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MEDITATION ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

Sripad Shankaracharya's Gīta-dhyāna

Translation and commentary by

His Divine Grace A.C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Versification by Hayagriva Das Adhikari

(continued from the previous issue)

bhīṣma-droṇa-taṭā jayadratha-jalā gāndhāra-nīlotpalā

śalya-grāhavatī kṛpeṇa vahanī karṇena velākulā

aśvatthāma-vikarṇa-ghora-makarā

duryodhanāvartinī

sottīrṇā khalu pāṇḍavai raṇa-nadī

kaivartakaḥ keśavaḥ



Of that terrifying river

Of the battlefield of Kurukshetra

Over which the Pandavas victo-

riously crossed,

Bhishma and Drona were as the high banks,

Jayadratha as the river's water,

The King of Gandhara the blue water-lily,

Salya the shark,

Kripa the current,

Karna the mighty waves,

Ashvatthama and Vikarna the dread alligators,

And Duryodhan the very whirlpool —

But Thou, O Krishna, wast the ferryman!

(Text 6)

pārāśarya-vacaḥ sarojam-amalāṁ gītārtha-gandhotkaṭam

nānākhyānaka-kesaram hari-kathā-sambodhanābodhitam

loke sajjana-ṣaṭ-padairaharahaḥ pepīyamānam mudā

bhūtyād-bhārata-parīkajam kali-mala-pradhvamsi nah śreyase

May the spotless lotus of the *Mahābhārata*

That grows on the waters

Of the words of Vyas

And of which the *Bhagavad-gītā*

Is the irresistibly sweet fragrance

And its tales of heroes

The full blown petals

Fully opened by the talk of Lord Hari,

Who destroys the sins

Of Kali-yuga,

And on which daily light

The nectar-seeking souls,

As so many bees

Swarming joyously —

May this lotus of the *Mahābhārata*

Bestow on us the highest good. (Text 7)

*mūkaṁ karoti vācāṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande paramānanda-mādhavam*

Salutations to Lord Krishna

The embodiment of supreme bliss,

By whose grace and compassion

The dumb become eloquent

And the lame scale mountains —

Him I salute! (Text 8)

PURPORT: Foolish followers of foolish speculators cannot understand the meaning of offering salutations to Lord Krishna, the embodiment of bliss. Shankar himself offered his salutations to Lord Krishna so that some of his intelligent followers might understand the real fact by the example set by their great master Shankar, the incarnation of

Lord Shiva. But there are many obstinate followers of Shankar who refuse to offer their salutations to Lord Krishna, and instead mislead innocent persons by injecting materialism into the *Bhagavad-gītā* and confusing innocent readers by their commentaries. Consequently, the readers never have the opportunity to become blessed by offering salutations to Lord Krishna, the cause of all causes. The greatest disservice to humanity is to keep mankind in darkness about the science of Krishna or Krishna consciousness by distorting the sense of the *Gītā*.

*yam brahmā varuṇendra-rudra-marutaḥ sturanti divyāḥ stavair
vedaiḥ sāṅga-pada-kramopaniṣadair gāyanti yam sāma-gāḥ
dhyānāvasthita-tad-gatena manasā paśyanti yam yogino
yasyāntam na viduḥ surāsura-gaṇā devāya tasmai namaḥ*

Salutations to that supreme shining one
Whom the creator Brahma, Varuna,
Indra, Rudra, Marut and all divine beings
Praise with hymns,
Whose glories are sung
By the verses of the Vedas,
Of whom the singers of *Sāma* sing
And of whose glories the Upanishads
Proclaim in full choir,
Whom the yogis see
With their minds absorbed
In perfect meditation,
And of whom all the hosts
Of gods and demons
Know not the limitations.

