

**Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 135: Chapter 14, Verses 22-24**

(December 2 – December 8, 2020)

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**ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT**

**TRANSLITERATION**

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

*śhrī-bhagavān uvācha*

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

*prakāśhaṁ cha pravṛtitiṁ cha moham eva cha pāṇḍava*

न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ १४-२२ ॥

*na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣhati*

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

*udāsīna-vad āsīno guṇair yo na vichālyate*

गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येवं योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥ १४-२३ ॥

*guṇā vartanta ity evaṁ yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate*

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

*sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ sva-sthaḥ sama-loṣṭāśhma-kāñchanah*

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ १४-२४ ॥

*tulya-priyāpriyo dhīras tulya-nindātma-sanstutiḥ*

## TRANSLATION

- (22)** The Supreme Divine Personality said: O Arjun, The persons who are transcendental to the three *guṇas* neither hate illumination (which is born of *sattva*), nor activity (which is born of *rajas*), nor even delusion (which is born of *tamas*), when these are abundantly present, nor do they long for them when they are absent. They remain neutral to the modes of nature and are not disturbed by
- (23)** them. Knowing it is only the *guṇas* that act, they stay established in the self, without wavering.
- (24)** Those who are alike in happiness and distress; who are established in the self; who look upon a clod, a stone, and a piece of gold as of equal value; who remain the same amidst pleasant and unpleasant events; who are intelligent; who accept both blame and praise with equanimity;.....(they are said to have risen above the three *guṇas*).

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## Chapter 14

### Verses 22 + 23 :

In verses 22 and 23, Lord Krishna clarifies the qualities and characteristics of one who has transcended the three *gunas* or the modes of material nature. First, He explains by what symptoms does one transcend them? The word *prakasham* means illumination, lucidity, or the brightness of disposition and are the effects of *sattva guna* or the mode of goodness. The word *pravritti* means enthusiastic effort or the disposition to active endeavor and is the effect of *raja guna*, the mode of passion. The word *moha* means delusion, bewilderment or having a distorted perception. All things external to the *atma* or immortal soul are of two categories: One is what causes attraction and the second is what causes aversion. The fundamental symptom of discerning who is beyond the three *gunas* or modes of material nature is that such a being neither desires to accept anything nor does such a being desires to reject anything. Such a one remains equipoised in all situations. Such a one is *udasinavat* or unconcerned with external circumstances because of being enraptured within by *atma tattva* or self-realization of the immortal soul. Therefore, one is naturally indifferent to anything external. One who is never agitated by attraction and aversion, which arise from the three *gunas*, and one who is never deluded by them into being impelled to act as the qualities might provoke one to respond.

### Verse 24:

In verse 24, Lord Krishna clarifies the question what is the behavior and conduct of one who has transcended the three *gunas*? One who is perfectly focused on the *atma* or immortal soul within is merely a witness to what transpires in the physical body. Such a one does not involve oneself anywhere into anything because one is unattached to everything external and thus is free from desire and repulsion which arise from passion and ignorance. Such a one does not deviate from the firm and steadfast establishment in the *atma*. Such a one is impervious to the desires for happiness and the disdain for unhappiness, accepting whatever comes equally and indifferently. Such a one equally reacts to adversity and felicity alike considering them both to be the same. A clod of earth, a precious stone or a nugget of gold are all just different manifestations of prakriti or the material substratum pervading physical existence. In the same spirit, one is neutral when exposed to pleasant or unpleasant sense objects and is *dhirah* or wise, not deviating from discriminative knowledge even if by chance one is subjected to the effects of the three *gunas* due to circumstances. Such a one views censure and praise, honor and infamy, friend and foe as alike and is equal to all living entities because of being free from attachment to all actions and due to perceiving the *atma* within all beings.