



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः Chapter 18 Volume 3

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As we saw last time, talking about कर्मs, Sri Krishna says: यज्ञकर्म, दानकर्म and तपस् कर्म, each one of them is कर्तव्य कर्म - कर्म to be done by every person. यज्ञकर्म is any form ईश्वर उपासन - Worship of परमेश्वर, which naturally includes all of one's duties arising from one's prevailing station in life. दानकर्म is maintenance of a



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charitable mental disposition at all times, and तपस् कर्म is maintenance of a constant disposition of personal discipline, all of which are कर्मs to be done by every person, whether one is a संसारि, कर्मयोगी or संन्यासी, because all the above three kinds of कर्मs are पावनानि शुद्धिकरं - they together have an inherent power to keep the instrument of अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि, continuously clean and clear, fit for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. In order for the above कर्मs to be so effective, they should be done with proper attitude, as indicated in the next verse.

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।
कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥

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The proper attitude here is two-fold, namely:

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा - totally giving up all मम बुद्धि - all egoistic notions as the doer of these कर्मs, and also

फलानि च त्यक्त्वा - totally giving up all desires, all cravings, all expectations, for the fruits of those actions. That is the required attitude.

इति मे निश्चितं मतम् उत्तमम् - This is My conclusive verdict, definitive declaration, with respect to the matter of performance of यज्ञकर्मs, दानकर्मs and तपस् कर्मs

Let us understand the attitude here properly. I do the यज्ञकर्मs, दानकर्मs and तपस् कर्मs simply because they are कर्मs to be done, which means, I recognize that in ईश्वर's scheme of creation, I am here today only to do those कर्मs, and therefore I do them. Further, I do them entertaining no desire or expectation of कर्मफल. Why? Simply



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because कर्मफल, whatever that is, does not belong to me. Whatever comes to me, whatever happens to me, That is ईश्वर प्रसादं - The Very Grace of परमेश्वर. That is the attitude in its entirety.

When यज्ञकर्मs, दानकर्मs and तपस् कर्मs are done with the above attitude, they do not become cause for bondage. On the other hand, they become means for gaining मोक्ष. That is Sri Krishna's final and definitive declaration on the matter.

The immediate topic of discussion here is about कर्मसंन्यास or कर्मत्याग - renunciation or giving up of कर्म as a means helpful for gaining मोक्ष. One may pick up some habit one day and give up that habit on another day. Such giving up is neither त्याग nor संन्यास. They are simply two कर्मs, both of which are matters of one's choice, and neither of which may have anything to do with मोक्ष. On the other hand, there are some other कर्मs which are not matters of one's choice. They are कर्मs to be done, duties to be performed under the Eternal Law of धर्म, which means, they are obligatory duties for everybody, because, they are enjoined कर्मs, ordained by परमेश्वर Itself for the good of everybody - indeed for the good of this entire creation. Such कर्मs are called नियत कर्मs - they are Vedic commands such as सत्यं वद, धर्मम् चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः, etc. To these नियत कर्मs, we must add now यज्ञकर्म, दानकर्म and तपस् कर्म following Sri Krishna's declaration on the matter. Continuing this topic, भगवान् now talks about नियत कर्मs:

नियतस्य तु संन्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागः तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥

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नियतस्य कर्मणः संन्यासः न उपपद्यते - संन्यास of any नियत कर्म is not proper (न उपपद्यते). Renunciation of कर्मs, enjoined by परमेश्वर, which means disobedience of Vedic commands - renunciation of obligatory duties, is absolutely improper. What is to be done, under the Eternal Law, must be done. It cannot be given up by anybody. If one chooses to give up any ईश्वरकर्म, any कर्म mandated by परमेश्वर, one is doing an improper action, an action which is illegal, under the Eternal Law.

Thus भगवान् tells here that if a संन्यासी thinks that he can give up नियत कर्मs, the Vedic Commandments, simply because he has chosen to dissociate himself from one's natural worldly duties, he is wrong. Nobody, including संन्यासीs, is immune from The Eternal Law - The सनातन धर्म. There is a clear message here for Arjuna. Every obligatory duty is a यज्ञकर्म. One cannot give up यज्ञकर्मs - one's obligatory duties, simply by assuming the lifestyle of a संन्यासी. Therefore, becoming a संन्यासी cannot relieve Arjuna from his obligatory duties, duties arising from his station in life. That is the message for Arjuna.

