



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता  
मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः  
**Chapter 18**  
**Volume 13**

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्येः स्तवेः  
वेदैः साङ्गपदक्रमोपनिषदैः गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।  
ध्यानावस्थित तद्गते न मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनः  
यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणाः देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥  
हरिः ॐ

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ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ 18 - 54

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।  
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥ 18 - 55

As we may recall, Sri Krishna says:



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स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः संसिद्धिम् लभते नरः

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By being in स्वधर्म and doing स्वकर्म in accordance with सनातन धर्म, which means, by being in one's own natural place in the social fabric, gained by virtue of all of one's past कर्मs, and accordingly doing one's own immediate duties in daily life with कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ईश्वरप्रसाद बुद्धि, a person naturally gains संसिद्धि - पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - absolute purity and clarity of mind and बुद्धि. As a result, one gains evenness of mind at all times, total self-control and self-discipline at all levels of action, and total freedom from cravings, longings, anxieties or excitements of any kind.

Such state of संसिद्धि provides the person with a body vehicle through which one can uplift oneself to the state of नेष्कर्म्यसिद्धि, the state of Absolute Actionlessness, while still being active in daily life, and That is the state of मोक्ष - Total Freedom, Absolute Happiness, पूर्ण आनन्दं.

Such नेष्कर्म्यसिद्धि can be gained only through सम्यक् आत्म स्वरूप दर्शनं - a clear vision, a clear recognition of the true nature of oneself as ब्रह्मन् Itself, as परमेश्वर already in oneself, which is indeed the ultimate goal of all human existence, Total Fulfillment in life.

On gaining संसिद्धि through कर्मयोग way of life, provided the person continues to remain totally committed to the pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, through श्रवणं मननं and निदिध्यासनं - listening to the words of the भगवत् गीता and the Upanishads again and again, reflecting on their contents again and again, and always trying to absorb the content of Upanishad knowledge in one's own daily life through the paths of कर्मयोग, ध्यानयोग, ज्ञानयोग and भक्तियोग (as outlined already in our readings on Taittiriya Upanishad with reference to the expression : "यो वेद" in the



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Veda Mantra "यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन्"), for that person, the upliftment of oneself from the state of संसिद्धि to the state of नेष्कर्म्यसिद्धि - upliftment of oneself from the state of पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि to the state of जीव ब्रह्म ऐक्यं - becoming ONE with परमेश्वर Itself, already in oneself, takes place in a sequence of 14 distinct recognizable steps, all of which together constitute the process of ज्ञाननिष्ठा.

Sri Krishna has already talked about these steps in detail in different chapters that we have already seen. Now, He points out only the sequence in which these steps of spiritual progress mature naturally and spontaneously in the continuing process of ज्ञाननिष्ठा, after gaining संसिद्धि through कर्मयोग.

बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तो धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च ।

शब्दादीन् विषयान् त्यक्त्वा रागद्वेषो व्युदस्य च ॥ 18 - 51

विविक्तसेवी लध्वाशी यतवाक्कायमानसः ।

ध्यानयोगपरो नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः ॥ 18 - 52

अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् ।

विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्म भूयाय कल्पते ॥ 18 - 53

The first 12 steps of progress in ज्ञाननिष्ठा are indicated in these three verses.

1. बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तः - The शुद्ध बुद्धि already gained through कर्मयोग way of life uplifts itself into विशुद्ध बुद्धि, which means one now not only has विवेक बुद्धि - a बुद्धि which can discriminate between what is अत्मा and what is NOT अत्मा, one also gains clarity of knowledge about one's ultimate Goal in the pursuit of अत्मज्ञानं, namely मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in life. Further, one also gets the capacity not to attribute to



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worldly objects and accomplishments, a value which they do not have, and thus one gets the capacity to protect oneself from misdirected pursuits. That is gaining विशुद्ध बुद्धि, which is the first step in ज्ञाननिष्ठा. Then

2. धृत्यात्मानं नियम्य च - That विशुद्ध बुद्धि is made absolutely firm through सात्त्विक धृति (18-33), which भगवान् described earlier. Such firmness in विशुद्ध बुद्धि is brought about by अत्मानं नियम्य अध्यात्म योग (कठ 3 - 13), which means disciplining the activities of one's mind and all of one's organs of perception and action, keeping them within the bounds of धर्म, and propelling them in the direction of मोक्ष through integrated योग, meaning कर्मयोग, ध्यानयोग, ज्ञानयोग and भक्तियोग, continuously, again and again.

3. शब्दादीन् विषयान् त्यक्त्वा - At this stage of one's progress in ज्ञाननिष्ठा, the person gives up all pursuits of sense objects and sense experiences, which means the person develops a त्याग बुद्धि, a संन्यास बुद्धि - a spirit of dissociation with worldly pursuits, except those which are absolutely necessary for one's sustenance, and maintenance of one's physical body in good health, just to keep it fit for the exclusive pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge.

