



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

### श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः Chapter 18 Volume 4

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।  
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥ 18-11

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।  
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ 18-12

पञ्चेतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।  
सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ 18-13

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।  
विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा देवं चेवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ 18-14

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिर्यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।  
न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चेते तस्य हेतवः ॥ 18-15

Sri Krishna has been talking about सात्त्विक त्याग, a त्याग - an act of renunciation, or giving up of something born of सत्त्व गुण. When we talk about सात्त्विक त्याग, we are talking only about नियत कर्मs - scripturally ordained कर्मs, which include all of one's obligatory duties, whether they are ritualistic or secular. With respect to such नियत कर्म, सात्त्विक त्याग means doing the कर्म with श्रद्धा and devotion, totally giving up कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल. Therefore in सात्त्विक त्याग, कर्म is not given up.



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What is given up is कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल. In the context of सात्त्विक त्याग, giving up कर्मसङ्ग means giving up totally all notions of self-glory in being the doer of one's own नियत कर्मs - obligatory duties. One's very birth itself confers upon oneself, the duty to do one's नियत कर्मs. Therefore, in doing one's own obligatory duties, there is really no self-glory involved.

Giving up कर्मफल means giving up totally all fruits of नियत कर्मs, which means the act of doing the नियत कर्मs is not motivated by expectation of gaining any कर्मफल, simply because कर्मफल belongs only to परमेश्वर. Every कर्म yields कर्मफल for the doer of the कर्म - whether one expects or not, whether one wants or not. When you do कर्म, some कर्मफल will necessarily come to you, but it does not belong to you. Therefore, you return the कर्मफल to परमेश्वर as an act of worship. Whatever then comes to you, receive that as ईश्वर प्रसाद - that is the attitude.

Thus, doing every नियत कर्म with proper attitude, namely, giving up कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल is सात्त्विक त्याग. Doing every नियत कर्म as सात्त्विक त्याग is 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 a कर्मयोगी. Therefore, for a कर्मयोगी, doing नियत कर्म means doing every कर्म totally giving up कर्मसङ्ग and कर्मफल. Such "giving up", such त्याग, then becomes सर्व कर्मफल त्याग - renunciation of the fruits of all actions. Referring to such सर्व कर्मफल त्याग of a कर्मयोगी, भगवान् says:

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्मणिःशेषतः ।



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यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागी इति अभिधीयते ॥ 18-11

देहभृत् is any being which sustains a body. Therefore, in the context here

देहभृता - for a person

कर्मणिअशेषतः त्यक्तुं न शक्यं - it is impossible to give up entirely all कर्मs. For any person, it is impossible to give up all actions entirely. Why? Because, as भगवान् pointed out earlier, (3 - 5)

न हि कश्चित् क्षणं अपि जातु तिष्ठति अकर्मकृत्  
कार्यते हि अवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥

At any time, even for a moment, a person does not remain without performing action, because, every person is necessarily impelled to act, impelled to engage in some kind of action, in accordance with one's own in-born nature, one's own स्वभाव, one's own माया गुणs - the सत्त्व, रजस्, तमस् गुणs. That is the nature of प्रकृति.

Nobody escapes कर्म, whether one is a ज्ञानी or अज्ञानी. Even though that is so, भगवान् declares here (please listen):

यःतु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागी इति अभिधीयते - The one who is a कर्मफलत्यागी. We must recall here that भगवान् has already defined त्याग as सर्व कर्मफल त्याग. In other words, the one who gives up some isolated or limited कर्मफल is not a त्यागी. A त्यागी is one who gives up all कर्मफलs - the fruits of all actions, that person alone is a त्यागी. Therefore,



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यःतु कर्मफलत्यागी means the one who is a सर्व कर्मफल त्यागी - the one who gives up the fruits of all actions. In other words, a सात्त्विक त्यागी, a कर्मयोगी अभिधीयते must be recognized as

स त्यागी - That त्यागी - which त्यागी? The one who has given up कर्मणि अशेषतः - all कर्म's entirely, which means, a सर्व कर्मत्यागी. In other words, भगवान् declares here:

- a सर्व कर्मफल त्यागी is indeed, in effect a सर्व कर्मत्यागी. Since कर्मत्याग is the लक्षण of संन्यास, what भगवान् says here is,

- a सर्व कर्मफल त्यागी, a कर्मयोगी is indeed, in effect, a सर्व कर्मसंन्यासी - an absolute संन्यासी, a ज्ञानी.

