



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4335 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6
ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

भगवत् गीता Bhagvad Gita Introduction Volume 1

We begin our study of भगवत् गीता with गीताध्यानं which is a set of 9 verses recited traditionally as Invocation, Dedication and Prayer. In this Invocation, we do नमस्कार to गीता ज्ञानं - Gita Knowledge - as ब्रह्मविद्या - and sing the glory of भगवत् गीता as It Is.

Doing नमस्कार to गीता ज्ञानं means, committing oneself to the pursuit of Knowledge and Service at the highest level, in one's everyday life, at all times. Such commitment leads to Total Fulfillment in life through Self-Discovery - Discovery of one's Identity, one's Roots, one's Strength, and one's overriding purpose in life, and the Discovery of the true glory of human existence, in one's own life.

Let us listen to गीताध्यानं first, and then we will go through each verse one by one.

गीता ध्यानं

ओं पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं, अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं
अंब त्वां अनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीं ॥ 1

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायत पत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥ 2

प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।
ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥ 3

सर्वापनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्था वत्स्यः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥ 4

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगत् गुरुम् ॥ 5



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भीष्मद्रोणतटा जयद्रथजला गान्धारनीलोत्पला
शल्यग्राहवती कृपेण वहनी कर्णेन वेलाकुला ।
अश्वत्थाम चिकर्ण घोरमकरा दुर्योधनावर्तिनी
सोत्तीर्णा खलु पाण्डवैः रणनदी कैवर्तकः केशवः ॥ 6

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजममलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कटं
नानाख्यानककेसरं, हरिकथा संबोधनाबोधितम् ।
लोक सञ्जन षट् पदैरहरहः पेपीयमानं मुदा
भूयाद्भारतपङ्कजं कलिमलप्रध्वंसिनः श्रेयसे ॥ 7

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्कुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवं । 8

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवैः
वेदैः साङ्गपदक्रमोपनिषदैः गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।
ध्यानावस्थित तद्रतेनमनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनः
यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणाः देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥ 9

The first verse is a salutation to गीता - Knowledge as ब्रह्मविद्या; आत्मज्ञानं - Knowledge of ब्रह्मन् - Knowledge of the Universal Self; this Knowledge is likened to Mother. An Upanishad is always regarded as Mother Knowledge.

The Gita is समस्त वेद-अर्थ-सार संग्रह भूतं - the very essence of the teachings of all the Vedas and the Upanishads. Therefore, the Gita-Knowledge is Mother for everyone.

Mother always does what is good for the child; mother's affection for the child transcends all limitations of the child; it is natural for the child to seek mother's protection, and it is natural for the mother to give the needed protection to the child at all times. Therefore, for us, anytime is good time to reach for the Gita; and, better still, it is best to hold on to the Gita Knowledge at all times. Therefore, this is how गीता ध्यानं begins:

ओं पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयम् ।
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ॥

अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं ।
अंब त्वां अनुसन्दधामि भगवत् गीते भवद्वेषिणीं ॥ 1



ओं

ओं is मङ्गल वचनं - Word of Auspiciousness

By uttering the word ओं, first invoke in your mind and बुद्धि, an atmosphere of auspiciousness, and an attitude of reverence for ब्रह्मविद्या, and then address भगवत् गीता as,

अंब - O! Mother भगवत् गीता Knowledge, त्वां अनुसन्धामि

त्वां दधामि-सन्धामि-अनुसन्धामि

त्वां दधामि I give myself to you; I seek refuge in you – how?

त्वां सन्धामि I seek refuge in you naturally and deliberately, because I now realize that by being under your protection only, I am really free; therefore,

त्वां अनुसन्धामि I not only seek refuge in you naturally, I want to follow your teachings, and I want to hold on to you at all times; I seek your protection at all times; May the Gita Knowledge be ever with me, in control of all my thoughts, words and deeds – That is my prayer.

That Gita – Knowledge

पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां - which was taught to Arjuna – how?

प्रतिबोधितां – again and again, in different ways through different pointers, until Arjuna understood what was being communicated, and got all his doubts cleared, and absorbed that knowledge in every fiber of his body, mind and intellect -That Gita knowledge.

By whom was it taught to Arjuna?

भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं - By Bhagavan Narayana Himself in the form of Sri Krishna.

Narayana means the unchanging abode of every change in this Universe – The ब्रह्मन् The Lord of this creation in the form and name of Sri Krishna is Sri Narayana.

Again, that Gita Knowledge, व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतं - incorporated in the midst of the इतिहास called महाभारत by the ancient sage व्यास. Sri Krishna taught the knowledge to Arjuna, and it was व्यास who reported it all faithfully in the महाभारत.

व्यास was a ज्ञानी - a Self Realized person, which means, he was the embodiment of भगवान् Itself, and that is how he could report faithfully this teaching in its entirety.

Again, that Gita Knowledge

अद्वैत-अमृत-वर्षिणीं भगवतीं - which showers – which gives in full measure the पूर्ण ब्रह्मज्ञानं - about जीव-जगत् - and ईश्वर - which is ईश्वर ज्ञानं in its entirety.



भवद्वेषिणीं - The knowledge which uplifts one from all worldly pains and sorrows.

When Upanishad talks about अद्वैत, it only means पूर्णम् - all inclusive, all pervasive Whole. That अद्वैत ज्ञानं - पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं - has nothing to do with sectarian philosophical divisions, which are of more recent origin.

