



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता  
क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञ विभाग योगः

**Chapter 13**  
**Volume 1**

अर्जुन उवाच

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।  
एतत् वेदितुं इच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञयं च केशव ॥

श्री भगवानुवाच

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय, क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।  
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः, क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ 13-1

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि, सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोजार्न, यत् तत् ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ 13-2

The Distinction between क्षेत्र and क्षेत्रज्ञ - शरीर and आत्मा - The Body of  
Oneself and The Self in oneself

This chapter opens with a question from Arjuna to Sri Krishna. Arjuna says:

अर्जुन उवाच

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।  
एतत् वेदितुं इच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥

Some ancient versions of भगवत् गीता do not have this verse. Therefore, we do not assign a sequential number to this verse. Let us simply understand this verse, just as it is. In this verse, Arjuna tells Sri Krishna

केशव - O! Lord

एतत् वेदितुं इच्छामि - I want to know this

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव, क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च, ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च - I want to know what exactly is meant to be communicated by these three pairs of words, namely प्रकृति and पुरुष, क्षेत्रं and क्षेत्रज्ञं, ज्ञानं and ज्ञेयं.



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

These words are used frequently, both in भगवत् गीता and in other Upanishads in different contexts, but what precisely they indicate, especially the distinctions between them, are not always clear. Therefore, Arjuna wants to know what they indicate. They being Upanishad words, what is sought is not the dictionary meaning of the words, but what they indicate in terms of Upanishad knowledge. For that question, this entire chapter is the answer. Sri Krishna changes the order of the pairs of words in the question, and talks about क्षेत्रं and क्षेत्रज्ञं first, then about ज्ञानं and ज्ञेयं, and finally about प्रकृति and पुरुष. At this point, it is enough for us to understand that

- anything that can be objectified is क्षेत्रं, and क्षेत्रं is also प्रकृति
- any person who knows a क्षेत्रं as an object of knowledge, that person is a क्षेत्रज्ञ – knower of क्षेत्रं, and such क्षेत्रज्ञ is also पुरुष.
- the means for making one's mind and बुद्धि fit for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं – knowledge about the true nature of परमेश्वर, is called ज्ञानं, and that ईश्वर ज्ञानं itself is called ज्ञेयं.

More about these words we will see as we progress in this chapter. It is particularly important for us to understand that this chapter is not merely about the meaning of some Upanishad words. It is far more than that. The main purpose of this chapter is ईश्वर तत्त्वज्ञान निर्धारणं, which means to reestablish, firmly and beyond doubt, in one's mind and बुद्धि, ईश्वर ज्ञानं – knowledge about the true nature of परमेश्वर, which also involves knowledge about the means by which अन्तः करण शुद्धि – purity of mind and clarity of बुद्धि can be established, so that one becomes fit for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं and also knowledge about the overriding purpose of this शरीर – the body-mind-intellect complex that every human being is blessed with. Consequently, this is by far the most crucial chapter in the entire भगवत् गीता in terms of Upanishad knowledge.

Sri Krishna has been talking about ईश्वर ज्ञानं in every one of the last eleven chapters, in the last six chapters in particular. When that is the case, what is the need to reestablish that knowledge?

The need is always there, because no matter how many times our Upanishads say "तत् त्वं असि – That you are, That परमेश्वर you are", it is practically impossible for us, at



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least for most of us, to recognize परमेश्वर in oneself, by oneself, as ONESELF Itself. It seems impossible, and even meaningless, for one to try to identify oneself as the very embodiment of परमेश्वर, as the very embodiment of सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, when one is constantly experiencing the tribulations, distresses and sufferings of everyday life. It seems impossible, and even meaningless for one to try to identify oneself with अमृतत्वं – Immortality, when one is constantly witnessing mortality every day everywhere. That being the nature of everyday life, there is certainly a need for ईश्वर तत्व ज्ञान निर्धारणं in one's mind and बुद्धि.

The fact of the matter is, the identity of oneself with परमेश्वर, oneself being the very embodiment of ब्रह्मानन्द and Immortality, is a matter of knowledge that needs to be understood by one's बुद्धि, even while apparently experiencing all kinds of tribulations and mortality in everyday life. Such understanding is independent of one's everyday transient experiences in worldly life.

