

Bagawat Geeta 2: Dhyana Shloka

Continuing his introductory remarks for Bhagawat Gita Swamiji today discussed the invocation prayer called Gitagyana Shloka. Madhusudhana Saraswathi wrote this Shloka. Madhusuadana also wrote a commentary on the Gita called Bhagavad-gita-gudhartha-dipika.

The Gitagyana Shloka has nine verses. In these Shlokas we are offering namaskara to: Bharathi, Gita/ Saraswathi, Vyasa and Lord Krishna.

Expanding on the Gitagyana Shlokas, Swamiji discussed each shloka.

Shloka # 7:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
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This Shloka is our namaskara to Bharatha. Mahabharata is a part of Itihasa or partly based on history. It is a mixture of fact and fiction. Itihasa means it happened in this manner. It deals with Bharatha Varsham. While Gita has 700 verses Mahabharata has 100,000 verses.

In Shloka 7, the prayer is that, may my study of Mahabharata help me transform and grow spiritually. The Mahabharata here is compared to a lotus flower due to its beauty, fragrance and honey. Swamiji says study of Mahabharata at home is good and acceptable. There is a superstition that Mahabharata should not be studied at home. He says this is not true.

While the lotus is born in a pond, Mahabharata was also born in the speech (pond) of Parasarya (son of Parasar), Vyasa. It is a pure lotus. Lotus is usually found in muddy water. This Lotus is very attractive because of its fragrance; the fragrance of Gita. More people know Gita than Mahabharata. The many small stories of Mahabharata are compared to the filaments of the Lotus. The Lotus flower is a full one. It is full of Hari Katha as well. It contains deep wisdom in many aspects such as religion, politics, philosophy and human relations. All are in Mahabharata. What is not found in Mahabharata is not found anywhere else. So, for all students, it is like honey. Noble people are the ones who have an open mind and reverence towards Mahabharata. They drink the honey of Mahabharata and specifically Gita repeatedly, day in and day out. This knowledge can destroy the problems of materialism of Kaliyuga that we face today.

Shloka # 1:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
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 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

This Shloka is our namaskara to Gita. The author addressing Saraswathi asks the Mother to nourish him at the right time with the right food. Mother Gita nourishes us with the knowledge of Karma Yoga, Upasana Yoga and Gyana Yoga in a teaching given to Arjuna, taught by Lord Narayana himself. It is a blessing to society even today. Vyasa, an Avatara of Vishnu, compiled it. He is most experienced among Rishi's. He has also has given us the Puranas. In the middle of Mahabharata is Shanthi Parva composed by Vyasa. It showers the knowledge of Advaita. Gita consists of 18 chapters and

700 verses.

Gita knowledge gives us moksha from Samsara. Samsara is all kinds of dissatisfactions that we experience including physical, emotional and intellectual. Moksha is satisfaction with myself. Gita gives us Mokshatvam. I meditate upon such a Gita.

Verse #4:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

Continuing, Swamiji says, Gita is not Krishna's philosophy. It is the teaching of Vedas from time immemorial. The last part of Vedas is Upanishad. Gita is the essence of Upanishad or Vedanta. Upanishad here is compared to a cow. Krishna is an expert cowherd. So he knows how to milk the Upanishadic Cow. To milk such a cow, you have to keep a calf in front. For the Upanishadic Cow, Arjuna is the calf. Out of milking this cow comes the Gita Amrita milk.

Verse # 2:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

This Shloka is our namaskara to Vyasa. Vyasa means divider and expander. Originally Vedas were one. Vyasa gave his four disciples the task of creating the four separate Vedas from the original one. He also expanded on Vedas through the Puranas. Vyasa's original name was also Krishna. Both were dark in complexion. He is also known as Krishna Dvaipayana (island born Krishna). He was an Acharya of great knowledge. His eyes were like Lotus petals. You have lit the lamp of wisdom with the oil of Mahabharatam stories,

says the devotee. So, to you, I offer my namaskaram.

With my good wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy