



## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

### Chapter 4

#### Volume 5

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Recalling Sri Krishna's words which we saw last time

- कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।  
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् ॥ 4 - 18

The one who sees परमेश्वर in every action, and at the same time, sees every action in परमेश्वर, that person is wise among people. That person has mastered the art of living a life of total fulfillment, and that person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life, which means that person is a योगी – a ज्ञानी. Describing such a ज्ञानी, भगवान् says

- यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः काम संकल्प वर्जिताः ।  
ज्ञानाग्नि दग्ध कर्माणं तं आहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ 4 - 19



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः

यस्य - For that ज्ञानी, for the ज्ञानी described above

सर्वे समारम्भाः - all undertakings without exception, whatever the ज्ञानी undertakes to do, they are all समारम्भाः - सम्यक् आरम्भाः - they are all well-begun, meaning they have no obstructions to face, and hence they are bound to succeed for common good, because

काम संकल्प वर्जिताः - they are all totally free from desire-propelled deliberate action. They are not motivated by any isolated or selfish ends. संकल्प means a proposal to do something, to accomplish something or gain something.

Initially, a संकल्प is just a thought, a proposal for action in one's thought. Somehow, that thought has come into one's mind for reasons known or unknown. On further deliberation or further enquiry, one may decide to dismiss that thought - dismiss that proposal, for good reasons. Once that thought is dismissed, there is no संकल्प. Such dismissal of thought proposal is called विकल्प. Thus every संकल्प is subject to विकल्प - dismissal.

On the other hand, if one's natural likes and dislikes, राग and द्वेष, are such that one's mind tends to dwell on the original संकल्प continuously, very soon that संकल्प turns into a काम - a desire nourished and propelled by one's राग-द्वेष forces. As Sri Krishna said earlier (2-62) संग्रहात् संजायते कामः - once the संकल्प becomes a काम, it cannot be dismissed. It has to take the form of some deliberate action. Such deliberate action propelled by काम is called काम संकल्प.

भगवान् says: A ज्ञानी, by one's very nature is totally free from काम संकल्प - desire propelled deliberate action, because the ज्ञानी has already पूर्ण ज्ञानं. The ज्ञानी has identity with परमेश्वर in oneself, which means there is really nothing that a ज्ञानी does not have, and there is nothing that a ज्ञानी has to wish for or gain by any action.

If that is so, does a ज्ञानी do any कर्म at all? If so, what for? The answer is yes, certainly. The ज्ञानी does कर्म at all times. And that कर्म is कर्तव्यं कर्म - कर्म that needs to be done - that is तेन त्यक्तेन कर्म. कर्म that has been specially left for him to do as an active participant in this creation, by the very Grace of परमेश्वर. In doing that कर्म, there is no



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selfish gain involved. A ज्ञानी has only ईश्वर अर्पित कर्म dedicated to परमेश्वर as ईश्वर आराधनं - as worship of परमेश्वर.

If that कर्म is प्रवृत्ति कर्म - an ever increasing kind of कर्म, the ज्ञानी does that कर्म for लोक संग्रहं - for the welfare of the world. If that कर्म is निवृत्ति कर्म, an ever decreasing कर्म, the ज्ञानी does such कर्म for जीवन मात्रं - just to keep the body going, so that all the प्रारब्ध कर्मs associated with this body, totally exhaust themselves, leaving behind no trace whatsoever.

Thus all कर्मs of a ज्ञानी, whatever be their nature, are completely free from काम and संकल्प. That is why all कर्मs are समारम्भाः, संयक् आरम्भाः, well-begun, well undertaken to serve the welfare of the entire world. Being already a fulfilled person, he has no expectations or cravings with respect to कर्म. His कर्म is ईश्वर कर्म, and whatever comes out of his कर्म is the very glory of परमेश्वर. So is the vision of a ज्ञानी. Further,

### ज्ञानाग्नि दग्धकर्माणं

ज्ञानाग्नि - By that Fire of knowledge –

दग्धकर्माणं – all his actions, whatsoever be their nature, are incinerated and rooted out.

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः – The one who sees परमेश्वर in every कर्म and at the same time sees every कर्म in परमेश्वर as the very Glory of परमेश्वर, which is the same as what the ईशावास्य उपनिषत् says, namely

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मनि एव अनुपश्यति ।

सर्व भूतेषु च आत्मानं (अनुपश्यति)॥ (ईश – 6)

The one who sees clearly all beings in oneself, and at the same time, sees oneself clearly in all beings, which again is the same as what the कैवल्य उपनिषत् says, namely

सर्वभूतस्थं आत्मानं सर्वभूतानि च आत्मनि ।

संपश्यन् ब्रह्म परमं (याति) ॥ (कैव-10)



## ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Seeing clearly oneself in all beings, and at the same time, seeing clearly all beings in oneself, one reaches the Limitless ब्रह्मन्.

