

Verses for Introspection

Mā Gurupriyā

e-Series
No. 56

True Relationship

Mā Gurupriyā

गुरुर्न स स्यात्स्वजनो न स स्यात्
पिता न स स्याज्जननी न सा स्यात् ।
दैवं न तत्स्यान्न पतिश्च स स्यात्
न मोचयेद्यः समुपेतमृत्युम् ॥

*gurur-na sa syāt-svajano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj-janani na sā syāt .
daivaṃ na tat-syān-na patiś-ca sa syāt
na mocayed-yah samupeta-mṛtyum ..*

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 5.5.18

That Guru is not a Guru, that relative is not a relative,
that father is not a father, that mother is not a mother;
the deity is not a deity and the husband is not a husband,
if he cannot liberate one from impending death.



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

Points for Introspection

The real purpose of life is to attain liberation by realizing one's real identity – the Self. When one realizes the birth-less and death-less nature of the Self, he understands that the body with mind and intelligence alone perishes with death, but the Soul is imperishable and immortal.

Every human being's aim in life should be to realize one's real Self – the immortal Soul. However, man out of ignorance identifies the Self with his body-mind-intelligence and considers himself mortal, changeful and perishable. With the suffering of the body etc. he too suffers because of the mistaken identity. When one realizes 'I am the Self – the real, imperishable, immortal', then one enjoys supreme, unbroken, bliss.

In Viveka-cūḍāmaṇī (verse 4), Śaṅkarāchārya says that one who does not strive to realize his Real Identity, but holds on only to the perishable and unreal, is verily committing 'suicide'.

The present śloka says that only those who help a man to go beyond death by helping him to realize the immortal Self are his true friends and relatives. The śloka goes to the extent of saying that a Guru cannot be called a Guru, only because he has given 'dīkṣā' (initiation) or has taught the scriptures. Unless the Guru guides the disciple at every step and makes all effort to enable the disciple to realize his immortality, he is not a true Guru.

In a similar manner, the relatives are not true relatives in spite



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

of their good and helpful behaviour, unless they help one in attaining liberation. The father, even though he gives birth and takes care, is no father at all; the mother, even if she carries the child in the womb and brings him up, is not a real mother, if she does not help the child in gaining the spiritual goal. A deity is no deity at all, if having been worshipped by a devotee, it does not help the devotee to get liberated. A deity is not only to be worshipped. The result of the worship should be an intense yearning for Self-realization. A husband is not a husband, even if he takes a vow of looking after the wife till the end of life, but does not help her to get liberation.

Chanting of this powerful śloka generates in the mind intense yearning for liberation. It also gives clarity to the mind that only those relationships that help in the path towards liberation are the true relationships. The futility of other relationships and hindrance created by clinging to them, are clearly understood.

Word Meaning

गुरुः (guruḥ) = Guru; सः (saḥ) = he; न स्यात् (na syāt) = is surely not; स्वजनः (svajanaḥ) = relative; सः (saḥ) = he; न स्यात् (na syāt) = is surely not; पिता (pitā) = father; सः (saḥ) = he; न स्यात् (na syāt) = is surely not; जननी (jananī) = mother; सा (sā) = she; न स्यात् (na syāt) = is surely not; दैवं (daivam) = deity; तत् (tat) = that; न स्यात् (na syāt) = is surely not; पतिः (patiḥ) = husband; च (ca) = and; सः (saḥ) = he; न स्यात् (na syāt) = is surely not; न मोचयेत् (na mocayet) = does not liberate; यः (yaḥ) = who; समुपेतमृत्युम् (samupeta-mṛtyum) = impending death.



Narayanashrama Tapovanam

अन्वयः

यः समुपेतमृत्युम् न मोचयेत्, सः गुरुः न स्यात्, सः स्वजनः न स्यात्, सः पिता न स्यात्, सा जननी न स्यात्, तत् दैवं न स्यात्, सः पतिः च न स्यात्।

yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum na mocayet, saḥ guruḥ na syāt, saḥ svajanaḥ na syāt, saḥ pitā na syāt, sā jananī na syāt, tat daivam na syāt, saḥ patiḥ ca na syāt.



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