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तत्सद्ब्रह्मणे नमः

श्रीवेदव्यासप्रणीतमहाभारतान्तर्गता

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता

शाङ्करभाष्योपेता एवं ललिताटीकांग्लानुवादसंवलित्वा

SHREEMAD BHAGAVAD GEETA

**Shaankar Bhaashya &
Lalita Commentary
(English Translation)**

LALITA COMMENTARY

Salutations to Lord Abhinav Chandraeshwara Mahaadeva

*That from which this world manifests, That in which it dissolves,
That by which it sustains itself, That is the Self of all. (1)
That is Eternal, That is Knowledge, and is full of Bliss,
That Truth, I know, from which nothing is far off. (2)
That's splendour sung by sages, That meditated upon by the seers,
That evading all comprehension, the great ruler That Self is. (3)
That fails the speech in telling, That fails the mind to reveal,
The grandeur of That is so, beyond any expressive means. (4)
With blessings Divine, this scriptural knowledge, stands completely revealed when,
In depth, in the Lalita, will I be satisfied then. (5)*

Jagadguru Aadi Shankaraachaarya is to write a commentary on Shreemad Bhagavad Geeta, for the propitious beginning of which, the 'invocation' (mangalaacharan) of Deity is obligatory. The 'invocation' ensures unimpeded conclusion of the work. Though there is no scriptural decree, currently available, which makes the practice of 'invocation' indispensable, but such sanction may be inferred from the conduct of the erudite ones,

who, conventionally resort to this practice. That 'invocation' is of three types, viz. 'salutary' (Namaskaaraatmak) i.e. by way of salutation to the Deity, 'benedictory' (Aashirvaadaatmak) i.e. by way of longing for blessings of the Deity and 'edificatory' (Tattvaanusmaranaatmak) i.e. by way of enlightening as regard the true nature of the Deity. In the present commentary, the Aachaarya has commenced with 'edificatory' invocation, which is not self-made but is 'scriptural' - 'Om Naaraayana paroavakyaat', etc.

अथ श्रीमदाद्यशङ्कराचार्यविरचितभाष्यम्
(तत्रोपोद्घातभाष्यारम्भः)

PREAMBLE

ॐ नारायणः परोऽव्यक्तादण्डमव्यक्तसंभवम् ।
अण्डस्यान्तस्त्वमे लोकाः समद्वीपा च मेदिनी ॥

Naaraayana is higher than the Unmanifest¹; from the Unmanifest is born the Cosmic Egg. Within the Cosmic Egg are these worlds as also the Earth with its seven isles.

1. Also known as Prakriti, Avyakta, Nature, Maayaa, Mulaavidyaa, Nescience, Ignorance etc. It has three traits (gunas) viz. sattva, rajas and tamas, is inscrutable, unreal and without any beginning. It serves as the material cause of creation of this delusive world that manifests as 'name' and 'form' and is of the nature of transmigration. It does so by veiling the knowledge of embodied souls and then superimposing the Self and non-Self. It abides in Pure Consciousness, has that for its object and is annihilated by the resolute knowledge of that Supreme Consciousness i.e. Brahman.

'Water', the creation of Lord, is referred to by the word 'Naara'. Prior to the creation of the worlds, this 'water' was the resting place of the Lord; hence the Lord is called as 'Naaraayana'. On more subtle thought, it emerges that 'Naaraayana' is an amalgamation of two words - 'Naara' and 'Ayana'. 'Nara' refers to all bodies - both animate and inanimate, which on alliance with the reflection of 'Supreme Consciousness' is known as the 'Naara' that stands for the 'embodied souls' (jiva). Being their principal, their inner controller and their ultimate abode, the 'Supreme Being' is referred to as the 'Naaraayana', which infact is the prime entity expounded by the 'Geeta'. That 'Naaraayana', is in all demeanours, disparate to the 'Unmanifest' i.e. the 'Maayaa'. Of

the 'Unmanifest' is born the 'Cosmic Egg'. The 'Egg' refers to the 'collective subtle body' (samashiti sookshma shareera) of 'Hiranyagarbha', which has the five elements viz. the earth, water, fire, air and space, in the simple non-compounded (apanchikrit) form. Hiranyagarbha is the 'Being' that is allied to the reflection of 'Supreme Consciousness' in this 'collective subtle body' and is the first one to become manifest. Within the 'Cosmic Egg' are situated all these worlds, including the Earth with its seven islands viz. Jambu, Plaksha, Shaalmali, Kusha, Krauncha, Shaaka, and Pushkara.