Such vision of oneself, such vision of this creation, such vision of ब्रह्मन्, परमेश्वर is पूर्ण ज्ञानं - totality of knowledge. Such पूर्ण ज्ञानं is ज्ञानाग्नि - the fire of knowledge. By that ज्ञानाग्नि - all his actions, whatever be their nature, are incinerated and rooted out in the ज्ञानी, as an individual जीव, which means that all कर्म's of the ज्ञानी are reactionless. No new कर्म can sprout from the कर्म of a ज्ञानी. That also means, for the ज्ञानी as an individual जीव, there is no आगामि कर्म, there is no कर्म to be held in storage waiting to be exhausted as कर्मफल in the future.

तं आहुः पण्डितं बुधाः - Such a ज्ञानी is called a पण्डित. A पण्डित is one who has परं ज्ञानं, आत्म ज्ञानं, ईश्वर ज्ञानं. A पण्डित is one who is बुद्धिमान्, युक्तः and कृत्स्न कर्मकृत्, as said in the previous verse. Thus a पण्डित is a wise person – a ज्ञानी. Who says that? बुधाः आहुः - those who are already wise say so, because, only the wise can recognize wisdom wherever wisdom is. Thus the ज्ञानी is a पण्डित because the ज्ञानी has total vision of परमेश्वर, and all the कर्म's of a ज्ञानी are only the manifestations of that total vision – पूर्ण ज्ञानं. Now we may recall what Sri Krishna said earlier in chapter 2 about पण्डिताs.

गतासून् अगतासून् च न अनुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः (2 - 11) - The पण्डिताs - the wise people, do not dissipate their energies, natural faculties by entertaining शोक, sorrow or distress, either with respect to the past events or with respect to the future events. On the other hand, realizing total reality as it is, by the total vision of परमेश्वर, the wise people do what needs to be done right now.

As the Upanishad says: न कर्म लिप्यते नरे - such actions do not and cannot bind a ज्ञानी. Further, continuing the description of a ज्ञानी, भगवान्, says:

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।  
कर्मणि अभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः ॥

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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

त्यक्त्वा - naturally and spontaneously giving up, releasing oneself from all bondages - bondages of what?

कर्मफल आसंगं त्यक्त्वा - आसंगं is fast attachment. कर्म आसंगं is कर्तृत्वं - fast attachment to action, which means, fast attachment to the notion " I am the doer, I am the कर्ता " and similarly, फल आसंगं is भोक्तृत्वं - fast attachment to the fruits of actions, fast attachment to the notion that I am the भोक्ता - I am the enjoyer of the fruits of actions. Thus

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं - releasing oneself naturally and spontaneously from attachments to actions and fruits of actions, the ज्ञानि has neither कर्म आसंगं, nor फल आसंगं, because, in the wake of पूर्ण ज्ञानं, all notions of doership and enjoyership vanish as a result of ज्ञानाग्नि दग्ध कमाणं - all कर्मs rooted out by the fire of knowledge and hence rendered reactionless. Thus,

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं - having gained release from the bondages of कर्मs and कर्मफलs, नित्यतृप्तः - the person has now become ever satisfied. The person is now ever full. The person is now कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् - the person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life. There is no more आकांक्ष -there is no more expectation of any kind

निराश्रयः - आश्रय रहितः - the person does not take recourse to any action for accomplishing any पुरुषार्थ - any goal of life. The person does not seek any साधनं, any external means for any self-fulfillment. The person is free from all dependence for one's happiness, which means that the person has now reached a state of आत्मनि एव आत्मना तुष्टः as भगवान् said earlier (2-55), the person has now discovered happiness in oneself by oneself in the wake of ज्ञानं, आत्म ज्ञानं, ईश्वर ज्ञानं. Consequently,

कर्मणि अभिप्रवृत्तः अपि - even though the ज्ञानी is enthusiastically engaged in ever increasing actions

नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः - सः किञ्चित् एव न करोति - the ज्ञानी does not do any action whatsoever. He has no notion of doership in his actions. He is just doing whatever कर्म has been left for him to do by ईश्वर. There is nothing for him to gain by his actions, those around him, his family, community, world at large - gain something and that is the part that has been left for him to do by ईश्वर. Again

निराशीः यत चित्तात्मा त्यक्त सर्व परिग्रहः ।



शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन् न आप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

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If the ज्ञानी is engaged only in निवृत्ति कर्मs, ever decreasing mode of actions, living a life of minimum actions, such a ज्ञानी is again

निराशी: - one from whom all राग-द्वेष rooted desires have vanished;.

