondage but not the prescribed duties performed in dedication. Thus there is no conflict between karma and sanyasa in the true sense of sanyasa viz. sankalpasanyasa.

**Gita concept of Niskama Karma (Nivritta karma)**

Gita is more concerned with the right approach to the performance of karma rather than running away from karma. The right approach consists of two important aspects:

1. Sankalpa sanyasa or abdication of motives.
2. Tyaga or offering of the results at the feet of God.

This way of performing karma is known as niskamakarma or nivrittikarma. Gita declares that one should concern oneself with the duties to be performed but not with the results that may accrue. 'Let not the result of thy activity be the motive of thy activity' Gita retorts. The Mimamsakas define the eligibility or adhikara for an undertaking in terms of the interest in the results on the part of the person undertaking it. Certain undertakings are enjoined for those are desirous of the results of those undertakings. Gita reverses the process. Eligibility is to be determined with reference to the duty as prescribed by the sastra but not in terms of the interest of an individual in the result of that particular undertaking. This approach is expressed in Gita by the expressions like 'sangam tyaktva', 'asaktah', 'kamasankalpavarjita' etc. Activity undertaken with such a frame of mind is known as niskamakarma or nivrittikarma. Such an attitude is possible only, if one understands his role in the activity correctly.

**Agent alone does not execute an activity:**

Most men are under the wrong impression that it is only karta or the agent who solely responsible for the activity undertaken by him. But there are five factors underlying each activity.

These are:

1. Adhithana i.e., the place, the ground, or the object with reference to which an activity is initiated.
2. Karta i.e., agent, the Jiva who is only a dependent agent.
3. Karana i.e., the instruments i.e. Indriyas etc.
4. Vividha chesta i.e. the various actions of these that are necessary for the production of results.
5. Daiva i.e. the supreme God who is behind all these as director and regulator. One who knows this will easily realize his limited role and will be able to undertake niskamakarma.

**Philosophical meanings of karma, akarma and vikarma:**

The expressions karma, akarma and vikarma apart from meaning action, inaction, and wrong action have deeper philosophical meanings also. This philosophical meaning is brought out in the verse '*Karmani akrma yah pasyet*' etc. When one undertakes an activity, one has to realize that it is not he who is doing but God is behind it. This is what is meant by '*Karmani akarma*'. Similarly, when one is not doing anything, say in the dream, one has to realize that God is active even then, this is '*akarmani karma*'. Thus one has to realize that all his activities are prompted by God and even when one is not

active God is active. This is the philosophical meaning of 'Karmani akarma' etc. The expressions karma and akarma also mean Jiva and God respectively. Karma ie. Jiva is akarma inactive in the sense that he cannot undertake any activity independently. Similarly akarma i.e., God is karma always active independently. The realization of these philosophical meanings gives correct perspective in respect of one's ability.

This will check our kartrtvabhimana and enable us to subdue our raga, dvesa etc. Further, one has to realize that all activities are sponsored by the God, designated as Prakrti, according to the nature of the jiva concerned and given affect through his body, antahkarana etc. He has also to realize that it is all the play of the attributes of prakrti i.e., satva, rajas etc. directed and regulated by the supreme God. Such a realization will pave the way for nivrttakarmanusthana. The word Prakrti has both meanings viz. God, and Jadaprakrti.

Engaging oneself in such a nivrttikarma, one has to dedicate the results of his activity at the feet of God. This is tyaga, Gita declares it more than once. 'Mayi servanikarmani sammyasya' '[Yat karosi yad asnasi]' etc. several statements make it clear that the fulfillment of work is in the dedication of it to the God. Work is worship is the motto of Gita. 'Svakarmanatam abhyaechya Siddhim Vindati manavah'.

## XI

### **Gita concept of Bhakti:**

Gita is known as Bhakti-Sastra. Gita repeatedly stresses that the prescribed duties should be performed with devotion to God. Performing one's duties is not merely an ethical concept. It has a theistic foundation. One's duties are dharma only when performed with dedication to God and with devotion to him. Therefore, bhakti or devotion has an important place in the Gita scheme of performing one's duty.

Bhakti is not merely love or admiration of the object concerned I.e. God. It is not merely an emotional attraction. It is loving God realizing his supreme nature. 'mAhAtmyajnAna pUrvaka sudrDhasnEha' (29).

