



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

Chapter 4

Volume 6

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This whole chapter, chapter 4, which we are now reading, is devoted to **सम्यक् आत्म दर्शनं** - gaining a clarity of vision of one's own Self. The vision of **ब्रह्मन्** is all that exists in this entire creation, through **कर्म योग** in the form of **यज्ञ कर्म**. Any **कर्म** that helps in bringing that clarity of vision to oneself is a **यज्ञ कर्म**.

The nature of a **यज्ञ कर्म** is that it ultimately leads one to the realization that one's transient nature is subject to change, and it can be changed so that one can recognize by one's own self, one's true changeless existence as the all-pervading **ब्रह्मन्**. Thus,



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every यज्ञ कर्म is a form of कर्म योग, leading to ज्ञान योग and संयक् आत्म दर्शनं - clarity of vision of oneself as one really is. Sri Krishna has been talking about यज्ञ कर्म with particular reference to a Havan ritual. For a कर्म योगी, every कर्म is a यज्ञ कर्म, which means that every कर्म is a kind of Havan, and what applies to a Havan ritual, applies to every कर्म done as a यज्ञ कर्म.

In one's daily life, every कर्म can be a यज्ञ कर्म in terms of understanding, attitude, discipline, effort, proper conduct, etc. For example,

- ⇒ when you eat only what you should eat, and never anything you should not eat
- ⇒ when you hear only what you should hear and never hear what you should not hear
- ⇒ when you see only what you should see, and never see what you should not see, etc.

even all this is यज्ञ कर्म for a कर्म योगी.

In all such यज्ञ कर्मs what is involved is self-control, शम, दम and त्याग - control of one's mind and बुद्धि - instruments of perception and action, and also a sense of renunciation. Such self-control is like fire in a Havan. All such यज्ञ कर्मs ultimately find their total fulfillment in ब्रह्मज्ञानं - clarity of the vision of ब्रह्मन् in every action, and indeed in everything that exists, including oneself. That is the content of today's verses.

Let us now see how Sri Krishna brings out this message. Sri Krishna says "Many varieties of यज्ञ कर्मs are described in our Vedas. For example:

दैवम् एव अपरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।

ब्रह्माग्नौ अपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैव उपजुहति ॥

4 - 25

योगिनः अपरे (च) दैवम् यज्ञं एव पर्युपासते

योगिनः - The कर्म योगीs

अपरे (च) - and also among people like you and me, some of them



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दैवं यज्ञं एव पर्युपासते - they perform देव यज्ञ - which means they offer ritualistic worship to देवताs like अग्नि, वरुण, वायु, इन्द्र, etc. or in the names of शिव, विष्णु, दुर्गा etc.

All our Temple पूजाS come under the category of देव यज्ञ. Such देव यज्ञs bring about some peace of mind and also अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - purification in our thought processes which ultimately make our mind and बुद्धि fit for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं

अपरे ब्रह्माग्नौ (देव) यज्ञं पर्युपासते - On the other hand, those who are already ज्ञानीs, some of them

अपरे ब्रह्माग्नौ देव यज्ञं पर्युपासते - they also perform देव यज्ञs, but they perform देव यज्ञs as ब्रह्म यज्ञ. How do they do that?

ब्रह्माग्नौ - अग्नौ ब्रह्म संपश्यन् - The ज्ञानी sees ब्रह्मन् in the अग्नि देवता, and likewise in every देवता, whatever be its name and form. Thus with संयक् ब्रह्म दर्शनं - with the clear vision of ब्रह्मन् in every देवता, the ज्ञानी performs the यज्ञ कर्म as ब्रह्म यज्ञ. Further यज्ञं यज्ञेन एव उपजुहति - which means आत्मानं आत्मना एव उपजुहति. A ज्ञानी offers, in terms of knowledge and attitude, one's entire self by one's entire self into that ब्रह्मन्, which means a ज्ञानी offers all of one's sense of perceptions, including mind and बुद्धि, into that ब्रह्मन् by one's act of worship, with the full realization that all that exists is only ब्रह्मन् - with full realization ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं.

By dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर through such worship, the ज्ञानी surrenders individual consciousness. Thus the individual consciousness naturally merges into the ocean of total consciousness. व्यष्टि consciousness resolves naturally into समष्टि consciousness.