Thus, any person, without ever taking to a lifestyle of a संन्यासी, just by always being a कर्मयोगी, doing all नियतकर्म's - all obligatory duties, but giving up the fruits of all कर्म's and enjoying whatever comes as ईश्वरप्रसाद, which means, by being a सर्व कर्मफल त्यागी, ultimately becomes a सर्व कर्मसंन्यासी - an absolute संन्यासी, a ज्ञानी.

This is not a statement against taking to a lifestyle of an ordinary संन्यासी. This statement only reconfirms what भगवान् said earlier, namely:

यत् सांख्येः प्राप्यते स्थानं तत् योगेरपि गम्यतेम् । (5 - 5)

The destination ultimately reached by ordinary संन्यासी's is also ultimately reached by कर्मयोगी's .



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As we may recall, in Chapter 12, भक्ति योग, Sri Krishna glorified सर्वकर्मफलत्याग as the best form of कर्मयोग, because such कर्मयोग is practically possible for every person. Prompted by काम - desires of various kinds, one does कर्म for the sake of कर्मफल. By giving up कर्मफल, in effect, one gives up कर्म as well as काम, as an act of worship of परमेश्वर. By such act of worship of परमेश्वर, सर्वकर्मफलत्याग, in effect becomes सर्वकर्मत्याग, and also सर्वकामत्याग, which is the लक्षण - the distinguishing mark of a स्थितप्रज्ञ, a ज्ञानी. As भगवान् said in Chapter 2 (2 - 55)

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान्  
आत्मनि एव आत्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ 2 - 55

When one naturally and totally abandons, which means, when one naturally outgrows all काम desires, as they arise in the mind, that person discovers Absolute Peace and happiness in oneself. That is the power and glory of सर्वकर्मफलत्याग form of कर्मयोग. Continuing the discourse, भगवान् says:

अनिष्टमिष्टं मिश्रं च त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम् ।  
भवत्यत्यागिनां प्रेत्य न तु संन्यासिनां क्वचित् ॥ 18-12

कर्मणः फलम् त्रिविधं - The result of action, any action, is of three kinds. They are:

इष्टं अनिष्टं मिश्रं च - इष्टं - desirable, अनिष्टं - undesirable, and मिश्रं - a mixture of both, a result which has both desirable and undesirable aspects, which means, some results are good, some are bad, and some are a mixture of good and bad, in terms of their effects on the disposition of one's अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि .



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Every ordinary person experiences, as well as accumulates such good bad and mixed **कर्मफल**s arising from their daily activities throughout one's life. One's very birth itself is **कर्मफल** of one's **पूर्वजन्मकर्म**s - an expression of the results of one's actions in one's previous births. That also means that even though every **कर्म** yields an immediate result, not all of them manifest immediately. Most of these results are in the form of seeds which sprout, grow and mature later, indeed very much later, forming the basis for one's next and subsequent births. Therefore, **भगवान्** says here:

**अत्यागिनां** - For those who are not **सर्वकर्मफलत्यागी**s, for those who do not give up the results of all of one's actions in this life, for those people

**त्रिविधं कर्मणः फलम्** - the three-fold **कर्मफल**, the good, bad and mixed results of actions continue to exist even after death, which means, they cannot escape the experiences of such **कर्मफल** on death. They will have to experience and exhaust them through birth after birth. On the other hand

**न तु क्वचित् संन्यासिनां** - That never happens for **सर्वकर्मफलत्यागी**s - for those who do give up the results of all of one's actions, because, a **सर्वकर्मफलत्यागी** is a **कर्मयोगी** who naturally gives up the **कर्मफल** of all actions. A **कर्मयोगी** is in effect, a **सर्वकर्मसंन्यासी** - an absolute **संन्यासी**, a **ज्ञानी**. For a **ज्ञानी**, there is no **अहंकार** - no ego, no **कर्ता**, **कर्म**, or **कर्मफल** - no sense of doership, and hence no action or fruit of action.