(29) mAhAtmyajnAnapUrvastu sudrDhah sarvatO adhikah |  
snEhO bhaktiriti proktah tayA muktirna chAnyathA ||

Sri Krishna states that

'priyo him jnAnino atyartham aham sa cha mama priyah' He who knows my supremacy loves me and I love him. The devotee who loves God has to have the knowledge of the supremacy of God. God loving devotee means his bestowing grace on the devotee. Thus, the knowledge and love are two essential ingredients of Bhakti.

Bhakti is essential to acquire the parokSha and aparokSha knowledge of Gita. It is required to solicit the grace of God at each stage. Even after aparokShajnAna, bhakti has

to continue. Its intensity is increased at every(30) stage. It is named 'bhakti', 'pakvabhakti', 'paripakvabhakti' and 'atiparipakvabhakti' to indicate its increase in intensity.

At all these stages, it is called sAdhana bhakti. Even after Mukti or liberation, bhakti has to continue. At that stage, it is called sAdhyabhakti as it strengthens the realisation of bliss in the liberated stage. Developing bhakti is a continuous process from the initial stage of seeking knowledge to the highest stage of spiritual attainment. The relation between God and Jiva is that of bimba and pratibimba. In the liberated stage, bimba i.e., God is revealed to the pratibimba i.e., Jiva. This is made possible by bhakti. Sri Krishna declares in Gita that

'the Supreme God can be known only by bhakti' (VIII-22).

'I will take care of those who are devoted to me alone' (IX-22).

'I love those who love me' (IX-29).

'He who is devoted to me, though not of a good conduct initially, will improve soon. My devotee will never perish' (IX-30, 31).

'You fix your mind on me, be devoted to me, worship me.

You will surely attain me' (IX-34, XVIII 65).

'I shall give my aparokShajnAna for those who are devoted to me' (X-10).

From these, it is clear that bhakti leads to the knowledge and grace of God.

In connection with bhakti and bhakta, Gita makes another important contribution. It is already pointed out that bhakti is not merely an emotional state, but it is to have the foundation of Knowledge. It is love with knowledge but not mere love. That is why Gita repeatedly states 'jnAni mama priyatamah' and 'jnAninah aham priyah' Jnanin is bhakta and Bhakta is jnAnin according to Gita. There is one more point that is equally important. It is high conduct that is laid down for a bhakta in Gita.

A bhakta should not have hatred for anyone. He should have friendly feelings towards all. He should have compassion. He should have no ego. He should have tolerance and should have a balanced attitude in pleasure and pain. He should always be contented. He must be determined. He should always be absorbed in God (XII-13,14).

None should be afraid of him. He should not be afraid of any. He should not be affected by the joy, anger, fear and any other tension. He should not long for anything other than God's grace. He should be clean, capable of his task, impartial and free from regret. He should not undertake anything that is not intended to obtain the grace of God. He should not have any likes and dislikes, he should neither covet nor regret. It is only a devotee of such a high conduct whom I love (31). (XII-15,16,17).

Thus, Gita concept of bhakti is a synthesis of emotional, intellectual and ethical aspects. Bhakti is not a blind emotional attachment without knowledge and conduct.



**The relative position of JnAna, Bhakti and PrasAda:**

It is stated above that both karma and bhakti have the foundation of jnAna. This raises the question of the relative position of jnAna and bhakti. We have already discussed the relative position of jnAna and karma. In connection with bhakti, some commentators hold the view that "bhakti is intended only to purify the mind, it is jnAna that is the cause of liberation". They also eliminate "grace" or "prasAda" of God as a means of liberation. According to them, "both bhakti and prasAda may help to purify the mind and to procure knowledge. The role of these ends with that. It is only jnAna that is the ultimate cause of liberation. Bondage is due to ignorance. This can be removed only by jnAna. Bhakti and prasAda have no direct role in it. They are the aids at the lower level or saguNa brahma level".

This relegation of bhakti and prasAda to the lower level is cutting the very roots of Gita teaching. JnAna being jaDa, by itself cannot remove ignorance. JnAna is the means of prasAda or grace of God. It is prasAda or grace that is the means of Liberation. Mere jnAna cannot elicit prasAda unless it is accompanied by bhakti. Therefore, it is the harmonious pursuit of jnAna and bhakti that leads to prasAda or grace of God. Bhakti is needed to obtain the aparokShajnAna of God and it is further needed to obtain the grace of God. Ultimately, it is the grace of God that leads to liberation.

