



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

हरिः ॐ

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता
तृतीयोऽध्यायः - कर्मयोगः
Chapter 3
Volume 1

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम्

अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं,
अंब त्वां अनुसन्दधामि, भगवत् गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

अर्जुन उवाच

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणस्ते, मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां, नियोजयसि केशव ॥ 3 - 1

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन, बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य, येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नयाम् ॥ 3 - 2

In the last 37 Scripture Reading Sessions, we have read the first two chapters of the भगवत् गीता in their entirety, followed by some introductory readings on Upanishads relating to

पुरुषार्थाः - Human endeavours towards various goals in life

उपनिषत्सु - how they form a distinct part of our Vedas, and also what exactly the word उपनिषत् means

वेदमहावाक्यसु - the great and concise declarations of our Scriptures

ॐ कार ध्वनि - what the sacred sound OM indicates

शान्ति पाठसु - the four Peace Invocations cited in our वेद मन्दिर, which we recite or hear, every week at this time; and

वेद उपदेश मन्त्रसु - the basic teachings of our Vedas, which also we recite or hear, every week at this time



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In addition, we have also read the two very important Upanishads, namely, ईशावास्य Upanishad and केनोपनिषत् in their entirety. All this is an essential part of ब्रह्मविद्या - a Knowledge which is extraordinary both in content and in purpose.

In content, this Knowledge is extraordinary because it unfolds our very roots, and talks about oneself - who one is, why one is, as what one is, what is the best one can be, and what one should do to realize the best and the highest one can be, both materially and spiritually.

Its purpose is even more extraordinary. It shows the means by which every one can reach the best and the highest in oneself, which means, to be one's true self.

ब्रह्मविद्या is not only about oneself, It is **oneself** itself, when properly understood, appreciated and realized, which means, when one becomes the very embodiment of that knowledge in thought, word and deed, then one discovers, in one's बुद्धि, that the best and the highest in all existence is already there, in oneself, as one's true self.

Such self-discovery, such self-realization, is possible only through the grace of परमेश्वर, gained through कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ज्ञान लक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति - which are precisely the topics of Enlightenment and discussion in all our scripture readings from now on.

As we may recall, सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः is the essential teaching of all our scriptures – स्मृति and श्रुति alike - Ramayana, Mahabharata, and all our Vedas, Upanishads, भगवत् गीता and also all glorious Hymns and devotional songs of all sages, past and present, born in the tradition of Vedanta - the tradition of Sanatana Dharma.

For an ordinary person, सत्यं वद means "Speak only what you know to be true", do what is proper, consistent with the values, traditions and the written and unwritten laws of the family in which you were born, the community to which you belong, and the society in which you live.

A person whose daily behaviour is governed by the Vedic Advice - the Vedic Commands – सत्यं वद and धर्मं चर is an ethical person.

To be ethical simply means to live with the dignity of a human being, and nothing more. To be ethical, one need not have to be religious or spiritual, and one need not have to worry about scriptures, God, etc. It is only common sense that a human being should be



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ethical, even in one's own self-interests and also in the larger interests of the society as a whole.

If you are not ethical, you are only hurting yourself and the society in which you live.

Most people are ethical most of the times, but that is not enough. Our Vedas attach the highest importance to ethical behaviour **at all times**, because that is **the** necessary requirement for the true progress in any kind of human endeavour.

If you are an ethical person, you will soon realize that life is much more than simply being an ethical person, and there is something more you can be, you can do, and you must do to fulfill yourself as a human being. What is it that you must do? The Vedas say:

स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः - Never neglect the study and assimilation of the teachings of our scriptures. Reading the scriptures again and again, one gains a fuller appreciation of the Vedic commands **सत्यं वद** and **धर्मं चर**. In particular, one realizes that there is a **सत्यं** - TRUTH - higher than all the truths one knows of, and there is a **धर्मं** higher than all the **धर्मं** one knows of, and at the highest level, **सत्यं** and **धर्मं** are indeed ONE and the same Being, and That Being is the Supreme Being, whose very nature is Ever Existent, All-conscious, All-Pervading, All-Inclusive and Unchanging.

