

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 163: Chapter 18, Verses 14-17

(June 16 – June 22, 2021)

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

ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

adhishṭhānaṁ tathā kartā karaṇaṁ cha pṛithag-vidham

विविधाश्च पृथक्क्रेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ १८-१४ ॥

*vividhāśh cha pṛithak cheshtā daivaṁ chaivātra
pañchamam*

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत्कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

śharīra-vāñ-manobhir yat karma prārabhate naraḥ

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चैते तस्य हेतवः ॥ १८-१५ ॥

nyāyyaṁ vā viparītaṁ vā pañchaite tasya hetavaḥ

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

tatraivaṁ sati kartāram ātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥ १८-१६ ॥

paśhyaty akṛita-buddhitvān na sa paśhyati durmatih

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

yasya nāhankṛito bhāvo buddhir yasya na lipyate

हत्वाऽपि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ १८-१७ ॥

hatvā 'pi sa imāl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate

TRANSLATION

- (14)** The body, the ego (the doer), the various senses, many vital forces, and the ultimate consciousness (the *atma* or the soul) are the five factors of action.
- (15)** These five are the contributory factors for whatever action is performed, whether proper or improper, with body, speech, or mind.
- (16)** Those, who do not understand this, regard the soul as the only doer. With their impure intellects they cannot see things as they are.
- (17)** Those who are free from the ego of being the doer, and whose intellect is unattached to the fruit of their action, though they may slay living beings, they neither kill nor are they bound by their actions.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14Uns7tWTqAV3mX3Jn_2pGX3AcVh-GeC/view?usp=sharing

Chapter 18

Verse 14

In this verse, Lord Krishna reveals the five factors which jointly contribute to the accomplishment of all actions. These are: (1) The body, (2) the ego or the doer, (3) the five senses, including sound, taste, smell, sight, and touch, (4) the various life forces, including both involuntary actions, such as breathing and heart beating, and voluntary actions, such as using hands to eat and legs to walk, and finally (5) the ultimate divine consciousness, which is the in-dwelling monitor: the soul. These five factors accomplish all actions and must be understood by the aspirants for *moksha* or liberation from material existence in order to achieve the discriminative knowledge that dissolves the sense of egoism while performing actions. According to Vedanta Sutra, *atma* of the *jiva* or embodied being, at the death of the physical body, takes the *pranas* or the life forces along with it; therefore, the *atma* is the controller. Some assert without any basis that the controller is the insentient (inanimate) ego, but this opinion should be rejected. How can the insentient ego be responsible for the sentient physical body, the senses, the life airs and itself as well, along with the *atma*? The controller of the five factors is indeed *atma*, the individual immortal soul and the controller of all *atmas* simultaneously is *paramatma*, the Supreme Soul, residing with the *atma* within the etheric heart of all living entities.

Verse 15

The five factors enumerated in verse 14 above are solely responsible for all actions. This includes everything done by the body, speech and mind. This is proven by the fact that all activities are either physical, audible or mental. So, Lord Krishna confirms in this verse that whatever action one performs, whether virtuous or sinful, these five factors are responsible.

Verse 16

Here, Lord Krishna states that the five previously mentioned causes are responsible for all actions. The ones, who due to ignorance from lack of knowledge of the Vedic scriptures erroneously regard themselves as the perpetrators of action, instead of attributing all actions to the Supreme Absolute Reality, which is completely spiritual and free from all limiting adjuncts and not subject to material considerations, are fools and deluded.

Verse 17

In the previous verse, Lord Krishna described those who erroneously think of themselves as the doers of actions, independent of their souls. Lord Krishna refers to them as ignorant fools with a distorted notion arising out of false ego and infatuation to a bodily conception that pollutes their mind. By contrast, such a notion is absent in those of spiritual intelligence who have surrendered themselves to the Supreme Lord. The words *na lipyate* means not attached to the rewards of actions. Such evolved beings have resolved that everything is completely dependent upon the Supreme Lord who sustains and energizes everything and is the sole controller of all existence. Thus, one has no conceptions of “I will do this” or “this is mine” or “I will achieve”, etc.. One who has achieved the true nature of the *atma*, the immortal soul, automatically realizes one’s eternal connection to the Supreme Lord. Such a blessed one is not affected by material activities or influenced by worldly conceptions. The ones with their intelligence refined in this manner are known to be purified and untainted. The inference is that although such embodied *jivas* may perform innumerable activities, in reality they do not, as they are bereft of considering themselves the doers. Therefore, they are not subject to be recipients of the consequent merits or demerits resulting from their actions, including even the killing of other living beings. This point has already been made by Lord Krishna in chapter 5, verse 10, that ones who offer all of their actions unto the Supreme Lord are not tainted by either pious or sinful reactions.