

Essence of Kapila Gita by Swami Tejomayananda

Updated on 20-02-2023

Gave correct references of Bhagavat Purana. Earlier only refernces were given of Kapila gita Sara which is a collection of selected shlokas by Swami Tejomayananda. They are marked as KG 1.22, etc.

Apologies for the error.

Kapila Gita occurs within Skanda 3 of Srimad Bhagavat Purana as Chapters 23 – 33. It consists of three chapters. Kapila Gita is unique in it's own way as it teaches advaita-bhakti.

Swami Tejomayananda of Chinmaya Mission has also translated Kapila Gita into English and commented on the relevant slokas. However, he has not translated entire Kapila Gita, but only the essence of slokas and has categorized them in three chapters. Though the book is titled 'Kapila Gita', in the introduction Swami ji has mentioned that it is 'Kapilopadesha-Sara' (Kapilopadeśa – sārāḥ, कपिलोपदेश - सारम्) meaning 'Essence of Kapila Gita'.

This translation and commentary on selected slokas is worth reading.

Legends: BP: Bhagavat Purana / KG: Kapila Gita Saram

Note: Shloka no given in Kapila Gita Saram are not in sync with shloka no of Bhagavat Purana. Only selected shlokas are taken up by Swami Tejomayananda.

|| Hari OM ||

Chapter - I

DevahUti-r-uvAca (Devahuti Said)

BP 3.25.7 / KG 1.1: O Infinite Lord! I am extremely exhausted from gratifying these deceptive Senses. I have fallen into blinding darkness that has risen from this gratification.

BP 3.25.8 / KG 1.2: By Thy Grace, at the end of many lifetime, I have gained in You an excellent eye (guide) that can penetrate that blinding darkness of ignorance and infatuation which is difficult to cross.

BP 3.25.9 / KG 1.3: Indeed, Thou art the Lord of all Beings, verily the lord who is the origin of the word, born like the sun, the eye of the beings blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

Following verses describes nature of ignorance

BP 3.25.10 / KG 1.4: O Lord! Thou art capable of destroying my delusion which is the false identification with the body and world as `I` and `mine`, as it is imposed by thee only.

devahUti concludes, saying:

BP 3.25.11 / KG 1.5: With a thirst for knowledge of matter and spirit, I take refuge in you, the only shelter, the veritable axe that cuts the tree of samsAra of Your servant. I prostrate to you, the greatest amongst the knowers of the noble truth.

SrI bhagavAn-uvAca (The Lord replies)

BP 3.25.13 / KG. 1.6: According to me, the spiritual yoga is the only means of attaining the supreme good for all mankind where there is a total cessation of both sorrow and joy. 1.6

BP 3.25.14 / KG 1.7: O sinless one! I shall expound to you that yoga, with all its aspects, which was earlier taught to rishi-s who were eager to listen.

BP 3.25.15 / KG 1.8: It is considered by Me that it is the mind, indeed, that is the cause for bondage and liberation of the Self

How can one revel in God? The Lord answers –

BP 3.25.19 / KG 1.9: For spiritual seekers, for attaining the Reality, there is no path as auspicious as devotion, which unites one to the Lord who is the Self of all beings.

BP 3.25.20 / KG 1.10: Extreme attachment (to the world) is an unbreakable rope for the Self – say learned men. The same when done for noble men, opens the gateway to liberation.

BP 3.25.21 / KG 1.11: Peaceful men of forbearance and compassion, without enemies, and the well wishers of all beings, are the best among all noble people.

BP 3.25.22-23 / KG 1.12-13: Various worldly afflictions do not trouble those who practice firm devotion in Me, with an unwavering mind, having given up all actions, relations, and friends for My sake; who depend on Me alone, who listen and tell My sweet stories, and whose mind is absorbed in Me.

