



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः Chapter 18 Volume 5

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Sri Krishna has been talking about कर्म. Anything one does is कर्म. भगवान् says that every कर्म involves these five factors, together, and only these five factors, serving as the हेतु - as the instrumental cause for the performance and successful accomplishment of any कर्म. These five factors are:

✚ अधिष्ठान - the शरीर - one's physical body vehicle, from where all कर्मs emanate



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- ✚ कर्ता the doer, one's अहंकार - the ego, the "I" notion in the person, which considers itself as the doer of the कर्म
- ✚ करणं - the totality of one's organs of perception and action, including the five ज्ञान इन्द्रियाः, five कर्म इन्द्रियाः, and अन्तःकरण (mind and बुद्धि)
- ✚ विविधाः पृथक् चेष्टाः - The पञ्च प्राणः - the five distinct vital physiological functions, namely प्राण, अपान, व्यान, समान and उदान - respiration, waste elimination, blood circulation, reaction and digestion (or assimilation), all of which naturally include the external environment in which one lives and the foods and drinks one consumes. And, finally
- ✚ देवं The अधिष्ठान देवताः - the presiding Deities of all natural phenomena, manifested as the laws of nature, some known and mostly unknown

Every कर्म has all these factors involved in it, and no other. While individually, none of the above factors, by itself, is the causal instrument for any कर्म, all these five factors, together constitute the entire instrumental cause for the accomplishment of any कर्म, which means there is no other instrumental cause for any कर्म. That being the case, भगवान् continues:

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारं आत्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यति अकृतबुद्धित्वात् न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥

18 - 16

तत्रैवं सति - When that is the case, these five factors, just mentioned, are the means, the instrumental cause, for any कर्म to take place. That being so

तु यः केवलं आत्मानं कर्तारं पश्यति सः दुर्मतिः - If one sees, if one considers, that आत्मा - The Self I in oneself as the doer of कर्म, that person is दुर्मतिः

- that person is simply ignorant. That person does not understand what आत्मा is and



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what आत्मा is not. आत्मा is केवलं, meaning शुद्धं - Absolutely Pure, uncontaminated by any of those five factors.

Sri Krishna has already talked about आत्मा extensively. As भगवान् said earlier in Chapter 13, आत्मा is उपद्रष्टा अनुमन्ता च - The nature of आत्मा is Pure Consciousness, Pure Awareness, Pure Witness, in whose presence alone all actions take place in this शरीर - in this physical body. By lending Existence and lighting it up, आत्मा blesses every कर्म. Self-luminosity is the very nature of आत्मा. Just as the sun lights up everything under the sun, by its very nature, and it does not perform any कर्म, nor does it gets affected or contaminated by any कर्म that takes place under the sun, so is आत्मा.

All the five factors mentioned above (which together serve as the instrumental cause for any कर्म) are क्षेत्र धर्मs - the attributes of one's स्वभाव गुणs - one's incidental qualities born of the ever-changing expressions of one's सत्त्व-रजस्-तमस् गुणs of माया, whereas, आत्मा is क्षेत्रज्ञः - the very knower of all those five factors. That क्षेत्रज्ञ is, as the महावाक्य says (13 - 2)

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ॥

That क्षेत्रज्ञ, That आत्मा is परमेश्वर Itself. It is असंगः - unconnected, uncontaminated, uninvolved, and totally independent. Therefore, आत्मा is असंगः, and hence अकर्ता. आत्मा is not the कर्ता - the doer of any कर्म. If one considers that आत्मा is the doer of कर्म, that person is दुर्मतिः - that person is simply ignorant.

Why is one so ignorant? Because



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अकृतबुद्धित्वात् - that person's बुद्धि has not yet become mature enough to understand and recognize the nature of आत्मा as It is. That person needs वेदान्त आचार्य उपदेश - that person needs teachings of Vedantic Knowledge, taught by a qualified teacher of Vedanta.

