



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः **Chapter 18** **Volume 11**

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तत् शृणु ॥ 18 - 45

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ 18 - 46

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ 18 - 47

सहजं कर्म कोन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण दूमेन अग्निरिव आवृताः ॥ 18 - 48

Sri Krishna has been talking about वर्णधर्म in terms of the four broad areas of occupational duties in the society, natural to each of the four distinct groups of people, namely the ब्राह्मणs, क्षत्रियs, वैश्यs and शूद्रs, constituting the entire Vedic society, based on their स्वभावगुणs - in-born personal qualities.

As pointed out already, one's स्वभावगुण itself is the result of one's पूर्वसंस्कारs, which means, one's accumulated impressions - the वासनs left behind in one's अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि by one's past कर्मs, education, training, experience and cultivated awareness in all of one's countless past lives.



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Thus one's वर्णधर्म at birth is a manifestation of one's own spiritual wealth, one's संपत्, earned through all of one's countless past lives. Naturally, therefore, one's वर्णधर्म at birth provides an extraordinary and unbeatable opportunity to make full and effective use of one's already earned wealth - one's संपत्, for one's continued material and spiritual progress in one's present life, by the quickest means possible. That is why Vedanta advises every person not to reject one's own वर्णधर्म at birth, but try to build on it for reaching one's own ultimate goal of परमपुरुषार्थ - goal of life, Total Fulfillment in life.

How to do that, भगवान् tells in today's verses.

One's self-earned, self-inherited spiritual wealth at birth naturally includes both देव संपत् and असुर संपत् - both positive qualities, as well as negative qualities. For one's further material and spiritual progress in life, one must first recognize these qualities as they are, and then, one must assiduously cultivate one's positive qualities without ever nourishing, sustaining or surrendering to one's negative qualities. By continuously strengthening one's already earned positive qualities, the power of the already existing negative qualities will be progressively weakened and incapacitated, and it will ultimately vanish by itself, as Sri Krishna pointed out already in Chapter 2:

परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते (2 - 59)

In terms of reaching one's ultimate goal of life, in terms of gaining मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life, one's वर्णधर्म at birth itself makes no difference. How one utilizes one's self-earned spiritual wealth at birth, makes all the difference. One's वर्णधर्म at birth provides one's स्वधर्म - one's own place in society, which in turn provides one's स्वकर्म - one's own particular duties in life, at any given time. Vedanta says - stick to your स्वकर्म with joy and enthusiasm, and do your duties, whatever they are, with



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कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ईश्वरप्रसाद बुद्धि. By being so and doing so, you will get what best can be gained by any कर्म, namely अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - purity of mind and बुद्धि, fit for gaining मोक्ष.

Communicating the above message, Sri Krishna says:

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥

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स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः- The one who is committed to doing one's स्वकर्मs - one's own कर्मs, whatever they are at any given time, and enjoy doing one's स्वकर्मs as duties to be done, mandated by परमेश्वर

संसिद्धिं लभते नरः - that person gains संसिद्धि, पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - Absolute clarity and purity of mind and बुद्धि, fit for gaining मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life.

The expression स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः has the same meaning as

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मागृधः कस्यस्वित् धनं

As an active participant in this creation,

- ✚ enjoy life, doing whatever has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर
- ✚ enjoy life through त्याग बुद्धि and संन्यास बुद्धि, by dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर as ईश्वर उपासन, seeking only ज्ञान प्रसादं
- ✚ cultivate ईश्वर ज्ञानं, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम् ज्ञानं by overcoming all internal and external obstacles for the realization and recognition of That ज्ञानं; and
- ✚ never covet , never develop an attachment for the wealth of someone else, including the wealth which you consider to be your own.



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All that is स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः - being committed to and enjoy doing one's स्वकर्म, one's own duties, whatever they are, at any given time.

By so being and so doing, संसिद्धिं लभते नरः a person gains संसिद्धि. सिद्धि is accomplishment of any particular कर्म - well done and completed. संसिद्धि refers to the accomplishment of all of one's स्वकर्मs - one's own duties, as well as one can, as a result of which one gains the best one can get by any कर्म, namely पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि, by which one gains ज्ञान निष्ठा योग्यता - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं.

There is another kind of सिद्धि called नेष्कर्म्यसिद्धि, which is Total Fulfillment in life, मोक्ष itself, about which we will talk later. Such नेष्कर्म्यसिद्धि has nothing to do with any कर्म.

In terms of one's spiritual endeavor, through कर्म, सिद्धि always means संसिद्धि. स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति - By being स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः so committed and devoted to one's स्वकर्म - one's own कर्मs, how does one get such संसिद्धि - such ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता - a fitness for gaining मोक्ष?