Thus when a ज्ञानी performs देव यज्ञ - worship of ईश्वर in any form, he is in a state of संगमं - holy confluence of व्यष्टि चैतन्यं and समष्टि चैतन्यं - holy confluence of the individual consciousness of oneself and the total consciousness of every self that there is - the cosmic consciousness - the totality of knowledge. Such यज्ञ कर्म is ज्ञान यज्ञं. Further,



श्रोत्रादीनि इन्द्रियाण्यन्ये सम्यम अग्निषु जुहति ।
शब्दादीन् विषयानन्ये इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥

4 - 26

Two diametrically opposite types of यज्ञ कर्मs are described here. In one case, the fire for the यज्ञ is control of the organs of perception. In the other case, the organs of perception themselves constitute fire for the यज्ञ.

Since there are several organs of perception, and each one of them has to be controlled, each control is a fire in the यज्ञ कर्म. Thus there are several fires in the यज्ञ कर्म. That is why the plural अग्निषु is used in this verse. One kind of यज्ञ कर्म is

श्रोत्र आदीनि इन्द्रियाणि अन्ये सम्यम अग्निषु जुहति. Some योगीs - some people offer their sense organs into the fire of self-control, which means that they deny the sense objects to the sense organs. For example, they may choose to close their eyes for some time every day, as a matter of self-discipline. They may deny their tongue certain kinds of food, etc. By such self-denial or self-restraint, they try to turn their mind and बुद्धि towards परमेश्वर. This kind of कर्म योग is called संयम योग.

On the other hand, there are some other योगीs - there are some other people, who do just the opposite. What do they do?

शब्दादीन् विषयान् अन्ये इन्द्रिय - अग्निषु जुहति - They offer the sense objects such as - शब्द, स्पर्श, रूप, रस, गन्ध - sound, touch, form, taste and smell as यज्ञ, as धर्म कर्म into the fires of the sense organs - the ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue and the nose, and also the mind and बुद्धि, keeping all of them under full control at all times. This is full and effective use of sense organs for enlightenment.

If you offer the eyes, everything which gives pleasure to the eyes, and the tongue, everything that gives pleasure to the tongue, etc. that is not यज्ञ कर्म. That is indeed foolish indulgence which will surely lead to self-destruction.

On the other hand, if you offer the eyes, everything that is proper and necessary to see for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - self-knowledge and deny the eyes those things which should not be seen, and in a similar way, if you follow the principle of going as far as you can, so long as it is proper and necessary, but never do anything improper with respect to every sense object and every sense organs, such a kind of यज्ञ कर्म- कर्म योग is called



नियम योग - control of actions governed by propriety - right conduct at all times.

Such **नियम योग** is conducive to the fullest development of one's abilities of perception and action, and ultimately to one's ability to gain **आत्म ज्ञानं** - self-knowledge. When the sense objects fed to the sense organs are of unquestionable propriety in terms of **धर्म** leading to **मोक्ष**, then the **इन्द्रियाः** - the sense organs, including mind and **बुद्धि**, become the fire for the **यज्ञ कर्म**.

Total withdrawal of sense organs from sense objects is relatively far easier, compared to the proper and the fullest enjoyment of sense objects by the sense organs, without ever being improper. It is this later kind of self-control, the **नियम योग**, which is the characteristic of a **स्थितप्रज्ञ**, as we may recall Sri Krishna's words in chapter 2:

राग द्वेष वियुक्तैस्तु विषयान् इन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादं अधिगच्छति ॥

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विषयान् इन्द्रियैः चरन् - Experiencing the world of objects, using fully and effectively, all your **इन्द्रियाः** - all your faculties of perception and action, doing whatever is to be done, and never doing whatever should not be done, and at the same time,

आत्मवश्यैः इन्द्रियैः - keeping all of one's instruments of perception and action under one's full control

विधेयात्मा प्रसादं अधिगच्छति - a self-controlled person gains **प्रसाद-बुद्धि**

That is **कर्म योग**. That kind of **कर्म योग** is **नियम योग**. Such **नियम योग** is **यज्ञ कर्म**. Further,

सर्वाणि इन्द्रिय कर्माणि, प्राण कर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्म संयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥

4 - 27

On the other hand, those who are already **ज्ञानीः**, those who already have **ब्रह्म ज्ञान**,

ज्ञानदीपिते - those who are already enlightened by **ज्ञानदीपं** - by the shining light of the lamp of knowledge which leaves no shadows of ignorance about oneself in one's **बुद्धि**, which means that those who already have **विवेक ज्ञानं** (we will see more about **ज्ञान दीपं**



in chapter 10 -11). Thus, those who are already ज्ञानीs, they offer आत्म संयम योग as यज्ञ.

In the previous verse Sri Krishna talked about संयम योग. Here He talks about आत्म संयम योग, which is the same as ध्यान योग - control of the mind through meditation, which means getting the mind absorbed in सत्, चित्, आनन्द स्वरूप आत्मा - सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म - the प्रमेश्वर in oneself.

