

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 29: Chapter 3, Verses 30-35

(November 14 –November 20, 2018)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३-३० ॥
ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३-३१ ॥
ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३-३२ ॥
सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३-३३ ॥
इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ ३-३४ ॥
श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३-३५ ॥

TRANSLITERATION

*mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi sannyasyādhyātma-cetasā
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā yudhyasva vigata-jvaraḥ

ye me matam idaṁ nityam anutiṣṭhanti mānavāḥ
śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ

ye tv etad abhyasūyanto nānutiṣṭhanti me matam
sarva-jñāna-vimūḍhāṁs tān viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ

sadr̥śaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ prakṛter jñānavān api
prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati

indriyasyendriyasyārthe rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
tayor na vaśam āgacchet tau hy asya paripanthinau

śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ para-dharmāt sv-anuṣṭhitāt
sva-dharme nidhanam śreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ*

TRANSLATION

- (30)** Performing all works as an offering unto me, constantly meditate on me as the Supreme. Become free from desire and selfishness, and with your mental grief departed, fight!
- (31)** Those who abide by these teachings of mine, with profound faith and free from cavil, are released from the bondage of karma.
- (32)** But those who find faults with my teachings, being bereft of knowledge and devoid of discrimination, they disregard these principles and bring about their own ruin.
- (33)** Even wise people act according to their natures, for all living beings are propelled by their natural tendencies. What will one gain by repression?
- (34)** The senses naturally experience attachment and aversion to the sense objects, but do not be controlled by them, for they are way-layers and foes.
- (35)** It is far better to perform one's natural prescribed duty, though tinged with faults, than to perform another's prescribed duty, though perfectly. In fact, it is preferable to die in the discharge of one's duty, than to follow the path of another, which is fraught with danger.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1IRPa6vFWnMqDG6CGTlrmrPuzTiznqFPK>

Commentary:

Verse 30:

The word *sannyasa* means “to renounce”. The words *adhyātma chetasā* mean “with the thoughts resting on God.” The word *Nirāśhīḥ* means “without desires for the results of the actions.” Here Lord Krishna is explaining to Arjuna to renounce all actions that are not dedicated to Him as *yagna* or sacrifice. Relinquishing both desire and attachment and thereby being free from any conceptions of ego and ownership; one should cheerfully perform all actions for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. In this way Lord Krishna is instructing Arjuna to free himself from delusion and to fight banishing all lamentation.

Verse 31:

In the previous verse, Lord Krishna explained to Arjuna to perform all works without desiring or expecting any rewards for his work, instead by offering all works as a sacrifice to Him. But the Lord knows that this statement can cause ridicule and blasphemy from those who have no belief in God. So, now He emphasizes the need for accepting His teachings of the *Bhagavadgita* with conviction and following them in one's life. He says that by faithfully following these teachings one becomes free from the bondage of the material world.

Verse 32:

Faith is an important and necessary ingredient for accepting the divine teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. However, our material intellect has innumerable imperfections, and so, we are not always able to comprehend the sublimity of Lord Krishna's teachings or appreciate their benefits. One of

the persistent defects of the material intellect is pride. Due to pride, whatever the intellect cannot comprehend at present, it often rejects as incorrect or false. Though Lord Krishna's teachings are presented by the omniscient Lord for the welfare of the souls, people still find fault in them, such as, "Why is God asking everything to be offered to Him? Is He greedy? Is He an egotist in asking Arjuna to worship Him?" Lord Krishna says that such people are *achetasah*, or "devoid of intellectual discrimination," because they cannot distinguish between the pure and the impure, the righteous and the unrighteous, the Creator and the created, the Supreme Master and the servant. Such people "bring about their own ruin," because they reject the path to eternal salvation and keep rotating in the cycle of life and death. Therefore, Whenever our intellect is unable to comprehend, rather than finding fault with the divine teachings, we must submit our intellect, "Lord has said it. There must be veracity in it, which I cannot understand at present. Let me accept it for now and engage in spiritual *sādhana*. I will be able to comprehend it in future, when I progress in spirituality." This attitude is called *śhraddhā*, or faith.