यतचित्तात्मा - he is one for whom all internal and external organs of perception and action are always kept under control. For a ज्ञानि, the चित्त - the faculties of thinking and recollection, and ज्ञान इन्द्रियाs and कर्म इन्द्रियाs - the organs of perception and action are just instruments to be used only when they are needed. Otherwise they are to be kept under total control, and in total readiness, safely in the tool box.

त्यक्त सर्वपरिग्रह: - a ज्ञानी is one who has given up all sense of possessions

परिग्रह - is a possession held with great avidity, greed, and/or a sense of ownership. A ज्ञानी has no परिग्रह. He possesses nothing. He is only a trustee of whatever is held by him. Further,

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन् - whatever कर्म he does, it is only for the purpose of sustaining this physical body

केवलं - indicates, even with respect to his physical body, the ज्ञानी has no sense of possession. He has been blessed with a physical body, which he has to sustain for the purpose for which it is intended. The only purpose for this physical body is to exhaust all प्रारब्ध कर्म and free oneself from all संचित and आगामि कर्मs, all past and future कर्मs and कर्म फलs. Further,

कुर्वन् अपि न आप्नोति किल्बिषं - even though doing various कर्मs for sustaining the physical body, the ज्ञानी does not get any किल्बिषं पाप or पुण्य - he is not contaminated by undesirable or desirable results of such कर्मs, because,

ज्ञानाग्नि दग्धकर्माणं - as far as he as a जीव is concerned, all कर्मs have already been incinerated and rendered harmless by ज्ञानं - by पूर्ण ज्ञानं - total vision of परमेश्वर. Further,

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्यापि न निबध्यते ॥

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यदृच्छा-लाभ संतुष्टः - A ज्ञानी is always संतुष्टः - as Happy as Happiness can be. What is he happy about?



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यदृच्छा लाभः - he is happy with whatever he gets without going after anything. What he does is ईश्वर कर्म and what he gets is ईश्वर प्रसाद - the very grace of परमेश्वर.

What he does is only an expression of संतुष्टः. What he gets again is only an expression संतुष्टः - Therefore a ज्ञानी is always संतुष्टः, as happy as happiness can be. That happiness is ब्रह्मानन्द - Limitless Happiness.

A ज्ञानी goes after nothing. He always has अलं बुद्धि, अलं means "enough". Whatever he has at this moment is enough for him. If he does not seem to have something at this time, it only means that he does not need it now. If he does need something at any time that will surely and naturally come to him in time. There is no need to go after anything. This is अलं बुद्धि - the realization of absolute happiness, the state of total fulfillment in daily life. Again

द्वन्द्वतीतः - द्वन्द्व अतीतः - A ज्ञानी is beyond the reach of the forces of द्वन्द्व - pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, profit and loss, success and failure, etc. Even though his physical body may be affected by such pairs of opposites, his बुद्धि remains unaffected, because of his vision of total reality, total vision of परमेश्वर. A ज्ञानी is a बुद्धिमान् - Being a wise person

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः - Such a बुद्धिमान्, as Sri Krishna said earlier (2 - 56)

दुःखेषु अनुविग्रमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः - in times of pain or sorrow, he is not agitated and in times of pleasure or comfort, he has no craving for more. Further

विमत्सरः - विगत मत्सरः - a ज्ञानी is always free from मत्सर - envy, jealousy or चैर बुद्धि - any sense of enmity and

समः सिद्धौ असिद्धौ च - a ज्ञानी remains the same, remains unaffected in success and failure. A ज्ञानी is ever free from elation and depression.

All this Sri Krishna said earlier with respect to a कर्म योगी. The distinguishing characteristics of a कर्म योगी and a ज्ञान योगी are the same. The difference is only in the degree of maturity. In कर्म योग, all these characteristics are साधन - means which



are deliberately cultivated by understanding and discipline. In ज्ञान योग, all these characteristics are natural and spontaneous. Further

कृत्वा अपि न निबध्यते

कृत्वा अपि - even though a ज्ञानी is engaged in actions

न निबध्यते - he does not get bound to any actions, because for a ज्ञानी, in all actions, there is only परमेश्वर and nothing else, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं. Hence, all कर्मs are ईश्वर कर्मs, यज्ञ कर्मs and he himself is free from any कर्म - न कर्म लिप्यते नरे, and that is the very nature of यज्ञ कर्म. Further,

गतसंगस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थित चेतसः ।

यज्ञाय आचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥

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गत संगस्य मुक्तस्य - The ज्ञानी naturally releases himself from all bondages. He is spontaneously free from पाप and पुण्य which are all causes for bondage

ज्ञानावस्थित चेतसः means ज्ञान अवस्थित चेतसः - his mind and बुद्धि are firmly rooted in आत्म ज्ञानं - in परमेश्वर in oneself. He is God-conscious at all times

यज्ञाय आचरतः कर्म - he is enthusiastically engaged in all his कर्मs as यज्ञ कर्म - totally dedicated to परमेश्वर

समग्रं प्रविलीयते - by virtue of his आत्म ज्ञानं - पूर्ण ज्ञानं - totality of knowledge, all bondages of कर्मs and कर्म फलs get instantaneously destroyed, even as the कर्म is being done. That is the nature of यज्ञ कर्म - कर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर.

