



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता

श्रद्धात्रयविभागयोगः

**Chapter 17**

**Volume 3**

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते । यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥	17-11
अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चेव यत् । इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥	17-12
विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् । श्रद्धा विरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥	17-13
देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञ पूजनं शौचमार्जवम् । ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥	17-14
अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् । स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चेव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥	17-15
मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मोनमात्मविनिग्रहः । भावसंशुद्धिरित्येत् तपो मानस मुच्यते ॥	17-16
श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरेः । अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तेः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥	17-17
सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चेव यत् । क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥	17-18



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत् पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा ततामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

17-19

In to-days verses, Sri Krishna first talks about the three types of श्रद्धा manifested by people in their performances of यज्ञकर्मs - Vedic rituals. Generally speaking, a यज्ञकर्म is any Vedic ritual, big or small. Every यज्ञकर्म is essentially a form of worship of परमेश्वर. Therefore, as worship of परमेश्वर, all यज्ञकर्मs - all Vedic rituals are the same. There is no difference.

But, in the श्रद्धा of the persons doing the यज्ञकर्मs, there are always differences depending on their motives and attitudes, reflecting the सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस् dispositions of their अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि. These differences in the dispositions make the यज्ञकर्म performed by the person as सात्त्विक यज्ञ, राजस यज्ञ or तामस यज्ञ. These names are not descriptions of the यज्ञकर्मs themselves, but they are descriptions of the differences in the श्रद्धा shown by the persons involved, in the performance of their यज्ञकर्मs. Describing such differences, भगवान् says:

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

यष्टव्यमेवेति मनः समाधाय स सात्त्विकः ॥

17-11

यः यज्ञः अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः इज्यते - That यज्ञकर्म which is performed by people who are not motivated by any फल - any result, by the people who neither seek, nor expect any particular fruit of action, now or later. Again, विधिदृष्टः इज्यते that यज्ञकर्म - performed as a Vedic mandate, which means "every यज्ञकर्म is worship of परमेश्वर. Every Vedic mandate is ईश्वर आदेश - a command from परमेश्वर Itself. I am only an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर.



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Therefore, I perform this यज्ञकर्म" That is the attitude here. Therefore, any यज्ञकर्म which is performed with that attitude. Again

यष्टव्यं इति एव इज्यते - That यज्ञकर्म which is performed just because it is considered as कर्तव्यम् कर्म - it is कर्म to be done as a matter of duty, whether it is duty dictated by one's conscience, or duty dictated by family and tradition, it is just a duty to be done. Any यज्ञकर्म which is performed with that attitude. Again

मनः समाधाय इज्यते - That यज्ञकर्म which is performed with one's mind and बुद्धि totally at peace within oneself, with a sense of self-fulfillment

स यज्ञः सात्त्विकः - That यज्ञकर्म is सात्त्विक यज्ञ - a manifestation of सात्त्विक श्रद्धा.

We may note here that in this verse, भगवान् has put together all the essential components of कर्मयोग. Doing any कर्म, neither seeking nor expecting any result, regarding the कर्म as an order under the eternal law of धर्म, and doing the कर्म, being only an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर, and doing the कर्म just as a matter of duty with one's mind and बुद्धि totally at peace within oneself, all these are the essential components of कर्मयोग attitude. Therefore, any यज्ञकर्म, any Vedic ritual performed with कर्मयोग attitude becomes a यज्ञकर्म performed with सात्त्विक श्रद्धा.

For a कर्मयोगी, every कर्म is a यज्ञकर्म, and being so, यज्ञकर्म includes all of one's duties, whatever they are. Here, Arjuna is not being asked to perform any Vedic ritual, but he is being asked to do his duty as सात्त्विक यज्ञकर्म. For every person, every such सात्त्विक यज्ञकर्म is a पुण्य कर्म, contributing to one's अन्तःकरण शुद्धि, and hence contributing to one's spiritual progress. On the other hand



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

अभिसंधाय तु फलं दम्भार्थमपि चेव यत् ।

इज्यते भरतश्रेष्ठ तं यज्ञं विद्धि राजसम् ॥

17-12

विधिहीनमसृष्टान्नं मन्त्रहीनमदक्षिणम् ।

श्रद्धा विरहितं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते ॥

17-13

अभिसंधाय फलं यत् यज्ञः इज्यते - That यज्ञकर्म performed by people for the sake of a फल - a result in view, seeking or expecting a definite result now or later; and/or,