Our Upanishads further point out that That All-pervading Supreme Being is the source of all freedom, all happiness, and all fulfillments in life. Thus the realization, the recognition of That All-pervading Supreme Being in one's own self, naturally becomes the ultimate goal of life for every human being.

How can one gain that realization? Again, the Vedic Advice **सत्यं वद** and **धर्मं चर** indicate the means for such realization. **सत्यं वद** is a **कर्म** - speaking the truth is an action. **धर्मं चर** includes all human actions, and every human being is only a bundle of actions.

If at the highest level, **सत्यं** and **धर्मं** are identical, then at the highest level **सत्यं** and **कर्म** must also be identical, which makes **कर्म** - every ordinary ethical **कर्म** - as the natural means for a human being to realize the highest **सत्यं** - the **परं सत्यं** in one's own self in one's own life time. That is an extra-ordinary prospect, especially in view of our common experience that **कर्म**s generally lead only to bondage, suffering and unhappiness.



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But our Scriptures point out that if only a person is totally ethical in every day life and also orders and reorders one's daily कर्मs appropriately, the very same कर्म, instead of being a source of bondage, suffering and unhappiness, becomes a means for gaining Absolute Freedom, meaning Absolute Happiness and Total Fulfillment in life.

When any ordinary ethical कर्म is so converted into a means for realizing परं सत्यं - The Highest Truth - the Supreme Being in oneself, that कर्म becomes कर्मयोग. कर्मयोग is the main subject matter of Sri Krishna's teachings in this and the next three chapters of the भगवत् गीता, which also establishes the connection between the Veda-Upanishad teachings, which we have been reading during the past few months, and the भगवत् गीता chapters which we will be reading from now on.

भगवत् गीता is स्मृति and श्रुति in ONE, which means that the context of this Teaching should be remembered, and the content of this teaching should be understood, reflected upon, appreciated and assimilated in its entirety in one's own daily life.

The third chapter of भगवत् गीता, which is entitled कर्मयोग, starts with a pertinent question from Arjuna. Before we start this chapter, let us briefly recall the mood of Arjuna at the end of chapter 2.

Arjuna is still feeling confused. To the already confused mind, Sri Krishna seems to have added more confusion by what He said in chapter 2. Seeing some contradictions in Sri Krishna's teachings to him, Arjuna wants, and seeks clarification from Sri Krishna.

Arjuna feels this way: "I told Sri Krishna clearly, what I did not want and what I did want.

न कांक्षते विजयं कृष्ण, न च राज्यं सुखानि च

1 - 32

Krishna, I do not want - I do not seek - I do not crave for - any victory, any kingdom, or the pleasures of the kingdom. Why? Because it is now clear to me that they cannot give any real happiness or fulfillment in life for me. Therefore, I do not want them.

What I want is यत् श्रेयः स्यात्. That which is श्रेयस्, meaning परम पुरुषार्थ, the Supreme Goal of Life, which is मोक्ष - Absolute Freedom from any kind of sorrow or distress - Absolute Happiness - Total Fulfillment in life - never subject to change. It is That श्रेयस् which I want. What action on my part under present circumstances will give me That श्रेयस् ?



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निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे - Please decide for me, and tell that to me in definite unambiguous terms. Why? Because

कार्पण्यदोष उपहत स्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां - My mind is so confused that I cannot decide for myself what I should do. Therefore,

शिष्यस्तेऽहं - please accept me as your disciple, please teach me what is the best for me to do to gain the श्रेयस् that I want. I surrender myself to you; I commit myself to your advice totally". So said Arjuna.

Thus it is clear that what Arjuna wants is श्रेयस् and not kingdom. Now, how did Sri Krishna respond to Arjuna's request? First, Sri Krishna started saying:

"अशोच्यान् अन्वशोचस्त्यं - Arjuna, all your concerns - all your sorrows and distress are misplaced. Why? Because on the one hand you say that you want श्रेयस्, and on the other hand all your concerns, sorrows and distress are only about प्रेयस्. They are only about the transient transactions of life."

Saying this, Krishna introduced आत्मज्ञानं - Self Knowledge to Arjuna.