वेदान्त उपदेश and आचार्य उपदेश are not two different things. वेदान्त उपदेश should be from an आचार्य, and आचार्य उपदेश should be on the basis of वेदान्त. Fortunately for us, Sri Narayana Itself, in the Form of Sri Krishna, is our teacher here, and the Vedantic knowledge Itself is a manifestation of That Sri Narayana. As Sri Krishna says in Chapter 15

वेदेश्च सर्वैः अहं एव वेद्यः

वेदान्तकृत् वेदवेदेव चाहं ॥ (15 - 15)

Hence, one needs a proper understanding of the entire भगवत् गीता in order to recognize clearly that आत्मा is अकर्ता. आत्मा - The Self I is NOT the doer of कर्म. If one does not have such clarity of understanding about the nature of oneself

पश्यति, सः न पश्यति - that person, even though he sees, he does not see, which means, even though one thinks that one knows all about oneself, one really does not know oneself. Further

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिः यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमान् लोकान् न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ 18 - 17

यस्य अहंकृत भावः न - That person for whom the egoistic notion of "I" as the कर्ता of a कर्म - as the doer of an action, is totally absent, and consequently

यस्य बुद्धिः न लिप्यते - whose बुद्धि does not get touched, affected or afflicted by any of one's नियत कर्मs - obligatory duties, done with सात्त्विक त्याग बुद्धि, giving



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up both कर्म सङ्ग and कर्म फल. Such a person is indeed a mature कर्मयोगी, a सर्वकर्मफलत्यागी, a सर्वकर्मसंन्यासी, an absolute संन्यासी, a ज्ञानी, an embodiment of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge. For such a कर्मयोगी इमान् लोकान् हत्वा अपि - even if he were to kill all these people standing in the battlefields as an obligatory duty (नियत कर्म) by virtue of one's prevailing station in life सः न हन्ति न निबध्यते - that person, in fact, neither kills, nor does he get bound to the पुण्य पाप कर्मs involved in such an act of killing, says भगवान् to Arjuna.

The above statement of Sri Krishna is not a divine sanction for any one kill anybody. The above statement is only meant to point out that आत्मा - The Self I in oneself is अकर्ता. आत्मा does no कर्म whatsoever.

We have already seen similar statements, both in the कठोपनिषत् (2-18 and 19), and also in भगवत् गीता (2-19 and 20). One may still raise a doubt here, by suggesting that while आत्मा by itself may not be the कर्ता of a कर्म - Doer of an action, It may still be so, in association with the body vehicle, इन्द्रियाs, etc.

This suggestion however is untenable, because, for any association with another object, one should have a form, a limb, or connecting part, and also, one should be subject to some change. आत्मा has no form; It has no limb, and It is never subject to any change. Therefore, आत्मा being असंगः - totally free, no association of any kind is possible for आत्मा.

Having thus pointed out that आत्मा is not one of the causes for कर्म, and कर्म is born entirely of one's मायागुणs, भगवान् now continues the discussion on the nature of कर्म in terms of one's मायागुणs. भगवान् says:



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ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥

18 - 18

कर्मचोदना त्रिविधा - There are three factors which together prompt a person to do कर्म. They are ज्ञानं, ज्ञेयं and परिज्ञाता.

ज्ञानं is knowledge, ordinary knowledge, some prior knowledge about the कर्म itself. Only then the question of doing the कर्म arises. One does कर्म only to accomplish something, only because there is something to accomplish. That something is the object of ज्ञानं and that is called ज्ञेयं. Therefore ज्ञेयं is what is desired to be accomplished by the कर्म; and परिज्ञाता is the one who has ज्ञानं (some prior knowledge about कर्म) and ज्ञेयं - one who knows what is desired to be accomplished by the कर्म, and also the will to do the कर्म. That person is परिज्ञाता. Thus ज्ञानं, ज्ञेयं and परिज्ञाता are the three factors, which together impel a person to do a कर्म. Again,

करणं कर्म कर्ता इति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः - Being impelled to do the कर्म by the three factors, namely ज्ञानं, ज्ञेयं and परिज्ञाता, one then performs the कर्म .

त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः - The performance of the कर्म itself necessarily involves three constituents. They are करणं कर्म and कर्ता

करणं - the means, the instruments, namely the organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि

कर्म - the details of the कर्म to be done, and

कर्ता - the person willing and ready to do the कर्म



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Thus करणं, कर्म and कर्ता are the three essential constituents involved in the performance of any कर्म.

