



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

Chapter 4

Volume 7

यज्ञ शिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनं ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति अयज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ 4 - 31

एवं बहुयविधा यज्ञाः वितताः ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान् विद्धि तान् सर्वान् एवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ 4 - 32

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् ज्ञान यज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ 4 - 33

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनः तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ 4 - 34

Sri Krishna has been talking about कर्म योग practiced in the form of various यज्ञ कर्मs in daily life, such as देव यज्ञ, ब्रह्म यज्ञ, द्रव्य यज्ञ, तपो यज्ञ, स्वध्याय यज्ञ, ज्ञान यज्ञ, प्राणायाम यज्ञ, नियताहार यज्ञ, etc. to point out that performance of यज्ञ कर्मs is the only way for uplifting oneself from all kinds of obstructions to one's spiritual progress.

When one does any kind of the above यज्ञ कर्मs, what does one get out of it? भगवान् says:

यज्ञ शिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनं ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति अयज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुत्तम ॥ 4 - 31

यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृतभुजः Those who enjoy what is left over after performing the यज्ञ कर्म, are called यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यज्ञ शिष्टं means यज्ञ शेषं - what is left over after performing the यज्ञ. That यज्ञ शिष्ट is अमृतं, means प्रसादं. Therefore, यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः means, those who eat what is left over after performing यज्ञ कर्म, those who eat the प्रसाद of यज्ञ कर्म.

When we do देव यज्ञ - any kind of पूजा to a देवता, we always offer some food to the देवता. After performing the यज्ञ, that food is no longer what it was before, It is now प्रसादं. Therefore, with respect to people who perform देव यज्ञ, यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः means those who eat the प्रसाद of यज्ञ कर्म.

Now, with respect to people who do other kinds of यज्ञ कर्मs which do not involve any food as such, for them, whatever they get as a result of their यज्ञ कर्म is प्रसाद for them. Therefore, whatever be the kind of यज्ञ कर्म that one does, यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः means those who live a life of यज्ञ कर्मs, enjoying the results of their यज्ञ कर्मs as the very Grace of परमेश्वर.

यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनं - They ultimately go to ब्रह्मन्, reach ब्रह्मन्, which is eternal, which means they gain ब्रह्म ज्ञानं in due course. The word यान्ति means गच्छन्ति - they go or they reach, which indicates that some time factor (some distance) is involved here.

Simply because one eats some good food, one does not grow up all of a sudden. It takes time to grow. Similarly, every यज्ञ कर्म is only a kind of discipline. यज्ञ कर्म is not ब्रह्म ज्ञानं. Simply because one lives a life of discipline and also धर्म, one does not gain ब्रह्म ज्ञानं. यज्ञ कर्म is only a pre-requisite, and it is a necessary pre-requisite, for gaining ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, because it makes the mind and बुद्धि fit for gaining ब्रह्म ज्ञानं.

If such यज्ञ कर्म is also simultaneously followed by श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं - listening and understanding, reflection and absorption of Upanishadic knowledge, one can ultimately reach ब्रह्म सनातनं - one can gain ब्रह्म ज्ञानं. One can recognize ब्रह्मन् everywhere and in everything, including in oneself.

That is with respect to one who lives a life of यज्ञ कर्म. Now what about one who has no यज्ञ कर्म at all in one's daily life. Such a person is called अयज्ञः - one who has absolutely



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

no discipline and consequently cannot live a life of धर्म at all times. Regarding such अयज्ञः, भगवान् says:

अयज्ञस्य न अयं लोकः अस्ति - This world is not for such अयज्ञ, which means such a person cannot enjoy even the ordinary pleasures of life that this world offers to every one, whether one is a ज्ञानी or an अज्ञानी, whether one is enlightened or not. Even to enjoy the ordinary pleasures of life, one must lead a life of यज्ञ कर्म - self-control, discipline and renunciation (त्याग बुद्धि) in daily life. That being the case

कुतोऽन्यः - कुतः अन्यः - For such an अयज्ञ, for the one whose daily life is devoid of यज्ञ, where is the question of gaining the superior joys of life arising from ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, which requires not only यज्ञ कर्म but much more

कुरुसत्तम - O! Arjuna

एवं बहु विधा यज्ञाः वितताः ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान् विद्धि तान् सर्वान् एवं ज्ञत्वा विमोक्षयसे ॥

4 - 32

एवं बहु विधाः यज्ञाः वितताः ब्रह्मणो मुखे

एवं - In this manner, in the manner described earlier

बहु विधाः यज्ञाः - many varieties of यज्ञ कर्मs वितताः are described and elaborated.