Further, as भगवान् said earlier, त्याग itself is of three kinds. Pointing them out, भगवान् says:

मोहात् तस्य (नियत कर्मणस्य) परित्यागः (तत् त्यागः) तामसः
परिकीर्तितः

मोहात् - Because of मोह - delusion and confusion born out of ignorance, meaning, due to lack of understanding and appreciation of Vedic commands and their significance
तस्य नियत कर्मणस्य परित्यागः - if a person chooses to give up नियत कर्मs - कर्मs ordained by परमेश्वर, such as सत्यं वद, धर्मम् चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः etc., including यज्ञ, दान, तपस् कर्मs - any of one's obligatory duties



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तत् त्यागः तामसः परिकीर्तितः - such त्याग, such giving up of नियत कर्मs is well known as, must be clearly recognized as तामस त्याग - a त्याग born out of तामस गुण.

What does तामस त्याग do for one's endeavor to gain मोक्ष? As भगवान् has already pointed out, अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः (14 - 8) तामस गुण degrades a person, pulls the person down in the spiritual ladder, which means, instead of gaining at least some relative peace and happiness by such त्याग, one gets deeper into ignorance, more confusion, and more unhappiness. Further

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।
स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥

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यत् कर्म त्यजेत् - If one deliberately gives up नियत कर्मs - one's obligatory duties, which means, the person knows fully well that नियत कर्मs - obligatory duties should not be given up, and yet he gives up those कर्मs, because of one or more of the following reasons, namely

दुःखं इति एव - he considers it to be too difficult or too painful to do those कर्मs, or
काय क्लेश इति एव - he considers it to be too much of a physical botheration, because such कर्मs call for some physical efforts and discipline which he does not have or does not like, or

भयात् इति एव - he is pre-possessed by fears of some kind in relation to such कर्मs.

For any or all of the above reasons, if one chooses to give up the नियत कर्मs - one's obligatory duties, then that kind of giving up is called राजस त्याग - a त्याग born out



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of one's overpowering forces of intense likes and dislikes. What does such राजस त्याग do for one's endeavor to gain मोक्ष? As भगवान् said earlier

मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः - that person moves neither up nor down in the spiritual ladder, which means, राजस त्याग contributes nothing to one's spiritual progress.

Therefore, भगवान् says:

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् - Having done the राजस त्याग, he does not gain the त्यागफल - the fruit of त्याग, which means, he does not gain any अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - cleanliness of mind and clarity of बुद्धि, and consequently मोक्ष. Peace and Happiness will continue to be out of his reach.

Again, there is a clear message here for Arjuna. Before the गीतोपदेश started, Arjuna's mind was full of confusion, conflicts and doubts as to what is right and what is wrong.

Facing so many of his relatives and friends, particularly भीष्म and द्रोण in the battlefield, his duties appeared too painful for him to do, and he had his own fears and doubts about the outcome of this war, all of which prompted him to seek Sri Krishna's advice to find a way to escape from the situation he found himself in. Here, Sri Krishna makes it absolutely clear to him that renunciation of obligatory duties out of escapism will not lead him to मोक्ष. Continuing, भगवान् says:

कार्यम् इत्येव यत् कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ 18 - 9

अर्जुन - O! Arjuna

यत् नियतं कर्म क्रियते एव - That नियत कर्म - obligatory duty (whether it is scriptural or secular), that नियत कर्म which is done only with this attitude, namely

कार्यम् इति - it is कर्म to be done. The only reason for doing this कर्म is that it is to be done. Further, it is done,



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सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा - giving up totally all the attachments to कर्म itself, which means, giving up all egoistic notions as the doer of the कर्म. The कर्म is not done to impress anyone. "I being only an instrument to serve the Will of परमेश्वर, and this कर्म being a नियत कर्म, ईश्वर कर्म - therefore I do the कर्म" - that is the attitude. Doing the नियत कर्म with such attitude is simply an expression of one's total surrender to one's own innermost consciousness, which means, offering the कर्म itself to परमेश्वर as an act of worship. Further,

फलं त्यक्त्वा च - giving up totally the fruit of कर्म also, which means, the act of doing the कर्म is not motivated by expectation of gaining any कर्मफल such as पुण्य, wealth, fame, power, etc., because "I have nothing to do with कर्मफल. कर्मफल belongs only to परमेश्वर. Whatever happens to me as a result of my action is the will of परमेश्वर, and That is ईश्वर प्रसाद for me". That is the attitude.

स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः - Doing any नियत कर्म - obligatory duty with such attitude, namely giving up totally both कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल, such त्याग - such giving up is called सात्त्विक त्याग - a renunciation rooted in सत्त्व गुण. Let us understand this clearly:

- In तामस त्याग, कर्म is given up due to ignorance
- In राजस त्याग also, कर्म is given up, but it is given up due to रागद्वेष forces
- In सात्त्विक त्याग, कर्म is not given up; only कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल are given up

Doing कर्म, giving up both कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल, is a manifestation of कर्मयोग बुद्धि. For a person who has कर्मयोग बुद्धि, every कर्म that comes to him in his lifetime is only नियत कर्म, ईश्वर कर्म. There is no other कर्म for such a person. For such



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a कर्मयोगी, giving up both कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल with respect to every कर्म is सर्व कर्मफलत्याग and that is सात्त्विक त्याग, born of सत्त्व गुण.