दम्भार्थम् अपि यत् यज्ञः इज्यते - That यज्ञकर्म which is performed by people just for दंभ - vanity, pretension or some form of self-glorification

तं यज्ञं राजसं विद्धि - please understand that यज्ञकर्म as one performed with राजस श्रद्धा. Further

यत् यज्ञः इज्यते - that यज्ञकर्म performed by people

विधिहीनं - in a form which is improper, contrary to the form prescribed in the Sastras

असृष्टान्नं - that यज्ञकर्म for the performance of which, food is not freshly prepared specifically for the worship of परमेश्वर, and subsequently distributed to people as प्रसाद

मन्त्रहीनम् - that यज्ञकर्म in the performance of which, mantras are not chanted properly, or, partially or totally omitted

अदक्षिणं - that यज्ञकर्म in which the symbolic gifts to the priests are not given adequately and respectfully

श्रद्धा विरहितं - that यज्ञकर्म in which a person who performs the यज्ञकर्म has no श्रद्धा at all in doing the यज्ञकर्म



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

तं यज्ञं तामसं परिचक्षते - that यज्ञकर्म is well-recognized as one performed with तामस श्रद्धा.

The राजस श्रद्धा and तामस श्रद्धा as described above, are detrimental to one's spiritual progress, and hence they should be avoided. That is the teaching here. Next, Sri Krishna talks about तपस् कर्म - acts of self-discipline. All acts of self-discipline fall under three broad headings, namely

शारीर तपस् - Discipline at the body level, in general. This is also called काय तपस्  
वाक् तपस् - Discipline at the level of speech in particular, and  
मानस तपस् - Discipline at the level of mind and बुद्धि - faculty of thinking and judgment

Describing the nature of this three-fold discipline, भगवान् says:

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञ पूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥

17-14

देव पूजनं - Worship of परमेश्वर in any form and name

द्विज पूजनं - showing respect to those who are awake to ईश्वर consciousness in daily life

गुरु पूजनं - showing respect to teachers of any kind of knowledge

प्राज्ञ पूजनं - showing respect to scholars and scholarship in any field of knowledge

शौचं - cleanliness of body at all times

आर्जवम् - straight forwardness, straight alignment among one's thoughts, words and deeds

ब्रह्मचर्यम् - total commitment to the pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या knowledge, total commitment to knowledge and service at all times



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अहिंसा - total commitment to non-violence towards all beings

शारीरं तप उच्यते - all these together, is called शारीर तपस् - self-discipline at the body level. This is also called काय तपस्. Further

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

17-15

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं - Speech which does not hurt, irritate or excite another person in any way

सत्यं वाक्यं - speech which tells the truth, as it is

प्रियहितं वाक्यं - speech which manifests love and care for the person, and at the same time, is also beneficial to the person spoken to, and

स्वाध्याय अभ्यसनं च एव - daily practice of scripture readings, chanting वेद मन्त्रs, or their equivalents, such as devotional recitation of prayers, singing भजन्s, contemplative repetition of जप मन्त्रs, or simply uttering the words हरिः ओं, ओं नमः शिवाय, etc. with the mind and बुद्धि firmly set in ईश्वर ध्यानं.

वाक् मयं तप उच्यते - all these together is called वाक् तपस् - self-discipline at the level of speech. Further

मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मोनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येत् तपो मानस मुच्यते ॥

17-16

मनः प्रसादः - Cheerfulness in mind, brought about by a deliberate process of thinking, which means, a process of thinking which brings about

- clarity of understanding free from depression and confusion
- an attitude of acceptance of oneself as one is, for the time being
- an attitude of acceptance of the situation in which one finds oneself, for the time being



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

- a readiness in the mind and बुद्धि to do whatever needs to be done, just as a matter of duty to oneself, and
- an attitude of prayerful surrender to the will of परमेश्वर

That is मनः प्रसादः - cheerfulness in mind. Again

सोम्यत्वं - spontaneous external expressions revealing the above cheerfulness in mind such as a cheerful face together with a gentle disposition in one's behavior

मौनं - ability to remain silent, which is a deliberate mental restraint in speaking, based on one's clarity in thinking and judgment, which means, even when there is some kind of internal pressure to talk, if it is better not to talk, or, if there is no need to talk, don't talk.

That is मौनं. That ability to deliberately restrain one's faculty of speech, when necessary, is called मौनं - silence, in terms of mental self-discipline.

