

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 168: Chapter 18, Verses 34-37

(July 21 – July 27, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

यया तु धर्मकामार्थान्धृत्या धारयतेऽर्जुन ।

yayā tu dharma-kāmārthān dhṛityā dhārayate'rjuna

प्रसङ्गेन फलाकाङ्क्षी धृतिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ १८-३४ ॥

prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣhī dhṛitiḥ sā pārtha rājasī

यया स्वप्नं भयं शोकं विषादं मदमेव च ।

yayā svapnaṁ bhayaṁ śhokaṁ viṣhādaṁ madam eva
cha

न विमुञ्चति दुर्मेधा धृतिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ १८-३५ ॥

na vimuñchati durmedhā dhṛitiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।

sukhaṁ tv idānīm tri-vidhaṁ śhṛiṇu me
bharatarṣhabha

अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ १८-३६ ॥

abhyāsād ramate yatra duḥkhāntaṁ cha
nigachchhati

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।

yat tad agre viṣham iva pariṇāme 'mṛitopamam

तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ १८-३७ ॥

tat sukhaṁ sāttvikaṁ proktam ātma-buddhi-prasāda-
jam

TRANSLATION

- (34) The steadfast will by which one holds to duty, pleasures, and wealth, out of attachment and desire for rewards, is determination in the mode of passion.
- (35) That unintelligent resolve, in which one does not give up dreaming, fearing, grieving, despair, and conceit, is said to be determination in the mode of ignorance,.
- (36) And now hear from me, O Arjun, of the three kinds of happiness by the cultivation of which the embodied soul rejoices and can even reach the end of all suffering.
- (37) That which seems like poison at first, but tastes like nectar in the end, is said to be happiness in the mode of goodness. It is generated by the pure intellect that is situated in self-knowledge.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JiBOJSvT1yR2bgMVi363Wiiij9XDH9WE/view?usp=sharing>

CHAPTER 18

Commentary

Verse 34

In this verse, Lord Krishna describes the *dhriti* or determination that is influenced by *raja guna*, the mode of passion. In this type of *dhriti*, a *jiva* or embodied being is engaged in for the purpose of reaping the rewards of worldly enjoyments and material possessions. For these are the means by which one interacts in life using the mind, senses and physical body, so the rewards that are reaped are only material and temporary in nature. *Moksha* or liberation from material existence is never achieved if one is motivated for rewards for their actions. So, Lord Krishna has confirmed that activities which engage the mind, senses and body for the purpose of recompense and rewards are situated totally in *raja guna* and although may achieve *kama* (desire), *artha* (wealth), and *dharma* (duty), such activities can not bestow *moksha*.

Verse 35

Lord Krishna describes here the *dhriti* or determination that is situated in *tama guna*, the mode of ignorance. In this category of *dhriti*, a *jiva* or embodied being, due to acute lack of intelligence, is unable to abandon dreaming, fear, grief, false pride, dejection and delusion.

For example, some people are unable to discriminate between what is real and what is unreal, while some others are victims of a fear-complex. There are still others who make their life a living hell because they cling to some past disappointment and refuse to let go of it, despite observing its ruinous impact upon them. Some are inclined to fight with anyone who hurts their ego. These fools do not oppose their mind from allowing their senses to buffet hither and thither in pursuit of sense gratification. The determination based upon such stubborn clinging to unproductive thoughts and actions is in the mode of ignorance.

Verses 36 + 37:

After presenting how the three *gunas* or modes of material nature influence knowledge, action, agent, intellect and determination; Lord Krishna now elaborates upon the three types of *sukham* or happiness aspired for by every human being because all of the aforementioned factors are enacted for the sake of receiving happiness. Now the three forms of *sukham* will be explained to reveal what is to be embraced and what is to be avoided. The *sukham* by which one experiences unabated pleasure by consistent practice of devotion, meditation and adoration of the Supreme Lord Krishna or any of His authorized incarnations as revealed in Vedic scriptures, is situated in *sattva guna*, the mode of goodness. Such *sukham* is unhampered by the pangs of sense gratification and the attraction for sense objects and its temporary illusions of pleasure. Hence that which in the beginning by practice of detachment, restraint, renunciation, austerities, meditation, etc. appear to be like poison but at the end when they have been perfected are just like nectar. By meditation on the Supreme Lord Krishna and constantly focused internally on the *atma* or immortal soul one stays established in *sattva guna*. The serenity and equanimity one derives from such *sukham* is like an elixir to the purified mind arising from abandonment of desire and cessation of passion, greed and infatuation that are the by products of *raja guna*, the mode of passion and *tama guna*, the mode of ignorance.