In this edificatory verse, by the word 'Naaraayana' is designated the identicalness of the 'embodied soul' (jiiva) and the 'Supreme Being', which forms the 'subject matter' (vishaya) of this scripture. The 'embodied soul', yearning for emancipation (mumukshu) is the 'eligible person' (adhikaari) to pursue the 'subject matter'. The 'affiliation' (sambandha) is that existing between the 'subject matter' and this scripture – the Bhagavad Geeta, which explicates that subject. The 'purpose' (prayojana) is 'emancipation' (moksha), which is defined as the absolute and eternal cessation of transmigration and the attainment of 'Supreme Bliss'. Hence become defined, the four 'requisite factors' (anubandh chatushtaya) of this scripture.

The Lord has sermonized two categories of 'conviction' in this scripture viz. that of 'knowledge' and 'action', the former being the 'result' and the latter the 'means' to achieve that. The naissance of the twin paths of 'renunciation' (nivritti) and 'acceptance' (pravritti), is feasible on the basis of these convictions only, as the commentator, Shankaraachaarya, will elaborate further on. The Lord is also called as 'Bhagawaana', since He is in constant possession of the merits (Bhagha) of magnificence (aeshwarya), righteousness (dharma), eminence (yash), affluence (shree), knowledge (gyaana) and dispassion (vaeiraagya) etc. in their absolute entirety.

स भगवान्सृष्ट्वेदं जगत्तस्य च स्थितिं चिकीर्षुर्मरीच्यादीनग्रे सृष्ट्वाप्रजापतीन्प्रवृत्तिलक्षणं धर्मं ग्राहयामास वेदोक्तम्। ततोऽन्यांश्च सनकसनन्दनादीनुत्पाद्य निवृत्तिलक्षणं धर्मं ज्ञानवैराग्यलक्षणं ग्राहयामास।

That Lord, after creating the world, and with the desire to make certain its permanence, first created the 'Prajapatis', the progenitor of creatures viz. Mariichi and others, and preached to them, the 'path of action' characterised by 'acceptance' of rites and duties as expounded by the Vedas. Though the Kshatriyas were entrusted with the responsibility of regulating the creation, yet, with a view to regulate the Kshatriyas, it was deemed essential to sermonize this Vedic path to the Prajapatis. It must be noted that the aforementioned path is Vedic in origin, which differentiates it from all other forms of non-Vedic adulations like the worship of 'Chaitya tree' (a gigantic tree situated

near the village cemetery, or a tree on which reside various gods or ghouls) etc. In contrast, He, created others viz. Sanaka, Sanandana etc. and revealed to them the 'path of knowledge', characterised by knowledge, renunciation and dispassion. The word 'gyaana vaeiraagya' (knowledge and dispassion) in the commentary also encompasses the practice of control of mind and other organs.

द्विविधो हि वेदोक्तो धर्मः, प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो निवृत्तिलक्षणश्च। तत्रैको जगतः स्थितिकारणं प्राणिनां साक्षादभ्युदयनिःश्रेयसहेतुर्यः स धर्मो ब्राह्मणाद्यैर्वर्णिभिराश्रमिभिश्च श्रेयोर्थिभिरनुष्ठीयमानः। दीर्घेण कालेनानुष्ठातृणां कामोद्भवाद्धीयमानविवेकविज्ञानहेतुकेनाधर्मेणाभिभूयमाने धर्मे, प्रवर्धमाने चाधर्मे जगतः स्थितिं परिपिपालयिषुः स आदिकर्ता नारायणाख्यो विष्णुर्भौमस्य ब्रह्मणो ब्राह्मणत्वस्य रक्षणार्थं देवक्यां वसुदेवादंशेन किल संबभूव। ब्राह्मणत्वस्य हि रक्षणेन रक्षितः स्याद्वैदिको धर्मस्तदधीनत्वाद्गर्णाश्रमभेदानाम्।

These two virtuous paths, expounded by the Vedas viz. the 'path of action' and the 'path of knowledge' are adequate to ensure the stability and order of the created worlds. Of these, the former is directly responsible for the overall prosperity of the follower and serially for his emancipation, whereas the latter leads directly to emancipation. 'Knowledge' is the immediate and direct means to emancipation, whereas mechanisms like 'corporeal' and 'mental' control act as a conduit to emancipation through the discipline of 'knowledge' only. Thus 'knowledge' occupies the core place amongst all means of emancipation, others being peripheral and secondary to it. These paths should be pursued by men stationed in their respective classes viz. Brahmin, Kshatriya etc., and in the respective life-stages viz. Celibate, Householders etc., as per the Vedic guidelines for such and such class and stage of life, leading to their empirical and spiritual welfare. If pursued autonomously, disregarding the Vedic guidelines for class and stage, these will not be of any advantage whatsoever.