When one has ज्ञानं - prior knowledge about the कर्म, ज्ञेयं - what is desired to be accomplished by the कर्म is decided by one's बुद्धि, and then, one becomes परिज्ञाता - the one who has ज्ञानं, ज्ञेयं and the will to do the कर्म. That परिज्ञाता subsequently becomes the कर्ता - the doer of कर्म.

Thus, in the matter of impelling a person to do the कर्म, and subsequently, in the performance of the कर्म itself, the factors involved are, ज्ञानं, करणं, कर्म and कर्ता - all of which are born of माया गुणs only.

भगवान् first talks about ज्ञानं, कर्म and कर्ता and then He talks about factors governing करणं . Talking about ज्ञानं, कर्म and कर्ता, भगवान् says:

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुणभेदतः ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावत् शृणु तान्यपि ॥

18 - 19

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधा एव गुणभेदतः

ज्ञानं - The knowledge about any कर्म, the details of the कर्म itself, and कर्ता च - the doer of the कर्म

त्रिधा एव गुणभेदतः - each one of these constituents is of three kinds, based on differences in one's गुणs , which means, with respect to ज्ञानं, there are three kinds, namely सात्त्विक ज्ञानं, राजस ज्ञानं and तामस ज्ञानं



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Similarly, with respect to कर्म, there are three kinds, namely सात्त्विक कर्म, राजस कर्म and तामस कर्म, and with respect to कर्ता, there are three kinds, namely सात्त्विक कर्ता, राजस कर्ता and तामस कर्ता. In each of these three kinds, there can be infinite shades and combinations, but in terms of predominance of गुण, there are only three kinds:

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने - All these three kinds, based on गुणs, are described in detail in गुणसंख्या - in Vedanta Sastra dealing with गुणs. This aspect of Vedanta Sastra is attributed to sage कपिल. भगवान् reminds Arjuna on कपिल शास्त्र here (ॐ कपिलाय नमः)

तानि अपि यथावत् श्रुणु - I will tell you about ज्ञानं, कर्म and कर्ता, just as they are told in कपिल शास्त्र. Please listen. भगवान् now describes what is सात्त्विक ज्ञानं.

सर्वभूतेषु येनेकं भावं अव्ययम् ईक्षते ।

अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तत् ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥

18 - 20

येन (ज्ञानेन) ईक्षते - That ज्ञानं - That Knowledge, by which a person is able to see, is able to recognize clearly, directly and immediately, what?

सर्वभूतेषु एकं भावं अव्ययं - in all beings in this creation, whether manifest or unmanifest, animate or inanimate, big or small, in all beings in this creation, a person is able to recognize clearly, directly and immediately

एकं अव्ययं भावं - ONE Supreme Being Which is never subject to change, which means, ONE आत्म वस्तु, ONE सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, ONE परमेश्वर, That ज्ञानं - That Knowledge. Further



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येन (ज्ञानेन) ईक्षते That ज्ञानं - That knowledge by which a person is able to see, is able to recognize, clearly, directly and immediately

एकं अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु - That ONE आत्मवस्तु, ONE परं ब्रह्म, ONE परमेश्वर remaining undivided, among all that appears divided in this creation

तत् ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकं - That ज्ञानं, That Knowledge must be understood and recognized as सात्त्विक ज्ञानं - ज्ञानं born of सत्त्व गुण. In other words, That ज्ञानं - That Knowledge by which a person is able to see, is able to recognize and appreciate clearly, directly and immediately that

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम् ॥

ब्रह्म एव इदं विश्वम् ॥

The ONE परमेश्वर, The ONE ब्रह्मन्, is in everything, everywhere, at all times, That ज्ञानं, That Knowledge is सात्त्विक ज्ञानं - ज्ञानं manifested by सत्त्व गुण. Such सात्त्विक ज्ञानं is obtainable only from श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं of Upanishad knowledge.

We will talk some more about सात्त्विक ज्ञानं before we go to राजस ज्ञानं and तामस ज्ञानं next time.