Now, one might ask, "What is the use of such understanding?" Such understanding, when recognized beyond doubt, does uplift one from one's सुख-दुःख style of - pleasure and pain style of everyday life, to one's real identity with परमेश्वर Itself, which means such clear understanding releases one from the world of all transient experiences, even while being fully engaged in worldly activities of various kinds. Such upliftment, such release from संसारित्वं – the ups and downs of worldly life, is indeed the purpose of ईश्वर तत्व ज्ञान निर्धारणं.

How is such निर्धारणं – reestablishment of ईश्वर ज्ञानं – Self Knowledge accomplished in this chapter? As we may recall, in chapter 7, Sri Krishna revealed himself as प्रकृति द्वय – as the two-fold प्रकृति, as the two-fold cause for this entire creation, including everything in this creation, the two-fold cause being पर प्रकृति and अपर प्रकृति.

The स्वरूप - the very nature of पर प्रकृति is परमेश्वर Itself, the ultimate, unchanging, ever existent cause for this entire creation. The inherent power of परमेश्वर, called स्वभाव of परमेश्वर, is the very nature of अपर प्रकृति, which is माया, constituted of the three गुणs – सत्व, रजस् and तमस् गुणs, and their various combinations, themselves



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variegated eight-fold, as पञ्चमहाभूतs – the five great elements, together with मनः – mind, बुद्धि – the faculty of discrimination and decision, and अहंकार – ego, the notion of doership and enjoyership, in all their infinite, ever-changing combinations and modifications, resulting in this entire creation as we see from time to time.

अपर प्रकृति – the Maya, the inherent power of परमेश्वर, being ever inseparable from पर प्रकृति – The परमेश्वर, it is clear that this entire creation, together with every being in this creation, is ever inseparable from परमेश्वर. Since everything in this creation, including the creation itself can be objectified by one's thought, word or deed, it is called here as क्षेत्र – an object of one's knowledge. The knower of क्षेत्र, The क्षेत्रज्ञ – the only one who independently knows every क्षेत्र in full, That क्षेत्रज्ञ is only परमेश्वर.

Therefore, the प्रकृति द्वय – the two-fold प्रकृति of परमेश्वर is only क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ लक्षण – this beautiful, extraordinary, inseparable, unchanging combination of क्षेत्र and क्षेत्रज्ञ in every being that exists in this creation, including the creation itself. By understanding the nature of क्षेत्र and क्षेत्रज्ञ both individually and collectively, one understands the nature of परमेश्वर Itself. That is how ईश्वर तत्व ज्ञान निर्धारणं is accomplished in this chapter, as we will see.

In this chapter, Sri Krishna talks about क्षेत्र and क्षेत्रज्ञ, and their combinations, and thereby helps us to understand the truth about परमेश्वर, and also the truth about one's own self. Every human being is naturally endowed with a शरीर – a live body-mind-intellect complex, with varying degrees of capabilities for cognition and action. Thus one's शरीर itself is an extraordinary manifestation of परमेश्वर's क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ लक्षण.

By understanding the क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ लक्षण of one's own शरीर, one gains an immediate appreciation of the sanctity and the incomparable utility of one's own शरीर – one's own physical body, both as कर्मफल भोग आयतनं - as a counter for experiencing and exhausting one's प्रारब्ध कर्मफलs - already fructified results of one's own past actions, and as मोक्ष साधनं – as the means for gaining मोक्ष – recognizing one's identity with परमेश्वर already in oneself.



Therefore, first focusing attention on one's own शरीर – one's own physical body, Sri Krishna opens this discourse on क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ लक्षण of परमेश्वर with these words:

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इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय, क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः, क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ 13-1

Please note that this is Verse number 1 in this discourse. In this verse, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna:

कौन्तेय – O! Arjuna, please listen

इदं शरीरं, क्षेत्रं इति, अभिधीयते – This शरीर - this physical body, is called क्षेत्रं

इदं शरीरं – This physical body. Sri Krishna points to his own physical body and says

इदं शरीरं – This physical body. Every person can likewise direct his attention to one's own physical body and say इदं शरीरं – this physical body, not a physical body remote from oneself, but the physical body closest to oneself, and that is one's own physical body.

इदं शरीरं, क्षेत्रं इति, अभिधीयते – this physical body, one's own physical body, is called क्षेत्रं. Later on, Sri Krishna is going to point out that क्षेत्रं includes all physical bodies, and indeed everything in this creation, including the creation as a whole.

