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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

देवासुर सम्पद्विभागयोगः

Chapter 16

Volume 1

श्री भगवान् उवाच

अभयं स्त्वसंशुद्धिः ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥

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Sri Krishna has been teaching ब्रह्मविद्या - आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge in all the first 15 chapters of the भगवत् गीता, which we have seen already. All this teaching is primarily focused on knowledge about one's स्वरूप - true identity of oneself, more particularly, the सर्वात्म स्वरूप of परमेश्वर - knowledge about the overriding fact that परमेश्वर is Everything - वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति ज्ञानं. "Everything" means everything, manifest, unmanifest, and all that is beyond manifest and unmanifest. That परमेश्वर, That पुरुषोत्तम, is indeed ALL that exist, All in existence, Existence Itself.

The realization of That Knowledge means that the स्वरूप of oneself is परमेश्वर Itself. Such Self-realization makes a person बुद्धिमान्, a ज्ञानी, a wise person. That is what ब्रह्मविद्या teaches.

Even with all this teaching from Sri Krishna Himself, Arjuna has not become a ज्ञानी, and most of us have not yet become ज्ञानीs either. That only shows that simply understanding ब्रह्मविद्या knowledge by itself is not sufficient for one to become the very

Editorial note: In this chapter, the part of the letter symbol ै is indicated as औ



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embodiment of that knowledge. In addition to understanding that knowledge, one needs an अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि, fit for absorbing that knowledge. One needs a स्वभाव, properly aligned to merge with one's स्वरूप totally.

One's स्वभाव is concerned with one's गुणs and कर्मs - one's personal qualities, values, attitudes and dispositions governing all of one's actions. What is that स्वभाव, the गुण-कर्म combination that is conducive to bring about Self-realization, as परमेश्वर Itself? That is the subject matter of Sri Krishna's discourses in the next three chapters, which are focused primarily on the cultivation of स्वभाव, the गुण-कर्म combination, appropriate for gaining मोक्ष - Total fulfillment in life, Self-realization, Self-recognition of one's true identity. Fortunately स्वभाव is प्रकृति धर्म - the distinguishing mark of every individual body-mind-intellect complex, and being so, one's स्वभाव is always subject to change, which means, one can order, and reorder one's स्वभाव to meet one's requirements.

If one's destination is gaining the परमपुरुषार्थ - मोक्ष in this very life, or at least, as soon as possible in one's evolution, what are the गुण-कर्म combinations one must cultivate now, and what are those one must avoid at all times, and how to order and reorder one's स्वभाव from time to time, to align one's स्वभाव to one's स्वरूप, so that they naturally merge into ONE स्वरूप-स्वभाव combination, that is what Sri Krishna teaches in the next three chapters.

These teachings are of immediate practical interest to every human being, because

- ◇ one can never fully understand, appreciate and realize what मोक्ष is, until one gains मोक्ष



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- ◇ until one gains मोक्ष, every one is subject to the experiences of सुख and दुःख - joys and sorrows of worldly life, however transient they may be
- ◇ for every person who is not yet a ज्ञानी, all worldly experiences are real, and they have to be faced and dealt with, without hurting oneself any further, which is the immediate need for every person
- ◇ any help, any real help one can get to meet one's immediate need, is always welcome, and that is exactly what the knowledge and practice of the Gita teachings do to every person, under all circumstances of life.

We must always remember these words of the भगवत् गीता

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ 2 - 40

यत्र योगेश्वर कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

तत्र श्रीः विजयो भूतिः ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ 18 - 78

In the pursuit of Gita knowledge, together with the practice of Gita teachings, there is never any loss of effort. Even a very little Gita knowledge, together with even a very little practice of Gita teachings, protects one from the fears and dangers of every kind of sorrow and distress, and contributes enormously to one's sense of peace, prosperity, success and happiness in daily life. That is what Gita is.

Thus भगवत् गीता is a perennial source of unflinching strength, peace and progress in worldly life, for everyone committed to its knowledge and teachings. With this firm conviction, we now go to Chapter 16 of भगवत् गीता, entitled देवासुर सम्पद्भिर्भागयोगः - The distinction between देव सम्पत् and असुर सम्पत्. सम्पत् generally means "wealth" - wealth of all kinds. Whatever one has, is one's wealth. In the context of this chapter, सम्पत् refers to one's गुणः - one's personal qualities, values and dispositions governing one's actions at any given time.