To Him, the Supreme God Krishna, be all salutations —

Him we salute! Him we salute! Him we salute! (Text 9)

PURPORT: By recitation of the ninth verse of his meditation, quoted from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* [12.13.1], Shankar has indicated that Lord Krishna is worshipable by one and all, including himself. He gives hints to materialists, impersonalists, mental speculators, "void" philosophers and all other candidates subjected to the punishment of material miseries — just offer salutations to Lord Krishna, who is worshiped by Brahma, Shiva, Varuna, Indra and all other demigods. He has not mentioned, however, the name of Vishnu because Vishnu is identical with Krishna. The Vedas and the Upanishads are meant for understanding the process by which one can surrender unto Krishna. The yogis try to see him (Krishna) within themselves by meditation. In other words, it is for all the demigods and demons who do not know where the ultimate end is that Shankar

teaches, and he especially instructs the demons and the fools to offer salutations to Krishna and his words, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, by following in his footsteps. Only by such acts will the demons be benefited, not by misleading their innocent followers by so-called mental speculations or show-bottle meditations. Shankar directly of-

Nāma-tattva

THE ULTIMATE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE Sri Jiva Goswami's commentary On Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 6.3.22

*etāvān eva loke 'smin puṁsām dharmāḥ paraḥ smṛtaḥ
bhakti-yogo bhagavati tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ*

"Devotional service, beginning with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the ultimate religious principle for the living entity in human society."

PURPORT: Here the word "*puṁsām*" means "of the living entities" and "*paro dharmāḥ*" means "the religion of the entire world". There is no religion better than this. Then he describes the nature of this religion (*etāvān*). He says it is direct devotional service (*bhakti-yogaḥ*), which begins with recitation of the holy name of the Lord (*grahaṇādibhiḥ*). The word "*eva*" (indeed) here clearly indicates that it is different from any other kind of religion. If the activities of devotional service, beginning with reciting the Lord's holy name were meant to attain the same results attained by fruitive work and other similar paths, then devotional service would not be superior. When one is an offender he will use devotional service to attain these insignificant goals. That is the meaning. Therefore devotional service is not meant to give results that are temporary. This verse was spoken by Yamaraj to his soldiers. ❀

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fers salutations to Krishna as if to show the fools who are searching after light that here is light like the sun. But the fallen demons are like owls that will not open their eyes on account of their fear of the sunlight itself. These owls will never open their eyes to see the sublime light of Krishna and his words the *Bhagavad-gītā*. They will, however, comment on the *Gītā* with their closed owl-eyes to mislead their unfortunate readers and followers. Shankar, however, discloses the light to his less intelligent followers and shows that *Bhagavad-gītā* and Krishna are the only source of light. This is all to teach the sincere seekers of truth to offer salutation to Lord Krishna and thus surrender unto him without misgivings. That is the highest perfection of life, and that is the highest teaching of Shankar, the great learned scholar whose teachings drove the void-philosophy of Buddha out of India, the land of knowledge.

Om tat sat. ❀

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COMPASSION

*Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode's
Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*

When a person takes shelter of *bhakti*, mercy towards all living entities is a natural quality.* Compassion does not have a separate existence from *bhakti*. The quality which when offered to the Lord is called *bhakti* or *prema*, becomes friendship, compassion and indifference when directed towards other living beings. It is a feeling which is inherent in the eternal nature of the soul. In the spiritual realm this quality manifests only as friendship, but in the material world it manifests as friendship towards devotees, mercy towards the innocent, and indifference towards the offenders. These are but different aspects of the same compassion. In the conditioned state this compassion is extremely stunted. It starts with one's own body, then widens to include one's household, then one's *varṇa*, then one's countrymen. Expanding, it includes the human beings of the whole world. Compassion becomes complete when it is directed towards all living entities. Patriotism is but

an aspect of this sentiment in relation to one's country. Philanthropy is compassion directed towards all humanity. The *vaiṣṇava* should not be limited by these sentiments. He is compassion for all living entities, not wanting to cause harm to any of them. ❀

* Bhaktivinode Thakur's footnote:

*tasmāt sarveṣu bhūteṣu dayāṁ kuruta sauhydam
bhāvam āsuram unmucya yayā tuṣyaty adhokṣajah*