The importance of prasAda is stressed more than once in Gita: "matprasAdAt avApnoti shAshvatam padam", "sarvadurgANi matprasAdAt tarishyati", "aham tvA mochayishyAmi" are some of the statements that make it clear.

The shruti "na anyah panthA ayanAya vidyate" does not rule out prasAda or grace. It only states that jnAna is an essential requirement for liberation. This jnAna naturally is the means through prasAda. It is intended to elicit God's grace. It does not make God's grace superfluous.

The Gita statement "jnAnam labdhvA parAm shAntim" etc. have to be understood in this light. Arjuna's statement "nashto mohah smrtih labdhvA tvatprasAdAt mayA achyuta" clearly brings out the importance of prasAda.

'shravaNa, manana, nidhidhyAsana or dhyAna' are the steps by which jnAna is acquired. At each of these steps bhakti is intensified and helps to acquire aparokshajnAna. The methodology of dhyAna is explained in Gita in detail. The samAdhi state is also described. DhyAna itself is not aparokshajnAna. It leads to aparokshajnAna. Though God is avyakta or invisible by nature, he reveals himself to aparokshajnAnin through his achintyAdbhutashakti. This is mentioned in Gita as 'pashyanti jnAnachakshushah', 'dhyAnEna Atmani pashyanti' etc. The expression 'dhyAnayoga' does not suggest a separate means. It is part of jnAnayoga. In fact, jnAnayoga, bhaktiyoga, dhyAnayoga etc are not exclusive ways. These expressions are employed in the context of stressing the importance of one or the other item i.e., jnAna, bhakti or dhyAna. This does not mean that these are exclusive ways. These have to be pursued in a harmonious way.

**The nature of Supreme God:**

To pursue karma jnAna and bhakti in a right way, a right knowledge of the God is essential. Therefore, throughout Gita, the nature of the supreme God is explained. It will be an interesting study to collect the important observations about God in Gita and formulate the Gita concept of God:

1. God is indestructible and all pervasive (II-17).
2. He is avyakta and achintya, that is to say, he is invisible and he has unique power (II-25).
3. He is the cause of the creation and the destruction of the entire universe (VII-6).
4. He is supreme and all others are entirely dependent upon him (VII-7).
5. He is omniscient, beginningless, subtle, sustainer of all and beyond death or destruction (VIII-9).
6. All are supported by him, he is everywhere, he is supreme and he can be realised only by devotion (VIII-22).
7. He is all pervasive but he is invisible. All are located in him but he is not located in any (IX-4).
8. He creates things taking jaDaprakrti or primordial matter as the material cause. The primordial matter is entirely under his control and all created things are also entirely under his control. The jaDaprakrti is evolved into mahat, etc., directed and supervised by him (IX-8,10).
9. He is the father, mother and the sustainer of the universe. He is the highest object to be known. He is conveyed by OM, Rik, Yajus and sAma vEdas. He is the Lord of all. He witnesses everything. He is the abode of all. He creates and destroys. Everything enters into him during pralaya. He is the cause of all. He does not undergo any modification. (IX-17,18).
10. He is impartial to all. He has no hatred or liking (IX-29).
11. He is the cause of all and he regulates all. (X-8).
12. He has vibhUti forms in all categories of things. All the things that have excellence have especially his presence. (X-22 to 41).
13. His vishwarUpa contains everything that is in the universe. (X-6,7,13,15,16,18,19,20).
14. He is the destroyer of all. When something is destroyed, it is destroyed by God and the human or other agency is only an instrument of God (XI 32,33). He is called vAyu, yama, prajApati etc. by all names (XI-39).
15. He is supreme. No one else is equal or superior to him. (XI-43).
16. He is kShEtrajna. (XIII-3).
17. He is not caused. He has no body etc., that are caused. He is parabrahman. He is distinct from sat and asat, that is to say, he is distinct from Vyakta and Avyakta, distinct from mUrta and amUrta (XIII-13).
18. His hand and feet function through all other limbs, his eyes, head and face function through all other limbs, his ear functions through all his limbs. His functioning is unique (XIII-14).
19. He knows all senses and their objects. He enables others to know through their senses. He has no prAkrti senses. He has aprAkrti senses that are not different

from him. He has no sin or religious merit. He enjoys all. He has no prAkrtA guNas. He has Ananda etc. aprAkrtA guNas. He is within all beings and outside all beings. He does not undergo any change. He moves everywhere. He is subtle and therefore, cannot be comprehended through the senses. As he is all-pervasive, he is far and near. He is present in all beings distinctly but still he is one. He creates, sustains and destroys the beings. He provides lumination to the luminaries. He is beyond the tamas i.e., prakrti. He is of the nature of consciousness and has self-awareness. The aparokShajnAnins know him. He is present at the heart of all. (XIII-14 to 18).

