

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 176: Chapter 18, Verses 62-65

(September 15 – September 21, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śharaṇaṁ
vraja

अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६ ॥

ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣhayiṣhyāmi mā
śhuchaḥ

इदं ते नातपस्काय नाभक्ताय कदाचन ।

idaṁ te nātapaskyāya nābhaktāya kadāchana

न चाशुश्रूषवे वाच्यं न च मां योऽभ्यसूयति ॥ १८-६७ ॥

na chāśhuśhruṣhave vāchyaṁ na cha mām yo
'bhyasūtayi

य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।

ya idaṁ paramaṁ guhyaṁ mad-bhakteṣhv
abhidhāsyati

भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ १८-६८ ॥

bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā mām evaiṣhyaty
asanśhayaḥ

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।

na cha tasmān manuṣhyeṣhu kaśhchin me priya-
krittamaḥ

भविता न च मे तस्मादन्यः प्रियतरो भुवि ॥ १८-६९ ॥

bhavitā na cha me tasmād anyāḥ priyataro bhuvi

TRANSLATION

- (66)** Abandon all *dharmas* (all forms of righteousness) and simply surrender unto me alone. I shall liberate you from all sinful reactions; do not fear.
- (67)** This instruction should never be explained to those who are not austere or to those who are not devoted. It should also not be spoken to those who are averse to listening (to spiritual topics), and especially not to those who are envious of me.
- (68)** Those, who teach this most confidential knowledge amongst my devotees, perform the greatest act of love. They will come to me without doubt.
- (69)** No human being does more loving service to me than they; nor shall there ever be anyone on this earth dearer to me.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xk-7jXdDPBZz4mMwL1RZDzzK_gO6juXt/view?usp=sharing

CHAPTER 18

Commentary

Verse 66

As stated earlier, this verse (#66) of the Shrimad Bhagavadgita is generally believed to be one of the two most important verses, the other one being the previous verse (#65). Here, Lord Krishna reveals the conclusion to the essence of all knowledge--The most confidential of all knowledge that is confidential. “*Sarva Dharmaan Parityagya*” means renouncing all conceptions of what one thinks or imagines religiosity to be. The ultimate goal of all religious and spiritual conceptions is communion with the Supreme Lord. Through *bhakti* or exclusive loving devotion alone unto the Supreme Lord with the unshakeable conviction that nothing else is required or necessary other than totally surrender to Him, one can be relieved of all sins and attain *moksha* or liberation, which the Lord personally and graciously promises here to such devotees. At the outset, this verse appears to be in conflict with His many advice and teachings to Arjuna in the earlier parts of the Shrimad Bhagavadgita. For example, the Lord initially instructed Arjuna to do *karma*, i.e. his material dharma as a warrior (verse 2.31). He next instructed Arjuna to do *karma yoga*, i.e. his material dharma with the body and spiritual dharma with the mind. The Lord again asked Arjuna to fight the war with the body and remember God with the mind (verse 8.7). This instruction of *karma yoga* constitutes the major part of the Bhagavadgita. Now in the

very end, Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna to practice *karma sanyās yoga*, i.e. renounce all *material dharma* and simply adopt *spiritual dharma*, which is love for God. He should thus fight, not because it is his duty as a warrior, but because God wants him to do so. To comprehend this instruction of Lord Krishna, we need to understand the term *dharma*. As mentioned above, there are two kinds of dharmas: (1) *material dharma*, and (2) *spiritual dharma*. These two kinds of *dharma* are based upon two different understandings of the “self.” When we identify ourselves as the body, then our *dharma* is determined in accordance with our bodily designations, obligations, duties, and norms. Hence, serving the bodily parents, fulfilling the responsibilities to society, nation, etc. are all bodily *dharma*. This is also called *apara dharma* or *material dharma*. This includes the *dharma* as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, etc. However, when we identify ourselves as the soul, we have no material designations of *varṇa* (social class) and *āśhram* (status in life). The soul’s father, mother, friend, beloved, and the resting place are all God. Hence our one and only *dharma* becomes loving devotional service to God. This is also called *para dharma* or *spiritual dharma*. Therefore, if one leaves the *material dharma* it is considered a sin due to dereliction of duty. But if one leaves *material dharma* and takes the shelter of *spiritual dharma*, it is not a sin. But then the question arises, “why did Lord Krishna not give this instruction to Arjun earlier? Why did he seem to clearly extol just the reverse in verse 5.2 when he stated *karma yoga* is superior to *karma sanyās yoga*?” Lord Krishna clearly explains this in the next verse (#67). In short, the Lord says that if one has not yet become established in love for God, and has prematurely given up one’s material duties, one will be strolling in neither of the two *dharmas*. Thus, *karm sanyās* is only for those who are qualified for it, and Lord Krishna, having acted as a Guru to Arjuna, has determined at this point that Arjuna is indeed qualified for it.

Verse 67

Having revealed the essence of Shrimad Bhagavadgita and the conclusion of all knowledge in the previous two verses, Lord Krishna gives the mandate in this verse for disseminating His divine discourse. Shrimad Bhagavadgita should never be instructed to those devoid of austerities, to those who do not follow prescribed Vedic activities and who are not on the path of devotion. Nor should one instruct those who are not humble or respectful to the spiritual preceptor and are averse to serving them. Never should it even be mentioned to those sinful miscreants who are malicious and envious of Lord Krishna, attributing His eternal spiritual form as mortal and thus blaspheme Him. For whatever they would hear about the Supreme Lord’s glories and potencies, it would only make them offensive in their attitude and actions toward Him.

Verse 68

In this verse, Lord Krishna affirms that a devotee who engages himself in disseminating the sublime, confidential knowledge and wisdom of the divine discourse of Lord Krishna in Srimad Bhagavadgita to the other devotees of the Lord, in His own words, renders the topmost devotional service to Him and without fail will attain the eternal communion with Him. So, it is established that loving devotion is what is essential to receive the Supreme Lord's grace even with the absence of austerities and such a devotee is qualified to approach the Supreme Lord based on *bhakti* alone. So, devotion is established as the only essential ingredient to attract the attention of the Supreme Lord. The understanding is that although determination and ritualistic Vedic knowledge are noteworthy and exemplary, they only bestow residence in the transitory heavenly planets and never the eternal spiritual realms.

Verse 69

In this verse, Lord Krishna reaffirms what He said in the previous verse that there has never been in the past a human being out of all humanity (approximately 400,000 human species) who was dearer to Him than the one who promulgates Srimad Bhagavadgita to His devotees nor will there ever be one dearer to Him in the future. The word *priya krittamah* means "pleases more by one's actions". In summary, among all the gifts we can give to others, the gift of *spiritual knowledge* is one of the highest, because it has the capacity to transform the recipient eternally.