BP 3.25.24 / KG 1.14: O noble lady (mother)! You should seek the company of those noble souls who are free of all attachments as they remove all your worldly attachments.

devahUti-uvAca (devahUti says)

BP 3.25.28 / KG 1.15: DevahUti said – What is appropriate devotion and how will it manifest for me, by which I will quickly gain Your adobe of freedom?

BP 3.25.29 / KG 1.16: O embodiment of nirvana! What is that yoga that You indicated, whose object is You? How and what are its limbs? Please tell me the yoga by which I will know the Reality.

BP 3.25.30 / KG 1.17: O Hari! Do make me understand that difficult yoga such that I, a dull-witted woman, too, can easily understand it by your Grace.

SrI BhagavAn-uvAca (The Lord Said)

BP 3.25.32-33 / KG 1.18-19: **Devotion is the single-pointed natural flow of thoughts along with senses by the guNa-s and actions understood by the scriptures, towards the Lord who is purity itself.** It is causeless, pertaining to the Lord, superior to all siddhi-s and destroys the covering of ignorance just as fire swallows all that is put in it.

Devotion Revealed

BP 3.5.34-35 / KG 1.20-21: Some devotees do not desire to become one with Me. They revel in serving My feet and doing activities for Me. They assemble together and enjoy My work. *Kapila Gita Sara 1.20-21*

Advaita devotees never perish

BP 3.25.38 / KG 1.22: Those for whom I am the supreme beloved, the Self, son, friend, Guru, well-wisher, and dear Lord (ISTa deva); and who meditate on My peaceful form, never perish as unwinking time has no power over them. *Kapila Gita Sara 1.22*

Jiva is renounced

BP 3.25.39-40 / KG 1.23-24: **I take such devotees across death who, having renounced** all others, this world, the other world, **the jiva-hood** that goes from this world to the other, the body, and all that relates to it like prosperity, animals, and houses, worship Me alone of universal form with single pointed devotion - *Kapila Gita Sara 1.23-24*

BP 3.25.44 / KG 1.25: This much alone is the supreme good for men in this world. This is achieved by intense devotion and devotional practice and with a mind firmly abiding in Me. - *Kapila Gita Sara 1.25*

Chapter – II

SrI bhagavAn-uvAca (The Lord said)

BP 3.26.1 / KG 2.1: I shall now explicitly expound to you the differentiating characteristics of various entities, knowing which man becomes free of various entities, knowing which a man becomes free from the qualities of prakriti.

BP 3.26.2 / KG 2.2: I shall describe to you that knowledge about which great sages speak, which is the means to the supreme good of man, which gives Self-knowledge and cuts the knots of the heart.

PuruSa was attributeless before creation

BP 3.26.3 / KG 2.3: **Before creation, the PuruSa was the beginningless Self, attributeless, beyond prakriti, the very subject and Self-shining, and even now it alone pervades the world.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.3*

Swami Tejomayananda further explains the meaning of AtmA (Self) from viShNu purANa as -

AtmA is that which pervades (the universe), takes back (the universe at the time of dissolution), enjoys (as the illuminator or experiencer of) objects here (in the world), and has eternal existence.

PuruSa manifested as Prakriti – Brahman getting deluded

BP 3.26.4 / KG 2.4: **The same infinite Lord, by chance alone, in sport, became manifested as the subtle prakriti with qualities.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.4*

BP 3.26.5 / KG 2.5: Prakriti with its qualities creates a variety of being like itself. **The Lord/Self having seen the creation got (as it were) completely deluded through the veiling of knowledge.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.5*

BP 3.26.6 / KG 2.6: Thus, by brooding over the other (prakriti), man assumes doership of actions that are actually done by the qualities of prakriti.

Cause of Bondage of sansAra

BP 3.26.7 / KG 2.7: That doership causes bondage of samsAra and enslaves this non-doer, witness, and peaceful Self, the Lord.

Discrimination between puruSa and prakriti

BP 3.26.8 / KG 2.8: The great sages know that prakriti is the cause of the cause-effect relationship and the notion of doership, and puruSa which is beyond prakriti is the cause of the enjoyment of joy and sorrow.

