

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 173: Chapter 18, Verses 54-57

(August 25 – August 31, 2021)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śhochati na kāṅkṣati

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ १८-५४ ॥

samaḥ sarveṣhu bhūteṣhu mad-bhaktim labhate parām

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaśh chāsmi tattvataḥ

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ १८-५५ ॥

tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśhate tad-anantaram

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्गपाश्रयः ।

sarva-karmāṅy api sadā kurvāṅo mad-vyapāśhrayaḥ

मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥ १८-५६ ॥

mat-prasādād avāpnoti śhāśhvataṁ padam avyayam

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।

chetasā sarva-karmāṅi mayi sannasya mat paraḥ

बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥ १८-५७ ॥

buddhi-yogam upāśhritya mach-chittaḥ satataṁ bhava

TRANSLATION

- (54)** One situated in the transcendental *Brahman* realization becomes mentally serene, neither grieving nor desiring. Being equitably disposed toward all living beings, such a yogi attains supreme devotion unto me.
- (55)** Only by loving devotion to me does one come to know who I am in truth. Then, having come to know me, my devotee enters into full consciousness of me.
- (56)** My devotees, though performing all kinds of actions, take full refuge in me. By my grace, they attain the eternal and imperishable abode.
- (57)** Dedicate your every activity to me, making me your supreme goal. Taking shelter of the Yog of the intellect, keep your consciousness absorbed in me always.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UJy3Uv4oNcM6Gyxmj62GFpl16DBkblIR/view?usp=sharing>

CHAPTER 18

Commentary

Verse 54

In this verse, Lord Krishna concludes his description of the stage of Perfection. He expounds upon the characteristics of one who has become qualified for realizing the state of the *Brahman* or spiritual substratum pervading all existence. Such a person is the one who has experienced the wisdom derived from the manifestation of pure knowledge and is of cheerful mind without any desire for sense objects, who neither grieves what is lost or craves for what is unachieved, who due to inner satisfaction resulting from perception of the *atma* or immortal soul, regards a clod of earth, a stone and a lump of gold as all the same and looks at all *jivas* or embodied beings with the same equanimity. Such a one is not a friend to those who praise and honor him, nor an enemy to those who criticize and ridicule him. Such one attains the Supreme state known as *bhakti* or exclusive loving devotion unto the Supreme Lord. *Bhakti* is the supreme perfection of all knowledge. It is to be noted here that Lord Krishna states that even after having attained the highest realization of *jñāna*, one indeed develops *parā bhakti* (Divine Love). This statement refutes the general notion that *bhakti* is only for the purpose of purifying one's heart and is an intermediate step toward *jñāna* that ultimately leads to the realization of *Brahman*. However, the veracity of Lord Krishna's statement is confirmed by many Hindu scriptures, including the Vedas,

Upanishads, and Shrimad Bhagavatam. Even those who are perfected souls, established in self-knowledge, and are liberated from material bonds, desire to possess *bhakti* toward God. The super-excellent qualities of God are such that they attract even the liberated souls.

There are many examples of renowned *jñānīs* who had attained self-knowledge and were situated in the realization of the formless Brahman, before they got drawn toward *bhakti* when they got a glimpse of the transcendental divine qualities of God. These *jñānīs* include, (a) Sanat Kumar, Sanatan Kumar, Sanak Kumar, and Sanandan Kumar, the four sons of Brahma in *Satya Yuga*, (b) King Janak, the father of Sita, the cohort of Lord Rama in *Treta Yuga*, (c) Shukadev, the son of Sage Ved Vyas in *Dwapara Yuga*, and (d) Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya in *Kali Yuga*.

Verse 55

In this verse, Lord Krishna reiterates that the mystery of His true personal form, virtues, pastimes, abode, and associates can only be comprehended through exclusive loving devotion or *Bhakti* toward Him even after reaching the state of perfection, as described in the previous verse. Although a *jñānī* will also have realized God, but it would only be as the *nirguṇa* (quality-less), *nirviśeṣha* (attribute-less), and *nirākār* (formless) Brahman. He would still have no realization of the true, personal form of God. The secret of that personal form can be revealed through nothing but pure loving devotion (*Bhakti*) that opens the door to the impossible and makes way for the inaccessible. Lord Krishna is bound by the love and devotion of His devotees. *Bhakti* is superior to everything and is the infallible means of attaining eternal communion with Him. Only by *Bhakti* is it possible to comprehend the reality of Lord Krishna as He is, who He is and what He is in reality. Free from doubts, false knowledge and illusion, and by understanding His unlimited divine attributes and His endless divine qualities, one becomes blissfully attached to Him. Such a devotee is always with Him and never away from Him. Lord Krishna being completely subdued by fervent love and devotion never leaves the presence of such a devotee nor does the devotee ever leave Lord Krishna's presence. They are never apart from each other. This has been confirmed in chapter six, verse 30 which states: One who sees the Supreme Lord in everything and sees everything in the Supreme Lord is never separated from Him.

Verse 56

In here, the Supreme Lord Krishna concludes the topic of communion with Him or taking the full refuge in Him even while routinely performing the prescribed Vedic activities. When such activities are performed selflessly as a natural duty without any egoistic conceptions or any desire for rewards, while taking sole refuge in the Supreme Lord Krishna as the only goal to be attained and the only reward to be sought after, such devotees will receive His grace and will attain the immutable, imperishable, eternal communion with Him.

Verse 57

In this verse, Lord Krishna confirms that dedicating all efforts and actions unto the Supreme Lord with devotion, considering Him as the sole goal and ultimate reward, constitutes the essence of consciousness. Lord Krishna uses the phrase “*Buddhi Yoga*” to explain this fact. *Yoga* means “union,” and *buddhi yoga* means “having the intellect united with God.” This union of the intellect occurs when it is firmly convinced that everything in existence has emanated from God, is connected to Him, and is meant for His sole satisfaction. Within our body is the subtle *antaḥ karaṇ* or the etheric heart. It has four aspects to it. When it creates thoughts, we call it *mana*, or mind. When it analyses and decides, we call it *buddhi* or the intellect. When it gets attached to an object or person, we call it *chitta*. When it identifies with the attributes of the body and becomes proud, we call it *ahankār* or ego. In this internal body machinery, the position of *buddhi* or the intellect is dominant. It makes decision, while *mana* or the mind desires in accordance with those decisions, and *chitta* or the consciousness gets attached to the objects of affection. For example, if the intellect decides that security is the most important thing in the world, then the mind always yearns for security in life. As human beings, our intellect possesses the ability to control the mind. Thus, we must cultivate the intellect with proper knowledge and use it to guide the mind in the proper direction. This is what Lord Krishna means by *buddhi yoga*: developing a resolute decision of the intellect that all work and all things are meant for the pleasure of God. For such a person of resolute intellect, the *chitta* easily gets attached to God.