At a time, when those affianced to Vedic rituals, desirous of diverse worldly fruits, lost their sense of discrimination because of the ever-increasing levels of wants in their minds, the rectitude came to be subjugated by iniquity. Hence to ensure the constancy and the order of the world, 'Lord Vishnu', incarnated as 'Krishna', the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. The Smriti also declares, 'for safeguarding the Brahmins, the Vedas and the Sacrifices (yagya) on this Earth, that Lord manifested through Devaki from the radiance of Vasudeva' (Mbh. Sh. 47.29) The form of Lord, created by His own wish and with His own Maayaa, is referred by the word 'ansha' in the commentary. The word 'kil' (as tradition goes) in the commentary refers to the scriptural eminence of such incarnation of the Lord, since none other except the Lord can incarnate in such manner otherwise it would lead to contradictions with the scriptures. This embodiment of the

Lord is to preserve the Vedic paths, since the distinction of the 'class and life stages' depend on it, thereby reinstating the stability and the order of the world. The Lord accomplishes this task by safeguarding the 'Brahminhood' (Brahmanattva) on the earth, since this would ensure the constancy of the Vedic path that in turn would ensure the preservation and continuation of the arrangement of class and life stages. Thus keeping the Brahmins in vanguard only, others viz. Kshatriya etc. can attain approbation, since the right to accomplish Vedic sacrifices and the right to sermonize the Vedas is vested in the Brahmins only.

स च भगवाञ्ज्ञानैश्वर्यशक्तिबलवीर्यतेजोभिः सदा संपन्नस्त्रिगुणात्मिकां वैष्णवीं स्वां मायां मूलप्रकृतिं वशीकृत्य, अजोऽव्ययो भूतानामीश्वरो नित्यशुद्धबुद्धमुक्तस्वभावोऽपि सन् स्वमायया देहवानिव जात इव च लोकानुग्रहं कुर्वन्निव लक्ष्यते। स्वप्रयोजनाभावेऽपि भूतानुजिघृक्षया वैदिकं हि धर्मद्वयमर्जुनाय शोकमोहमहोदधौ निमग्नायोपदिदेश, गुणाधिकैर्हि गृहीताऽनुष्ठीयमानश्च धर्मः प्रचयं गमिष्यतीति। तं धर्मं भगवता यथोपदिष्टं वेदव्यासः सर्वज्ञो भगवानीताख्यैः सप्तभिः श्लोकशतैरुपनिबन्ध।

That Lord, even as an incarnation, remains ever possessed of the merits (Bhagha) of knowledge, authority, potency, audacity, autonomy, rectitude etc. in their absolute entirety, and thus is not like an ordinary soul. He incarnates Himself by domineering His own 'Maayaa', also referred to as the 'Primordial Nature'. He, by disposition, is without birth, immutable, eternal, chaste, conscious, liberated and the Lord of all beings, but through His own 'Maayaa' appears to be personified and as if born. The birth of an ordinary soul being under the control of 'Maayaa' is different from that of the Lord. The 'Maayaa' consisting of the three traits (guna) viz. sattva, rajasa and tamasa, is all pervasive, deceptive and enigmatic. It belongs to, and is under the verdict of the Lord, who is Eternal - being devoid of transformation; Pure - being devoid of a cause; Conscious - being not inert; and Free - being free from ignorance, desire and action. 'Maayaa' being the foremost factor involved in the incarnation of the Lord, the word 'svamaayayaa' (through His Maayaa) has been repeated in the commentary. The word 'iva' (like) has occurred twice in the commentary and is indicative of the 'unrealism' of the Lord taking birth etc. as an embodied form, which is only illusive. Establishment of the dual Vedic paths viz. the path of 'action' and the path of 'knowledge', for the empirical and spiritual welfare of the creatures, is the aim of personification of the Lord. Thus, He, having no purpose in incarnating for Himself, with the exclusive desire to consecrate the creatures, preached this two fold Vedic path to Arjuna, who had sunk deep into the sea of delusion and regret. Arjuna was preferred by the Lord as he was endowed more with an abundance of exceptional virtues in comparison to any other, and thus the Lord's philosophy, when espoused and practised by men affluent in merit,

