

## Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 26: Chapter 3, Verses 12-17

(October 24 –October 30, 2018)

*Please Note: Click Anywhere On The Dark Area Below to Listen to The Above Verses:*

### ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

### TRANSLITERATION

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।

*iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ  
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhukte stena eva saḥ*

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ ३-१२ ॥

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

*yajña-śiṣṭāśinaḥ santo mucyante sarva-kilbiṣaiḥ  
bhujate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātma-kāraṇāt*

भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ ३-१३ ॥

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḥ anna-sambhavaḥ  
yajñād bhavati parjanyaḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ ३-१४ ॥

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।

*karma brahmodbhavam vidhi brahmākṣara-samudbhavam  
tasmāt sarva-gataḥ brahma nityaḥ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam*

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ ३-१५ ॥

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।

*evaṁ pravartitaḥ cakram nānuvartayatīha yaḥ  
aghāyur indriyārāmo moghaḥ pārtha sa jīvati*

अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ ३-१६ ॥

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

*yaś tv ātma-ratir eva syād ātma-tṛptaś ca mānavaḥ  
ātmany eva ca santuṣṭaś tasya kāryaḥ na vidyate*

आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ ३-१७ ॥

## TRANSLATION

- (12)** The celestial gods, being satisfied by the performance of sacrifice, will grant you all the desired necessities of life. But those who enjoy what is given to them, without making offerings in return, are verily thieves.
- (13)** The spiritually-minded, who eat food that is first offered in sacrifice, are released from all kinds of sin. Others, who cook food for their own enjoyment, verily eat only sin.
- (14)** All living beings subsist on food, and food is produced by rains. Rains come from the performance of sacrifice, and sacrifice is produced by the performance of prescribed duties.
- (15)** The duties for human beings are described in the Vedas, and the Vedas are manifested by God himself. Therefore, the all-pervading Lord is eternally present in acts of sacrifice.
- (16)** O Parth, those who do not accept their responsibility in the cycle of sacrifice established by the Vedas are sinful. They live only for the delight of their senses; indeed their lives are in vain.
- (17)** But those who rejoice in the self, who are illumined and fully satisfied in the self, for them, there is no duty.

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### Commentary:

#### Verse 12:

As office holders of God to manage various processes of the universe, the celestial deities (*devatās*) provide us with rain, wind, crops, vegetation, etc. We human beings are indebted to them for all that we receive from them. The *devatās* perform their duty, and expect us to perform our duty in the proper consciousness too. Since these celestial gods are all servants of the Supreme Lord, they become pleased when someone performs a sacrifice for Him, and in turn assist such a soul by creating favorable material conditions. Thus, it is said that when we strongly resolve to serve God, the universe begins to cooperate with us. However, if we begin looking upon the gifts of nature, not as means of serving the Lord but as objects of our own enjoyment, Lord Krishna calls it a thieving mentality. Often people ask the question, "I lead a virtuous life; I do not harm anyone, nor do I steal anything. But I do not believe in worshipping God, nor do I believe in Him. Am I doing anything wrong?" This question is answered in the above verse. Such persons may not be doing anything wrong in the eyes of humans, but they are thieves in the eyes of God. The world that we live in was made by God, and everything in it belongs to Him. If we utilize His creation for our pleasure, without acknowledging His dominion over it, from the divine perspective we are certainly committing theft.

#### Verse 13:

In traditional Hindu beliefs and customs, based on Vedic directives, food is cooked with the consciousness that the meal is for the pleasure of God. A portion of the food items is then offered to God in a plate while a verbal or mental prayer is made to the Lord to accept and bless the food. After the offering, the food in the plate is considered as *prasād* (grace of God). All the food in the

plate and the pots is then accepted as God's grace and eaten in that consciousness. Most other religious traditions follow similar customs. Lord Krishna states in this verse that eating *prasād* (food that is first offered as sacrifice to God) releases one from sin, while those who eat food without offering commit sin. The word *agham* meaning sin denotes there will be grave consequences for such sins. Ignorant of the path to *atma-tattva* or self realization of the soul, such degraded persons perpetually eat sinful food insuring a hellish destination in their next life.

#### **Verse 14:**

Lord Krishna describes here the cycle of nature. Rain begets food. From food, semen and eggs are created through a series of biochemical processes. The union of semen with eggs produces the human body. Human beings perform sacrifices (*yajñas*), which please the celestial bodies, who then cause rains, and so the cycle repeats itself. Lord Krishna thus points out the virtues of performing *yajña* or sacrifice according to the Vedic injunctions as well as the demerits incurred by ignoring the Vedic prohibitions and failing to perform *yajña*. He points out the folly of non-performance of sacrifice (*yajña*) in verses 14, 15 and 16 beginning *annad bhavanti* meaning food strengthens living beings.

#### **Verse 15:**

According to Brahadaranyaka Upanishad (4.5.11; v9) "*asya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitametadyad ṛigvedoyajurvedaḥ sāmavedo 'thavaṅgirasah*", all four Vedas—Ṛig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, Atharva Veda—emanated from the breath of the Supreme Divine Personality. In these eternal Vedas, the duties of humans have been laid down by God himself. These duties have been planned in such a way that through their performance materially engrossed persons may gradually learn to control their desires and slowly elevate themselves from the mode of ignorance to the mode of passion, and from the mode of passion to the mode of goodness. These duties are enjoined to be dedicated to Him as sacrifice (*yajña*). So, duties consecrated as sacrifice to God verily become godly, of the nature of God, and non-different from Him.

#### **Verse 16:**

The cycle of *yajña* →rain→ food →genetic material →human body → *yajña* was set into motion by the Supreme Lord Himself at the beginning of creation. This cycle is never ending and was designed to exist perpetually providing all necessities for the embodied beings allowing them to prosper and flourish. All human beings have the right to perform spiritual activities according to qualification; but those who instead choose to shun this responsibility and disrespect all of creation which provides all necessities, by not performing *yajña* has verily disconnected themselves from the spiritual reality that the Supreme Lord Himself established for the benefit of all living beings. Thus day by day such a living entity is increasing their sins by being deluded into thinking they are independent and do not need to satisfy the guest, the ancestors, the demigods and the Supreme Brahman. Thus by daily feeding one's body which is not consecrated by being offered in *yajña* that unfortunate person life is in vain. The purport is that even death is better than living for such a person as this.

**Verse 17:**

In this verse, Lord Krishna declares that the ones who have reached the stage of self-realization do not need to perform these duties prescribed in the Vedas. This is because they no longer possess any material desires and are self-satisfied. Those who are enlightened realize that the self (the soul or the Atman) is not material in nature, but divine, and imperishable. The perishable objects of the world can never fulfill the thirst of the imperishable soul, and therefore, the self-illuminated souls learn to unite their consciousness with God and experience His infinite bliss within them. The *karma* (duties) prescribed for the materially conditioned souls are no longer applicable to such enlightened souls because they have already attained the ultimate goal of all such *karma*. For such liberated souls, there is no need to follow the rules of the Vedas any longer because the goal of the Vedas is only to help unite the soul (the Atman) with God (the Paramaatman, the Super Soul). Once the soul becomes God-realized, the rules of the Vedas no longer apply.