

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 161: Chapter 18, Verses 06-09

(June 2 – June 8, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।

etāny api tu karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā phalāni cha

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ १८-६ ॥

kartavyānīti me pārtha niśchitaṁ matam uttamam

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

niyatasya tu sannyāsaḥ karmaṇo nopapadyate

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ १८-७ ॥

mohāt tasya parityāgas tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।

duḥkham ity eva yat karma kāya-kleśha-bhayāt tyajet

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ १८-८ ॥

sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgam naiva tyāga-phalaṁ labhet

कार्यामित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

kāryam ity eva yat karma niyataṁ kriyate 'rjuna

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ १८-९ ॥

saṅgam tyaktvā phalaṁ chaiva sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ

TRANSLATION

- (06)** These activities must be performed as duty without attachment and expectation for rewards. This is my definite and supreme verdict, O Arjun.
- (07)** Renunciation of prescribed duties is not recommended. Abandoning them due to delusion is said to be in the mode of ignorance.
- (08)** To give up prescribed duties because they are troublesome or cause bodily discomfort is renunciation in the mode of passion. Such renunciation is never beneficial or elevating.
- (09)** When actions are taken in response to duty, Arjun, and one relinquishes attachment to any reward, it is considered renunciation in the nature of goodness.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vGbcxvFm38C_OaA4MrnS9Q3CGpsEOfHJ/view?usp=sharing

Chapter 18

Verse 06

In this verse, Lord Krishna renders his final verdict on performing the prescribed Vedic activities during renunciation of the two kinds, including *Sanyasa* and *Tyaga*, which were discussed in the preceding verses. Due to the fact that these activities sanctify and purify, and hence, lead one to *bhakti* or exclusive loving devotion to the Supreme Lord, they should be performed daily throughout the whole life as a matter of joy or a matter of duty without desiring any reward and without any sense of ego involved. These prescribed Vedic activities include *Yajna* or ritualistic propitiation and worship, *Tapah* or austerities and *Daanam* or charity to the deserving individuals such as Brahmins. These daily obligatory duties must be performed with firm conviction and full faith in the injunctions and ordinances of the Vedic scriptures.

Verse 07

The kinds of renunciation briefly talked about by Lord Krishna in earlier verses are being elaborated upon in this verse and the next two. He says that renouncing the prohibited and unrighteous actions is proper. Renouncing desire for the rewards of actions is also proper. However, giving up prescribed Vedic activities and obligatory duties is not considered

proper since those activities purify the mind and elevate it stepwise from *tamo guṇa* to *rajo guṇa* to *sattva guṇa*. These obligatory duties vary according to one's level of consciousness. For an ordinary person, acts such as earning wealth, taking care of the family, bathing, eating, etc. are prescribed duties. As one's mind gets elevated, these obligatory duties change. For an elevated soul, sacrifice (*yajna*), charity (*daanam*), and penance (*Tapah*) are the duties. Therefore, the concept of abstaining from these sanctifying Vedic activities arises only from delusion. This delusion is understood to be clearly situated in *tama guṇa*, the mode of ignorance.

Verse 08

In this verse, Lord Krishna speaks of the renunciation characterized by *raja guṇa* or mode of passion. If one renounces actions out of fear of repercussions or due to inconvenience or bodily discomfort or else performs them reluctantly with minimal exertion and effort and gives up prescribed Vedic activities and obligatory duties, such renunciation is understood to be clearly situated in *raja guṇa* or mode of passion. For pain and discomfort as well their opposites, namely pleasure and comfort, are products of *raja guṇa*. Lord Krishna confirms that such *jivas* or embodied beings will acquire no benefit or reap any reward for their endeavors.

Verse 09

In this verse, Lord Krishna reveals renunciation characterized with the *sattva guṇa* or the mode of goodness. Prescribed Vedic activities performed as *kaaryam iti eva*, as a sense of duty, and *tvaktya sangam*, meaning abandoning attachment to receiving rewards for one's actions, and without any-and-all ego sense, are situated in *sattva guṇa* because they are performed solely for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. Lord Krishna describes this as the highest kind of renunciation. More often than not, the people's understanding of renunciation is very shallow, and they consider it to be only the external abandonment of activities. Such renunciation only leads to hypocrisy in which, while externally donning the robes of a renunciant, one internally contemplates upon the objects of the senses. There are many individuals, who call themselves as Holy Men, who come in this category. They left the world with the noble intention of God-realization, but because the mind was not yet detached from the objects of their senses, their renunciation did not produce the desired fruits.