Is puruSa really bound by prakriti? The Lord answers,

PuruSa does not get affected by prakriti

BP 3.27.1 / KG 2.9: The puruSa, even though dwelling in prakriti, does not get affected by the qualities of prakriti, as he is immutable, non-doer, and attributeless like the sun in water. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.9*

BP 3.27.2 / KG 2.10: When the puruSa gets overwhelmingly attached to the qualities of prakriti and gets deluded by the notion of doing, he then considers "I am the doer"

BP 3.27.3 / KG 2.11: Because of this attachment and doership, he helplessly reaches the state of a samsArI and becomes unhappy. Due to the evil of action born of attachment, he is born in good, bad and middling wombs.

Objects do not exist in reality

BP 3.27.4 / KG 2.12 **Indeed, even though objects do not exist really**, the samsAra does not seem to end. Just as one who broods on objects meets with disaster alone, even in the dream. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.12*

BP 3.27.5 / KG 2.13: Therefore, the mind which is extremely attached to wrong ways should be slowly brought under control by intense practice of devotion and dispassion.

How can there be freedom in the presence of qualities of Prakriti?

DevAhUti, has doubts as how can one get rid of prakriti

BP 3.27.17 / KG 2.14: **O Lord! What if the prakriti does not leave the puruSa due to mutual interdependence and eternal coexistence?** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.14*

DevahUti gives an example to support her point.

BP 3.27.18 / KG 2.15: Just as smell cannot exist without earth, sapidity without water, in the same way there is mutual dependence and coexistence of the mind (prakriti) and the Supreme (puruSa) – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.15*

BP 3.27.19 / KG 2.16: Therefore, **how can there be freedom in the presence of the qualities of prakriti? (For prakriti) causes the bondage in action to the puruSa who is a non-doer.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.16*

Finally, devahUti concludes

BP 3.27.20 / KG: 2.17: Sometimes, by the discrimination of truth, the terrible fear (on bondage) is removed. But since it's cause is not removed, it may come back again. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.17*

Reply

Kapila Muni, the Lord replies,

BP 3.27.21-23 / KG 2.18-20: **The bondage of puruSa by prakriti is burnt up by spiritual practices performed day and night by prakriti (body-mind) itself**, like the fuel by the fire in the cup of the araNi. The practices are causeless ("choiceless") performance of one's duties, purity of mind, intense devotion to Me, nourished by constant listening, knowledge with clear vision of Truth, strong dispassion, intense meditation accompanied by austerity, and absorption of the mind. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.18-20*

jIva does not get deluded when -

BP 3.27.24 / KG 2.21: **That prakriti which has been completely enjoyed, then discarded, whose evil effects are seen constantly, can cause no harm to one who abides in the glory of one's own Self.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.21*

The above statement is explained further with the help of example.

BP 3.27.25 / KG: 2.22: Just as a dream causes a lot of sorrow to one who has not awoken, but the same does not delude one who has woken up. – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.22*

A person when asleep dreams and takes a role where he enjoys, suffers but on awakening, he realizes that everything was illusion and not a reality. Further bhagavAn says,

BP 3.27.26 / KG 2.23: **In the same way, prakriti never harms him who knows the Truth and who revels in the Self, as his mind is always united with Me.** – *Kapila Gita Sara 2.23*

Earlier, it was said that puruSa was formless and attributeless (without qualities) prior to creation. Our journey too is to go back to this state where there is no one else other than Self.

BP 3.27.30 / KG 2.24: O mother! When the mind of the accomplished one does not get attached to the powers gained by the intense practice of yoga, for which (powers) there is no other cause, then one gains My absolute state where there is no laughter of death.