" नासतो विद्यते भावो, नाभावो विद्यते सतः - You must realize what is सत् and what is असत्, what is नित्यं and what is अनित्यं, what is सत्यं and what is मिथ्या - what is real existence and what is transient existence. You mistake the transient as real, and that is the source of all your confusion. In order to resolve this confusion, you must learn to realize the nature of सत्यं, and then you will be able to treat the transient as transient, and the confusion will vanish naturally, and along with that, all consequences of such confusion will fall in their right places. Therefore, what you need is knowledge about सत्यं.

Having said that, Sri Krishna continued "आत्मा is सत्यं, and what you need is आत्मज्ञानं - knowledge about the nature of आत्मा, which is:

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि, नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो, न शोषयति मारुतः ॥

2 - 23

Atma is not subject to any change. Weapons cannot destroy Atma, fire cannot burn Atma, water cannot drown Atma and air cannot dry Atma.



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अच्छेद्योऽयं अदाह्योऽयं अक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।

नित्यः सर्वगतःस्थानुः, अचलोऽयं सनातनः॥ 2 - 24

Atma is beyond the reach of any cause of destruction. Atma is नित्यः - eternal, सर्वगतः - all-pervading, स्थानुः - ever stable, unmoving, अचलः - Immovable, because there is no place that It is not there, and It is सनातनः - Eternal and ever-new because of its infinite dimensions. Further

अव्यक्तोऽयं अचिन्त्योऽयं अविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।

तस्मात् एवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ 2 - 25

The Atma which we are talking about is

अव्यक्तः - unmanifest. It is not available as an object for one's comprehension

अचिन्त्यः - It is not available as an object for comparison or definition

अविकार्यः - It is not an object that is subject to change, either by Itself or by anyone else. So is the nature of आत्मा.

It is That आत्मा which is Real, and It is everywhere, in you, in me, in everybody else and in everything.

तस्मात् एनं एवं विदित्वा त्वं अनुशोचितुं न अर्हसि - "When you realize the nature of That आत्मा by a process of enquiry, you not only gain आत्मज्ञानं, you also become totally free from any kind of sorrow or distress." So said Sri Krishna.

Thus, it is clear, what Sri Krishna says is that Arjuna needs आत्मज्ञानं. But then, Sri Krishna also said:

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयः अन्यत् क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ 2 - 31

Look at your own situation from the point of view of स्वधर्म - your own duty. For a क्षत्रिय, there is no duty higher than protecting the धर्म of the society. And if that protection involves a war, and it has been left for you by ईश्वर to fight that war, then that is what you should do as कर्तव्य कर्म - as the duty to be done.



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तस्मात् उत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः 2 - 37

Therefore, Arjuna, उत्तिष्ठ - get up, wakeup to your duty, and be resolved to fight.

सुख दुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 2 - 38

In the performance of one's duty, there is no सुख or दुःख involved, because a duty is a कर्म to be done, and it should just be done, there is nothing more to it. सुख and दुःख - pleasure and pain do not come into the picture, as long as one's vision is on the duty to be done. Let not considerations of gain and loss, victory and defeat govern your action. Let there be no राग - passion for gain or victory. Let there be no द्वेष - hatred for loss or defeat.

युद्धाय युज्यस्व - Both in terms of mood and action, get ready to fight.
न एवं पापं अवाप्स्यसि - in performing your duty, you incur no sin. Not only that

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूः मा ते संगोऽस्तु अकर्मणि ॥ 2 - 47

कर्मणि एव अधिकारः ते, मा फलेषु कदाचन - You have power, you have a choice only with respect to your actions, and never over fruits of your actions at any time, which means that once you do your duty, your power - your choice ends there.
मा कर्मफल हेतुः भूः - Never become a हेतु - a means, an instrument for going after the fruits of actions. You are an an instrument only for doing कर्म, and not for going after कर्मफल.

मा ते संगः अस्तु अकर्मणि - Never develop an attachment to inaction. Inaction cannot remove your sorrow and distress.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगं त्यक्त्वा धनंजय ॥ 2 - 48

With that attitude of कर्मयोग बुद्धि, perform whatever कर्म you have to do in your circumstances, with absolutely no attachment whatsoever, either to the कर्म or to the कर्मफल.