20. He is present in the bodies of all vaishvAnara and digests the food taken by the living beings. (XV-14).
21. He is present at the heart of all. He causes the understanding, memory and illusions. He is conveyed by the entire veda. He has written brahmasUtras. He only knows the purport of the vedas fully (XV-14,15).
22. He is uttama puruSha. He is paramAtma. He is higher than kShara and akShara. He enters and regulates the three worlds. (XV 16-18).
23. He is designated as OM, TAT and SAT. OM means he is present in the whole world as regulator, the whole world is supported by him, and he is guNapUrNa, TAT means he is conveyed by vedas only, SAT means he has no defects and is full of auspicious attributes (XV-23).

The above observations in Gita give a complete picture(32) of the Gita concept of God. Generally to elucidate the concept of God, three grounds are utilised viz.,

- i) Ontological
- ii) Epistemological
- iii) Theological

In the above description of God, we will find these three grounds duly explored.

Ontologically he is the supreme reality. He is completely independent. He is infinite. He is the cause of creation, sustenance etc. all the events in the universe. He is omniscient, omnipresent. He is imminent and transcendent. He is the regulator of all. He possesses infinite number of attributes. He is absolutely free from the defects.

Epistemologically, he is conveyed by Veda - the apaurushEya and svatahpramANa authority. He also reveals himself to aparokShajnAnins. He cannot be fully omprehended as he is infinite. But he is not unknowable. He cannot be fullydescribed but he is not indefinable.

Theologically, he is the supreme god. He bestows his graceon his devotees. He has no partiality or cruelty. His gracecould be obtained through bhakti. He is the supreme governor of the entire universe. Everything takes place as per his will.

A special aspect of the Gita concept of God is the aspect of avatAra or incarnation. Sri Krishna clearly declares that he takes incarnations by his own (34) will. He further informs that whenever dharma is on the decline, he takes incarnations to revive dharma and to ward off adharm (IV 6, 7). While stating this, he makes one point clear viz., his incarnation forms are neither different from his original form nor inferior to it. These are only manifestations. His nature of being unborn or unchanged is not affected by it. He warns that to take his incarnations as human forms is unwise and irreligious. Therefore, the idea of some commentators that his incarnations are inferior saguNa forms and his nirguNa nature is highest is not correct. He is guNa prUrNa in his original form as well as incarnations. The idea that God or Brahman is nirguNa is nowhere to be found in Gita. The expressions nirguNa, guNa AtIta etc. refer to the fact of God being free from the prAkrtaguNas viz., satva, rajas and tamas. This is clear from the statement 'nirguNam guNa bhoktr cha'. He is free from prAkrtaguNa but possesses aprAkrtaguNas such as Ananda. In almost all references to God, Krishna clearly describes himself as God and brings out the supremacy of God. Therefore, it is not correct to say that Krishna represents only saguNa brahma stage and nirguNa brahman is above him. The idea of two levels of Brahman is not at all found in Gita. We may note the passages like 'mattah parataram nAsti', 'na tvatsamosti abhyadhikah', 'param brahma paramam bhavAn' etc. in this connection.

Another question that is sometimes raised is whether God is personal or impersonal. God is not personal in the sense of having a material or prAkrt form. His personality has no physical apparatus. But he is personal in the sense of a conscious, willing, active personality with aprAkrt form.

Thus, Gita concept of God is monotheistic. There is one Supreme and independent God who governs the entire universe in all respects.