Sri Krishna has already talked about यज्ञ कर्म before in chapter 3, verses 9 to 11, with reference to a कर्म योगी. In the next verse, भगवान् describes the same यज्ञ कर्म as it is for a ज्ञानी, with reference to a Havan ritual, taken as an illustration, but the same knowledge applies to any कर्म performed as यज्ञ कर्म.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतं ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना ॥

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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

For a ज्ञानी, everything that is involved in any यज्ञ कर्म is ब्रह्मन्, and nothing but ब्रह्मन्. The कर्ता - the Doer, the करणं - the means used for doing the कर्म, the action that is done and the कर्म फल - the result of the action, **all that**, is only ब्रह्मन्. That is what is being pointed out in this verse. With reference to a Havan ritual, form a ज्ञानि, ब्रह्मार्पणं means अर्पणं ब्रह्म. अर्पणं is the instrument by which you make the oblation in a Havan. If you make the oblation with your hand, the hand is the अर्पणं. If you use some kind of spoon to make the oblation, that spoon is the अर्पणं. For a ज्ञानि, that अर्पणं, that instrument by which the oblation is made, is nothing but ब्रह्मन्.

How can one see ब्रह्मन् in the अर्पणं, the instrument by which the realization that other than ब्रह्मन् there is nothing else? Just as the one who has knowledge of gold does not miss seeing gold in a gold bracelet, the bracelet has no existence independent of gold. If you remove the form and name from the bracelet, what remains is really gold. Other than gold, there is nothing else in the bracelet. For enjoying the bracelet as gold, no change in bracelet is needed. In a similar manner, the अर्पणं - the instrument used in the यज्ञ कर्म is non-separate from ब्रह्मन्. When I say "This is अर्पणं, this is the instrument by which I offer oblation, that अर्पणं is non-separate from my own consciousness, because of my knowledge of that instrument. That knowledge is established in my consciousness which is ONE with ब्रह्मन्.

In a similar manner, if one analyzes anything that exists, it exists first, and then only it exists in some form and name. Its very existence – सत् स्वरूप is its निर्विशेष स्वरूप - its unqualified attributeless nature. That existence, that सत् स्वरूप is ब्रह्मन्. That attributeless, unqualified सत् स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् is the invariable basis, changeless basis of any existent object with a Form and a Name.

A ज्ञानी, when he sees an object, sees that existence itself - the सत् स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् because of which alone that object exists. Thus, for him, अर्पणं is ब्रह्मन्, and it is non-separate from ब्रह्मन्. Similarly,

ब्रह्म हविः - that which is called हविस् - the oblation, that is also ब्रह्मन्  
ब्रह्माग्नी - the agni, the fire into which the offering is made, that is also ब्रह्मन्



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## ब्रह्मचिदा **Brahma Vidya**

ब्रह्मणा हुतं - the one by whom the हविस् - the oblation is offered, that person is also ब्रह्मन्. All that is done in terms of oblation, ritual, etc. is ब्रह्मन्

If everything is ब्रह्मन्, what is it that is to be achieved by such यज्ञ कर्म ?

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं -तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म एव - The purpose, the end to be achieved by the यज्ञ कर्म is also ब्रह्मन्.

By whom is this purpose, this end achieved?

ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना - By the one whose बुद्धि is in समाधि. By the one whose बुद्धि abides, totally absorbed in the knowledge that the यज्ञ कर्म is indeed ब्रह्मन्, which means कर्मणि ब्रह्म यः पश्येत् - the one who sees ब्रह्मन् the परमेश्वर, in every कर्म, which is the meaning of the original statement namely कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत्, अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

That is the लक्षण - the distinguishing characteristic of a बुद्धिमान्, a ज्ञानी, so says Sri Krishna.

Food and eating is an all important function in our daily life. Eating proper food at proper time is a sacred यज्ञ कर्म in our tradition – कर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर. Knowledgeable people usually recite this verse before eating, in a prayerful and contemplative mood

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविः ब्रह्मग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतं ।  
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥

Then we eat our food as यज्ञ कर्म – कर्म dedicated to परमेश्वर, recognizing परमेश्वर within oneself. We will see more about यज्ञ कर्म next time.