

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 30: Chapter 3, Verses 36-40

(November 21 –November 27, 2018)

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

ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

अर्जुन उवाच ।

arjuna uvāca

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

*atha kena prayukto 'yam pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ
anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva ni yojitaḥ*

अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्ण्येय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ ३-३६ ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

śrī bhagavān uvāca

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

*kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam*

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ३-३७ ॥

*dhūmenāvriyate vahnir yathādarśo malena ca
yatholbenāvṛto garbhas tathā tenedam āvṛtam*

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

*āvṛtaṁ jñānam etena jñānino nitya-vairiṇā
kāma-rūpeṇa kaunteya duṣpūreṇānalena ca*

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३-३८ ॥

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।

कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ ३-३९ ॥

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।

एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ३-४० ॥

*indriyāṇi mano buddhir asyādhiṣṭhānam ucyate
etair vimohayaty eṣa jñānam āvṛtya dehinam*

TRANSLATION

- (36)** Arjun asked: Why is a person impelled to commit sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if by force, O descendent of Vrishni (Krishna)?
- (37)** The Supreme Lord said: It is lust alone, which is born of contact with the mode of passion, and later transformed into anger. Know this as the sinful, all-devouring enemy in the world.
- (38)** Just as a fire is covered by smoke, a mirror is masked by dust, and an embryo is concealed by the womb, similarly one's knowledge gets shrouded by desire.
- (39)** The knowledge of even the most discerning gets covered by this perpetual enemy in the form of insatiable desire, which is never satisfied and burns like fire, O son of Kunti.
- (40)** The senses, mind, and intellect are said to be breeding grounds of desire. Through them, it clouds one's knowledge and deludes the embodied soul.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1z8gCTyVPGnF7FjU8a8uTXtzbURkFOUIM>

Commentary:

Verse 36:

Lord Krishna stated in Verse 34 that one should not come under the influence of either attraction or aversion. Arjuna wishes to lead such a divine life but considers this advice difficult to implement because he sees that a person who is otherwise able to restrain and control one's senses through discrimination can at times still revert to committing sinful activities. So he asks Lord Krishna a question that is very realistic and representative of the human struggle. He says, "What force prevents us from reaching this high ideal? What makes one succumb to attachment and aversion?" We all have a conscience that makes us feel remorseful while committing a sin. The conscience is grounded in the fact that God is the abode of virtue, and we all being the part of Him, have an innate attraction for virtue and goodness. The goodness that is the nature of the soul gives rise to the voice of conscience. Thus, we cannot make the excuse that we did not know stealing, swindling, libel, extortion, murder, oppression, corruption, etc. are sinful activities. We intuitively know these deeds to be sinful, and yet we commit such acts, as if some strong force impels us to do them. Arjuna wishes to know what that strong force is.

Verse 37:

In this verse, Lord Krishna answers Arjuna's question in the previous verse. He says that the main cause for human sinful behavior is *Kama*, a Vedic term for lust. Also *Krodha* or anger, which is instigated by lust. This is because when *kama* is unable to satisfy its desires, it takes the form of *krodha*. Vedas use the term *Kama* not only for sexual desires but also to

include all desires for material enjoyment based on the bodily concept of the self. Thus, lust shows itself in many ways—in addition to the urge for physical intimacy, cravings for money, prestige, power, etc. When the soul associates itself with the material energy in the form of the body, its divine love for God is transformed into lust, in association with the mode of passion or the *rajas guna*. Since divine love is the highest power of God, its perversion in the material realm, which is lust, is also the most powerful force in worldly activities. When there is an increase of *sattva guna* or the mode of goodness, then *kama*, the mode of passion, will be decreased proportionately. The mode of passion deludes the soul into believing that worldly objects will give satisfaction, and so one creates desires for acquiring them. When desire is satisfied, it gives birth to greed; when it is not satisfied, it gives rise to anger. Both *kama* and *krodha* are formidable enemies on the path of *moksha* or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Verse 38:

Here Lord Krishna gives three examples to illustrate how lust, a formidable adversary, clouds the discriminatory ability of the human intellect. Knowledge of what is right and what is wrong is called discrimination. The three examples quoted by Lord Krishna include (a) *Fire*, which is the source of light, gets covered by smoke, (b) *Mirror*, which is naturally reflective, gets obscured by dust, and (c) *Embryo* which gets concealed in the womb. This complete obfuscation is like the consequence of desires subverting the power of discrimination. Similarly, the spiritual knowledge we may have earned completely gets shrouded by *Kama* or lust in the broadest sense that includes all kinds of material desires as described earlier.

Verse 39:

The adverse or evil nature of *kama* (lust) is being made even more explicit here by Lord Krishna. *Kama* means all sorts of desires as explained earlier, *duṣhpūreṇa* means insatiable, *anala* means inexhaustible. Desire overpowers the discriminatory power of even the wise and lures them to fulfill it. However, the more they attempt to douse the fire of desire, the more strongly it burns and becomes unquenchable. Even if supplied with delightful sense objects of enjoyment it is never enough, and when it is not satisfied *kama* turns into *krodha* or anger and that leads to grief and affliction just like the forest fire which burns everything in its path. Those who do not understand this secret waste away their life in the futile pursuit of trying to satiate their lust. Therefore, *kama* is an eternal, formidable enemy.

Verse 40:

In this verse, Lord Krishna reveals the locations where lust resides, and also indicates that there is a way to control it. He says that the senses, mind, and intellect are the places from where lust exercises its dominion over the soul. Under the sway of lust, the sense objects (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, etc.) are desired by the senses, which infatuate the mind, which in turn misleads the intellect, and consequently, the intellect loses its discriminatory powers. When the intellect is clouded, the living being is deluded to become a slave of lust and will do anything to satiate it. However, these three things—senses, mind, and intellect—are not bad in themselves. They were given to us for the purpose of achieving God-realization, but we have permitted lust in its many forms to lay siege on them. Now, we have to use the same senses, mind, and intellect to uplift ourselves.