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Thus Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to do the actions demanded by his duty. But, then again, Sri Krishna came back to the subject of आत्मज्ञानं in the last 18 verses of chapter 2, wherein he repeated again what one needed for शान्ति and मोक्ष - Peace and Freedom from any kind of sorrow - was आत्मज्ञानं - which is indeed the distinguishing characteristic of a स्थितप्रज्ञ.

आत्मनि एव आत्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञः तदोच्यते - The one who discovers आत्मा in oneself, by oneself

सः शान्ति अधिगच्छति - that person gains Peace.

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति

That is the state of ब्रह्मनिर्वाण - that is the state of Realization of आत्मा in oneself, at which state, one is totally and permanently released from all confusion, sorrow and distress - so said Sri Krishna.

Thus it is clear that what one needs for gaining श्रेयस् is आत्मज्ञानं. When that is the case, why does Sri Krishna ask me - Arjuna - to fight this war? Why does he not ask me to give up all worldly कर्मs and advise me to pursue आत्मज्ञानं exclusively - that is the thought occupying Arjuna's mind at the end of chapter 2. That is the Arjuna that we are seeing now. Now we go to chapter 3.

अर्जुन उवाच

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

तत् किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥

3 - 1

Having listened to Sri Krishna in the second chapter about कर्म and ज्ञानं, Arjuna understands that आत्मज्ञानं is what is needed for gaining श्रेयस्, and, that being the case, Arjuna cannot understand why Sri Krishna is pushing him into कर्म, however necessary it may be. In his mental confusion, Arjuna forgets the difference between कर्म and कर्मयोग, and looks upon कर्म as essentially irrelevant to - even opposed to आत्मज्ञानं.



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Therefore, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna the following question. Addressing Sri Krishna as जनार्दन and केशव, जनार्दन - means सर्वान्तरः - the one who is in all beings. जनार्दन is a name indicating महाविष्णु and केशव means क्लेशनाशनः - the one who destroys pains of all kinds, the one who removes all obstructions to one's spiritual upliftment. केशव is an expression indicating परमेश्वर.

We start all our religious ceremonies with the मन्त्र ॐ केशवाय नमः. It has the same significance as हरिः ॐ.

Addressing Sri Krishna as जनार्दन and केशव, Arjuna says

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणः, ते मता बुद्धिः

ते मता, तव अभिप्रायः - If it is your considered view that

बुद्धिः, आत्म बुद्धि आत्मज्ञानं - pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणः - is superior to - is better than the pursuit of worldly कर्म s,

तत् किं घोरे कर्मणि, मां नियोजयसि - then, in that case, why are you pushing me into this terrible action of fighting this war.

If it is your considered view that pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं is superior to the pursuit of worldly activities – कर्मs of various kinds - for gaining the श्रेयस् I seek, then why do you push me into this terrible action of fighting this war.

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।

तदेकं वद निश्च्यत्य, येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥

3 - 2

व्यामिश्रेण इव वाक्येन - By your words which appear as though they are contradictory,

मे बुद्धिं मोहयसि इव - it appears to me as if you are confusing my mind

इव - means as though, or as if. Arjuna uses this word twice, indicating that he is not trying to accuse Sri Krishna. He is only emphasizing the confusion in his own mind.

From what you say, it is आत्मज्ञानं that is needed for gaining श्रेयस्. Again, from what you say, it also appears to me that कर्म and आत्मज्ञानं are mutually incompatible and



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inconsistent, or mutually opposed to each other from the point of view of gaining श्रेयस्. But you advocate both कर्म and आत्मज्ञानं at the same time. That is confusing to me.

What I want is श्रेयस् - That is clear to me.

तत् - Therefore

एकं वद, निश्चित्य, येन श्रेयः अहं अवाप्नुयाम् - Please decide and tell me the ONE means by which I can gain श्रेयस् The परम पुरुषार्थ - Absolute Happiness -Total Fulfillment in life.

Should I go after कर्म, or should I go after आत्मज्ञानं - to gain श्रेयस् - please tell one of these two, to me, definitely and decisively. That is Arjuna's question and Arjuna's request. How Sri Krishna responds to Arjuna's request we will see next time.