

Bhagawat Gita 1: Introduction

Greetings All,

This is my summary of the first class (October 1, 2015) of Bhagawat Gita .

Swamiji introduced the Bhagawat Gita today. He says all human beings pursue goals in life. Some are long term and some are short term in nature. Goals also vary from individual to individual, from time to time, and from age to age. There are infinite numbers of goals that differ by age, by time, and they also change with times. If analyzed, we will note that there are some goals common to all human beings. Even animals have goals but they are instinctive. Thus, these are three common goals:

1. Security, safety and survival related goals. Consequently food and shelter are important goals. Even animals have these goals although they are driven by instinct.
2. The desire to lead a peaceful life, comfortable with myself, is another goal. In search of this goal we go from Ashram to Ashram, says Swamiji.
3. The desire for happiness and fulfillment

Everybody is running after these three goals using different methods. Some think real estate will do it, some think surrounding themselves with people will do it and others think of gold, jobs and so on and on. All these are means of security. Different people seek peace also in different ways.

Swamiji says, our scriptures offer some comments and suggestions regarding these goals. Scriptures say:

1. All three basic needs are available within us.
2. They also say they are within "you" only.

Strangely, Swamiji says, scriptures are telling us that these goals are not available to us outside ourselves. By seeking

them outside, the goals will evade you. It will be a misplaced search for something in a place it is not available. So, we should search where it is available. Why do we commit such mistakes asks Swamiji? Why struggle so much? Answering the question he says all these needs within us are hidden. It is hidden under layers of covering. To get to them we need to remove these layers through a process of "Discovery".

What are these layers? Swamiji says, per scriptures, there are three layers, from gross, subtle to subtlet. They are known as Malam (impurity), Vikshepa (extroverted-ness) and Aavaranam (Ignorance).

Malam: It refers to mental problems. They are six fold in nature:

- 1 Kama – lust
- 2 Krodha – anger
- 3 Lobha – greed
- 4 Moha – delusory emotional attachment or temptation
- 5 Mada or ahankara – pride, hubris
- 6 matsarya – envy, jealousy

Vikshepaha: is mental restlessness, extroverted-ness and all that cause turbulence of mind also called Chanchalam.

Aavaranam: or ignorance that I am the source of all peace and security also called Ananda.

We need to remove the three layers by appropriate Sadhanas or following spiritual disciplines. Each discipline is called Yogaha. Yoga means the seeker unites with his destination. Three yoga's are recommended. They are:

Karma Yoga is for first layer of Malam.

Upasana Yoga is for the second layer of Vikshepa and

Gyana Yoga is for third layer of Agyana Nivritihi or removal of ignorance.

Karma Yoga is a life style consisting of proper action with

proper attitude. It removes all Malas. Proper action is any action that reduces the six Malas. Proper attitude is a healthy attitude towards the proper actions and the results from such action. This attitude will help one grow through any experience including a very painful one. Mala Shudhi is also called Chitta Shudhi.

Upasana Yoga consists of forms of meditations. They help quiet one's restless and extrovert mind. It results in Vikshepa Nivriti or a steady mind. It is also called Chitta Nischalatham.

Gyana Yoga is Enquiry into one's real nature. Do I need peace from outside? Am I ever secure? This self-enquiry and analysis is also called Atma Vichara.

Our scriptures guide us on how to practice these Yoga's. The scriptures are called Vedas. Veda means source of knowledge. Vedas are revelations by Lord himself through Rishis. Vedas are divided into four parts; they are:

1. Mantra Bhaga
2. Samhita Bhaga
3. Brahmana Bhaga
4. Upanishad Bhaga.

Brahmana Bhaga deals with Karma Yoga and is also called Karma kanda

Aranyaka Bhaga deals with Upasana Kanda or Vikshepa.

Upanishad deals with Gyana Yoga and is called Gyana Kanda.

Mantra Bhaga or Suktam deals with prayers to Deities. Swamiji says,

Bhagawan's grace is very important in this quest and prayers help us with changing the direction of our mind towards spirituality.

Vedas are a huge literature and include Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Vedas. For many people Vedas are not accessible. So, God has given us a condensed version of all Vedas called

Bhagawat Gita. It has 700 verses. It is Veda Sara. It is narrated as a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Just a study of Gita will give us the direction we need for life.

This is what we will study next. We will start with Gita Gyana Shloka. While Shankara wrote a commentary on Gita so did Madhu Sudhana Saraswati. Madhu Sudhana Saraswati also wrote the Gita Gyana Shloka. This invocation prayer offers namaskras to Bharata, Gita/Saraswathi (knowledge), Vyasa (composer) and Lord Krishna (Jagat Guru) in nine verses. Swamiji says, we must start any endeavor with a prayer to ward off any obstacles.

Note: During discussion it was suggested that we check out the site:

www.yogamalika.org It contains Swamiji's lectures on special occasions like New Years.