

Bhagavad Gita Principles by Shankaracharya

Adi Shanaracharya was one of the most prominent teachers of the Vedanta philosophy and one his major contributions was his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. The foundational principles of the Gita were prescribed by him in simple terms, as stated below.

na yogena na sāmkyena karmanā no na vidyayā.
brahmātmakabodhena mokṣaḥ siddhayati nānyathā..

न योगेन न सांख्येन कर्मणा नो न विद्यया.

ब्रह्मात्मकबोधेन मोक्षः सिद्धयति नान्यथा..

Purify Your Heart

The core summary of the principles of the Gītā is that **man should perform all his tasks and duties with a positive frame of mind with an attitude of detachment** towards the rewards of his tasks. This attitude toward work will help him purify his inner being or heart. The only way to purify the heart is to perform work while removing the expectation of rewards from the psyche. Until and unless the heart is purified, man will not develop the burning desire to know the truth - and without this burning desire to know the truth, it is impossible to develop the desire for moksha or liberation.

गीता का सिद्धान्त अति संक्षेपसे यह है कि **मनुष्यको निष्कामभावसे स्वकर्ममें प्रवृत्त रहकर चित्तशुद्धि करनी चाहिये।** चित्तशुद्धिका उपाय हीफलाकंक्षाको छोड़कर कर्म करना है। जबतक चित्तशुद्धि न होगी, जिजासा उत्पन्न नहीं हो सकती, बिना जिजासा के मोक्षकी इच्छा ही असम्भवहै।

Develop True Detachment

After the heart is purified, *vivek* or inner knowledge arises in the man of truth. The development of *vivek* simply means the ability to distinguish between the transitory (or variable) and the eternal (or absolute). All the constituents of the world are transitory (or variable), and **only the *aatmaa***, which is separate from these constituents, **is eternal (or absolute)**. When one can experience this truth, their *vivek* gains immense strength. This strong sense of *vivek* leads to the development of true detachment towards the world in the seeker's heart.

पश्चात् विवेकका उदय होता है। विवेकका अर्थ है नित्य और अनित्य वस्तुका भेद समझना। संसारके सभी पदार्थ अनित्य हैं और **केवल आत्माउनसे पृथक् एवं नित्य है।** ऐसा अनुभव होनेसे विवेकमें दृढ़ता होती है, दृढ़ विवेकसे बैराग्य उत्पन्न होता है।

The Path of Renunciation

Man's progress towards the strengthening of true renunciation is not possible until he becomes detached towards the attainment of happiness and pleasure - in this world and beyond. **Renunciation is the primary path to moksha or liberation** - and it is through renunciation that *sham-*, *dam-*, *titeeksha*-and *karma*- liberation are made possible. It is only after one is liberated from these four elements that the *gyana* or knowledge which is necessary for attaining *moksha* arises or dawns onto the seeker. It is impossible to reach the state of *moksha* without obtaining this *gyana* in its purest form.

लोक-

परलोकके यावत् सुख और भोगोंके प्रति पूर्ण विरिक्त बिना बैराग्य दृढ़ नहीं होता। अनित्य वस्तुओंमें बैराग्य मोक्षका प्रथम कारण है औरइसीसे शम, दम, तितिक्षा और कर्म-

त्याग सम्भव होते हैं। इसके पश्चात् मोक्षका कारण जो ज्ञान है, उसका उदय होता है। बिना विशुद्ध ज्ञानके मोक्ष किसी प्रकार भी नहीं मिल सकता।

What is true Moksha?

The paths which lead to *anitya* or impermanent results cannot lead one to the state of *moksha*. One needs to assimilate the knowledge that **man and the supreme brahman are one and the same**, before one can move towards *moksha*. The complete understanding of this truthful knowledge is indeed the state of *moksha*.

जिन साधनोंका फल अनित्य है वे मोक्षके कारण हो ही नहीं सकते। मोक्षका स्वरूप है जीवात्मा परमात्मा की अभिन्नताका ज्ञान। दोनों एक स्वरूपहैं, इसी ज्ञानका नाम मोक्ष है।

What is Maya?

The apparent (false) distinction between man and brahman is because of nature. The removal of this falsehood is only possible by the dawn of knowledge or *gyana*. Those who believe otherwise remain trapped in the realm of *maya* or ignorance. And that ***maya is the cause of a lot of confusion and misery***. It is neither the truth - nor is it the untruth - but it is the abode for *dvaita* or the philosophy which separates man and brahman.

जीवात्मा परमात्मामें जो भेद मालूम होता है वह प्रकृतिके कारणसे है। इस भ्रान्तिकी निवृत्ति ज्ञानद्वारा होती है। द्वैत जो भासता है उसकाकारण माया है। और वह माया अनिर्वचनीया है। न तो वह सत् है और न असत् है और दोनोंहीके धर्म उसमें भासते हैं।

What is truth?

That is why *it* has been deemed as unattainable. The truth is that *maya* is also deception. Since **untruth cannot be created from truth** and truth and untruth can never meet - this means that untruth has no inherent strength. Hence the world is indeed imaginary and dream-like in nature.

इसीलिये उसको अनिर्वचनीया विशेषण दिया गया है। वास्तवमें माया भी मिथ्या है। क्योंकि सत् से असत् की उत्पत्ति सम्भव नहीं औरसत्-

असत् का मेल भी सम्भव नहीं और असत् में कोई शक्ति ही नहीं। अतैव जगत् केवल भ्रान्तिमात्र है और स्वप्नवत् है।

Gita leads to liberation

Bhagwan Shankaracharya is the preacher of the path of liberation and *nivritti*. He has prescribed that the *Gita* is the primary path or means for obtaining *nivritti*. According to him, it is not possible to obtain *moksha* without committing to *sanyasa*. This is his repeated teaching. One must keep in mind that

Shankaracharya preaches that **the path of action or *karma* is necessary for the purification of the heart and mind.**

भगवान् शंकराचार्य निवृत्तीमार्गके उपदेष्टा हैं और गीताको भी उन्होंने निवृत्ती-मार्ग-प्रतिपादक ग्रन्थ माना है। उनके मतानुसार संन्यासके बिनामोक्ष प्राप्त नहीं हो सकता। यही उनका पुनः-पुनः कथन है। परन्तु इतना ध्यान रखना उचित है कि **कर्म वा प्रवृत्ति-मार्गको वे चित्तशुद्धिके लिये आवश्यक समझते हैं।**

What is true Sanyasa?

Shankaracharya does not believe that everyone is deserving of or is entitled to the path of *sanyasa*. **The true *sanyasa* is that in which one does not deliberately give up or relinquish his possessions** ; instead, just like a ripened fruit naturally falls from the tree, the man of *sanyasa* also becomes automatically detached from the world when his time is *ripe*. Does one need to wait for instructions on when to release a ball of golden hot metal from his hands?

अतैव वे सभीको संन्यासका अधिकारी नहीं मानते। सच्चा संन्यास अर्थात् **विद्वत्संन्यास वही है जिसमें मनुष्य किसी वस्तुका त्याग नहीं करता** वरं पके फल जैसे वृक्षसे आप ही गिर पड़ते हैं - संसारसे वह सर्वथा निर्लिप्त हो जाता है। लोहेके तप्त गोलेको हाथसे छोड़ देनेके लिये किसके आदेशकी प्रतीक्षा होती है?