### **KShEtra and kShEtrajña:**

Another important aspect of the God delineated in Gita is kShEtrajña aspect. Gita informs us that sharIra is kShetra and he who knows it is kShEtrajña (36) (XIII-2). Here, the word kShetra should not be taken in the limited sense of body and kShEtrajña in the sense of Jiva. In the very next verse, we are clearly told that kShEtrajña is God. 'kShEtrajnam cha api mAm viddhi' is a clear statement. Prakrti, Mahat, ahankAra, bhUtas, indriyas, the objects of these indriyas and even the mental states like joy, sorrow etc., the body and mind, all these constitute kShEtra (XIII-6,7). Thus the scope of kShEtra is much wider than mere body. kShEtra with such wide scope is called sharIra, not in the sense of body, but in the sense that it has two important features viz. shar and Ira. shar means that which tortures the Jiva, Ira means that which is directed by God. Prakrti, Mahat etc., listed above as kShEtra tortures the Jiva and are directed by God. Therefore, this entire set up of prakrti and its evolutes is called sharIra. It is not merely body. Jiva is also included in kShEtra. Jiva is called sharIra in the shruti 'yasya AtmA sharIram'. Therefore, when sharIra is called kShEtra, Jiva is also included. The entire chetana and achetana is

kShEtra and God is kShEtrajna. There is another sense of kShEtra. LakShmI is called kShEtra and God is kShEtrajna in the verse 'kShEtra kShEtrajna samyogAt' (XIII-27). Here, it is stated that all beings are created by the contact between LakShmI and God . This fact is also stated in the verse 'mama yonih mahad brahma' etc. Thus, kShEtra stands for the entire chetana and achetana. It also means LakShmI. KShEtrajna is God in all contexts. The effort of some commentators to restrict the meaning of kShetra to body and kShEtrajna to Jiva in one verse and take it as entire achetana and Ishvara in another verse and justify this difference by introducing the doctrine of Jiva-brahmaikya is unwarranted.

### **The Nature of Jiva:**

Jivas are distinct from God and are many. These are pratibimbas of God. The bimba-pratibimba relation between God and Jivas involves two important features on the part of Jiva viz., similarity and dependence 'tadahInatve sati tatsadrshatvam'. Jivas are also of sat, chit and Ananda nature. Therefore, these are similar to God. But these are entirely dependent upon God in respect of their very essential nature, functioning and understanding (svarUpa, pravrtti and pramiti). Jivas are sometimes called as amshas of God also. The expression amsha has many meanings. But in respect of Jiva being the amsha of God, it is used in the sense of pratibimba only. There are two types of amshas of God viz. svarUpAmsha and bhinnAmsha. Matsya, kUrma etc. incarnations of God are svarUpAmshas while Jivas are bhinnAmshas.

Jiva experiences sukha, dukha etc. He has prAkṛta body and senses. He has kartrva or agency since vidhi and niShEdha are addressed to him. Thus, he has moral responsibility. However, his kartrva is not independent kartrva. It is controlled by God.

There are three categories of Jivas viz. sAttvika, rAjasa and tAmasa. These distinctions are found in their nature, behaviour, food, speech activities and even the purpose of their functions. Gita gives these in detail. Gita gives the main features of good and evil tendencies in the form of Asuri sampat and daivi sampat and also sAttvika, rAjasa, tAmasa grouping in all aspects of Life.

Jivas are distinct from God not only during samsAra stage but even after liberation. The Jivas are different from each other also both during samsAra and liberation. These are different from achetana objects. Thus a five-fold distinction is the cornerstone of Gita metaphysics. These are differences between:

- Jiva and Jiva
- JaDa and JaDa
- Jiva and JaDa
- Jiva and ParamAtma
- JaDa and ParamAtma

The entire metaphysics of Gita pre-supposes these distinctions. Good many observations of Gita bring out the distinction between God and Jivas, plurality of Jivas and the other distinctions mentioned above. We may notice a few of them:

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- 'ashOchyan anvashOchah' (II-11)
- 'natvEva aham jAtu nAsam' (II-12)
- 'punarjanmanApnuvanti mahAtma nah' (XVIII-61)
- 'gachchanti amUDhAh' (XV-5).

In all these the plural employed clearly shows the difference. among Jivas both during samsAra and liberation.

Gita verses that bring out the supremacy of God are already pointed out while describing the nature of God. We may notice a few more here that bring out the distinction between God and Jivas.

- 'tAni aham veda sarvANi na tvam vettha' (IV-5)
- 'na anavAptam avAptavyam' (III-22)
- 'mat-prasAdAt tariShyati', 'mattah sarvam pravartate' (X-8)
- 'aham Adirhi devAnAm' (X-2)
- 'aham bIjapradah pitA' (XIV-27)... and so on.

