

Sanatkumara Gita

The Sanatkumara Gita is contained in chapter 22 of Skandha IV of Srimad Bhagavata.

Maitreya said:

1. While people were thus extolling Prthu of mighty prowess, there approached four sages, brilliant like the sun.
2. Attended upon by his servants, the King saw those lords of sages descending from the heavens. They were recognized to be Sanaka and others, by their lustre which absolved the worlds of sins.
3. Just as the lord of sense-organs (Jiva) rushes forth to the objects of senses, Prthu, the son of Vena, along with the courtiers and attendants, immediately stood up (and went forth to the sages), as if to recover his vital breaths which sprang forth at their sight.
4. When the sages accepted preliminary reception (arghya) and occupied the seats (offered to them), the courteous King, who was hypnotized with their august presence, bowed down his head out of modesty, and worshipped them with due formalities. Arghya consists of respectfully offering water and other articles to gods or venerable persons.
5. (To purify himself) the King sprinkled the hair on his head with (the sanctifying drops of) water with which he washed their feet. He, thereby, observed the course of conduct of the virtuous, to show respect to them.
6. The King was endowed with deep faith and self-discipline, and was full of joy. He addressed those elder brothers of Lord Siva, who occupied seats of gold, and were looking like sacrificial fires in their respective altars.

Prthu said:

7. Oh! What meritorious deeds I must have performed that I have the privilege of seeing you, the abodes of auspiciousness, who are very difficult to be perceived even by masters of yoga!
8. What is very difficult to attain here and hereafter to a person unto whom Brahmanas (like you), and gods Siva and Visnu along with their attendants are gracious!
9. Just as Mahat and other principles (or Brahma, Manu and other makers of the world), which are the causes of the universe, do not visualize the Omniscient Atman (Soul), people do not at all see you even though you roam over the world (to help them to attain their purusharthas).
10. Verily, blessed are those saintly householders who, though poor, have in their homes materials for worship such as water, mat of (darbha) grass, accommodation (cleaned floor), the master of the household and his dependants ready (for receiving) the worthies.

11. (Unwelcome) like the trees which are haunted by poisonous serpents are the homes which, though fully furnished with all kinds of riches, are not hallowed by the holy water used for washing the feet Visnu's devotees.

12. Welcome is your arrival, Oh preeminent Brahmanas, who, determined to secure liberation, have been faithfully and with resolute mind, observing great vows (like lifelong celibacy) since your very childhood. (It may also mean, 'Brahmanas whose course of observance of vows is followed by other ignorant persons desirous of Liberation').

13. O spiritual Masters! Is there any hope of good for us who regard the (achievement of) objects of senses as the goal of life and who, by our own deeds, have fallen into the samsara, the bed of miseries?

14. The etiquette of enquiring after welfare of the guests is not applicable (or desirable) in the case of such great men like you who are absorbed in the bliss of the Atman

(Soul), and who are above the thoughts of welfare or otherwise.

15. You are the friends and well-wishers of the distressed. With full faith in you, I, therefore, wish to enquire of you how one can speedily achieve Moksha (Liberation) in this samsara.

16. It is obviously certain that the eternal Lord Narayana, who shines as the soul of the self-knowing sages and who manifests Himself (in the heart of the devotees), goes

about the world, in the form of Siddhas (like you), for showering His grace upon His votaries.

Maitreya said:

17. Having heard Prthu's beautifully worded, logical, deeply significant, brief, melodious speech, Sanatkumara slightly smiled, and verily replied with pleasure.

Sanatkumara said:

18. With the welfare of all beings at your heart, a good enquiry has been made by Your Majesty, even though you know its answer. O great King! For, such is the nature of the righteous.

19. The meeting of the righteous is highly approved by both (the speakers and the members of the audience); for, their dialogues and enquiries increase the happiness of all.

20. O King! Your honour has definitely a constant and abiding love for eulogizing the excellent attributes of the lotus-like feet of Lord Visnu (the enemy of demon Madhu). Such constancy of love is difficult to be found in others. Such love (if generated) completely shakes off the sticky dirt of inner passions and desires in the heart (which is otherwise difficult to remove).

