



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

पुरुषोत्तम योगः

Chapter 15

Volume 3

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखं अश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययं । छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥	15-1
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In the first two verses, Sri Krishna calls attention to the well-known संसार वृक्ष कल्पना - the imagery of an अश्वत्थ tree, compared to the state of existence of this मनुष्य लोक - this world of human beings in this creation.

Following this imagery, one sees this संसार वृक्ष - the अश्वत्थ tree in the imagery:

- as a perennial flow of existence , seemingly indestructible
- it has its primary root above, which is imperceptible
- it has its branches below, which are available for perception
- the Vedas are its leaves, giving it continued protection and sustenance
- it has innumerable branches, some of them growing downwards and some of them growing upwards, all of them in different locations in the tree, in different forms and in different directions
- all these branches are nourished by their own natural saps
- so nourished, from the nodular buds in these branches, new branches and leaves continuously sprout forth, and come into existence
- aside from its imperceptible primary root above, it also has secondary roots, hanging down from its branches, growing downward. These secondary roots entrench themselves into the earth naturally, and further strengthen the entire tree, thus contributing to its continued and ever-changing existence.

Such is the nature of this entire संसार वृक्ष, the imagery अश्वत्थ tree. So is the nature of this संसार - this ever changing world of human beings in this creation. This संसार, as it



is, is a manifestation of माया - the inherent infinite power of ब्रह्मन् - the सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्. Since माया owes its very existence to ब्रह्मन्, the root cause, the primary cause for this creation is ब्रह्मन्, which is imperceptible, and beyond one's comprehension.

The products of माया are all objects seen in this creation, and they are available for perception. The Vedas, which provide the knowledge of means and ends, protect and sustain this creation. In this creation, different beings are born with different उपाधिस, different शरीरस - different body vehicles, some in the celestial kingdom, and some in this human kingdom, including animals, plants, etc. All उपाधिस, all शरीरस are nourished by their own गुणस, the सत्त्व रजस् तमस् गुणस.

There is no doer in any being in this creation, other than one's own गुणस. The sense objects and sense experiences of all beings in this creation give rise to a variety of desires and actions, which in turn continuously give rise to the birth of new beings, with new उपाधिस, with new गुणस, all of which keep this creation going perpetually. Aside from ब्रह्मन्, which is the primary cause for this creation, the beings in this creation themselves generate innumerable secondary causes for themselves, giving rise to a never-ending succession of desires and actions.

These secondary causes are the different वासनास - the lingering impressions left behind by one's past experiences in the form of one's likes and dislikes, born of one's own कर्मफल स. These वासनास, as secondary causes, give rise to various पुण्य कर्मस and पाप कर्मस, all of which are binding in nature. They bind the people to their own कर्मस strongly. Such वासनास extend to all aspects of human life. Being so, they continuously create new कर्मस and new bondages. Thus this never-ending cycle of वासनास, कर्मस, bondages, keeps this ever-changing संसार going perpetually. Such is the nature of this संसार - the world of human beings in this creation. That is how the अश्वत्थ वृक्ष कल्पना - the अश्वत्थ tree imagery unfolds the nature of this संसार in this creation.

If that is indeed the nature of this संसार, it would appear as if this संसार is so strongly rooted in existence that those who are already within this संसार are locked into it for ever. If so, how can any human being uplift oneself from the hold of this संसार and gain मोक्ष - Absolute Freedom and happiness? Such a question naturally arises in the mind of any interested person, for which भगवान् answers by saying:



न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थ मेनं सुविरूढ मूलं असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढैर्न छित्वा ॥ 15-3

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ 15-4

भगवान् says:

Do not be carried away by this elaborate description of this संसार वृक्ष, and through it the संसार – this world of human beings. This description is only with reference to what you see. All that you see in this मनुष्य लोक – world of human beings, is मिथ्या – products of माया. All that you see in this world are only transient appearances. In reality

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते – इह अस्य रूपं तथा न उपलभ्यते – The form of this संसार – this world of human beings as described here, is not available, is not obtainable as a perceptible entity, because it is like mirage water. You may describe it in many ways in terms of time, space, color, beauty, magnitude, etc., but when you go near, to touch it, it is not available, it has disappeared. So is the nature of this संसार.

Thus, this संसार – this world of human beings, is दृष्ट नष्ट स्वभावः – even as you are seeing it, it is disappearing. What you see at one moment is not there the next moment. What you see is only a succession of appearances and disappearances. This succession is so swift that it is impossible to define where one impression ends and the next one begins.

नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा – न अन्तः न चः आदिः न च संप्रतिष्ठा – With reference to any appearance in this creation, it has no end (न अन्तः), no beginning (न चः आदिः) and no stability whatsoever (न च संप्रतिष्ठा). It is an appearance ever in transit, with no tangible form whatsoever. About that kind of appearance, we may recall what भगवान् said earlier in Chapter 2.

ना सतो विध्यते भावो, ना भावो विध्यते सतः (2-16)

असतः भावः न विध्यते – For non-existence, there is no real existence, no independent existence at any time. What was non-existent in the past, and will be non-existent in the future, is really non-existent in the present also, even though it has an appearance of existence. Consequently, a transient existence has no independent existence at any time, and that is the nature of संसार – the world we live in. On the other hand,



सतः अभावः न विध्यते – for real existence, there is never non-existence. It is eternal, and never subject to change. That is indeed the nature of ब्रह्मन्, pointed out earlier as ऊर्ध्वमूलम्, so says Sri Krishna.

Even though this संसार has no real existence from the point of view of ब्रह्मन्, it is very much in existence for all ordinary human beings like ourselves, because we are already in it, as part of it, and affected by it every day of our life. When that is the case, what can one do to uplift oneself from the hold of this संसार – this world of transient existence?

The answer is: First, one must clearly understand and recognize that the nature of this संसार is दृष्ट नष्ट स्वभावः. That means that one must clearly understand and recognize that this संसार has absolutely no existence independent of ब्रह्मन्, and what one sees in this entire संसार is only a succession of appearances and disappearances superimposed on ब्रह्मन्, by one's own ignorance on the nature of ब्रह्मन्.

One must also realize and recognize that one's every day experiences of सुख दुःख – happiness and unhappiness etc., in this world is entirely due to one's association and identification with the transient appearances of this संसार. Therefore, to uplift oneself from the hold of संसार, one must totally dissociate oneself from one's association and identification with this संसार, as भगवान् said earlier in Chapter 6.

तं विध्यात् दुःखसंयोग वियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् (6-23)

Dissociation from association with संसार is ध्यानयोग – identification with one's स्वरूप, The आत्मा, The परमेश्वर already in oneself. Such dissociation is possible only through विवेक बुद्धि, leading to आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge. Therefore, भगवान् says

अश्वत्थ मेनं सुविरूढ मूलं असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्वा ॥

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

एनं सुविरूढ मूलं अश्वत्थं छित्वा – After cutting this अश्वत्थ tree whose roots are deeply entrenched. How do you cut this tree?

दृढेन असङ्ग शस्त्रेण – by the weapon of steadfast , unwavering detachment, dispassion

ततः – then

तत् पदं – That End, the nature of That Destination, which destination?

यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः – reaching which, those who have already gone into it, do not return again, the nature of That Destination



परिमार्गितव्यं - must be properly enquired into, again and again, says भगवान्.

Let us try to understand what is said here. First, cut this well-rooted, deeply entrenched अश्वत्थ tree like संसार वृक्ष, by the weapon of undistracted, unwavering detachment, and then, enquire properly into the nature of That Destination, reaching which, those who have already gone into it, do not return again to संसार. That is the means available for every human being to uplift oneself from the hold of the bondages with this संसार - this world of transient experiences.

एनं अश्वत्थं छित्वा - Cutting this अश्वत्थ tree like संसार वृक्ष, which means dissociating yourself from all associations, from all bondages of संसार विषयs - worldly experiences such as कर्म, कर्मफल सुख, दुःख, possessions, relationships of all kinds, etc., dissociating yourself from all of them. Such dissociations are not easy, because

सुचिरूढ मूलं - these worldly bondages are very strongly rooted, and deeply and widely held, not only by one's initial स्वभाव गुणs, but also by the later-born वासनाs - likes and dislikes of all kinds, being generated by oneself every day during one's very life. Therefore, in order to cut these worldly bondages along with their माया and वासना roots, one needs an appropriate weapon and that weapon is

दृढ असङ्ग शस्त्रम् - the weapon of strong detachment, the weapon of दृढ विवेक वैराग्यं, the weapon of steadfast, undistracted and undisturbed dispassion towards everything that is मिथ्या, everything that is only transient in nature.

This dispassion is not born of disappointments and its frustrations in life. It is born of knowledge, understanding and total commitment, arising from repeated appreciation of the inherent incapability of worldly matters to give you any lasting peace and happiness in life. Therefore, what is needed is an enlightened commitment to the pursuit of नित्यवस्तु - that which is सत्यं, that which is ऊर्ध्वमूलम् - the ultimate Truth behind all this kaleidoscopic scenery of this world, ever in transit, which we see and experience every day.