These clearly show the supremacy of God and the distinction of Jivas from Him. All these cannot be brushed aside merely as vyAvahArika positions. These are addressed to a spiritually progressed soul and therefore cannot depict a false position.

### **Nature of the Jagat:**

Gita clearly holds the view that jagat is satya or real. 'Prakrtim puruSham chaiva viddhi anAdi ubhau api' etc. statements clearly affirm jagatsatyatva. The elaborate account of kShEtra and God as kShEtrajna cannot be meaningful unless jagatsatyatva is accepted.

Further, Gita specifically refutes the jaganmithyAtva theory in the verse 'asatyam apratiShTam tu jagadAhurAnIshvaram'.

Jagat consists of prakrti, mahat etc. twenty-four categories. It is constituted of satva, rajas and tamas. It provides the physical apparatus of sharIra, antahkaraNa etc. to Jiva and involves him in the experiences of pleasure and pain. The environmental setup of jaDa prapancha can be used or abused by Jivas depending upon their nature i.e., sAttvika, rAjasa etc. The jagat is entirely under the control of God in respect of its essential nature and functions.

**The Nature of Liberation:**

Gita mentions the nature of liberation in more than one place. It also states the nature of bondage. In connection with the bondage, two facts have to be noted viz., Prakrti and mAyA. The word mAyA is used in the sense of IshvarEchcha or the will of God.

It is also used in the sense of Prakrti. Prakrti is jaDaprakrti or matter.

Jivas are bound by matter due to the will of God. Ishvarechcha, ajnAna, prakrti-sambandha, kAmakarma, abhimAna cause the bondage. These grounds of bondage are mentioned in Gita in different contexts.

The remarks 'guNamayi mama mAyA duratyayA' and 'mAmeva ye prapadyante mAyAm etAm taranti te' bring out the two important facts that it is mAyA or prakrti that is responsible for bondage and it can be removed only by the grace of God. This also shows that the will of God is not only the cause of bondage, but also the cause of Liberation.

ajnAna or avidyA is another cause. This ajnAna should not be taken in the advaita sense of sadasadvilakShaNa and mithyA ajnAna. It is satya or real. It has two aspects viz., jIvAcchAdika and paramAcchAdika. The first aspect conceals the true nature of jIva and the second conceals the true nature of God. This fact of ajnAna concealing

the true nature of Jiva is mentioned in the verse 'ajnAnena Avrtam' etc. The removal of this ajnAna by jnAna is mentioned in 'jnAnena tu tadajnAna nAshitam'. AjnAna is removed by the aparokShajnAna of God by his grace. To acquire jnAna one will have to abandon kAmyakarma and also has to get rid of abhimAna.

AparokShajnAna leads to God's grace. It is ultimately the grace of God that bestows liberation. 'matprasAdAt parAm shantim achireNa adhigacchasi'.

Liberation is not the discovery of the identity between Jiva and Brahman as contended by some commentators. Jiva does not lose its separateness after liberation. In this connection, correct understanding of the purport of certain observations in Gita is necessary:

1. brahmanirvANam ricchati (II-72)
2. manmayAh madbhAvam AgatAh (IV-10)
3. brahmavid brahmaNi sthita (V-20)
4. brahmayogayuktAtma sukham akShayyam ashnute (V-21)
5. brahmanirvANam brahmabhUto adhigacchati (V-24)
6. labhante brahmanirvANam (V-25)
7. yah prayati sa madbhAvam yAti (VIII-5)
8. brahma bhUyAya kalpate (XIV-26)

are some of the observations that are quoted in support of jiva-brahma identity. But a close scrutiny of the context of these remarks and the wordings of the verses in which these occur will reveal that these do not convey jiva-brahmaikya at all.