Such a **ज्ञानी** is a **परमहंस परिव्राजक\*** - an embodiment of **परं ब्रह्म**, who has given up everything, which means, who remains dissociated with everything by reason of one's realization of **आत्मज्ञानं** - Self-knowledge and consequent Self-recognition -

Thus **भगवान्** points out again the power and glory of **सर्वकर्मफलत्याग - कर्मयोग** for Self-realization and Self-recognition, which is indeed **मोक्ष** - Total Fulfillment in life, Absolute Peace and Happiness. Further

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*\*An ascetic of the highest order*



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पञ्चेतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ॥ 18-13

Thus far, in this chapter, भगवान् has been talking about त्याग and संन्यास, with particular reference to कर्म, in response to Arjuna's opening question. Now, the topic changes. Now भगवान् extends the scope of His discourse to include the nature of कर्म itself, which is a big topic involving several aspects. We will be hearing Sri Krishna's words on this topic for the next several sessions. Calling attention to this change in topic, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna:

महाबाहो निबोध मे - मम वचनं निबोध

निश्चयं बोध - O! Arjuna, please understand this clearly from Me. Awaken yourself to this knowledge from My words, clearly, definitively and without any vagueness about it (निबोध). About what knowledge?

पञ्च एतानि सर्वकर्मणाम् सिद्धये कारणानि - Here कारण means हेतु - the causal means, the instrumental cause. Therefore, the knowledge here is about the five distinct factors, all of which together constitute the means, the instrumental cause, for the successful accomplishment of all actions.

Thus, Sri Krishna says "Arjuna, I am now going to talk about the five distinct factors, all of which together constitute the means, the instrumental cause, for the performance and successful accomplishment of any कर्म. Please listen to and understand these factors clearly, definitively without any vagueness. This knowledge is very important".

How important is that knowledge?

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि - The knowledge about these five factors, which together constitute the instrumental cause for any कर्म is so important that they are pointedly



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stated and very well explained in कृतान्त सांख्य - meaning Vedanta Sastra - The Upanishads. Let Me remind them to you again, says भगवान्

कृतान्त means Vedanta, that which is said at the end of कर्मकाण्ड of the Vedas, namely The Upanishads. सांख्य means knowledge that is presented concisely, precisely and completely. Thus कृतान्त सांख्य is another name for Vedanta Sastra - The Upanishads. What is presented in the Upanishads is knowledge for enlightenment, not entertainment. That knowledge has to be understood, appreciated, absorbed and utilized effectively for one's own total fulfillment in life. Reminding Arjuna about the knowledge unfolded in the कृतान्त सांख्य, on the five-fold factors constituting the instrumental cause for any कर्म, भगवान् says:

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा देवं चेवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥

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The five factors involved in successful performance and accomplishment of any कर्म are the following:

अधिष्ठानं means आयतनं. The base, the location from where all actions emanate, that is one's शरीर - one's physical body. One's शरीर - the physical body, is where all desires, likes, dislikes, pain, pleasure, knowledge, ignorance, etc. find expression in some form. Therefore, one's physical body is the अधिष्ठानं - the main base, the location, for all of one's actions.

तथा - Similarly

कर्ता - the second factor is कर्ता - the doer of the action. Now, who is the doer of one's action? The doer is one's अहंकार - one's "I" notion, one's ego, which considers itself as the doer of the action, and the experiencer of the fruit of the action. Thus, one's अहंकार - ego, is the second factor.