21. In the Sastras, which have made a thorough enquiry (about the good of beings), it has been positively stated that perfect non-attachment to things other than the soul

(one's own body), firm and constant love of the attribute-less Brahman and the Self constitute the means to the final beatitude of men.

22 – 25. By attachment to the attribute-less Brahman and non-attachment to the

entire non-self material world (un-atman), intense faith in the Brahman being the cause and the effect, performance of righteous duties towards the Lord, the desire to know (the Truth), firm faith in the spiritual path of yoga, meditation about the Lord of yoga, and constant listening to the holy stories of the Lord of hallowed renown; by cessation of desire to associate with the tamasic people who take pleasure in wealth and with the rajasic people who revel in the enjoyment of sensual pleasure, and by non-attachment to the filthy lucre and to sense-gratification which are highly valued by them; through love of seclusion for enjoying the blissfulness of the self (atman) except on occasions when the drink of the nectar of Hari's excellent glories is available; by practising non-violence, by following the course of conduct prescribed for the highest ascetic order called the paramahansas, by drinking the highest form of nectar in the form of Lord Hari's stories, by eschewing desires and by observing rules of self-discipline called yama (abstention) and niyama (observance), by refraining from slandering (and condemning other paths of God-realization prescribed in scriptures), by desire-less-ness, and by endurance of opposite states (such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain); and by devotion to Hari that blossoms for constantly glorifying Lord Hari's excellences which form the ornaments to the ears of His devotees through faith and deep devotion (one attains to liberation).

Performance of righteous duties is two-fold. One is performance of the five mahayajnas and other round of religious duties for propitiating the Lord. The other is performance of religious duties according to one's own varna and asrama (varna-asrama dharma). These duties relate to the initiated and the un-initiated. In respect of the initiated ones, they are to have faith in meditation as part of adoration of the Lord, as stated in the scriptures.

As for yama (abstention), according to Patanjali, it is abstention from injuries, falsehood, theft, incontinence and acceptance of gifts. As for niyama (observance), it is cleanliness, contentment, renunciation, study of scriptures and devotion to the Lord.

26. When his attachment and delight in the Brahman becomes firmly established, a man seeks a spiritual preceptor. Just as fire ignited from arani (a piece of wood of the

sami tree used for kindling fire by friction) consumes its own source (the piece of wood from which it arose), the man, by force of his knowledge and non-attachment, burns

down his subtle body consisting of five subtle elements and enveloping his soul, in such a way as to render it un-revivable.

What is sought to be stated is that firm faith in the Brahman leads to the grace of the spiritual preceptor, and not the other way. With the force of knowledge, renunciation and the love for or delight in the Brahman, a man burns his karma, resulting from merit and demerit, which is the cause of his present incarnation in body and the resulting

samsara. The five subtle elements referred to have two different connotations. The first consists of the five klesas, namely, avidya (nescience), ahamkara (ego), raga (attachment),

dvesa (hatred) and abhinivesa (instinctive clinging to the worldly life and the bodily enjoyment). The other consists of the five sheaths which, lying one within the other, make the body enshrine the soul. They are annamaya, manomaya, pranamaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya kosas (sheaths).

27. When the screen or sheath (of the subtle body enveloping the soul) which, till then intervened between the Supreme-Soul (Paramatman) and the soul, is destroyed, the

person becomes freed from all the attributes pertaining to the subtle body which has been burnt down. (Thenceforth) he does not perceive (his subjective states of pleasure,

pain, etc) which are within him, nor objects (a pot, a piece of cloth, etc) which are external to him, just as a man awakened from a dream does not see the objects he perceived in his dream.

When the knowledge of the relation between the Supreme Soul and the individual soul (the Jiva) disappears, the Jiva does not perceive any difference within and without.

While being in the samsara, there is a screen between the Supreme Soul and the individual soul in the sense that there is a semblance of identity of the individual soul, as in a dream. But when the subtle body is lost, there is no more identity of the Jiva or the individual soul. Who is there then to bother about liberation?

The attributes referred to in the verse relate to love, hate, etc.

28. (It is in the states of wakefulness and dream) this upadhi (conditioning) of mind continues; man can perceive himself (the seer), the objects of senses and what is beyond them both (ahamkara which establishes relation between them, the seer and the seen), and not otherwise (as in sleep).