For now, भगवान् – Sri Krishna is calling attention to one's own physical body for a particular reason, which is the following. Even though every person naturally recognizes one's own physical body, one also entertains a continuing confusion about one's own physical body. Everyone treats one's own physical body sometimes as an object of one's knowledge, and sometimes as identical with oneself, as the subject, oneself itself, as I itself. In order to dispel this subject-object confusion with reference to one's own physical body, Sri Krishna opens the discourse with the statement

इदं शरीरं, क्षेत्रं इति, अभिधीयते – This physical body, one's own physical body, is called क्षेत्रं, which means one's शरीर one's own physical body must be understood as क्षेत्रं, as an object of one's knowledge, not as oneself itself, not as "I" itself.



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क्षेत्रं is a beautiful Upanishad word. In Vedantic tradition, क्षेत्रं indicates a holy place, especially a place for pilgrimage. One's own शरीर – one's own physical body, is indeed a holy place, just like a temple is a holy place. For any person, the holiest of all places is one's own शरीर – one's own physical body, because it is the only one capable of doing holy actions.

Holy action means proper action, action in accordance with धर्म, which is the only means for gaining the ultimate goal of life, namely मोक्ष – Total Fulfillment in life. In an agricultural society, a fertile plot of land fit for cultivation, where one can sow the seeds and reap the fruits, is also called क्षेत्रं. One's शरीर – one's physical body is a धर्म क्षेत्र, which means कर्म क्षेत्र, where one does पुण्य कर्मs and पाप कर्मs, and reaps the fruits of such कर्मs in one's own life cycles. In that sense also, one's शरीर is a क्षेत्र,

There are also other reasons why one's शरीर is called क्षेत्र. For example क्षत- त्राणात् क्षेत्र – That which releases one from संसार – from the ups and downs of worldly life, which means that which enables one to gain आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge is क्षेत्र. So is one's physical body.

क्षरणात् क्षेत्रं – That which is continuously changing is क्षेत्र, so is one's physical body.

क्षयात् क्षेत्रं – That which is ever subject to decay and destruction is क्षेत्र. So is one's physical body.

Such descriptions of क्षेत्र apply to all क्षेत्रs - all objects in this creation as we can easily appreciate from our own daily experiences. Having pointed out that one's शरीर - one's physical body is a क्षेत्र an object of one's knowledge, भगवान् says in the next line

एतत् यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः, क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः

एतत् यः वेत्ति means एतत्, इदं शरीरं क्षेत्रं, यः वेत्ति – The one WHO knows this fact, namely that one's own शरीर – physical body is क्षेत्र an object of one's knowledge

तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञः इति – That knower of this शरीर क्षेत्र is called क्षेत्रज्ञः



यः वेत्ति – The one who knows one's शरीर completely as an object of one's knowledge - how does one know that? Both by nature and through विवेक ज्ञानं – Upanishad knowledge.

I do not need anyone to tell me whether or not this शरीर is my शरीर. I know it naturally. Anything touching my शरीर, anywhere in my शरीर, I immediately recognize that my शरीर is being touched. On the other hand, if I have विवेक ज्ञानं – discriminating knowledge about what is आत्मा and what is not आत्मा – what is SELF and what is not SELF, then I know clearly, even more clearly than before, that this शरीर – this physical body is an object of my knowledge and the knower of that knowledge – The क्षेत्रज्ञ is Myself, The आत्मा, The चेतन आत्मा, The प्रत्यग आत्मा – the pure consciousness in myself, the innermost consciousness in myself, and that is the Self I Itself.

एतत् यः वेत्ति, तं प्राहुः, क्षेत्रज्ञ इति – The ONE who knows fully, both naturally and through Upanishad knowledge, that one's शरीर – one's physical body is a क्षेत्र – an object of one's knowledge, and the knower of one's शरीर क्षेत्र, namely The Self I - the चेतन आत्मा - the all-conscious, ever conscious आत्मा - The Self I, is called क्षेत्रज्ञ.

The आत्मा I is called क्षेत्रज्ञ; by whom?

तद्विदः क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ विदः – By those who understand clearly and beyond doubt the distinction between क्षेत्र and क्षेत्रज्ञ. Thus Sri Krishna opens this discourse on क्षेत्र क्षेत्रज्ञ विभाग by saying that one's शरीर – one's physical body is a क्षेत्र – an object of one's knowledge, and not oneself itself, and the knower of one's शरीर क्षेत्र – the knower of one's physical body as क्षेत्र, that knower, That Self I in oneself, That आत्मा "I" is क्षेत्रज्ञ.

Sri Krishna identifies that क्षेत्रज्ञ, The आत्मा, The Self I as Himself, as परमेश्वर Itself in the next verse, which we will see next time.