



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता
मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः
Chapter 18
Volume 7

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Sri Krishna has been talking about the different aspects of कर्म. Anything that one does is कर्म, whether it is by thought, word or deed. In the matter of impelling a person to do



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a particular कर्म, and subsequently in the performance of the कर्म itself, there are essentially four factors involved, and they are: ज्ञानं, करणं, कर्म and कर्ता, all of which are born of one's माया गुणs - one's सत्त्व, राजस् and तमस् गुणs prevailing at any particular time. Consequently, each one of the above four factors is of three kinds, based on the differences in one's गुणs. भगवान् has already talked about सात्त्विक ज्ञानं, राजस ज्ञानं and तामस ज्ञानं, and also about सात्त्विक कर्म, राजस कर्म and तामस कर्म. Now Sri Krishna is going to talk about कर्ता - the doer of कर्म.

Now, who is the doer of कर्म? Ordinarily, every one thinks of oneself as the doer of one's कर्म, and says so "I am the doer of the कर्म I do". Now, who is that "I"? For most people, The आत्मा - The Self I, The Universal Self I, as unfolded in the Upanishads, remains unrecognizable, because, the अन्तःकरण - the mind and बुद्धि of the person involved is not pure enough to transcend all of one's internal obstacles to reach the ब्रह्मपुरि region in one's own बुद्धि, where alone That आत्मा - The Universal Self I, is available for recognition. Therefore, for any ordinary person, the notion of self in oneself is only in one's अहंकार I - the ego I, the apparent I, one's ever-changing notion of I, undergoing varied experiences in life, so beautifully and effectively illustrated symbolically in the Mundaka Upanishad (3 - 1 - 1), in the language of an allegory of two birds abiding on the same tree, inseparably together. We may recall here the following verse from the Mundaka Upanishad:

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया
समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति
अनश्नन् अन्यः अभिचाकशीति ॥

MU 3 - 1 - 1

We saw this verse in detail not too long ago. As we have already seen in the Upanishads, आत्मा does no कर्म. आत्मा is always अकर्ता - non-doer. Until Self-



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realization, Self-recognition takes place, and the अहंकार I naturally disappears, the अहंकार I is the only कर्ता - the doer of action, every person naturally recognizes, and hence all of one's actions are naturally governed by one's स्वभाव गुणs - the सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस् गुणs of माया. Consequently, the कर्ता - the notion of doer I that every ordinary person has, is also of three kinds, namely सात्त्विक कर्ता, राजस कर्ता and तामस कर्ता.

Describing the लक्षण - the characteristics of a सात्त्विक कर्ता, भगवान् says:

मुक्तसङ्गः अनहंवादी धृति उत्साहसमन्वितः ।

सिद्धि असिद्धयोः निर्विकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ 18 - 26

मुक्तसङ्गः - The one who has no attachment to कर्म or कर्मफल - either to action itself or to the result of action, the one who does the कर्म simply because it is both right and necessary at this time, and it is to be done, and nothing more. Again

अनहंवादी - the one who does not talk about अहं - "I" all the time, which means, the one who does not entertain अहंकार - pride and egoism in whatever one does, the one who feels grateful for whatever one can do, and does it, with no trace of egoism or boasting about oneself. Again

धृति उत्साहसमन्वितः - the one who is endowed with firm perseverance and continued enthusiasm, the one for whom all of one's ज्ञानेन्द्रियs and कर्मेन्द्रियs - organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि, align themselves and continue to cooperate in the performance of the कर्म one is doing. Again

सिद्धि असिद्धयोः निर्विकारः - the one whose अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि remain unchanged, unperturbed and unaffected in the success or failure in one's शास्त्रविहितकर्म - in one's obligatory duties enjoined by the scriptures in terms of धर्म - one's proper conduct in life



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कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते - Such a person is called a सात्त्विक कर्ता - a doer of action born of सत्त्व गुण, predominantly सत्त्व गुण. We may note here that all the above लक्षणs - characteristics of a सात्त्विक कर्ता are those of a कर्मयोगी. That means, the one who is a कर्मयोगी is naturally a सात्त्विक कर्ता.

Now, about राजस कर्ता, भगवान् says:

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः लुब्धो हिंसात्मकः अशुचिः ।
हर्षशोक अन्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥

18 - 27

रागी - the one whose actions are all prompted by राग - cravings of various kinds, never considering whether they are proper or improper, the one who is pushed into action by the forces of one's own राग - cravings of various kinds. Cravings for what?

कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः - The one whose cravings are for कर्मफल all the time. The one who can never understand that कर्मफल - fruit of action does not belong to the कर्ता - the doer of action. The कर्ता has only कर्म to do, and has absolutely no claim whatsoever on कर्मफल - fruit of action. Again

लुब्धः - the one who is greedy. There are two kinds of greediness: One wants other people's wealth, property, etc.; the other kind is never willing to part with any of one's own wealth for any worthy charitable purpose or common good - The one who has greediness of any kind. Again

हिंसात्मकः - the one whose very nature is to hurt others, the one who derives some pleasure in hurting others

अशुचिः - the one who is devoid of cleanliness, both internal and external. Internal cleanliness is with reference to anger, hatred, jealousy, etc., and external cleanliness is with reference to one's body, clothing, food, environment, etc. The one who has neither internal nor external cleanliness



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हर्षशोक अन्वितः - The one who is susceptible to excessive elation (when desirable events occur) and excessive depression (when undesirable events occur)

कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः - Such a doer of action is well recognized as राजस कर्ता - one born of रजस् गुण, predominantly रजस् गुण.

Now, about तामस कर्ता

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृतिकः अलसः ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥

18 - 28

अयुक्तः - The one whose mind and बुद्धि are never focused, the one who is always disturbed, restless and indecisive

प्राकृतः - The one who is immature, one whose mind and बुद्धि have never undergone adequate discipline of thinking, the one whose बुद्धि has never gained clarity with reference to any field of knowledge. Again

स्तब्धः - The one who is like a pillar, unbending and irreverent in attitude. Again

शठः - means कपटः, वंचकः - the one who cheats, deceives and conceals oneself from one's real nature. The one who is unreliable and deceptive

नैष्कृतिः - The one who is cruel, and intent upon destroying others. The one who is malicious

अलसः - The one who is too lazy to do what needs to be done

विषादी - The one who is always depressed and complaining about something or other, without doing anything about it. and

दीर्घसूत्री च - The one who is also a procrastinator over everything one needs to do

कर्ता तामस उच्यते - Such a person is called तामस कर्ता - a कर्ता, a doer born of predominantly तमस् गुण.



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Having already talked about ज्ञानं, कर्म and कर्ता, भगवान् now talks about करणं - the instrument of action. Since all instruments of action ultimately depend on one's बुद्धि - one's faculty of judgment, and also धृति - how firm, how resolved one's बुद्धि is, भगवान् talks about करणं in terms of one's बुद्धि and धृति. Introducing the topic, भगवान् says:

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणतस्त्रिविधं शृणु ।
प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥

18 - 29

बुद्धेः भेदं - The difference in one's बुद्धि - in one's faculty of discrimination and decision
धृतेः भेदं चैव - and also the difference in one's resolve, in one's firmness of बुद्धि
गुणतःत्रिविधं - in terms of the three-fold गुणs
प्रोच्यमानं अशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन - which I am going to explain completely as well as separately
धनञ्जय शृणु - O! Arjuna, please listen. Now I am going to explain fully the differences in one's बुद्धि - faculty of judgment, as well as in one's धृति - resolve, firmness of that बुद्धि, in terms of the three-fold गुणs - सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस्. Arjuna, please listen.

When भगवान् says शृणु - please listen, it means the matter is not a trivial one in spite of its appearance. Now, describing सात्त्विक बुद्धि, भगवान् says:

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्या कार्ये भयाभये ।
बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥

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First, we must understand that बुद्धि and ज्ञानं are not the same; they are distinct from each other. ज्ञानं is knowledge, and बुद्धि is the receptacle, the container, the उपाधि for that knowledge. Sri Krishna has already talked about ज्ञानं. Now he talks about बुद्धि - the receptacle which is appropriate for containing that ज्ञानं. Only a सात्त्विक बुद्धि can accommodate सात्त्विक ज्ञानं.