29. (For example), if, anywhere, (reflecting) condition, upadhi like water, mirror or such other condition, is present, a man can see the difference between himself (the object

of reflection) and the other thing (his own reflection), and not in the absence of the reflecting medium.

The limiting condition is like an inert body causing interruption between the Jiva and the Supreme Soul whereby the individual soul (the Jiva) experiences separateness from his true Self, the Supreme Soul. But a sage liberated sees no such distinction between the two. This limiting condition (upadhi) is destroyed for the sage by knowledge.

When real knowledge dawns, the sage realizes the Brahman in his soul.

30. The mind of those who brood over objects of worldly enjoyment is distracted by their senses which are attracted to objects of worldly pleasure. Thereby the intellect loses its power of thinking and discrimination, just as water from a pool is (imperceptibly) sucked by the roots of a clump of grass.

31. As a consequence of the loss of the reasoning capacity, memory is lost. The loss of memory results in loss of knowledge and wisdom. The wise call this loss of wisdom as the covering of the Self through one's own self.

32. In this world, there is no greater loss of one's self-interest than one's loss of one's own self, for, because of loss of one's own self, every other thing in the world

becomes
dear.

33. Constantly brooding over wealth and objects of senses leads to the loss of all purusharthas (goals to be achieved in life). Having thus lost knowledge of the Brahman

and worldly knowledge, one enters (is born in) immobile yonis without end.

34. A person who desires to cross the dense darkness (of samsara) should not entertain attachment to anything whatever. For, that attachment is extremely harmful to dharma, artha, kama and moksha (the four purusharthas).

35. Even among these objectives of life, moksha (liberation) is acknowledged as the highest goal of life (as it transcends death). For, the remaining goals of life are always

subject to the fear of death.

36. For the Jiva of the higher order (like Brahma) and lower order like us who are created after the equilibrium of the three gunas of Prakrti was disturbed (resulting in creation), there is no security and happiness, as all their aspirations and hopes (of attaining their objectives) are ruined by the all-powerful Time.

37. Therefore, O King, (you) realize that you are (the same as) the Lord (the only existing Reality) – the Lord who manifests Himself and directly shines everywhere in the Self as antaryamin (the inner controller) in the hearts of all mobile and immobile Jiva who are covered (invested) with body, sense-organs, vital airs, intellect and ego (ahamkara).

38. I take shelter with the Supreme Soul, eternally free, extremely pure, highly enlightened, Reality Itself that has overpowered the Prakrti (primordial nature) contaminated by karma (of various Jiva), and in Which appears this universe of superior and inferior things (or of cause and effect) as maya, which disappears owing to (the dawn of) discriminating wisdom like (the dispelling of) the misapprehension of a garland of flowers as a (coiled) serpent.

39. You (therefore) take resort to Lord Vasudeva as your asylum through devotion (and concentration) on the splendour of petal-like toes of His lotus-feet. By such meditation, the saintly devotees easily cut the knot of their egotism (ahamkara) formed in their hearts by karma that even recluses and ascetics who have cleared their mind (of all worldly thoughts) and have controlled their senses are unable to do so.

The Sanskrit word used for asylum is a-ranam meaning 'beyond fight'. It, therefore, means that if one does not resort to Vasudeva, one will have to battle with one's sense-organs which, by their brute force, will defeat one.

The Sanskrit word used for splendour is vilasa meaning 'beauty which increases every moment'. It means that the devotee meditating on Vasudeva experiences ever increasingly the grandeur of Vasudeva leading to liberation.

40. There is a great trouble here to those who have not resorted to the Lord as a boat for crossing the ocean of samsara which is infested with crocodiles in the form of the

six-fold. For they desire to cross it (samsara) by painful means (practice of yoga). You should, therefore, make the adorable feet of Lord Hari as a boat, and reach the

other

end of this impassable ocean of samsara easily, and without any difficulty.

The 'six-fold' relates to the six passions, namely, kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (avarice), mada (conceit), moha (delusion) and matsara (jealousy), or the mind and

the five senses.

Maitreya said:

41. The King to whom the real nature of the Atman (Soul) was thus expounded by Sanatkumara, the son of god Brahma, the knower of the Brahman, praised him appropriately and enquired.

