

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 46: Chapter 5, Verses 16-20

(March 20 –March 26, 2019)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।

*jñānena tu tad ajñānam yeṣhām nāshitam ātmanaḥ
teṣhām āditya-vaj jñānam prakāśhayati tat param*

तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ ५-१६ ॥

*tad-buddhayas tad-ātmānas tan-niṣṭhās tat-
parāyaṇāḥ*

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

*gachchhantya punar-āvṛittim jñāna-nirdhūta-
kalmaṣhāḥ*

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥ ५-१७ ॥

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।

*vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śhuni chaiva śhva-pāke cha paṇḍitāḥ sama-
darśhinaḥ*

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ ५-१८ ॥

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।

*ihai va tair jitaḥ sargo yeṣhām sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ
nirdoṣham hi samaṁ brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te
sthitāḥ*

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ ५-१९ ॥

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।

*na prahṛishyeta priyam prāpya nodvijeta prāpya
chāpriyam*

स्थिरबुद्धिरसम्मूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ ५-२० ॥

*sthira-buddhir asammūḍho brahma-vid brahmaṇi
sthitāḥ*

TRANSLATION

- (16)** But for those, in whom this ignorance of the self is destroyed by divine knowledge, that knowledge reveals the Supreme Entity, just as the sun illuminates everything in daytime.
- (17)** Those whose intellect is fixed in God, who are wholly absorbed in God, with firm faith in Him as the supreme goal, such persons quickly reach the state from which there is no return, their sins having been dispelled by the light of knowledge.
- (18)** The truly learned, with the eyes of divine knowledge, see with equal vision a Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and a dog-eater.
- (19)** Those whose minds are established in equality of vision conquer the cycle of birth and death in this very life. They possess the flawless qualities of God, and are therefore seated in the Absolute Truth.
- (20)** Established in God, having a firm understanding of divine knowledge and not hampered by delusion, they neither rejoice in getting something pleasant nor grieve on experiencing the unpleasant.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1tFHhy9OADKhlmZXT3IzYId-IcxckrfpP>

Chapter 5

Verse 16:

In this verse, Lord Krishna states that persons whose spiritual knowledge has become awakened do not become deluded in the material existence. They are able to discriminate between the mundane material knowledge and the divine spiritual knowledge of the *atma* (soul or self) as part of the *Paramaatma* (the Supersoul or the Supreme). This spiritual knowledge destroys all ignorance and manifests illumination of the Supreme Lord within the heart of a human being just as the sun destroys darkness and illuminates all things. Despite the combined light of the full moon and all the visible stars in a cloudless sky, the night does not fully disappear. But the moment the sun rises, the night makes a hasty exit. The light of the sun is such that the darkness cannot remain before it. The light of God's knowledge has a similar effect in dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Darkness is responsible for creating illusions. In the darkness of ignorance, we identify ourselves with the body, and consider ourselves to be the doers and enjoyers of our actions. When the light of God's knowledge begins shining brightly, the illusion beats a hasty retreat, and the soul wakes up to its true spiritual identity, even while it lives in the city of nine gates.

Verse 17:

Here Lord Krishna talks about those whose intellect is directed towards God (*Tadbuddhayaḥ*), whose soul is totally absorbed in God (*Tadātmanaḥ*), whose faith in God

is fixed and their conviction is unwavering and steady (*Tanniṣṭhāḥ*), and who strive for God as the supreme goal and the only refuge (*Tatparāyaṇaḥ*). Such persons will have their darkness of ignorance and the material bondage dispelled by the light of spiritual knowledge, their sins dissolved by self-realization (*Atma Tattva*), and they quickly achieve the state of total liberation (*Moksha*) to attain the Supreme Lord.

Verse 18:

Here Lord Krishna makes a clear distinction between the mundane physical vision versus the divine spiritual vision. In the mundane physical vision, a Brahmin, who performs worship ceremonies, is looked upon with great respect, while a dog-eater is frowned upon as an outcaste; a cow is milked for human consumption, but not a dog; an elephant is used for ceremonial parades, but none of the other animals are. From the physical perspective, these species are sharp contrasts in the spectrum of life on our planet. However, a truly learned person endowed with spiritual knowledge sees them all as eternal souls, and hence views them with an equal eye. Lord Krishna further adds that the divine knowledge is always accompanied by a sense of humility (*Vinaya Vidyā Sampanne*), while shallow bookish knowledge is accompanied with only the false pride of scholarship.

Verse 19:

In this verse, Lord Krishna states that we cannot ever achieve the equality of vision toward all living beings, as described in the previous verse, if we continue to think of ourselves as the body because we will experience continued desires and aversions for bodily pleasures and discomforts. Saints rise above bodily consciousness and absorb their minds in God, giving up all worldly attachments. When one's mind is situated in this divine consciousness, attachment to bodily pleasures and pains get transcended, and one reaches a state of equanimity. This equipoise that comes through the sacrifice of selfish bodily desires makes one Godlike in demeanor. It should be noted here that equality in vision also means to rise beyond likes and dislikes, happiness and misery, pleasure and pain. Shree Krishna says that those who are able to do so transcend the *samsara* of repeated birth and death.

Verse 20:

This verse firmly establishes the essence of the earlier four verses, *i.e.*, the cause of triumph over *samsara* or the perpetual cycle of birth and death is absolute equanimity of perception that the eternal soul is equally situated in all naturally created beings. One who is also equipoised regarding the dualities and not elated by obtaining something pleasant thinking how lucky am I, nor dejected by receiving something unpleasant thinking how unfortunate am I. Such a person endowed with firm resolution reflects that sentiment: I will steadfastly cross over the ocean of *samsara* through the knowledge of *atma* or self-realization of the soul. Such a person is free from all doubts and infatuation with delusion which is merely a tendency of the mind. Such a person becomes a knower of the *Brahman* or *Paramaatman* or the Ultimate Truth of the Universe. Such a person lives one's life immersed in the *atma* or soul which is of the same absolute nature of the *Paramaatman* (*The Supersoul or the Brahman*).