There are two kinds of सम्पत् - one is देव सम्पत् and the other is असुर सम्पत्. देव सम्पत् are qualities, values and dispositions which are helpful to one's progress,



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both worldly progress and spiritual progress, which means, they are the "good qualities" which one must recognize, and try to cultivate. असुर सम्पत् are qualities, values and dispositions which are opposed to one's progress in every way. Hence they are "bad qualities" which must be recognized as such, and one must try to avoid them at all times.

Therefore the subject matter in this chapter is देव सम्पत् and असुर सम्पत् - clarity of knowledge about the *good qualities* to be recognized and cultivated and the *bad qualities* to be recognized and avoided at all times. Generally speaking, details about good qualities and bad qualities may be considered as matters of common knowledge. But frequent failure to recognize the distinction between the two, and the occurrence of improper actions arising from such failure are also matters of common knowledge.

Therefore, clear and definite knowledge on good and bad personal qualities and the philosophy for proper actions in daily life form an essential part of ब्रह्मविद्या knowledge, and that is the subject matter for this and the next two chapters.

As we may recall the words of Sri Krishna in Chapter 9:

मोघाशाः मोघकर्माणः मोघज्ञानाः विचेतसः

राक्षसीम् आसुरीम् चैव प्रकृतिम् मोहिनीम् श्रिताः ॥

9 - 12

Describing the personal qualities and dispositions of राक्षसs and असुरs, meaning people who have predominantly रजस् and तमस् गुणs respectively, भगवान् says, they are:

मोघाशाः - people of false hopes

मोघकर्माणः - all their कर्मs are really fruitless, because they cannot yield what they really need, namely peace and happiness

मोघज्ञानाः - their knowledge is totally inadequate to meet their real needs, and

विचेतसः - they do not have विवेक ज्ञानं. They cannot really discern what is proper and what is improper in daily life



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The above kinds of personal qualities are described in this chapter in detail as असुर सम्पत्. On the other hand, there are those people who have predominantly सत्त्वगुण, and some among them have even transcended all the three गुणs. They have become गुणातीतः, which means they are ज्ञानीs. Those people are called महात्माs. their personal qualities are described as

भजन्ति अनन्य मनसः ज्ञात्वा भूतादिम् अव्ययं ॥ 9 - 13

They recognize परमेश्वर as the source of all happiness. For them, परमेश्वर is indeed everything, and hence they worship परमेश्वर with single-minded devotion. Such people do already have the twenty personal qualities, ज्ञानसाधनं, described in Chapter 13 as अमानित्वं, अदम्भित्वं, अहिंसा, क्षान्तिः, आर्जवम्, etc. Those are the personal qualities which are capable of yielding peace, prosperity and happiness, leading ultimately to the परमपुरुषार्थ, the मोक्ष, for every qualified person. Those personal qualities, along with a few more, are presented again in this chapter as देव सम्पत् - divine dispositions, spiritual wealth, meaning "good qualities" to be recognized and cultivated by every one who seeks peace, prosperity and happiness in daily life.

Thus Sri Krishna opens this discourse with a list of देव सम्पत् - good qualities, spiritual wealth, as follows:

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अभयं - Fearlessness is the foremost among all देव सम्पत् - divine dispositions. This is not the fearlessness of a ज्ञानी. For a ज्ञानी, there is nothing other than परमेश्वर



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Itself. A ज्ञानी has none to fear from. We are not talking here about people who are already ज्ञानीs. We are talking about अज्ञानीs - people who have not yet become ज्ञानीs.

For अज्ञानीs - for people who have not yet gained Self-realization, Self-recognition, which means for most of us, there are, of course, many sources of fear in daily life, such as the possibility of losing something, or getting hurt in some way, or mental conflicts, guilt feelings, bondages, weak heartedness, perceived inadequacies, disappointments, etc., all of which are common sources of fear. परमेश्वर Itself is a great source of fear for all अज्ञानीs.

Thus fear of some kind or other is common for most people. When that is so, how does one gain freedom from भय - fear? It is important for all of us to know what one needs to do to gain freedom from fear. There should be an existent and conscious Being in whom one can take refuge, under whose protection one can gain भय निवृत्ति - total redemption from fear of any kind, which means, a शरणागति वस्तु is necessary for भय निवृत्ति. That वस्तु is ब्रह्मन् - The सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, The परमेश्वर The ज्योतिस्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा, The Self I already in oneself as ONESELF Itself, as Pure Consciousness Itself.