Therefore, my dear young friends born of demons, please act in such a way that the Supreme Lord, who is beyond the conception of material knowledge, will be satisfied. Give up your demoniac nature and act without enmity or duality. Show mercy to all living entities by enlightening them in devotional service, thus becoming their well-wishers. (*Bhāg.* 7.6.24)

A SIMPLE DEVOTEE

CAN SPEAK WITH THE LORD

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

A simple-hearted *vaiṣṇava sādhu* talks with the deity, and the deity talks with him. This is simplicity. Those who are crooked don't understand. I will tell you a story in this regard. One gentleman had a Gopal deity in his house. He performed the worship, his wife cooked, and he offered the *bhoga* to the deity. He was a *bhakta*, *vaiṣṇava*, a devotee doing *bhajana*. He had only one son, who was about five years old. Once, some occasion arose and he had to go out of the house on some business. He was going to have to be absent for one or two days. Then who will offer *bhoga* to Gopal? He instructed his young son, "My dear boy, your mother will cook food for Gopal. She will arrange the plate, you take it and place it before our Gopal deity, offer your obeisances, chant "*hare kṛṣṇa*", and tell Gopal, "My mother has cooked this food for you. My father is away, so I have brought this plate for you. Please eat it. Just say this simple thing."

The child said, "Father, you utter some mantra and you ring a bell. But I don't know any mantra."

"No mantra is required", the father said. "You just say this simple thing. Just chant 'hare kṛṣṇa' and say, 'My mother has cooked this food for you, so I have brought you this plate. Please eat it.' Just say this thing. Then offer your obeisances and come out of the temple room. Leave the door open just a little. If Gopal needs something, some salt, some more *subji*, or something else, then you can give it to him. Just sit outside."

The simple child did exactly what his father told him to do. He brought the plate, placed it before Gopal, offered obeisances, chanted "hare kṛṣṇa", and said, "My father is absent. He has told me to do this thing. I brought this plate for you, Gopal. Please eat it." Then he went and sat outside. Very often he was looking in at the altar. He waited and waited, half an hour, then an hour. "Oh, Gopal is not eating, what is this?" He began talking to the deity, "Gopal, my father was giving, and you were eating. Now I am giving to you and you are not eating. What happened to you, you are not eating? I don't know any mantra and I didn't ring a bell, is that why you are

not eating, or is there some other reason? My father said that there was no need of a bell, and I should just say this thing. Why are you not eating? If you won't eat, then I won't get up from this place, I will just sit here. I will never get up unless you eat."

The simple child spoke in this way. Then Gopal ate everything. The whole plate was empty, finished. No food was left for the mother and son, so the two of them fasted that night, taking only a *tulasī* leaf and some water. "OK. Gopal gave us this." The next day, the father came, and said, "Why are you fasting? What happened?"

The son said, "I did what you told. At first, Gopal didn't eat, and I waited for half an hour, then one hour. Then I said, "Gopal, why aren't you eating? My father was offering to you and you were eating. Now I am offering and you are not eating. If you won't eat, then I won't get up from this place, I will sit down here the whole night. Then Gopal ate everything and the plate was empty. There was no food for us, so we are fasting."

His father said, "No, no. Some rats must have eaten it. There must be some rats in the temple room."

The boy insisted, "No, no. Gopal ate it."

His father couldn't believe it. Finally, he said, "OK, today you offer in the same way as you did yesterday." Then the father hid himself in the temple room to see what was going on. Just as he did the day before, his son took the plate, placed it before Gopal, chanted "hare kṛṣṇa", offered *daṇḍavats*, and told Gopal, "You eat." Then he went outside and sat down. But Gopal was not eating. The boy waited half an hour. "Gopal, what happened to you? You ate yesterday, why are you not eating today?"

Then Gopal said, "Your father is hiding here, how can I eat?"

This is a true story. The child is simple. Simplicity is *vaiṣṇavism*. If you are a true, simple *sādhu*, *vaiṣṇava*, then you can talk with the Lord. ❀

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