

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 158: Chapter 17, Verses 24-28

(May 12 – May 18, 2021)

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तस्मादोमित्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।
प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ १७-२४ ॥
तदित्यनभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।
दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ १७-२५ ॥
सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ १७-२६ ॥
यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।
कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ १७-२७ ॥
अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेष्य नो इह ॥ १७-२८ ॥
ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे
श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगो नाम सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥ १७ ॥

TRANSLITERATION

tasmād om ity udāhṛitya yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
pravartante vidhānoktāḥ satataṁ brahma-vādinām
tad ity anabhisandhāya phalaṁ yajña-tapaḥ-kriyāḥ
dāna-kriyāśh cha vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣha-kāṅkṣhibhiḥ
sad-bhāve sādhu-bhāve cha sad ity etat prayujyate
praśhaste karmaṇi tathā sach-chhabdaḥ pārtha yujyate
yajñe tapasi dāne cha sthitiḥ sad iti chochyate
karma chaiva tad-arthīyam sad ity evābhidhīyate
aśhraddhayā hutaṁ dattaṁ tapas taptaṁ kṛitaṁ cha yat
asad ity uchyate pārtha na cha tat pretya no iha
om tatsaditi shrimadbhagavadgitasu upanishatsu
brahmavidyayaam yogashaastre
shrikrishnaarjunasamvaade
shraddhatrayavibhaagayogo naama
saptadashodhyaayah

TRANSLATION

- (24) Therefore, when performing acts of sacrifice, offering charity, or undertaking penance, expounders of the Vedas always begin by uttering “Om”, according to the ordinances of Vedic injunctions.
- (25) Persons who do not desire fruitive rewards, but seek liberation from material entanglements, utter the word “Tat” along with acts of austerity, sacrifice, and charity.
- (26) The word “Sat” means eternal existence and goodness. O Arjun, it is also used to describe an auspicious action. Being established in the performance of sacrifice, penance, and charity, is also described by the word “Sat.” And so, any act for such purposes is named “Sat.”
- (27) +
- (28) O son of Pritha (Arjun), whatever acts of sacrifice, charity or penance are performed without faith, are termed as “Asat.” They are useless both in this world and the next.

Thus, in the Holy Book of Bhagavadgita, one of the Upanishads, in the Science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Art of Self-Knowledge, in the Conversation between Lord Shri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the 17th Chapter called “Shraddhatrayavibhaaga Yoga”.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bUiGzv-V29bMd3lj1olqqpQthghQ_c9n/view?usp=sharing

Chapter 17

Verse 24

In this verse, Lord Krishna elaborates on the metaphysics of the words OM TAT SAT and how they are interrelated. The *brahma-vadinam* are those who follow the injunctions and ordinances of the Vedic scriptures. *Yajna* or propitiation and worship to the Supreme Lord is performed exclusively by these individuals (normally, the priests or Brahmins). The recitation of OM TAT SAT at the commencement of all Vedic rites insures success. In order to delineate the proper actions involved with each of the above three words for achieving the desired goal, Lord Krishna begins with OM explaining that it is a name for the *Brahman* and is a potency of the Supreme Lord as it is connected to the prime source of all the Vedic scriptures. Therefore, by the vibration of the transcendental *pranava* OM at the commencement of any prescribed Vedic activity without any pause or digression stabilizes the continuity and connection insuring successful accomplishment of *yajna* or propitiation and worship by Brahmins, *tapah* or austerities by the *Kshatriyas* or royal warrior class and *daanam* or charity by the *Vaishyas* or the merchant class.

Verse 25

In this verse, Lord Krishna describes the ontology of uttering the word TAT. To perform prescribed Vedic activities without any desire for rewards is known as TAT. Such followers

of the Vedic scriptures perform all activities, such as *yajna* or propitiation and worship to the Supreme Lord (normally by the *Brahmins*), *tapah* or austerities (normally by the *Kshatriyas* or the warrior class) and *daanam* or charity (normally by the *Vaishyas* or the merchant class, for the Supreme Lord solely out of devotion or as a matter of duty with no expectation of any material rewards in return. The *Vishnu Sahasranaama* confirms that *sah*, *vah*, *kah*, *klim*, and *tat* denote the Supreme Absolute. So, the metaphysics of the word TAT has been demonstrated to signify its connection to transcendental and eternal activities which independently bestow *moksha* or freedom from material existence and promotion to the eternal spiritual realms.

Verses 26 + 27

In these two verses, Lord Krishna glorifies the auspiciousness of the word SAT. SAT is the sound vibration representing the *Brahman* or the spiritual substratum pervading all existence and exemplifies eternal goodness and the purity of creation. SAT signifies any Vedic rite enjoined to be performed under the ordinances and injunctions of the Vedic scriptures. The sound of SAT vibrates in conjunction with that of OM and TAT. Steadiness and concentration in *yajnas* or propitiation and worship is also deemed as SAT. All activities directly performed for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord such as collection of articles for offering like ghee or clarified butter from a cow, sweeping and cleaning the temple of the Supreme Lord, singing devotional songs in glorification of the Supreme Lord, making flower garlands for Lord Krishna or any authorized incarnation and expansion as revealed in Vedic scriptures, etc. All these direct activities are deemed as SAT. Even indirect activities that assist in accomplishing the direct activities, such as establishing flower gardens and agricultural fields, harvesting fruits, rice and grains, acquiring wealth to be donated to the worthy devotees of the Supreme Lord, are also deemed to be SAT. Therefore, since OM TAT SAT are transcendental nomenclatures connected to the Supreme Lord, and are eternally auspicious, they are recited at all Vedic rites by the duly initiated Brahmins. The Rig Veda confirms that *yajnas* that are performed for the exclusive satisfaction of the Supreme Lord without the slightest trace for expectation of rewards are designated OM TAT SAT. The Vedas confirm that the potency of vibrating these three divine sounds OM TAT SAT perfects any defects, insures success and pleases the Supreme Lord to grant communion with Him.

Verse 28

In this verse, Lord Krishna emphasizes the paramount importance of undertaking all Vedic activities with *shraddha* or resolute faith. The Lord condemns offering propitiation and worship, executing austerities, and giving charity, without requisite faith in the activity performed. All activities performed without faith give no results in the present life or the next, and instead, leads to the blemish and ill repute of ASAT, the very antithesis of SAT.