The Gita knowledge is पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं by Its very nature. That Gita Knowledge is भवद्वेषिणीं - the destroyer of rebirth, which means That Gita Knowledge is the means for gaining freedom from all संसार बन्धनs - freedom from all bondages of worldly life, and for gaining जीव ब्रह्म ऐक्यं - recognition of one's true identity with परमेश्वर, already in oneself.

अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं - That Gita Knowledge is given in the 18 chapters of the भगवत् गीता. That भगवत् गीता Knowledge is:

अंब - Mother Knowledge.

अंब त्वां अनुसन्दधामि - I worship That Knowledge; I commit myself to the pursuit of That Knowledge. I do नमस्कार to that भगवत् गीता Mother Knowledge.

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे पुल्लारविन्दायतपत्र नेत्र
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयप्रदीपः ॥ 2

This verse is a salutation to भगवान् व्यास, the author of महाभारत.

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास - नमस्कार to you भगवान् व्यास

नमः - saying नमस्कार to anyone is recognizing the divinity behind the form and name of the person.

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशाल बुद्धे - नमस्कार to you व्यास of wide knowledge and profound intellect.

पुल्ल-अरविन्द आयत पत्र नेत्र - नमस्कार to व्यास whose eyes are so beautiful like the petals of a fully blooming lotus flower. The eyes are beautiful because the eyes are capable of seeing the glory of परमेश्वर in all existence; "Beautiful eyes" always means penetrating knowledge.

नमस्कार to भगवान् व्यास of wide and penetrating knowledge.

येन त्वया - by whom

ज्ञानमयप्रदीपः - The lamp of all wisdom is



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प्रज्वालितः well lighted in fullness

भारत तैल पूर्णः The oil for this lamp of wisdom is भारत पूर्णः – The fullness of Enlightenment.

भारत is the individual or the society where the sense of value is भा-रत- Enlightenment is Joy – that sense of value is the oil for the lamp of wisdom.

नमस्कार् to भगवान् व्यास of wide knowledge and penetrating intellect, by whom the lamp of wisdom has been well lighted bringing the fullness of Enlightenment through the Gita Mantras.

The next 3 verses are salutations to Sri Krishna – saying नमस्कार् to Sri Krishna.

प्रपन्न पारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।	
ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥	3
सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।	
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥	4
वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनं ।	
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं चन्दे जगत् गुरुम् ॥	5

कृष्णं चन्दे जगत् गुरुम् - I do नमस्कार् to Sri Krishna, whose गीता teaching is for all humanity. I do नमस्कार् to That Krishna.

प्रपन्न पारिजाताय - who is the पारिजात tree - the Divine Wish Fulfilling Tree – the bestower of all needs for those who surrender to Him completely. Sri Krishna takes care of all the needs of everyone who seeks identity with Him completely; again

तोत्र-वेत्र एक पाणये who holds the wielding cane in one hand (तोत्र = wielding, वेत्र = cane) In one hand, Sri Krishna is holding the whip with which He drives the horses; His other hand assumes the gesture symbolizing knowledge; this means that Krishna does not give up the job of the charioteer role, He was playing, even while teaching ब्रह्मविद्या to Arjuna;

Unto That Krishna, I do नमस्कार् again.

ज्ञानमुद्राय - Sri Krishna is the Stamp of Authority for ब्रह्मज्ञानं - भगवत् गीता is the most authoritative teaching on ब्रह्मज्ञानं; Sri Krishna is both the Eternal Law and the wielder of That Law. To that Sri Krishna, I do नमस्कार्



गीतामृत दुहे - Sri Krishna is the milker of the Upanishadic knowledge leading to Enlightenment. The Gita gives the essential knowledge contained in all the Upanishads.
कृष्णाय नमः - To That Sri Krishna, I do नमस्कार्.

The next 2 verses explain the words ज्ञानमुद्र and गीतामृत दुह through a poetic comparison.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो -> सर्व उपनिषदः गावः - all the Upanishads are compared to milk bearing cows.

दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः - The milker is Gopala Krishna

गोपाल means जगदीश्वर - The Lord of the entire Universe; and

नन्दनः means आनन्द स्वरूपः the आनन्द here is ब्रह्मानन्द; therefore,

Sri Krishna is ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूप जगदीश्वर - The Lord of the entire Universe whose manifestation is Fullness, Happiness and Enlightenment - पूर्ण-ब्रह्मानन्द-ज्ञानस्वरूपं

पार्थो वत्सः - Arjuna is the calf. In order to milk the cow you need a calf; the calf here is Arjuna.

दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् - The milk is the Supreme Gita Knowledge.

भोक्ताः - the enjoyers of the Milk are

सुधीः

- people with deep roots of piety, purity and peace
- people who are mature enough for Gita Knowledge.

Therefore, this is the comparison:

- ✓ All the Upanishads are the cows
- ✓ The Milker is Sri Krishna
- ✓ Arjuna is the calf
- ✓ The Milk is for all humanity to enjoy
- ✓ And The Milk itself is – Gita Knowledge –
- ✓ Fullness, Happiness, Enlightenment all in ONE.

Again, That Sri Krishna is

- वसुदेव सुतं - The son of Vasudeva
- कंस चाणूर मर्दनं - The destroyer of कंस and चाणूर - the destroyer of all evil forces.
- देवकी परमानन्दं - The perennial Joy to His Mother देवकी who is the very embodiment of piety, purity and peace.



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➤ जगत् गुरुम् - The Teacher for all humanity.

कृष्णं वन्दे - That Sri Krishna – I do नमस्कार् to Him. I seek the Grace of That Sri Krishna at the start of this Gita study.

There are 4 more verses in गीताध्यानं which we will see next time.