आत्मविनिग्रहः - mastery over all of one's ways of thinking, a total control over the wandering ways of one's thoughts, and

भावसंशुद्धिः - absolute purity of one's intents and motives in dealing with people; total absence of any deceit in one's interactions with people

इति एतत् तपः मानसं उच्यते - all the above, together, is called मानस तपस् - self-discipline at the level of mind.

Thus, internal cheerfulness in mind, brought about by a deliberate process of thinking, the spontaneous external expressions in appearance and behavior, revealing the above cheerfulness in mind, ability to deliberately restrain one's faculty of speech when necessary, a total control over the wandering ways of one's thoughts, and absolute purity of one's intents and motives in one's interactions with people, all these together constitute मानस तपस् - self-discipline at the level of mind.

Thus the three-fold nature of तपस् कर्म - self-discipline, has been described as शारीर

तपस् (or काय तपस्) - discipline at the body level, वाक् तपस् - discipline at the

speech level and मानस तपस् - discipline at the mind level. These three types of self-discipline are not mutually exclusive. They always go together. One cannot have one without the other two, naturally, because body, speech and mind are all components of one and the same person.



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Therefore, when we talk of श्रद्धा in तपस्, we refer to श्रद्धा in शारीर तपस्, वाक् तपस् and मानस तपस् together. In such श्रद्धा also, there is a three-fold distinction, which is now being pointed out as follows

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरेः ।

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तेः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥

17-17

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपः तत् तपः त्रिविधं नरेः - The तपस् कर्म performed by the people with supreme faith is of three kinds

परया श्रद्धया - means "with supreme faith", which means "with आस्तिक्य बुद्धि - with immense unqualified faith in परमेश्वर", faith in oneself. It is only with such faith, all the requirements of the three-fold तपस्, namely काय तपस्, वाक् तपस् and मानस तपस् - can be realized. Even "with such परया श्रद्धा - supreme faith in परमेश्वर", faith in oneself, the तपस् कर्म people do differ in three ways as follows

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः युक्तेः तप्तं तपः - The काय-वाक्-मानस तपस् observed by

अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिः - people who neither seek nor expect any fruit of action, any result whatsoever, and also, युक्तेः - by people whose अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि is peaceful, composed and steadfast in the practice of such तपस् कर्म

तत् तपः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते - that तपस् कर्म is called सात्त्विक तपस्, done with सात्त्विक श्रद्धा

Thus any काय-वाक्-मानस तपस् कर्म done, just as a matter of duty to oneself, with no result in view, and with a sense of fulfilled mind and बुद्धि, is सात्त्विक तपस् and hence done with सात्त्विक श्रद्धा . On the other hand





## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

सत्कारमानपूजार्थं तपो दम्भेन चैव यत् ।

क्रियते तदिह प्रोक्तं राजसं चलमध्रुवम् ॥

17-18

यत् तपः क्रियते सत्कारमानपूजार्थं - That तपस् कर्म practiced by a person, for the purpose of projecting oneself, as the doer of good actions, as a तपस्वी, as a person of spiritual discipline, deserving honor, respect, and words of praise, and for receiving acts of worship from others, and also

यत् तपः क्रियते दम्भेन एव - that तपस् कर्म practiced by a person merely for दम्भ - vainfulness and ostentation

तत् तपः इह प्रोक्तं राजसं - that तपस् कर्म is well known in this world as राजसं - as one performed with राजस श्रद्धा. Such राजस श्रद्धा is

चलं अध्रुवम् - unstable and unsteady. It is transient in effect, which means, whatever result one gets out of such तपस् कर्म is also transient, and all that honor and acts of worship one receives for such तपस् कर्म will also disappear soon. Further,

मूढग्राहेणात्मनो यत् पीडया क्रियते तपः ।

परस्योत्सादनार्थं वा ततामसमुदाहृतम् ॥

17-19

मूढग्राहेण - Due to deluded understandings arising from अविवेक बुद्धि - lack of discrimination

आत्मनः पीडया यत् तपः क्रियते - that तपस् कर्म practiced by a person afflicting pain on one's own body

परस्य उत्सादनार्थं वा - or, for the purpose of hurting or destroying another person

तत् तपः तामसं उदाहृतम् - that तपस् कर्म is declared as तामसं, one performed with तामस श्रद्धा



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.  
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Obviously राजसं and तामसं, which means तपस् कर्म done with राजस श्रद्धा or तामस श्रद्धा are detrimental to one's spiritual progress, and hence they should be so recognized, and avoided at all times. That is the teaching here.

Then भगवान् talks about श्रद्धा in दानं - any gift given as an act of charity which we will see next time.