ध्यान योग is another form of कर्म योग; ध्यान is, as the गीता ध्यानं says:

ध्यानावस्थिततद्गतेन मनसा, पश्यन्ति यं योगिनः :

ध्यान अवस्थित - with the mind held steadfast, unperturbed and absorbed in the ज्ञान वस्तु, The ब्रह्मन्
तत् गतेन मनसा - all thoughts are flowing towards and emptying into the ब्रह्मन्, the प्रमेश्वर in oneself.

That state of mind is called आत्म संयम योग, which is possible for ज्ञानदीपिते - those who are already enlightened on the nature of जीव-जगत् and ईश्वर. For such enlightened ones, आत्म संयम योग is the अग्नि in the यज्ञ कर्म, where they empty सर्वाणि इन्द्रिय कर्माणि, प्राण कर्माणि च. In the fire of आत्म संयम योग, which means in the fire of ईश्वर ध्यानं, they empty all actions of their इन्द्रियs, including their physiological functions of प्राण, अपान, व्यान, उदान and समान (respiration, evacuation, circulation, reaction and assimilation or digestion).

For the enlightened ones, all the इन्द्रिय कर्मs and प्राण- कर्मs join the ocean of ब्रह्मन्. All कर्मs are naturally resolved only in ब्रह्मन्. Further,

द्रव्ययज्ञाः तपोयज्ञाः योगयज्ञाः तथापरे ।

स्वाध्याय ज्ञानयज्ञाः च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥

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तथा अपरे - Likewise, there are other people who do other kinds of यज्ञs. For example, such people are द्रव्ययज्ञाः, तपोयज्ञाः, योगयज्ञाः, स्वाध्याय यज्ञाः and also ज्ञान यज्ञाः. They are all यतयः and संशितव्रताः

यतयः - means those who are full of effort, interest and dedication, which means श्रद्धा, and

संशितव्रताः - means those who are of firm resolve. Their श्रद्धा is not transient or of temporary nature. Their श्रद्धा is deep rooted; therefore,

यतयः संशितव्रताः - All the people about whom we are now talking, are people who are full of efforts, firm resolve and deep rooted श्रद्धा. For them, their efforts and deep rooted श्रद्धा constitute the अग्नि - the fire in the Havan of their यज्ञ कर्म. Who are those people? They are:

द्रव्ययज्ञाः - Those who offer their material wealth as यज्ञ कर्म - those who give away their wealth with proper attitude and dedication to various kinds of ईश्वर कर्मs, कर्मs contributing to the material and spiritual progress of the society as a whole. Such people are called द्रव्ययज्ञाः.

Proper attitude means what? That means दत्तं, न मम - once given, the wealth does not belong to me any more. I have no right or any claim on account of it. I feel more free, I feel more fulfilled on account of such giving" that is the proper attitude. Such giving is द्रव्य यज्ञ.

तपो यज्ञाः - Those for whom तपस् is यज्ञ कर्म are called तपो यज्ञाः. They live a life of enlightened discipline at all times, with firm resolve, and श्रद्धा in whatever that they are doing. Such तपस् is primarily to overcome one's राग-द्वेष forces, and cultivate one's will power to follow the path of धर्म under all circumstances.

योग यज्ञाः - Those who are totally committed to one or more of the योगs described in the Vedas, such as, for example

शम-दम-योग - control of mind and organs of perception and action

नियम योग - adhering to the path of धर्म at all times, under all circumstances

आसन योग - discipline of the body and the mind through Yoga exercises

प्राणायाम योग - control of body and mind primarily through breathing exercises

प्रत्यहार योग - Abstaining from certain activities as a matter of discipline



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धारण योग - Fixing the mind and बुद्धि on something for a length of time

ध्यान योग - Meditation

समाधि योग - absorption, etc.

All these are forms of कर्म योग, and those who are committed to one or more of these are called योग यज्ञाः. Similarly,

स्वाध्याय यज्ञाः - Learning to recite properly the Vedas in the tradition of one's own family is स्वाध्याय with श्रद्धा - with dedication, keeping it in memory and communicating that knowledge to others in the community, again, in the proper manner with श्रद्धा and dedication. That is called स्वाध्याय यज्ञ, and those whose major occupation is such स्वाध्याय यज्ञ are called स्वाध्याय यज्ञाः. Again,

ज्ञान यज्ञाः - The ज्ञान यज्ञाः are people who are totally dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and service at the highest possible level at all times. In addition to the pursuit of objective knowledge and related services, they also learn, study, understand, appreciate and practice the content of Vedas and Upanishads, and they pass on that understanding and appreciation to others in the community who are qualified to receive that knowledge. Thus there are a number of यज्ञ कर्मs described in the Vedas. Continuing, भगवान् says