What does सात्त्विक त्याग do for one's endeavor to gain मोक्ष? As भगवान् said earlier

ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः - that person moves up in the spiritual ladder, because

सत्त्वात् सञ्जायते ज्ञानं (14 - 17) from सत्त्व गुण arises ईश्वर ज्ञानं, आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, which leads one ultimately to मोक्ष.

How सात्त्विक त्याग or सर्वकर्मफलत्याग becomes मोक्ष साधनं - a means helpful for gaining मोक्ष ultimately, is told in the next verse:

न द्वेष्टि अकुशलं कर्म कुशले न अनुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टः मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥

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When a person grows up to be सात्त्विक त्यागी = सर्वकर्मफलत्यागी, all of one's previous endeavors in terms of कर्मयोग, ध्यानयोग, भक्तियोग and ज्ञानयोग tend to sequentially converge into ONE state of ज्ञाननिष्ठा, at which state the entire अन्तःकरण becomes मोक्षयोग्यं - fit for gaining मोक्ष.

भगवान् talks about ज्ञाननिष्ठा a little later. Here, only the sequence - the क्रम, the order of such convergence into the state of ज्ञाननिष्ठा is being pointed out. The sequence is: The सात्त्विक त्यागी matures into a सत्त्वसमाविष्टः, then into a



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मेधावि, and then into a छिन्नसंशयः, and finally into ज्ञाननिष्ठा, which is the ultimate कर्मफल of कर्मयोग.

सत्त्वसमाविष्टः - As a result of diligent cultivation of कर्मयोग बुद्धि, which means प्रसाद बुद्धि, the सात्त्विक त्यागी gains अन्तःकरण शुद्धि in full measure. He no longer comes under the spell of मोह, राग or द्वेष. His अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि is now totally pervaded by सत्त्वगुण, meaning विवेक ज्ञानं - discriminative knowledge as to what is आत्मा and what is not आत्मा. That state of maturity of अन्तःकरण is called सत्त्वसमाविष्टः. Then

मेधावि - the one who has gained मेधा is a मेधावि. मेधा arises from ईश्वर जप, ईश्वर ध्यानं. मेधा is intellectual vigor and memory, which means, ability to think incisively, ability to gain knowledge, ability to retain that knowledge, and mental alertness, which means the ability of that knowledge to spring forth spontaneously when it is needed, and the power of the intellect to guide and control one's actions at all times. A सत्त्वसमाविष्टः matures into a मेधावि, gaining that kind of intellectual vigor and memory. Then

छिन्नसंशयः - The one who has gained freedom from all doubts about आत्मज्ञानं - true nature of oneself, is छिन्नसंशयः. Such freedom from doubts arises from श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं - listening and understanding, reflecting and absorbing the contents of the words of the Upanishads through आचार्य उपदेश - teachings from an appropriate teacher of Vedantic knowledge, combined with total commitment to knowledge and service at the highest level. A मेधावि progressively matures into such a state of छिन्नसंशयः. When a person reaches that state of छिन्नसंशयः, that person's अन्तःकरण is pure, clean and clear, and he is naturally enlightened with reference to आत्मा - The Self, The Universal Self. He realizes that the meaning of "I" lies only in आत्मा - The Self in oneself, Which is also The Self in every self.



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That आत्मा is ever-existent, never subject to change, neither does any action, nor causes any action. That आत्मा is Actionless and Actionlessness Itself, and so is he. By such Self-knowledge, Self-realization and Self-recognition, he remains beyond the reach of all actions, himself being actionless, even while being active in the world of actions. Such state of actionlessness is ज्ञाननिष्ठा. Reaching the state of ज्ञाननिष्ठा,

न द्वेष्टि अकुशलं कर्म कुशले न अनुषज्जते - that person has no particular aversion of any अकुशलं कर्म, meaning any काम्य कर्म - any desire prompted action. Simply because such कर्म's are the cause for one's सुख and दुःख in life, he has no hatred for them. Likewise, he has no particular attachment for कुशलं कर्म's, the नियत कर्म's - the obligatory कर्म's mandated by the Sastras. Simply because such नियत कर्म's have the capacity to contribute to one's अन्तःकरण शुद्धि, he does not have any attachment for them, because he has already gained full अन्तःकरण शुद्धि. In other words, he has now outgrown all dependence on any कर्म, even while doing every कर्म that he needs to do in life by virtue of being a natural participant in the Divine Creation. Such freedom from dependence on any कर्म for one's Peace and Happiness is the कर्मफल of सात्त्विक त्याग सर्वकर्मफलत्याग - indeed कर्मयोग (G.12 - 12)

We will continue next time.