This commitment to the pursuit of सत्यं has to be दृढं - strong enough and sharp enough to cut this strong and deep-rooted संसार वृक्ष - all worldly bondages. How do you make this commitment strong and sharp enough for the job? Only by अभ्यास योग - repeated practice based on निश्चय ज्ञानं - definite and convinced knowledge about what



you really need to do to achieve the goal, The Destination to be reached. What exactly should one do then? भगवान् says:

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

ततः - Then, after cutting this संसार वृक्ष totally, after completely dissociating oneself from all worldly bondages, then

तत् पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं - तत् पदं - That Goal, the nature of That Destination, That सत्यं - That Ultimate Truth, That वैष्णवं परमं पदं - that abode of the all-pervading परमेश्वर, That ऊर्ध्वमूलम्, That ब्रह्मन्, परिमार्गितव्यं should be enquired into properly, seeking clear recognition of That ब्रह्मन् through incisive enquiry. The Destination about which one needs to enquire is तत् पदं - That ब्रह्मन्

यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः - reaching which those who have already gone into it never return back to this संसार, which means, there is no rebirth for them. As भगवान् said earlier:

आब्रह्म भुवनात् लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मां उपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विध्यते ॥

8-16

Reaching any world, including ब्रह्म लोक, one is subject to return to this संसार. Only by reaching that ऊर्ध्वमूलम् Itself, That परमेश्वर Itself, only by gaining identity with ब्रह्मन् Itself, there is no rebirth. It is तत् पदं - That Destination about which one should enquire into properly. "Properly" means what? As भगवान् said earlier

तत् विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

4-34

The mode of enquiry is three-fold:

प्रणिपातनं, परिप्रश्नं and सेवनं

प्रणिपातनं is diligent study of Upanishad teachings with humility, dedication and unqualified श्रद्धा

परिप्रश्नं is reflecting on the content of the Upanishad teachings through repeated questioning of one's own understanding, and

सेवनं is doing every कर्म as ईश्वर कैङ्कर्य कर्म - service to परमेश्वर, with कर्म योग बुद्धि and अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

That is how one must commit oneself to the enquiry on तत् पदं, ब्रह्म पदं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ईश्वर ज्ञानं, आत्म ज्ञानं Self-knowledge. Now, through such enquiry what happens?

तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी - through such enquiry one comes to recognize आद्यं पुरुषं, That पूर्ण पुरुष, that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म which is आद्यं, which has been there even before creation

यतः - from which पूर्ण पुरुष

पुराणी प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृताः - this ancient, beginningless संसार वृक्ष, this entire ever changing creation is born as a perennial flow of ever-changing existence.

That means, That पूर्ण पुरुष is ऊर्ध्वमूलम्, The पर ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, which is both the efficient cause as well as the material cause for this entire creation. Consequently, that पूर्ण पुरुष is indeed what is indicated by the word तत् पदं - The Ultimate Goal, The Ultimate Destination to be reached. This creation itself being an effect, and since the cause is already in the effect, this enquiry unfolds That पूर्ण पुरुष, तत् पदं - The Ultimate Destination to be reached, is already within every being in this creation. It is already within oneself. In the wake of this knowledge, the enquirer on तत् पदं recognizes that पूर्ण पुरुष as सोऽहं अस्मि

That पूर्ण पुरुष I am

That पर ब्रह्मन् I am

That ऊर्ध्वमूलम् I am

In the wake of such recognition, the enquirer of तत् पदं declares with joy and ecstasy तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी - I surrender all that is transient in Me to that ever existent पूर्ण पुरुष, The पर ब्रह्मन् from whom all this entire ever changing creation has come into existence.

When one surrenders completely all that is transient in oneself to that पूर्ण पुरुष, which means when one completely dissociates oneself from all the bondages with this संसार, and one finds oneself in identity with परमेश्वर Itself, already in oneself. Thus one recognizes The Self in oneself, the प्रत्यग आत्मा - the innermost Self in oneself, as पूर्ण पुरुष, as तत् पदं, as ब्रह्मन्, as परमेश्वर Itself.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus, as a result of तत् पदं परिमार्गितव्यं - incisive enquiry on तत् पदं, one recognizes that The Ultimate Destination to be reached, so that one is never born again in this संसार, That तत् पदं, That वैष्णवं परमं पदं is The Self Itself in oneself, free from all associations, with all bondages in this संसार - in this ever changing world of transient experiences.

That is the message of the संसार वृक्ष कल्पना on the nature of जीव, जगत् and परमेश्वर unfolded in the first four verses of this chapter.

We will continue next time.