is bound to burgeon and flourish. These paths, as revealed by the Lord, are superior and illustrious as compared to the philosophy of the non-Vedics, and hence are referred to as 'Vedic'. Also, eminent ones like Manu and all have acknowledged this philosophy of the Lord. Vedvyaasa, who is omniscient, and possessed of Godly merits, compiled the Lord's dissertation in seven hundred verses, distinguished as the 'Bhagavad Geeta'. Vedvyaasa is an incarnation of 'Vishnu', a fact, which puts to rest any qualms regarding the legitimacy of the 'Geeta' being a source of valid scriptural knowledge. It is the quintessence of all Vedic knowledge.

तदिदं गीताशास्त्रं समस्तवेदार्थसारसंग्रहभूतं दुर्विज्ञेयार्थम् । तदर्थाविष्करणायानेकैर्विवृतपदपदार्थ-
वाक्यार्थन्यायमप्यत्यन्तविरुद्धानेकार्थत्वेन लौकिकैर्गृह्यमाणमुपलभ्याहं विवेकतोऽर्थनिर्धारणार्थं संक्षेपतो
विवरणं करिष्यामि ।

The commentator now proceeds to conclude this context by declaring Geeta to be the indubitable assimilation of the inference of all Vedic knowledge. In human pronouncements there could exist a possibility of error, but Geeta, being pronounced by the Lord Himself, is devoid of any such blemishes. The principle of Bhagavad Geeta is exceptionally difficult to comprehend and cannot be arrived at by simply knowing Its words. Many preceding attempts, by those ignorant of the true implication of the scriptures, to expound Its factual objective by evocative analysis of Its words and sentences, their connotation and their entirety as a coherent dissertation, have resulted in the amalgamation of the dual Vedic paths of 'action' and 'knowledge' leading to extreme incongruity and multiplicity of expositions. Hence, 'to put an end to all these flawed explications, will I, write an epigrammatic commentary to resolutely expound the factual import of the 'Geeta', which would be understood clearly even by people of low or diffident intellect', thus says Aadi Shankaraachaarya. This commentary of Shankaraachaarya is comparatively succinct as compared to other previous expositions; therefore everyone can enthusiastically take to its comprehension.

तस्यास्य गीताशास्त्रस्य संक्षेपतः प्रयोजनं परं निःश्रेयसं सहेतुकस्य संसारस्यात्यन्तोपरमलक्षणम् ।
तच्च सर्वकर्मसंन्यासपूर्वकादात्मज्ञाननिष्ठारूपाद्धर्माद्भवति । तथेममेव गीतार्थधर्ममुद्दिश्य भगवतैवोक्तम्
—“स हि धर्मः सुपर्याप्तो ब्रह्मणः पदवेदने” (महा. आश्व. १६.१२) इत्यनुगीतासु । तत्रैव चो-
क्तम्—“नैव धर्मी न चाधर्मी न चैव हि शुभाशुभी । यः स्यादेकासने लीनस्तूष्णीं किञ्चिदचिन्तयन्” ॥
(महा. आश्व. १९.७); ‘ज्ञानं संन्यासलक्षणम्’ इति च (महा. आश्व. ४३.२६) । इहापि चान्ते
उक्तमर्जुनाय—‘सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज’ (गी. १८.६६) इति ।

Though 'Geeta' is accepted as a source of valid scriptural knowledge, but still, the absence of declaration of the four 'requisite factors' (anubandh chatushtaya) viz. the

eligible person (adhikaari), the subject matter (vishya), the relation (sambandha) and purpose (prayojna), makes it undeserving of writing any commentary on It; to dispel this doubt is the subsequent commentary.

