

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 37: Chapter 4, Verses 20-24

(January 16 –January 22, 2019)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

*tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgaṃ nitya-tṛipto
nirāśhrayaḥ*

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ ४-२० ॥

karmaṇyabhipravṛitto 'pi naiva kiñchit karoti saḥ

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

*nirāśhīr yata-chittātmā tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ
śhārīraṃ kevalaṃ karma kurvan nāpnoti*

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ ४-२१ ॥

kilbiṣham

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।

*yadṛichchhā-lābha-santuṣṭo dvandvātīto
vimatsaraḥ*

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ ४-२२ ॥

samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau cha kṛitvāpi na nibadhyate

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।

gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-chetasah

यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ ४-२३ ॥

yajñāyācharataḥ karma samagraṃ pravilīyate

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

*brahmārpaṇaṃ brahma havir brahmāgnau
brahmaṇā hutam*

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ ४-२४ ॥

*brahmaiva tena gantavyaṃ brahma-karma-
samādhinā*

TRANSLATION

- (20)** Such people, having given up attachment to the fruits of their actions, are always satisfied and not dependent on external things. Despite engaging in activities, they do not do anything at all.
- (21)** Free from expectations and the sense of ownership, with mind and intellect fully controlled, they incur no sin, even though performing actions by one's body.
- (22)** Content with whatever gain comes of its own accord, and free from envy, they are beyond the dualities of life. Being equipoised in success and failure, they are not bound by their actions, even while performing all kinds of activities.
- (23)** They are released from the bondage of material attachments and their intellect is established in divine knowledge. Since they perform all actions as a sacrifice (to God), they are freed from all karmic reactions.
- (24)** For those who are completely absorbed in God-consciousness, the oblation is *Brahman*, the ladle with which it is offered is *Brahman*, the act of offering is *Brahman*, and the sacrificial fire is also *Brahman*. Such persons, who view everything as God, easily attain him.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1TT_23A-JpUEHNkt8JIHa-J2-1y0ntp_O

Commentary:

Verse 20:

The minds of enlightened persons are absorbed in God. Being fully satisfied in devotional union with Him, they look upon God as their only refuge and do not depend upon external supports. In this state of mind, all their actions are termed as *akarma*, or inactions. Once one has given up attachment to actions as a means of obtaining rewards, one becomes tranquil and content without any need for acquisition or accumulation. Such persons although sometimes appear to be engaged in actions, factually do nothing at all as all their activities are actually inactions. Being completely satisfied by the bliss they experience within their consciousness, they maintain their bodily existence by simply accepting what comes along on its own accord. They are no longer affected by the dualities of life like good and evil.

There is a beautiful story in the Puranas to illustrate this point. The *gopīs* (cowherd women) of Vrindavan once kept a fast. The ceremony of breaking the fast required them to feed a sage. Shree Krishna advised them to feed Sage Durvasa, the elevated ascetic, who lived on the other side of River Yamuna. The *gopīs* prepared a delicious feast and started off, but found the river was very turbulent that day, and no boatman was willing to ferry them across. The *gopīs* asked Shree Krishna for a solution. He said, "Tell River Yamuna that if Shree Krishna is an *akhaṇḍ brahmacharī* (perfectly celibate since birth), it should give them way." The *gopīs* started laughing, because they felt that Shree Krishna used to dote upon them, and so there was no question of Him ever being an *akhaṇḍ*

brahmacharī. Nonetheless, when they requested River Yamuna in that manner, the river gave them way and a bridge of flowers manifested for their passage across. The *gopīs* were totally astonished.

Verse 21:

The mystics who work in divine consciousness are released from all sins, because their mind is free from attachment and proprietorship, and their every act is performed with the divine intention of pleasing God. The one who is completely free from desire does not become tainted by the disease of materialism while performing the natural functions that occur automatically to insure bodily maintenance. The word *niraashir* means bereft of expectancy or devoid of all desires for rewards. The words *yata-chittatma* means to control the mind by the power of the *atma* or soul, keeping the mind tranquil and equipoised, free from agitation. The words *tyakta-sarva-parigraha* means abandoning all cravings for sense objects and sense pleasures. As long as one has life one should perform all actions as a matter of duty merely as a function of their body.

Verse 22:

Life in this world is full of dualities—good and evil, day and night, sweet and sour, hot and cold, rain and drought, victory and defeat, fame and notoriety, etc. While living in this world, nobody can hope to neutralize the dualities to have only positive experiences. However, one who is tranquil and content with whatever spontaneously comes along is the being who has gone beyond the dualities of material existence. This means that such a being patiently endures pleasure and pain, acceptance and rejection, sadness and happiness and the rest of the opposites which all mortals inevitably must face. Such a person is also a *vimatsarah* meaning free from envy. He neither holds any envy toward others for their prosperity or good fortune nor does he blame them for any negative reactions he might experience. With detachment to the fruits of actions and equipoised in both positive and negative circumstances, as well as performing all works for the pleasure of God, such an individual is never bound by his own actions even while performing all sorts of activities.

Verse 23:

Lord Krishna here summarizes the conclusion of the previous five verses. The compound words *gata-sangasya* means being freed from desires for rewards. The word *muktasya* means free of passion and likes and dislikes. The words *jnanavasthita chetasah* means one who has communion with the ultimate consciousness. In other words, the one who is desireless, devoid of attachment to the rewards of actions, who performs every action as an act of *yajna* or an offering to the Supreme Lord, and whose individual consciousness is in total communion with the ultimate consciousness, is never bound by any actions although engaged in many actions.

Verse 24:

One who sees God everywhere and in all beings is the highest spiritualist. For such advanced individuals whose minds are completely absorbed in God-consciousness, the person making the sacrifice, the object of the sacrifice, the instruments of the sacrifice, the sacrificial fire, and the act of sacrifice, are all perceived as non-different from God. For example, light is the energy of fire. It can be considered as different from the fire, because it exists outside it. But it can also be reckoned

as a part of the fire itself. Similarly, when the rays of the sun enter the room through a window, people say, "The sun has come." Here, they are bundling the sunrays with the sun. The sunlight is both distinct from the sun and yet a part of the sun. Likewise, the objects of the world are made from Maya, the material energy of God. The material energy is both one with God and is also different from God. Here Lord Krishna is essentially conveying the fact that the transformation of action to inaction is always present in a person who performs all his actions as a sacrifice to the *Brahman* (God) or the spiritual substratum pervading all existence. Such a person easily attains the *Brahman*.