Therefore पूर्ण ब्रह्मज्ञानं, together with the mental disposition of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति, is the only means for gaining total freedom from every kind of fear. That is what we learn from the teachings of our Upanishads. As we may recall, this is what the Taittiriya Upanishad says (2 - 7) on the subject of भय - fear.

यदा ह्येवेष एतस्मिन् अदृश्ये अनात्म्ये अनिरुक्ते
अनिलयने (ब्रह्मणि) अभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते ।
अथ सो अभयं गतो भवति ।



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यदा ह्येवेष एतस्मिन् (ब्रह्मणि) उद् अरं (अल्पं अपि)
अन्तरं कुरुते अथ तस्य भयं भवति ।
तत्वेव भयं विदुषो अमन्वानस्य। (ते - 2 - 7)

All this we have seen already. When a person has matured enough to recognize one's identity with ब्रह्मन् itself, then, that person becomes one who has reached the state of अभयं - fearlessness. How does one get the notion of fear in the first place? The Upanishad says:

Due to lack of आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, when one entertains a notion of separateness from ब्रह्मन्, even to a minute extent, then ब्रह्मन् becomes the source, the cause, and the means for fear. So long as one does not recognize ब्रह्मन् as पूर्ण, as पुरुषोत्तम, The परमेश्वर in everything there is, one will continue to entertain the notions of fear. Even scholars who may know the words of the Vedas and the Upanishads, but do not really recognize the nature of ब्रह्मन्, even for such scholars, ब्रह्मन् becomes the source, the cause and the means for fear.

From the foregoing, it is clear that gaining realized पूर्ण ब्रह्मज्ञानं is the means for gaining total freedom from fear. As we have already seen in Chapter 7, such realized पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं is possible only when one has पूर्ण ईश्वर भक्ति, and the natural fusion of पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं and पूर्ण ईश्वरभक्ति is indeed पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति. Therefore, it is clear that पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं together with पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति is the only means for gaining total freedom from every kind of fear.

Again, as we may recall, in Chapter 1 of भगवत् गीता, we see Arjuna afflicted by fear. Sri Krishna then opens the Gita Upadesa with उत्तिष्ठ मन्त्र

"क्षुद्रं हृदयदोर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वा उत्तिष्ठ परन्तप

2 - 3



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Arjuna, get rid of this fear and weak-heartedness. उत्तिष्ठ - wake up, grow up to your real nature" which means, commit yourself to the pursuit of पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं, and finally, Sri Krishna closes the Gita Upadesa, advising Arjuna

मां एकं शरणं व्रज - Develop the attitude of total surrender to परमेश्वर." which shows that पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं together with पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति is the solution, the only solution, for overcoming fear of any kind. Thus the entire भगवत् गीता is The Scripture for gaining total freedom from every kind of fear.

Gaining पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं and cultivating the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति are not easy accomplishments. They are matters of constant endeavor over very long periods of time. But, one can start that process of endeavor today, right now. How?

By a total commitment to a life of ethical behavior, proper conduct and good moral character in every day life, together with a total commitment to follow भगवान्'s "निमित्तमात्रं भव" उपदेश at all times, under all circumstances.

The three Vedic commands, namely सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः constitute the very basis of all ethical life.

सत्यं वद - Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times

धर्मं चर - Follow धर्म. Do what is proper, and never do what is improper

स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः - Do not neglect scripture readings every day, which means, never lose contact with That परमेश्वर already within yourself.

Being truthful, following धर्म, and daily scripture readings are themselves प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - direct manifestations of परमेश्वर. By holding on to that परमेश्वर at all times, under all circumstances, one is already in the active pursuit of पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं. Further, following भगवान्'s "निमित्तमात्रं भव" उपदेश means one looks upon



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oneself only as an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर at all times and under all circumstances. By so doing, one is actively cultivating the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति.

Therefore, by the above two commitments, namely living a life of सत्यं and धर्मम्, and being only an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर at all times and under all circumstances, one naturally progresses in one's accomplishment of both gaining पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं and cultivating the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति simultaneously, and consequently, all fears in oneself will also naturally disappear progressively, and ultimately, completely.

That is how one gains अभयं - fearlessness which is the foremost among divine virtues - देव सम्पत्.

We will continue next time.