ब्रह्मणे मुखे means वेद द्वारेण - through the Vedas, in the Vedas. Thus many varieties of यज्ञs - disciplines and actions are elaborated through the sounds of the Vedas. Vedic words are not mere words. They are more than words. They are शब्द प्रमाण. They are indicators of knowledge beyond the scope of words. The Vedic words describing यज्ञs - rituals of various kinds, have to be understood properly. The most important thing to understand about all यज्ञs - all rituals is the following

कर्मजान् विद्धि, तान् सर्वान्

विद्धि - Addressing Arjuna, भगवान् says

विद्धि you must understand clearly, what?



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तान् सर्वान् कर्मजान् - all the यज्ञs are कर्मजान्, कर्म born, which means that every यज्ञ - every ritual, whatever be its name and form, is only a कर्म. It is not ब्रह्मज्ञानं. By doing a कर्म, one cannot gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge.

Sri Krishna tells here something very significant. "Arjuna, you say that you want श्रेयस्, the परम पुरुषार्थ - the highest goal of life. That श्रेयस् is मोक्ष, and That is ब्रह्मज्ञानं - that श्रेयस् is not the result of a यज्ञ कर्म or any कर्म. You must clearly understand the nature of कर्म, what it can do and what it cannot do." What are the things that a कर्म can do?

उत्पत्ति, कर्म can produce something that is potential
संस्कार, कर्म can purify, and it can bring something back to its original state
विकार, कर्म can change something from one form to another form. कर्म can modify one into another, and
आप्तिः, कर्म can get something that is already there. कर्म can make one reach a place that is already there.

All the above four attributes of कर्म do not apply to मोक्ष, because मोक्ष cannot be produced. It is not an object. To realize that "I am ब्रह्मन् " is मोक्ष. Between the knower and the known, there is no distance.

मोक्ष cannot be purified. It is ever pure.

नित्य शुद्धः - It cannot be contaminated with anything

मोक्ष cannot be changed or modified, because it is not subject to any change

मोक्ष is identical with आत्मा - the SELF, which is all-pervasive

What is all-pervasive need not be reached. What is to be reached should be away from you, and it should be different from you. मोक्ष is neither away from you nor different from you. The moment you want to reach मोक्ष, you are already moving away from मोक्ष. मोक्ष is being yourself.

That is the nature of कर्म and मोक्ष. But there is no contradiction between कर्म and मोक्ष. They are not opposed to each other. You need कर्म to become fit for मोक्ष. The only कर्म



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

that can make you fit for मोक्ष is यज्ञ कर्म, and that is indeed कर्म योग. Thus यज्ञ कर्म is मोक्ष साधनं, the means for gaining मोक्ष.

एवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे - Understanding the nature of कर्म in this manner, you gain release from all mistaken notions of कर्म. You will then be able to appreciate the glory of कर्म as यज्ञ कर्म, as the only means for gaining मोक्ष.

If यज्ञ कर्मs are the means for gaining मोक्ष and there are so many different kinds of यज्ञ कर्मs, then what kind of यज्ञ कर्म is best suited for gaining मोक्ष as early as possible? Obviously, all यज्ञs cannot be equal, since each one is different from the others in terms of कर्म फलs. That being the case, what is the best kind of यज्ञ कर्म which is most conducive to gaining मोक्ष ? Answering this question, भगवान् says,

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् ज्ञान यज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥

4 - 33

परंतप - O! Arjuna. परंतप literally means one who totally destroys one's enemies, both internal and external enemies. परंतप is one of the most endearing names for Arjuna. O! Arjuna.