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणे अपानं तथा अपरे ।

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायाम परायणा : ॥

4 - 29

In this verse Sri Krishna makes particular mention of one of the योग यज्ञ कर्मs, namely प्राणायाम - breathing exercises, which is considered to be very good for cultivating discipline and also good health. प्राणायाम has three components in one. they are पूरकं, रेचकं and कुंभकं. पूरकं is inhalation, filling up the lungs with air. रेचकं is exhaling - outgoing breath - emptying the lungs. कुंभकं is holding the breath, either inside or outside. अन्तः कुंभकं is holding the breath inside and बहिः कुंभकं is holding the breath outside.

By controlling the duration of each one of these three components, one can achieve certain results. There is obviously some close relationship between one's mental state and one's mode of breathing. Unwholesome mental situations such as fear, lust, anger,



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etc., disturb and hinder the flow of breath. Similarly wholesome mental atmosphere such as calmness, contentment, etc. leads to rhythm, steadiness and smoothness in breathing.

The practice of **प्राणायाम** as an exercise is not an easy one. While its correct practice can be beneficial, its incorrect practice can be harmful. Some people practice **प्राणायाम योग** as **यज्ञ** by controlling their **रेचकं**, **पूरकं** and **कुंभकं** - by controlling their breathing out, breathing in and holding the breath inside or outside. That is what this verse says:

अपरे प्राणायाम परायणाः - Some people practice **प्राणायाम योग** as **परायणं**, which means for them, **प्राणायाम योग** is **परं अयनं** - Supreme Abode – **ब्रह्मन्** itself, the highest destination to be reached, which means that they are totally committed to **प्राणायाम योग**. How do they practice **प्राणायाम योग** ? **भगवान्** says:

अपाने जुहति प्राणं - **प्राण** is **रेचकं** - outgoing breath and **अपान** is **पूरकं** - inhalation.

They offer the **प्राण**, the outgoing breath as **अहुति** - as oblation, in the fire of **अपान** - the inhalation, which means when they inhale, they take the air in a controlled manner deliberately. They do not breath out involuntarily.

तथा - in a similar manner

प्राणे अपानं जुहति - They offer **अपान** - the incoming breath as **अहुति** - as oblation in the fire of **प्राण** - the outgoing breath, which means that they breath out for the full length of time needed, preventing inhalation in the meantime. Again, the discipline is continued by:

प्राणापान गती रुद्ध्या

प्राण गती रुद्ध्या - stopping the movement of the outgoing breath, which means holding the breath inside, and also

अपान गती रुद्ध्या - stopping the movement of the ingoing breath, which means holding the breath outside. Therefore,

प्राणापान गती रुद्ध्या means cultivating discipline by **कुंभकं**, holding the breath inside or outside.

That is how they practice **प्राणायाम योग**. Those who practice such **प्राणायाम योग** are called **प्राणायाम परायणाः**. If practiced properly, the practice of **प्राणायाम योग** as **यज्ञ** is another form of **कर्म योग**. It brings about certain tranquility in the mind which is



conducive to gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. In the next verse, Sri Krishna refers to one more kind of यज्ञ called नियत आहार यज्ञ.

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुहति ।
सर्वे अपि एते यज्ञविदः यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥

4 - 30

अपरे - Some people cultivate discipline by

नियत आहाराः - regulating or restricting their food. It is not just dieting, it is much more than that. Food in a general sense includes all sensory activity - food for the ear, food for eyes, food for touch, taste, smell, etc.

प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुहति - They offer the प्राणाs - physiological functions, into the प्राणाs as आहुति - as oblation. That is यज्ञ.

That means, by controlling one kind of activity, one also controls every other kind of human activity. That is the discipline here.

सर्वे अपि एते यज्ञविदः - All these people who cultivate discipline through the various kinds of यज्ञाs described above, they are all यज्ञ विदः - they are knowers of यज्ञ कर्म. They know what यज्ञ कर्म really means, because

यज्ञ क्षपित कल्मषाः - their sins are destroyed by their यज्ञ कर्मs. They redeem themselves from the obstructions to their spiritual progress by their यज्ञ कर्मs. Thus, citing the various kinds of यज्ञ कर्मs, Sri Krishna points out that performance of यज्ञ कर्म is the only way for redeeming oneself from obstructions to one's spiritual progress. That is Sri Krishna's message today.

Sri Krishna has more to say on यज्ञ कर्म which we will see next time.