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करणं च पृथक् विधम् - the third factor is करणं - the different and distinct (पृथक् विधम्) instruments of actions, namely the कर्म इन्द्रिय and ज्ञान इन्द्रिय - the five organs of actions (speech, hands, legs, anus and the genitals) and the five organs of perception (ear, skin, eyes, tongue and nose) together with mind and बुद्धि.

First, one desires, and then one decides "Yes, I will do the action". Then, using one's organs of perception and action, one does the action. These means of action are manifold and diverse, each distinct from the other (पृथक् विधम्)

विविधा: च पृथक् चेष्टा - The fourth factor is the distinct and varied activities governed by पञ्च प्राणस - the five physiological functions of प्राण, अपान, व्यान, समान and उदान which are all vital for one's very existence. That means, the kinds of activities one does from time to time are governed by the atmosphere and the environment in which one breathes, one lives, and also the kinds of foods and drinks one consumes. Thus the activities of the पञ्च प्राणस, together constitute the fourth factor. Finally

देवं च अत्र पञ्चमं - indeed, the fifth factor here is देवं - the presiding Deities of all natural functionaries, which are collectively called The Laws of Nature, known and unknown. The word देवं here must be understood properly. Wherever there is a natural function, there is a natural law, not a man-made law, which governs the function.

Why do eyes see and not the ears? Why do ears hear and not the eyes? etc. Therefore, there should be some law governing each and every natural function in this creation. The laws which apply to my eyes are also applicable to every other pair of eyes. That is why science is possible, and all the applications of scientific research are also possible.

We must understand here that all such natural laws are also expressions of माया - the inherent power of परमेश्वर.

If one looks at परमेश्वर through these natural laws, each law becomes a देवता. All these देवताs are collectively indicated here as देवं. Therefore, the five underlying



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factors constituting the entire instrumental cause for the successful performance of any action are:

अधिष्ठान - one's शरीर - one's physical body

कर्ता - one's अहंकार - one's ego, the "I" notion

करणं - one's organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि

विविधाः चेष्टाः - one's पञ्चप्राणs - five physiological functions of प्राण अपान, व्यान, समान and उदान and their associated components; and

दैवं - the laws of nature, known and unknown

शरीरवाङ्मनोभिः यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः ।

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा पञ्चेते तस्य हेतवः ॥

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यत् कर्म प्रारभते नरः - whatever कर्म, whatever action a person performs

शरीर वाक् मनोभिः - by one's physical body, speech or mind

न्याय्यं वा विपरीतं वा - whether that action is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad

पञ्च एते तस्य हेतवः - these five underlying factors, together, are its means, its instrumental cause, and no other

Every कर्म, whether it is a शरीर कर्म, वाक् कर्म or मानस कर्म, whether it is a धर्म कर्म or अधर्म कर्म, every कर्म has, involved in it, all the five underlying factors indicated above, and no other, which means

- ✘ One's शरीर - the body alone is not the हेतु - the instrumental cause for any कर्म.
- ✘ One's अहंकार - ego, one's "I" notion alone is not the हेतु for any कर्म.
- ✘ One's organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि, that alone, is not the हेतु for any कर्म.



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- ✦ One's पञ्चप्राणs alone, are not the हेतु for any कर्म.
- ✦ The देवता s - The laws of nature alone are not the हेतु for any कर्म.

All the above five underlying factors, together constitute the हेतु - the instrumental cause for every कर्म, and there is no other हेतु involved in the performance and successful accomplishment of any कर्म. That means, in particular, आत्मा - The Self I in oneself, is not the हेतु - the instrumental cause involved in any कर्म, and hence आत्मा is not the doer of any कर्म.

Even though all कर्मs take place in the presence of आत्मा, and blessed by the presence of आत्मा, आत्मा itself does not perform any कर्म. आत्मा is अकर्ता - non-doer at all times. That is the message here.

Sri Krishna continues with this topic, which we will see next time.



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