

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 167: Chapter 18, Verses 30-33

(July 14 – July 20, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्याकार्ये भयाभये ।

pravṛttiṁ cha nivṛttiṁ cha kāryākārye bhayābhaye

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ १८-३० ॥

bandham mokṣam cha yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī

यया धर्ममधर्मं च कार्यं चाकार्यमेव च ।

yayā dharmam adharmaṁ cha kāryam chākāryam eva cha

अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ १८-३१ ॥

ayathāvat prajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī

अधर्मं धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।

adharmaṁ dharmam iti yā manyate tamasāvṛtā

सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ १८-३२ ॥

sarvārthān viparītānśh cha buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī

धृत्या यया धारयते मनःप्राणेन्द्रियक्रियाः ।

dhṛityā yayā dhārayate manaḥ-prāṇendriya-kriyāḥ

योगेनाव्यभिचारिण्या धृतिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ १८-३३ ॥

yogenāvyabhichāriṇyā dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī

TRANSLATION

- (30) The intellect is said to be in the mode of goodness, O Parth, when it understands what is proper action and what is improper action, what is duty and what is non-duty, what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, what is binding and what is liberating.
- (31) The intellect is considered in the mode of passion when it is confused between righteousness and unrighteousness, and cannot distinguish between right and wrong conduct.
- (32) That intellect which is shrouded in darkness, imagining irreligion to be religion, and everything contrary to what they are, is of the nature of ignorance.
- (33) The steadfast will that is developed through Yoga, and which sustains the activities of the mind, the life-airs, and the senses, is said to be determination in the mode of goodness.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SI4rttOsW7x6Z7iLkcQY_74NeXJltVHD/view?usp=sharing

CHAPTER 18

Commentary

Verse 30

In this verse, Lord Krishna speaks about the three types of intellect due to the influence of the three *gunas* or modes of material nature. He explains that those whose *buddhi* or intellect is situated in *sattva guna*, the mode of goodness, possess the understanding that 1) *pravarttim* is actions performed under the auspices of *dharma* or righteousness, 2) *nivrittim* is refraining from actions opposed to *dharma*, 3) *karya-akarya* is knowing what is appropriate according to time, place and circumstance whether adhering to *pravrittim* or *nivrittim*, 4) *bhaya-abhaya* is fear stemming from not adhering to the injunctions of the Vedic scriptures and fearlessness is by observing the ordinances of the Vedic scriptures, 5) *bandham* is *samsara* or enslavement in the perpetual cycle of birth and death, and 6) *moksha* is liberation from material existence and release from *samsara*.

Verse 31

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains that the *buddhi* or intellect of those who are situated in *raja guna*, the mode of passion, becomes confused about what is righteousness (*Dharma*) and what is unrighteousness (*Adharma*). Also, they have no understanding of what should

be done (*Karya*) and what should not be done (*Akarya*), according to time, place and circumstance. For example, there are some people who are very competent in their profession, and they highly succeed in their career but are utter failures on the home front because their attachments prevent them from proper perception and conduct. Their intellect becomes confused between the important and the trivial, the permanent and the transient, the valuable and the insignificant.

Verse 32

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains that the *buddhi* or intellect that is enveloped and warped by distortion is situated in *tama guna* or the mode of ignorance. The one with this category of intellect considers the highest reality as an insignificant entity, and who assesses the Supreme absolute truth to be lower than an abstract, impersonal conception, and believes that the conditioned *jiva* to be equal to the Supreme Lord. Such a person also imagines the Supreme Lord, who overflows with all divine qualities, attributes and potencies, to be on the same platform as all other demigods, and who negates the eternal and imperishable Vedic scriptures for some impermanent, temporal religious texts applicable for only limited time. Such an individual cannot discern what are real and unreal in this world, and instead, believes what is unreal as real. In the *tāmasic* intellect, the faculty of judgment and the ability for logical reasoning become lost.

Verse 33

Lord Krishna now moves on to describe the three kinds of *Dhṛiti* or determination. *Dhṛiti* is the inner strength of our mind and intellect to persevere on our path despite difficulties and obstacles. *Dhṛiti* is what keeps our vision focused on the goal, and mobilizes the latent powers of the body, mind, and intellect to overcome insurmountable impediments on the journey. Although consciousness has many functions such as desire and aversion, it is *buddhi* or intellect and *dhṛiti* or determination, which lead to righteousness and happiness, whereas their absence leads to unrighteousness and despair. Of the various functions of the consciousness, *buddhi* and *dhṛiti* are the chief ones that determine the other functions and so the influence of the three *gunas* or modes of material nature have been specifically explained in this light by Lord Krishna. The threefold influence of the three *gunas* or the modes of material nature beginning with *sattva guna* or the mode of goodness on *dhṛiti* or determination is illustrated in this verse. It specifically describes the unwavering concentration upon the goal (*dhṛiti* or determination) to be achieved with the aid of *yoga* through meditation (*dhyāna*) and breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*) by which the senses are brought under complete control and directed to focus fully upon the goal. Such *dhṛiti* possessed by a *jiva* or embodied being is situated in *sattva guna*.