4. रागद्वेषो व्युदस्य च- Even with reference to those pursuits which are necessary for the sustenance and maintenance of one's physical body, the person gives up all likes and dislikes, and one becomes totally dedicated to the pursuit of ज्ञाननिष्ठा - contemplation on आत्मा, The परमेश्वर.

5. विविक्तसेवी - The person now gains the disposition to live a quiet life, in a quiet place, conducive to uninterrupted contemplation on Upanishad knowledge (13 - 10).

6. लघ्वाशी - Being engaged mainly in contemplation on Upanishad knowledge, the person now eats only lightly, neither too much, not too little only just as much as is necessary. Living in a quiet place and eating moderately have the capacity to bring



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about चित्तप्रसादं - a cheerful disposition, and an atmosphere of auspiciousness in one's mind and बुद्धि.

7. यतवाक्कायमानसः - The person then gains a natural restraint and discipline with respect to one's speech, body and mind, All that Sri Krishna talked about वाक् तपस्, शारीर तपस् and मानस तपस् earlier in Chapter 17, now mature spontaneously in a naturally disciplined manner.

8. ध्यानयोगपरः नित्यं - At this stage of one's progress in ज्ञाननिष्ठा, the person is totally committed to contemplation on आत्मा - The Self I, नित्यं - all the time. Here, there are four words and each has a particularly significant meaning.

- ✿ ध्यान - here means आत्मस्वरूप चिन्तनं - incisive enquiry on the true nature of आत्मा - The Universal Self I.
- ✿ योग - here means single-minded devotion to such enquiry
- ✿ परः - here means a firm commitment to such enquiry
- ✿ नित्यं - means always, even while being engaged in one's daily duties. Thus, there is repeated enquiry all the time, which means, the mind and बुद्धि are brought again and again to dwell on the content of the words of the Upanishads on the nature of आत्मा, the Self I, such as:

अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म - The Self I is ब्रह्मन् Itself

आत्मा इदं सर्वं - The Self I is all this, all that can be objectified

आत्मा शुद्धं नित्यं मुक्तं - आत्मा, The Self I is absolutely Pure, ever-free

आत्मा सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म - आत्मा, The Self I is what is indicated by the Upanishad words सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, etc. Repeated enquiry on such



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Upanishad words is contemplation on आत्मा at this stage of one's progress in ज्ञाननिष्ठा. By such enquiry,

9. वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः - the person is now endowed with total dispassion - वैराग्यं towards all objects and experiences, known and unknown. No object, real or imaginary, has any fascination for the person. The person is now totally committed to the pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge only.

From now on, त्याग बुद्धि - संन्यास बुद्धि manifests itself explicitly in the form of one's natural dissociation with क्षेत्र धर्मस - the attributes of one's शरीर - body vehicle. Consequently

10. अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम् विमुच्य

विमुच्य - one naturally gives up, what?

अहङ्कारं - ego

How does one give up अहङ्कारं - one's ego? It is only one's ego which gives up anything. Total elimination of अहङ्कारं is only by ज्ञानं, which means, अहङ्कारं - one's ego, disappears naturally only when ONENESS with ब्रह्मन् happens. That has not yet happened. Therefore, at this stage of ज्ञाननिष्ठा, अहङ्कारं विमुच्य - giving up one's ego is only in terms of attitude, which means, the person realizes clearly that "I am NOT the doer of any कर्म. I am only an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर". With that attitude, one gives up बलं, दर्पं, कामं, क्रोधं and परिग्रहम्.

बलं - one's pride in one's strength, powers, skills, attributes, abilities, etc.

दर्पं - one's vainfullness, one's cravings for recognition of one's accomplishments

कामं - all binding desires

क्रोधं - anger in all forms, and



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परिग्रहम् - sense of possession, ownership, etc., with respect to worldly objects.

All these are given up naturally. Again, as a consequence of such त्याग बुद्धि

11. निर्ममः - The person also gives up ममत्वं - the notion of "mine" with respect to anything. One realizes that "there is nothing that is "mine" I am only a trustee of whatever I have, to serve the will of परमेश्वर". Because of such त्याग बुद्धि, the person is content within himself, being free from elation and depression. Naturally therefore, he is

12. शान्तः - The person enjoys the continuous experience of Peace. The Peace here is अनुभव शान्ति - the experience of Peace rooted in the continued pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, with ब्रह्मार्पण बुद्धि - सर्वम् ब्रह्मार्पणं अस्तु - that is the disposition of mind and बुद्धि for that person. That शान्ति is what Sri Krishna described in Chapter 2 - 70:

आपूर्यमाणं अचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रं आपः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिम् आप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ 2 - 70

The person in whom all desires arising in the mind, simply merge and disappear in the mind itself as they arise. Just as all the rivers flowing into the already full ocean, simply disappear into the ocean itself, that person experiences the joy of continuous Peace. It is that kind of continuous experience of Peace, अनुभव शान्ति, which is gained by the person now in ज्ञाननिष्ठा. A person who has reached that step in the process of ज्ञाननिष्ठा.