Chapter - III

Who should not be taught Kapila Gita

BP 3.32.39-40 / KG 3.1-2: This knowledge should not be taught to the wicked, the arrogant, the stubborn, the one with bad conduct, a hypocrite, an indulgent one, one whose mind is obsessed with home, one who is not devoted to Me and also one who dislikes My devotees.

Who are worthy of being taught Kapila Gita

BP 3.32.41-42 / KG 3.3-4: This knowledge should be given to one with faith, devotion, humility, who is not envious, a friend of all, revels in serving all, dispassionate, peaceful free of envy, pure, and to whom I am the dearest of all.

Phala shruti (benefits of reading and teaching Kapila Gita)

BP 3.32.43 / KG 3.5: O mother! The person who listens to this knowledge even once with faith or teaches this knowledge with their mind in Me, indeed, attains my state.

devahUti, being so transported, sings the glory of the Lord

Praises by devahUti

devahUti sings:

BP 3.33.6 / KG 3.6: Even a dot-eater becomes fit for sacrificial rituals (purified), by listening to and chanting Your name, by prostration to You, and by remembering You even once. What of them, O Lord, who actually see you?

BP 3.33.7 / KG 3.7: Indeed, even a dog-eater is great who chants Your name. Those noble men who chant Your name, must have already practiced austerities, performed sacrificial rituals, taken holy bath, and studied the veda-s.

BP 3.33.8 / KG 3.8: I salute You who are the Reality, the Supreme puruSa, viShNu incarnated as kapila, who are meditated upon within the inward flow of thoughts, who, by His brilliance destroys the might of the qualities of prakriti and who is the source of the veda-s.

Kapila muni gives his final words of advice in two verses:

Kapila-uvAca (Lord Kapila says)

BP 3.33.10 / KG 3.9: O mother! By abiding in this easy-to-practise path, revealed by me to you, you shall long reach the Supreme goal.

BP 3.33.11 / KG 3.10: Have faith in this teaching of mine which is worshipped by the seekers / knowers of Brahma-vidyA. You shall reach My unborn state by it. Those who do not know it reach death.

maitreya Rishi was narrating the story of kapila muni to Vidura. He concludes the narration with following verses:

maitreya-uvAca (Maitreya said)

BP 3.33.12 / KG 2.11: Thus, Lord kapila, having shown His own nature to that noble lady, His own mother, who was now a knower of Reality, took her permission and went away.

BP 3.33.13 / KG 2.12: she also, staying in the ASrama on the banks of sarasvatI, by the method of yoga taught by her own son, united in yoga, quietened her mind.

Jiva is destroyed - Nirvikalp Samadhi

BP 3.33.26 / KG 3.13: **Due to the elimination of jIva-hood, and the mind firmly abiding in th Reality, the Lord, who is the support of all jIva-s, her afflictions were destroyed and she attained total peace. Kapila Gita Sara 3.13**

BP 3.33.27 / KG 3.14: **As her mind remained absorbed in the Truth, she transcended the delusion of the qualities of prakriti and, at that time, did not even remember her body like the one who awakes (does not remember) objects seen in the dream. – Kapila Gita Sara 2.14**

devahUti was not aware of her physical body

BP 3.33.28 / KG 3.15: That body, nourished by others was not even emaciated due to absence of mental afflictions. It was covered with dirt like fire with smoke.

BP 3.33.29 / KG 3.16: Her mind absorbed in vAsudeva, devahUti, was unaware of her own body which was transformed by austerity and yoga, and protected by God, she sat with hair open, unconscious even of her clothes.

BP 3.33.30 / KG 3.17 It is said that by the path taught by kapila muni. devahUti soon attained the Supreme elf, the ever liberated Reality, the Lord.

phala shruti (fruits of listening to Kapila gita) is given in last verse.

BP 3.33.37 / KG 3.18: Those who continuously listen to or teach this teaching of kapila muni, the secret of Self knowledge, get their mind absorbed in Lord viShNu and attain the lotus feet of the Lord.

Thus ends Kapila gita.

|| OM tat sat ||