Verse 33:

Propelled by their own natural instincts, all living species on this earth are inclined to act in accordance with their individual genetic tendencies and modes of action. Take for example, dogs display the virtue of loyalty to depths that cannot be matched by the best of humans. Ants are such social creatures that they bring food for their community while forsaking it for their individual consumption, a quality that is difficult to find in a human society. A cow has such intense attachment for its calf that the moment it goes out of its sight, the cow feels distressed. Similarly, we humans too are propelled by our own nature. Since Arjuna was a warrior by nature, Lord Krishna tells him, "Your own *Kṣhatriya* (warrior) nature will compel you to fight, and you will be driven to do it by your own inclination, born of your nature." Humans find it difficult to resist this force of habit and nature. If the Vedic scriptures instructed them to give up all works and engage in pure spirituality, it would create an unstable situation. Such artificial repression would be counter-productive. The proper and easier way for spiritual advancement is to utilize the immense force of habit and tendencies and dovetail it in the direction of God. We have to begin the spiritual ascent from where we stand, and doing so requires that we have to first accept our present condition of what we are and then improve on it. Our nature should be sublimated by shifting the goal from worldly enjoyment to God-realization, and performing our prescribed duty without attachment and aversion, in the spirit of service to God.

Verse 34:

The senses naturally run toward the sense objects and their mutual interaction creates sensations of pleasure and pain. For example, the taste buds experience joy in contact with delicious foods and distress in contact with bitter foods. The mind repeatedly contemplates the sensations of pleasure and pain which it associates with these objects. Thoughts of pleasure in the sense objects create attachment while thoughts of pain create aversion. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna not to succumb to feelings of either attachment or aversion. In the discharge of our worldly duty, we will have to encounter all kinds of likeable and unlikeable situations. We must practice neither to yearn for the likeable situations, nor to avoid the unlikeable situations. When we stop being slaves of both the likes (pleasure) and dislikes (pain) of the mind and senses in the discharge of our duty, we will truly

become free to act from our inherent nature. Recalling that Lord Krishna emphasized in the previous verse that the mind and senses are propelled by their own natural tendencies, He now cautions about the possibility of harnessing them. As long as we have the material body, we have to utilize the objects of the senses for its maintenance. So, the Lord is not asking us to stop consuming what is necessary, but to practice eradicating the attachment and aversion that are associated with it. Certainly, *sanskārs* (past life tendencies) do have a deep-rooted influence on all living beings, but if we practice the method taught in the *Bhagavad Gita*, we can succeed in correcting the situation.

Verse 35:

Here Lord Krishna emphasizes that it is better to follow our own Dharma (*Swadharmā*, responsibilities, duties, thoughts, and actions that are appropriate for our own nature) than to adopt someone else's pathway. The duties born of our nature can be performed with much more ease and stability than the duties of others, although may seem attractive from a distance and allure one to switching, is risky as they may conflict with our nature and create disharmony with our own senses, mind, and intellect. This will be detrimental for our consciousness and will hinder our progress on the spiritual path. For example, if one's nature is attuned with *Karma Yoga*, it may be very difficult for the same person to perform *Jnana Yoga*, in spite of the fact that the latter path may be shorter. That is because there may be many dangers accosting the path of *Jnana Yoga* which the *Karma Yogi* may not be able to surmount. So Lord Krishna advises Arjuna that one should adopt the path that naturally befits him (it is *Karma Yoga* in Arjuna's case) even if death comes before one has the opportunity to fulfill one's purpose of attaining *Moksha* or the liberation from the cycles of birth and death. Here the Lord implies that even the death would not impede one's progress toward *Moksha* as his merits of work in this life would be applied to his next life and he can pick up where he left off.