The King said:

42. O venerable Brahmana! Lord Hari is compassionate to the afflicted. He had formerly conferred His grace upon me. You all have now come to consummate it.

43. Your venerable-selves, merciful as you are, have translated into reality the blessing in its entirety. Everything that I possess, including my own self, belongs to the saintly souls who have graciously returned it to me as a favour. What can I give to you?

44. My life, wife, sons, houses with all their furnishings, kingdom, army, soil and treasury, everything, are offered to you although they already belong to you.

45. And a person who is well-versed in the Veda and Sastras really deserves to command an army, (to rule over) a kingdom, to direct military operations and to govern the entire world.

46. A brahmana eats his own food, wears the clothes belonging to him and offers his own belongings. It is through his (brahmana's) grace that kshatriyas and others enjoy their food.

47. You are past-masters in the Vedic lore. In your discourse about the Atman (and other spiritual matters), you have succinctly and definitely explained to us the nature of the Lord. Abounding in mercy as you are, may you forever be pleased with your action of redeeming the afflicted? Who can return your obligations except by folding his palms in reverence? (One becomes an object of ridicule if one attempts to repay your kindness).

Maitreya said:

48. Those masters of atma-yoga (the yogic path of self-realization) were worshipped by the first monarch Prthu. They appreciated his righteous character, and rose to the heavens while people were looking on (agape).

49. Prthu (the son of Vena), the foremost among great souls, became firmly established in his soul, owing to concentration achieved by their instruction in the spiritual lore. He felt as if he had achieved all his desires in life.

50. It was as an offering to the Brahman that he performed all his actions at the proper time, at the proper place, to the best of his ability, according to proper formalities, and

according to his means and property.

51. Thus, with concentrated mind, he consigned the fruit (of his deeds) to the Brahman. He remained unattached by regarding his self as distinct and beyond Prakrti, a mere witness to all actions.

52. Just as the sun (remains unattached to, and unsoiled by, the objects on which it shines), the King, though leading the life of a householder and endowed with imperial

majesty and splendour, remained free from egotism (ahamkara), and hence unattached to the objects of the senses.

53 – 56. While he was, in this way, doing his prescribed duties properly and in time, with his heart fixed on his atman (self), he begot through his queen Arcis five sons who were resembling and agreeable to him. They were Vijitasva, Dhumrakesa, Haryaksa, Dravina and Vrka. But Prthu was a part of Lord Visnu. For the protection of the created world, Prthu combined in him (and manifested) powers of all lokapalas (protectors of worlds like Indra, Varuna), from time to time, as was necessary (according to the exigencies of the situations). He bore significantly the title Raja by delighting his subjects with his thoughts, words and deeds, and pleasing Soma-like (saumya) qualities as if he was another king Soma (the moon or the soma – juice which has raja as its epithet). Like the sun (evaporating water from the earth and collecting it in clouds), he levied taxes from his subjects only to give them back (for their welfare) and governed them (as the sun gives light and heat).

57. By his majestic splendour, he was unassailable like Agni (Fire-god); he was unconquerable like the great Indra; in forbearance, he was like the earth; and he was like the heaven (svarga) in granting desired objects to his subjects.

58. Like the rain-god, he showered to the satisfaction (of his subjects) all that they desired; like the (unfathomable) sea, he was too deep to be understood; and in his firmness, he was like Meru, the king of mountains.

59. He was comparable to Yama-dharma, in dispensing punishment; in marvelousness (in scenery, ores, etc), he was like the Himalayas. He had rich treasure like Kubera (the god of wealth). He possessed immense un-divulged treasures like Varuna.

60. In physical strength, force and energy and in his ability to move anywhere he was like Vayu. In his irresistibility, he was comparable to god Siva.

61. He was a compeer of the god of Love in beauty; in spiritedness, he was like a lion; in paternal affection, he was like Manu; while, in his lordship over man, he was like

god Brahma.

62. He was Brihaspati in his knowledge of the Veda, while in self-control he was like Lord Hari Himself. He was comparable to himself in his devotion to cows, brahmanas,

preceptor, votaries of Hari, and in qualities like modesty, humility, good nature and work for the benefit of others.

63. As his glory was loudly sung by people everywhere in the three worlds, he reached the ears of women just as Rama entered the ears of the saintly people.