तत् शृणु - That I am going to tell you now. Please listen, so says भगवान्.

Continuing, भगवान् says:

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वम् इदं ततम् ।

स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

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This is an important verse in भगवत् गीता. Let us understand the message here clearly.



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यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वम् इदं ततम् - That is परमेश्वर
स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः - By worshipping That
परमेश्वर by स्वकर्म - one's own कर्मs - whatever they are at any given time, a human
being finds संसिद्धि in the form of ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर
ज्ञानं - Total Fulfillment in life - मोक्ष.

This is the simple meaning of this verse. Now let us see how this message is communicated.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां - That परमेश्वर from which this entire world of beings has come into existence

As we may recall from Taittiriya Upanishad (3 - 1)

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि
जीवन्ति यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति

That from which all that is in this creation is born. That by which, those which are born, live and grow; and That into which all that live and grow, ultimately go back, giving up their forms and names, and become ONE from which they came - That ब्रह्मन्, That परमेश्वर.

Again, प्रवृत्ति also means any kind of action. My ears hear, my eyes see, my mind thinks and all my organs of perception and action do their respective jobs. All these are glories of परमेश्वर. Therefore

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां means, That परमेश्वर whose glories these actions are
येन सर्वम् इदं ततम् - That परमेश्वर by Whom this entire world of objects is pervaded

As Sri Krishna said in Chapter 9 (9 - 5)



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मया ततमिदं सर्वम् जगत् अव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेषु अवस्थितः ॥
न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमेश्वरम् ॥

By Me, the परमेश्वर, this entire world of objects is pervaded in My Unmanifest Form as सत्-चित्-आनन्द स्वरूप अक्षरब्रह्मन्. While all beings in this creation have their abode in Me, the परमेश्वर, I am not confined to anything in this creation. While I lend reality of existence to all names and forms in this creation, My own existence is totally independent of and apart from all of them. That is परमेश्वर योग. That is what I am, says Sri Krishna. Therefore,

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वम् इदं ततम् refers to That Ever Existent, All-inclusive, All-pervading सत्-चित्-आनन्द स्वरूप परब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, already in oneself. स्वकर्मणा तम् (परमेश्वरं) अभ्यर्च्य - By worshipping That परमेश्वर by स्वकर्म - one's own कर्मs, which means, regarding स्वकर्म - one's own कर्म as duties to be done in conformity with one's वर्णधर्म - the Eternal ORDER in which one is born, and therefore, doing those कर्मs with कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि, with the attitude of total dedication to परमेश्वर. Just as you worship परमेश्वर with पत्रं, पुष्पं, फलं, तोयं - leaves, flowers, fruits, water, etc., you worship परमेश्वर by performing स्वकर्म - one's own duties, whatever they are, as well as you can, in total conformity with स्वधर्म, recognizing स्वधर्म is परमेश्वर Itself. Because the कर्म is totally dedicated to परमेश्वर, there is no कर्मफल involved. Whatever one gets as a result of such worship of परमेश्वर, that is ईश्वरप्रसाद - the very Grace of परमेश्वर, which always brings one closer to परमेश्वर already in oneself, by such worship of परमेश्वर.



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सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः - a person gains संसिद्धि, materially in the form of excellence in स्वकर्म, and spiritually in the form of पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि and hence ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता - fitness for gaining पूर्णईश्वरज्ञानं.

Sri Krishna is telling here something very important. Usually people associate worship of परमेश्वर with some special कर्मs such as some special rituals, prayers, meditations, etc. That narrow concept of worship of परमेश्वर is negated here. In order to worship परमेश्वर, no special कर्म is necessary, even though all such कर्मs are generally helpful in one's spiritual endeavors. What is necessary is to recognize स्वधर्म, which is an expression of one's वर्णधर्म at birth, and hence स्वकर्म - one's own कर्म at any time, arising from one's स्वधर्म is परमेश्वर Itself. Therefore, any कर्म one does in conformity with स्वधर्म is worship of परमेश्वर. By such worship of परमेश्वर, one naturally gains संसिद्धि ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता, an अन्तःकरण - a mind and बुद्धि fit for gaining मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life.