Let us notice the correct meaning of these in light of their context and wordings:

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1. He who concentrates on Brahman at the time of departure from his last body attains Brahman who has not prakrata form (Nirvana means he who has no prakrata body) (II-72).
2. Those who consider me as supreme will remain with me (manmaya means matpradhaana, madbhava means mayibhaava) (IV-10).
3. Brahmaavid he who knows Brahman, and Brahmani sthita he who firmly remembers Brahman (V-20).
4. Brahamayoga yuktatma he who continuously meditates on Brahman, akshyama sukham asnute will remain eternal bliss (V-21).
5. Bramhabuta he who has Brahman at his heart will attain Brahman who is without a prakrta body (nivana he who has no prakrta body) (V-24).
6. They will attain Brahman who has no prakrta body (V-25).
7. He who remembers me at the time of departure from his body will remain with me (mad bhaavam means mayi sattam)(VIII-5)
8. He who is devoted me crosses three gunas and obtain my affection like Lakshmi (In he expression Brhmabuuya, Beahman means Lakshmi, bhuuya means becoming similar, that is to say receiving God's affection like Lakshmi)
9. The liberated will cross over Sri, Bhu and Durga, will reach Lakshmi and then will reach Lord Vishnu (XIV-26)

From the above explanation of the purport of these passages it is clear that no where jiva-brahma identity is intended in Gita. According to Gita the liberated jiva retains his separations from God and enjoys the bliss with his grace. Getting rid of the bondage of prakrta or matter and realizing one's blissful nature in liberation. During the liberated stage one will have aparoksa jnana of God, practice devotion to him, and obtain his grace. This will enable him enjoy the bliss to the best of his ability. The remark 'Matprasaadaat avaapanoti shashvatam padam avyayam' (XVIII-56) by my grace the liberated will attain the eternal abode has summed up Gita concept of liberation. It is unthinkable that God's grace leads to the identity with God and eliminates the recipient of the Grace.



### Guidelines for good life:

In the course of explanation of sankhya and yoga, Gita lays down very useful guidelines for good life. These could be followed by everyone irrespective of religious and philosophical affiliation. These guidelines are given while describing sthita-prajna, gunatita, and bhakta. The ideal man envisaged by Gita is described while depicting these three. The main features of an ideal man delineated here are elaborated throughout Gita. The concepts of Daivisampat and Asurisampat also bring out these features. Chapters 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> lay down detailed guidelines in respect of food, action, speech, and thought. We may notice a few points here.

The most important point for a man to function as a good man and a good member of society is the refinement of his emotions. He has to lift himself from animal level to human level. Passions, anger, hatred, greed etc. have to be tamed and the mind has to be directed in the right direction. Therefore, Gita repeatedly states that one should develop equanimity of mind and should not give room to wrong emotions. 'Indriyaani niyamyā', 'Advēstā sarvabhūtaānām', 'Nirvairah Sarvabhutesu', 'Sukhaduhkhe samekrta', 'Siddhi asidhyoh samo bhutvaa' and many other similar observations of Gita hammer the idea that one should not allow his emotions to have a sway over his reason. Gita puts the characteristic of such a person as 'one who does not provoke any one nor himself is provoked by any one' (Yasmaan na udvijate lokah lokaat na udvijate cha yah). This is the foundation of all good conduct.

Such taming of emotions requires good analysis of the nature of men and matter. Therefore, Gita elaborately analysis the saattvika, raajana, and taamasa nature of men and matter. Enlightenment, activity and dullness are the three important aspects of man. These are reflected in the behavior, food, thought, attitudes, actions, purposes, associations, ambitions and all other aspects of life. These are all minutely analyzed in Gita. This analysis helps one to introspect and improve.

With the correct understanding of the nature of men and matter, and taming of emotions, one is qualified to pursue an active and meaningful life. Work is life. One has to discharge one's duty courageously and faithfully. 'Yogah karmasu kausalam'. The philosophy of action propounded by Gita has three important aspects: 1. Do your duty courageously and faithfully. 2. Do not transgress into other's duty. 3. Do not withdraw from your duty out of the fear of failure, incompleteness or any other extraneous consideration.

These guide-lines laid down in Gita are universal and very simple to imbibe. The spiritual and theistic framework in which these guidelines are laid down has enriched their appeal much more.

The entire teaching of Gita is beautifully summed up in a Gita verse:

mathkarmakRith mathparamah madhbhaktah saNgavarjithah |  
nirvairah sarvabhootheshu yah sa maamEthi pANdava || XI-55

## Essentials of Geeta Bhasya and Tatparya of Sri Madhvacharya

[www.tatvavada.org](http://www.tatvavada.org)

Do your duty in dedication to God. Be always aware of the supremacy of God. Do not be entangled into lesser things. Do not entertain any hatred or ill-will to any one. This will enable one to attain God. This is the summum bonum of Gita teaching.

Darsanaratna

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