

PURPOSE OF GĪTĀ ACCORDING TO ŚAIVA VIEW

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Kashmir Śaivism is basically an enquiry into the truth of human experience. It is a venture at discovering permanence in changefulness and universality in individuality. It, therefore, affirms the spirit of modern science. Studied in the right way, Kashmir Śaivism is bound to reveal its utility and charm to the modern mind. There is a purposeful uniqueness in this system of Indian spiritual thought. To give an instance here, I would point out how the great Śaiva teacher Abhinavagupta explains the purpose of the Gītā in his Gītārtha-saṁgraha (a commentary on Gītā).

While trying to solve the problem of life in the light of the Lord's song, Abhinavagupta says : What is the main purpose of our life here ? Why is our mind torn by conflicting duties and loyalties ? These are the very difficult questions he sets out to solve in his commentary. The freedom from all our miseries, he very boldly and emphatically declares, can neither be obtained through the renunciation of the world, nor by hatred towards this world but by feeling the presence of God everywhere, who is the inmost centre of each and every object.

There is an unceasing battle going on between Right (Pāṇḍū) and Wrong (Kurū) in one's own body (dharma-kṣetre) which is analogous to the war between Kauravas and Pāṇdavās. Each side strives to gain the upper hand. This famous conflict between the two sides shows how man should side with the Right ultimately to conquer the Wrong and thus become the instrument of God's good purpose on earth.

'Dharmakṣetre' signifies that the minds of people as they are by nature pure, get polluted by selfish interests and wicked thoughts leading them to the acts of vileness and wildness. Abhinavagupta explains 'māmakāḥ' as vile and impure thoughts coming in man's mind by his inherent ignorance and selfishness (māmakāḥ - avaidyā-puruṣocitā avidyāmayāḥ saṅkalpāḥ) which lead him to use violence against his own fellow men, may even against his own kith and kin. Pāṇḍavāḥ is explained as pure or good and wise thoughts, humanistic outlook, which are the result of pursuit of truth and knowledge, by man (Pāṇḍavāḥ - śuddha-vidyā puruṣocitā vidyātmānaḥ). Ultimately there is the victory of the right.