ब्रह्म भूयाय कल्पते - gains the capacity for gaining the certainty of knowledge of ONESELF as ब्रह्मन् Itself. Thus the person becomes ब्रह्मभूतः. That means, Sri Krishna explains:

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।



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समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥

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ब्रह्मभूतः meaning ब्रह्मप्राप्तिः - One who has caught the sight of ब्रह्मन्. One for whom ब्रह्मन् in oneself is clearly within the reach of one's बुद्धि. That means, the ultimate destination of ज्ञाननिष्ठा is clearly in sight.

The person's बुद्धि has not yet gained identity with ब्रह्मन्, but it has progressed close enough to ब्रह्मन् to clearly recognize that ब्रह्मन् IS, and That IS in oneself itself. That means, there is no longer any doubt about gaining certainty of knowledge of ONESELF being ब्रह्मन् Itself. Naturally therefore

प्रसन्नात्मा - the person's अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि, is blissfully happy and cheerful, because, the Destination of ज्ञाननिष्ठा is already clearly in sight. Consequently न शोचति - there is nothing for this person to regret, or to be sad about

न काङ्क्षति - there is nothing more for this person to seek or desire

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु - the person now looks upon all beings in this creation, all people around oneself, just as he looks upon his one self, which means, the person now clearly sees ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. The person thus gains a clear appreciation of सनातन धर्म - The Eternal Order and The Glory of The All-pervading परमेश्वर in all existence. With such appreciation,

13. मद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् - the person now finds oneself blessed with the Highest State of ईश्वर भक्ति, which is the 13th step. This State of ईश्वर भक्ति is not the ordinary भक्ति of one who prays to परमेश्वर for some worldly or heavenly object of desire. The State of ईश्वरभक्ति at this state of one's progress in ज्ञाननिष्ठा is pure ज्ञानलक्षण ईश्वरभक्ति, ईश्वरभक्ति rooted in the state of being in the closest proximity of ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर already in oneself.



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Reaching that state of ईश्वरभक्ति is indeed identical with being in the आनन्दमय State of Existence, the प्रिय-मोद-प्रमोद-आनन्दमय State of Existence that we talked about in Taittiriya Upanishad (T. U. 2 - 5), which is identical with the State of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति - Total surrender to परमेश्वर already in oneself, Total surrender to Pure Consciousness already in oneself. That state of Existence is as far as one can reach by human endeavor. Then comes the final step in ज्ञाननिष्ठा. Sri Krishna says:

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

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ततः - Then

भक्त्या - by such ज्ञानलक्षण ईश्वरभक्ति

मां (परमेश्वरं - परमात्मानं) अभिजानाति - the person in ज्ञाननिष्ठा clearly, totally and directly recognizes Me, The परमेश्वर, The परमात्मा, as The SELF in oneself and in every self. How?

यावान् (अहं) अस्मि तत्त्वतः - Just as "I" am in reality, just as परमेश्वर is in reality, in all the glories of परमेश्वर, as manifested in all the names and forms in this creation (recall Gita, Chapter 10, विभूति योग) including one's very self, and also

यः च (अहं) अस्मि तत्त्वतः - just as "I" am in reality, just as परमेश्वर is, in reality, as पूर्णपुरुष, as पुरुषोत्तम, transcending all forms and names, transcending both जगत् and माया, transcending both क्षर and अक्षर (recall Gita Chapter 15, पुरुषोत्तम योग).

Thus, the person who has progressed thus far in ज्ञाननिष्ठा,



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मां परमेश्वरं अभिजानाति - recognizes Me, The परमेश्वर, clearly, totally, directly, both in oneself and in every being in this creation as The ONE, all-pervading, all-inclusive, Eternal Reality of Existence, in its entirety.

मां तत्त्वतः ज्ञात्वा - Thus, knowing Me, The परमेश्वर, as पूर्णपुरुष, as पुरुषोत्तम, thus gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं

तदनन्तरम् मां विशते - thereafter, the person enters into ME, the परमेश्वर, merges into परमेश्वर.

Here the word "तदनन्तरं = thereafter" does not mean there is a time lag between "knowing" परमेश्वर and "entering" into परमेश्वर. For example, when I say "after eating food, my hunger is quenched", it does not mean that there is a time lag between eating food and quenching hunger. Eating food itself is quenching hunger.

Similarly, knowing परमेश्वर itself is entering into परमेश्वर, becoming one with परमेश्वर. Therefore,

14. मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् means, having gained पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं - Knowledge of Absolute Reality in Its entirety, one is no longer separate from परमेश्वर. One directly recognizes one's identity with परमेश्वर. One recognizes that one is already ONE with ब्रह्मन्. That is जीव-ब्रह्म ऐक्यं - ONENESS with ब्रह्मन्. That is नेष्कर्म्य सिद्धि - The State of Absolute Actionlessness, Absolute Freedom from Action, The State of Total Fulfillment in life. That is मोक्ष - The Ultimate Destination of ज्ञाननिष्ठा.

We are now approaching the end of this chapter. We will be hearing the final message of Sri Krishna to Arjuna in the next two sessions.