What is सात्त्विक बुद्धि? भगवान् says: If the बुद्धि is capable of recognizing, understanding and appreciating the difference between प्रवृत्ति and निवृत्ति, कार्य and अकार्य, भय and अभय, and बन्धं and मोक्षं, then that बुद्धि is सात्त्विक बुद्धि, and it is an appropriate container for सात्त्विक ज्ञानं. Therefore, भगवान् says here:

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति - That बुद्धि which clearly recognizes प्रवृत्ति and निवृत्ति, which means the प्रवृत्ति मार्ग and निवृत्ति मार्ग

The प्रवृत्ति मार्ग is कर्म मार्ग, which is the way of life which is conducive to more and more worldly activity leading to greater and greater worldly prosperity, success and happiness, now and later, both in this life and in all future lives, and the निवृत्ति मार्ग is कर्मयोग मार्ग, which is मोक्ष मार्ग, and that is the way of life committed to total renunciation of कर्मफल of all actions, सर्व कर्मफलत्याग मार्ग, which is the same as सर्वकर्मसंन्यास मार्ग - a way of life totally dedicated to knowledge and service of the highest level with कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ईश्वरप्रसाद बुद्धि, which is conducive to gaining मोक्ष ultimately - liberation from all limitations and bondages, in this very life itself.



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The बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing clearly such प्रवृत्ति मार्ग and निवृत्ति मार्ग - such कर्म मार्ग and कर्मयोग मार्ग

कार्य अकार्ये च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति - the बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is proper and what is improper in daily life, taking into consideration time, place and circumstances

भय अभये च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति - the बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing what is to be feared and what is not to be feared. भय here is not fear itself. It is the object of fear. Therefore the बुद्धि which is able to recognize the object of fear, and hence what is to be avoided, and also the object about which there is no need for any fear

बन्धं मोक्षं च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति - the बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing what is बन्धं as well as बन्ध हेतु - what is bondage, as well as the cause for bondage, and also what is मोक्ष as well as मोक्ष हेतु - what is liberation, Real Freedom, as well as the means for liberation, the means for gaining Real Freedom

सा बुद्धिः पार्थ सात्त्विकी - O! Arjuna, That बुद्धि is सात्त्विक बुद्धि, बुद्धि born of सात्त्व गुण.

Let us be clear in our mind about what is सात्त्विक बुद्धि. The बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing what is कर्म मार्ग and what is कर्मयोग मार्ग, the way of life committed to ever increasing prosperity, success and happiness, and also the way of life totally dedicated to knowledge and service at the highest level with no trace of attachment either to कर्म or कर्मफल.

- The बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is proper and what is improper in daily life.
- The बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing the object to be feared, and the object from which there is nothing to be feared.
- The बुद्धि which is capable of recognizing what is bondage, as well as the cause for such bondage, and also what is liberation from any bondage and the means of gaining such liberation



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- The बुद्धि which recognizes that the cause for bondage is ignorance about the true nature of oneself, and the means for gaining freedom from all bondages is gaining Self-knowledge.

That बुद्धि which recognizes all the above is सात्त्विक बुद्धि - born of सत्त्व गुण.

Now about राजस बुद्धि

यया धर्मम् अधर्मम् च कार्यम् च् अकार्यम् एव च ।

अयथावत् प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥

18 - 31

यया बुद्धिः अयथावत् प्रजानाति - The बुद्धि by which one understands wrongly, one convincingly misinterprets the words of the scripture - about what?

धर्मम् अधर्मम् च कार्यम् च् अकार्यम् एव च - about what is proper and what is improper, and also about what is to be done and what is not to be done

सा बुद्धिः पार्थ राजसी - that बुद्धि is राजसी बुद्धि, बुद्धि born of रजस् गुण.

O! Arjuna. The बुद्धि born of रजस् गुण convincingly misinterprets scriptural mandates with respect to धर्म and अधर्म - what is proper and what is improper, and also with respect to कार्यम् and अकार्यम् - what is to be done कर्म and what is prohibited कर्म.

Now, about तामस बुद्धि

अधर्मम् धर्मम् इति या मन्यते तमसा आवृता ।

सर्वार्थान् विपरीतान् च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥

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या बुद्धिः तमसा आवृताः - the बुद्धि which is covered by ignorance, governed by false values, and because of that



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या बुद्धिः अधर्मम् धर्मम् इति मन्यते - the बुद्धि which considers अधर्मम् as धर्मम् - that which is improper as proper. Again

या बुद्धिः सर्वार्थान् विपरीतान् च मन्यते - the बुद्धि which views all things, all aspects of life as the opposite of what they really are, because of perverted thinking and judgment

सा बुद्धिः पार्थ तामसी - That बुद्धि is तामस बुद्धि, बुद्धि born of तमस् गुण

Thus तामस बुद्धि cultivates only improper judgment and intellectual degradation, which are not conducive to gaining आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge. Then भगवान् talks about धृति - one's resolve, one's firmness of बुद्धि, which we will see next time.