

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 31: Chapter 3, Verses 41-43

(November 28 –December 4, 2018)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

*tasmāt tvam indriyāṅy ādau niyamyā bharatarṣabha
pāpmānaṁ prajāhi hy enaṁ jñāna- vijñāna-nāśanam*

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ ३-४१ ॥

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

*indriyāṅi parāṅy āhur indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ*

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ ३-४२ ॥

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।

*evam buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā saṁstabhyātmanā
jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam*

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ३-४३ ॥

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु

Om, Tatsaditi Shrimadbhagavadgītasu Upaniṣatsu

ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे

Brahmavidyayam Yogashastre Shrikrishnarjuna Samvade

कर्मयोगो नाम तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥ ३ ॥

Karmayogo Naama Dwadashodhyayah || 3 ||

TRANSLATION

- (41)** Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, in the very beginning bring the senses under control and slay this enemy called desire, which is the embodiment of sin and destroys knowledge and realization.
- (42)** The senses are superior to the gross body, and superior to the senses is the mind. Beyond the mind is the intellect, and even beyond the intellect is the soul.
- (43)** Thus knowing the soul to be superior to the material intellect, O mighty armed one, subdue senses, mind, and intellect by self-realization (by strength of the soul), and conquer this formidable enemy called lust.

(End) Thus, in the Holy Book of Bhagavadgīta, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the colloquy between Lord Shri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the 3rd Chapter called, "Karma Yoga".

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xrr8WI76N050nucP-2VEaz_X7HthYJSJ

Commentary:

Verse 41:

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna that *Kama* (lust) is the root cause of all evils, causing impediments to consciousness (self-realization) and true knowledge, and therefore, must be overcome to attain the eternal peace. To that end, one must withdraw the senses away from the sense objects at the very beginning before being deluded by them.

Verse 42:

Here Lord Krishna explains the way to control one's senses from the sense objects. He invokes the use of different levels of superiority amongst the instruments that have been naturally provided to us in order to control senses. He says that the body is made of gross matter; superior to it are the five knowledge-bearing senses (which grasp the perceptions of taste, touch, sight, smell, and sound); beyond the senses is the mind; superior to the mind is the intellect, with its ability to discriminate; but even beyond the intellect is the divine soul. So, the control of senses can be achieved by using the strength of either the resolute mind (which is superior to senses), intellect (which is superior to mind), or soul (which is even superior to both mind and intellect). If we think of ourselves as the soul and our only purpose is happiness of the soul, then it becomes much easier to renounce all material desires.

Verse 43:

In conclusion, Lord Krishna reiterates that one should try one's best to destroy the powerful enemy known as *kama* or lust. Knowing that lust is the mightiest and formidable enemy, one must slay it by withdrawing the senses from its objects while keeping the mind steady and the intellect resolute. However, if the soul, which is superior to both mind and intellect, wakes up to its higher nature and decides to take a proactive role, it can maneuver the intellect in the proper direction. The intellect will then govern the lower self—the mind and the senses. In this way, the higher self (soul) can be used to control the lower self (senses, mind, and, intellect). This is beautifully explained in the Kaṭha Upaniṣhad, which we studied last year:

*ātmānagvaṃ rathinaṃ viddhi śharīraṃ rathameva tu
buddhiṃ tu sārathin viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva cha
indriyāṇi hayānāhurviṣhayānsteṣhu gocharān
ātmendriyamanoyuktaṃ bhoktetyāhurmanīṣhiṇaḥ (1.3.3-4) [v21]*

The Upaniṣhad uses the model of a chariot, which has five horses pulling it; the horses have reins in their mouths, which are in the hands of a charioteer; a passenger is sitting at the back of the chariot. Ideally, the passenger should instruct the charioteer, who should then control the reins and guide the horses in the proper direction. However, in this case, the passenger has gone to sleep, and so the horses are holding sway.

In this analogy, the chariot is the body, the horses are the five senses, the reins in the mouth of the horses is the mind, the charioteer is the intellect, and the passenger seated behind is the soul residing in the body. The senses (horses) desire pleasurable things. The mind (reins) is not exercising restraint on the senses (horses). The intellect (charioteer) submits to the pull of the reins (mind). So in the materially bound state, the bewildered soul does not direct the intellect in the proper direction. Thus, the senses decide the direction where the chariot will go. The soul experiences the pleasures of the senses vicariously, but these do not satisfy it. Seated on this chariot, the soul (passenger) is moving around in this material world since eternity.

This concludes the 3rd Chapter of Bhagavadgita, entitled “Karma Yoga”.