The definitive implication of 'Geeta' is in the liberation of the embodied soul. The Vedaanta describes the 'liberation' as absolute termination of all worldly sorrows, along with their cause i.e. 'ignorance', and the realization of the Supreme Bliss. Though cessation of the worldly sorrows also occurs in the deep sleep, in the comatose or in stuporous state, but, because of the persistence of the cause, i.e. 'ignorance' (Nescience), this cessation is only impermanent in nature. The 'liberation' results only from the unwavering obedience to the knowledge of 'Self', heralded by the renunciation of all 'actions'. With this insinuation in mind, the Lord Himself says in the 'Anugita' - 'for the realisation of the Supreme Self (Brahman) is adequate this path of knowledge' (Mbh. Ashva. 16.12); 'one who remains absorbed in the same posture, forsaking all activities of the senses like speech etc., not thinking of anything, who is neither an admirer of virtue nor of vice, neither engaged in good or bad actions, that one is Brahman only' (Mbh. Ashva. 19.1&19.7); 'knowledge is distinguished by renunciation' (Mbh. Ashva. 43.25) etc. Such liberation cannot be achieved by the amalgamation of the dual Vedic paths of 'action' and 'knowledge', neither alone by the path of 'action', but only through the aforesaid path of 'knowledge'. In the Geeta, the path of 'action' is the 'means' and the path of 'knowledge' is the 'result'. The word 'tuushnim' (silently), in the commentary implies the absence of activity of the external organs like speech etc., and the word 'kinchit achintayan' (not thinking of anything), indicates the absence of activity of the mind. In the concluding part of the Geeta, the Lord says the same to Arjuna - 'abandoning all actions take refuge in Me, the non-dual Brahman alone' (18.66).

अभ्युदयार्थोऽपि यः प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो धर्मो वर्णानाश्रमांश्चोद्दिश्य विहितः, स च देवादिस्थानप्राप्तिहेतु-
रपि सन्नीश्वरार्पणबुद्ध्याऽनुष्ठीयमानः सत्त्वशुद्धये भवति फलाभिसंधिवर्जितः। शुद्धसत्त्वस्य च ज्ञा-
ननिष्ठायोग्यताप्राप्तिद्वारेण ज्ञानोत्पत्तिहेतुत्वेन च निःश्रेयसहेतुत्वमपि प्रतिपद्यते। तथा चेममेवार्थमभिसंध-
ाय वक्ष्यति—'ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि' (गी. ५.१०) 'योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वाऽऽत्मशुद्धये'
(गी. ५.११) इति।

इमं द्विप्रकारं धर्मं निःश्रेयसप्रयोजनं परमार्थतत्त्वं च वासुदेवाख्यं परं ब्रह्माभिधेयभूतं विशेषतोऽ-
भव्यञ्जयद्विशिष्टप्रयोजनसंबन्धाभिधेयवद्गीताशास्त्रम्। यतस्तदर्थं विज्ञाते समस्तपुरुषार्थसिद्धिः इत्यतस्त-
द्विवरणे यत्नः क्रियते मया।

इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यगोविन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यश्रीमच्छङ्करभगवतः कृतौ
श्रीमद्भगवद्गीताभाष्यस्योपोद्घातः ॥

The path of 'action' is for the all round opulence and evolution, which is critical and recommended for the follower of class and stage, and is instrumental in finding a place in the abode of gods. The same, if practised, without the desire of fruit and as a service to the Lord, leads to sanitization and refinement of mind, which bequeaths upon the agent, the eligibility to attain the knowledge of non-dual Brahman and ultimately salvation. With this in mind only, the Lord says subsequently, 'the one who discards all actions - virtuous and vicious, and institutes himself in the non-dual Brahman, remaining unattached to all preordained (praarabdha-karma) actions in the same way as the crest of the lotus leaf not getting drenched though remaining in water', (5.20); 'giving up attachment, the Yogis embark on actions for self purification' (5.12); thus demonstrating that the actions, when performed without the attachment and desire of fruit, result in mental purification and refinement.

Till now is elucidated the 'purpose' of Geeta along with the means to achieve it. The 'Supreme Reality', the 'Brahman' called 'Vaasudeva', is the 'subject' of this scripture and this 'scripture' is the one that illustrates this subject, thus establishing the 'relation' of the subject and this 'scripture'. Thus it is apposite only, to write a commentary on the Geeta, which has an unambiguous and imperative principle, subject and relation. Since by comprehending the purport of the Geeta, all human ends are rewarded, consequently, will I endeavour to write a commentary on it, so says Aadi Shankaraachaarya.

Thus concludes the English translation by Dr. Narendra Tuli of the Lalita commentary by Aachaarya Mahaamandaleshwara Swaami Vidyaanand Giriji Mahaaraaj on the 'preamble' by Shankaraachaarya on Shreemad Bhagavad Geeta Bhaashya.