

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 162: Chapter 18, Verses 10-13

(June 9 – June 15, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

na dveṣṭy akuśhalaṁ karma kuśhale nānuṣhajjate

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १८-१० ॥

tyāgī sattva-samāviṣṭo medhāvī chhinna-sanśhayaḥ

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।

na hi deha-bhṛitā śhakyam tyaktuṁ karmaṇy aśheṣataḥ

यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ १८-११ ॥

yas tu karma-phala-tyāgī sa tyāgīty abhidhīyate

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।

aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśhram cha tri-vidham karmaṇaḥ phalam

भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ १८-१२ ॥

bhavaty atyāginām pretya na tu sannyāsinām kvachit

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

pañchaitāni mahā-bāho kāraṇāni nibodha me

साङ्ख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ १८-१३ ॥

sāṅkhye kṛitānte proktāni siddhaye sarva-karmaṇām

TRANSLATION

- (10)** Those who neither avoid disagreeable work nor seek work because it is agreeable are persons of true renunciation. They are endowed with the quality of the mode of goodness and have no doubts (about the nature of work).
- (11)** For the embodied being, it is impossible to give up activities entirely. But those who relinquish the fruits of their actions are said to be truly renounced.
- (12)** The three-fold fruits of actions—pleasant, unpleasant, and mixed—accrue even after death to those who are attached to personal reward. But, for those who renounce the fruits of their actions, there are no such results in the here or hereafter.
- (13)** O Arjun, now learn from me about the five factors that have been mentioned for the accomplishment of all actions in the doctrine of *Sāṅkhya*, which explains how to stop the reactions of karmas.

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Chapter 18

Verse 10

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains that an intelligent person who is situated in the mode of *Sattva Guna* or the mode of goodness neither abhors that which is undesirable nor seeks that which is desirable. Such a one does not avoid prescribed Vedic activities because they may cause discomfort, such as predawn bathing daily in the cold of winter, nor does he ever get attached to that which gives great pleasure and comfort such as eating delectable and rich food every day. He simply does his duty under all conditions, without feeling elated when the going is good or feeling dejected when life becomes tough. The reason is that the mentality of such a one is constant, steady, and discriminative even when criticized and humiliated by others due to misunderstanding his state of equipoise endures.

Verse 11

In this verse, Lord Krishna confirms that it is impossible for any *jiva* or embodied being, whether in a gross or subtle body, to completely stop all actions. This is because there is always some activity operating for the maintenance of the subtle and physical body even if it is beyond the threshold of consciousness. In the physical body, the heart is beating, the lungs are breathing, water must be drunk, some form of nourishment must be ingested. If it is a subtle body, then sunshine must be absorbed or *prana* or energy must be assimilated.

These things are indispensable for life in a physical or subtle body. In conclusion, one who has relinquished the desire for rewards for one's actions while performing prescribed Vedic activities with *bhakti* or exclusive loving devotion to God or performing them simply as a matter of duty, is designated as situated in actual renunciation and not the mere abstainer of actions.

Verse 12

In this verse, Lord Krishna delineates the result of renunciation of the desire for rewards. There are three types of rewards that a *jiva* or embodied being accepts after death as a cumulative result of his actions (*karma*) in this as well as his past lives. They are: *anishtam* or unpleasant rewards in *naraka loka*, the hellish planets, *ishtam* or pleasant rewards in *svarga loka*, the heavenly realms, and *mishram* or mixed rewards in *Bhoomi loka*, the material earthly worlds. But these destinations are only awarded to those who have not fully engaged in renunciation. Those *jivas* or embodied beings who are full of desires, after death in their next life, get the opportunity to pursue these desires, but these limitations never apply to those situated in renunciation. The word *sannyasinam* means fully renounced and includes both those who abandon the desire for the rewards of actions as well as those who abandon all actions. The purport is that sinful activities that would propel one to hellish planets are impossible for the aspirant situated in *sattva guna*, the mode of goodness, and since whatever rewards one would receive for one's virtuous deeds have already been renounced and offered to the Supreme Lord, none of the threefold results of actions would have any effect or influence on him.

Verse 13

In Verse 12 above, Lord Krishna clarified that those who perform actions motivated by desire are reincarnated in either the heavenly, hellish or human worlds; but those who have renounced the desire for rewards are not subject to this *karma* or reactions to actions. Now, the question may arise as to how is it possible that one performing actions derives no reactions from one's activities. Apprehending such a doubt, Lord Krishna explains here that for one who has given up attachment to the reward of actions and who is free from the ego sense of I and mine, there is no connection to reactions from any action. This he elaborates in this verse and the next four. In order to establish the fact that egoism and non-egoism are the cause of actions influenced by indiscrimination and discrimination, Lord Krishna reveals the five factors which jointly contribute to the accomplishment of all actions. These five factors must be understood by the aspirants for *moksha* or liberation from material existence in order to achieve the discriminative knowledge that dissolves the sense of egoism while performing actions. These five factors to be presented will remove any doubt regarding the liberating or binding effects of actions. The word *sankhya* means rational, analytical reasoning and refers to the *sankhya philosophy* established by Lord Krishna's

incarnation of Kapila Deva. The word *kritante* means deriving the perfect conclusion of the categorical and essential nature of all things based upon the tenets, ordinances and injunctions of the Vedic scriptures. The five causes Lord Krishna will reveal are component factors combining to manifest individual acts. The word *nibodha*, meaning comprehend, denotes that they must be contemplated and reflected upon.