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

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स्वधर्म - One's own धर्म, one's own duties arising from one's own स्वभाव गुण, and hence, one's own वर्णधर्म at birth - one's own parentage, tradition, experiences of life, education, training, skills, cultivated awareness, etc., such स्वधर्म is

श्रेयान् - far better, far superior, far more valuable and favorable to one's own spiritual progress

वигुणः - Even though your स्वधर्म appears to have no virtue or value in terms of your present likes and dislikes, or assumed norms of the social environment in which



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you live, even if you do not see any virtue or value in **स्वधर्म** - your own duties which have come to you through your **वर्णधर्म** at birth - your parentage, doing your own duties following **स्वधर्म** is far superior to

परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् - doing the duties of another, even though well discharged.

If you reject **स्वधर्म** - your own **धर्म**, and take to somebody else's **धर्म** that is not natural to you, even if you discharge that **धर्म** properly, you can never gain true happiness or fulfillment in your **कर्म**, because the moment you see no virtue in **स्वधर्म** - your own duties, you have already surrendered to your enemies, namely the forces of your likes and dislikes.

You must understand that in **स्वधर्म** - in performing your own duty, whatever that is, there is no such thing as superior or inferior. Duty is duty, it is **कर्तव्यं कर्म**, it is **कर्म** to be done, that is all and nothing more. Duty in itself has no attributes, virtuous or otherwise. If you see no virtue, or if you see something inferior in your duty, it is only because your **राग-द्वेष** forces - the forces of your likes and dislikes are overpowering your mind and **बुद्धि** at this time. Further, you must realize

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन् - by doing the duties to which you have been led naturally by your **स्वभाव गुण** generated **वर्ण धर्म** - **स्वधर्म** - duties natural to your heritage rooted in **सनातनधर्म** - the Eternal Order

न अप्नोति किल्बिषम् - you never go wrong, you never go astray, you never gain any fault, any fear or any hurt.

When one does one's own duty, whatever that is, the mind and **बुद्धि** remain free from any conflicts, and that is healthy for one's spiritual progress. Giving the same message earlier in Chapter 3, **भगवान्** added: **परधर्मो भयावहः** (3 - 35) - rejecting **स्वधर्म** -



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your own धर्म, and following somebody else's धर्म will bring you only more and more fear, leading to greater unhappiness, discontent and delusion.

Therefore, stick to your own धर्म, and do your duty - नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वम् (3 - 8). Do what you have to do at this time and place, and do it with कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि. That is the advice of Sri Krishna. Continuing this message, भगवान् says:

सहजं कर्म कोन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण दूमेन अग्निरिव आवृताः ॥

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कोन्तेय - O! Arjuna

सहजं कर्म - स्वभावजं कर्म - जन्मना उत्पन्नं कर्म - any duty that has naturally come to you by virtue of वर्ण धर्म at birth - by virtue of your parentage, tradition, education, training, skill, cultivated awareness, etc., that स्वकर्म - one's own कर्म is सहजं कर्म.

सदोषमपि - That स्वकर्म, even though it may have some दोष - some defects, some blemishes, shortcomings or some unsatisfactory elements

न त्यजेत् - it should not be given up. It should not be abandoned. You should not abandon your स्वकर्म, arising from your स्वधर्म - your natural duty, even if it has some दोष - some defect, or blemish or some unsatisfactory elements in it, because every कर्म has some दोष in it by its very nature. That is because every कर्म is also त्रिगुणात्मिका - all three माया गुणs are in every कर्म. No कर्म is pure सत्त्व or pure रजस् or pure तमस्. Any दोष in any कर्म arises from its रजस् गुण and तमस् गुण components. Consequently, some दोष is inherent in every कर्म.



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If you give up your स्वकर्म arising from your स्वधर्म, you will be doing some other कर्म which will also have some दोष in it. Therefore,

हि - please understand this

सर्वारम्भा दोषेण दूमेन अग्निः इव आवृताः

अग्निः दूमेन इव - Just as fire is always associated with some smoke, so also

सर्व आरम्भाः (सर्व कर्माणि) दोषेण आवृताः- all कर्मs are associated with some दोष - defects, blemishes or shortcomings. Any कर्म you do has some दोष in it.

That is no reason to abandon your स्वकर्म, सहजं कर्म.

If you regard your स्वकर्म as कर्तव्यं कर्म - as duty to be done, then you realize that in duty, there is no preference. Only by doing one's स्वकर्म as ईश्वर आराधन कर्म - as an act of worship of परमेश्वर, a person gains संसिद्धि - पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - ज्ञाननिष्ठायोग्यता - a fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं, मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life. Even after gaining that पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि, that ज्ञाननिष्ठायोग्यता - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं, there is still one more step to go, to actually gain पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, which is मोक्ष. It is about that final step to gain आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge that Sri Krishna is going to talk in the next few verses, which we will see next time.