श्रेयान् ज्ञानयज्ञः - ज्ञान यज्ञ is superior to all other forms of यज्ञ. ज्ञान यज्ञ is total commitment and dedication to knowledge and service at the highest possible level, at all times. Such ज्ञान यज्ञ is the best among यज्ञs for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं.

The people who are committed to the pursuit of ज्ञान यज्ञ are those who not only learn the Vedas and the Upanishads, which means both objective knowledge and spiritual knowledge, properly with dedication, understanding and appreciation, they also practice the content of that knowledge in daily life. They also pass on that knowledge to others in the community, who are qualified to receive that knowledge, as service to परमेश्वर and the world at large. In other words, ज्ञानयज्ञ is the way of life for such people.

To start with, ज्ञानयज्ञ is also a साधन - a means, a discipline for gaining मोक्ष. However, as the person matures in such discipline, one ultimately grows up to be a ज्ञानी - a wise person. ज्ञानी means one whose nature is कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्यत्, अकर्मणि च कर्म यः.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

The ज्ञानी is one who sees, who recognizes परमेश्वर in every कर्म, and at the same time recognizes every कर्म as the Glory of परमेश्वर. For such a person, as Sri Krishna said earlier

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणाहुतं ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥

Thus for an enlightened person, for a ज्ञानी, every कर्म is a ब्रह्मयज्ञ, a ज्ञानयज्ञ. Such ज्ञानयज्ञ is श्रेयस् and is superior to द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात्, यज्ञs which involve only objects or materials of some kind because a द्रव्यमय यज्ञ - a यज्ञकर्म involving only objects and materials of some kind is only an initiator of results – कर्मफलs. An ordinary person does such यज्ञ for a purpose in view. यज्ञ being a कर्म, naturally produces some results which initiate another action, another यज्ञ, another action, etc., and the process is endless.

On the other hand, in ज्ञानयज्ञ, ज्ञानं itself is the result. It does not produce any result external to oneself. While ज्ञानयज्ञ does not produce any material result, it does accomplish something. The accomplishment is सिद्धस्य सिद्धिः. It is the accomplishment of something that is already accomplished, which means, it is the realization and enjoyment of the fact that one is already a सिद्ध पुरुष, a पूर्ण पुरुष - a full person, a free person, free from all bondages.

Anything that is produced at a particular time is subject to disappearance at another time. Thus any created object is bound by time. It is अनित्यं - not eternal. मोक्ष is not created, that is why it is नित्यं - eternal. मोक्ष is not an event in time. It is already there. It is already ONESELF. तत् त्वं असि - That you are, says the Upanishad. "अहं नित्य मुक्तः - I am ever Free" Realization of that knowledge - Recognition of that freedom is ज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ईश्वरज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge.

An action which makes you fit for gaining that ज्ञानं is ज्ञानयज्ञ. Such ज्ञानयज्ञ is superior to any other kind of यज्ञ. Therefore perform every कर्म, not only as यज्ञ, but as ज्ञानयज्ञ. Let everyone of your actions be an enlightened action. Because, Sri Krishna says

पार्थ - O! Arjuna



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

सर्व कर्म अखिलं - all actions without exception

ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते - find their total fulfillment in ज्ञानयज्ञ

Just as a river reaches its destination when it joins the ocean, all actions which constitute the river of कर्म, performed as ज्ञानयज्ञ कर्म, find their total fulfillment in ज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ईश्वरज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं - Self knowledge, which is the destination of ज्ञानयज्ञ. आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge itself is मोक्ष - freedom. Between आत्मज्ञानं and मोक्ष, there is no distance, which means that between ज्ञानयज्ञं and मोक्ष there is no distance. Between every other kind of यज्ञ and मोक्ष there is some distance. That is why ज्ञानयज्ञ is superior to all other forms of यज्ञकर्म.

How can one do every कर्म as ज्ञानयज्ञ? In other words, what is the means for gaining आत्मज्ञानं - Self Knowledge, which will enable one to do every कर्म as ज्ञानयज्ञ ? भगवान् says

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनः तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

That which will enable one to do every कर्म as ज्ञानयज्ञ is total commitment to knowledge and service at the highest possible level at all times. What that means with respect to Self-knowledge is being told here. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna - which means you and me

तत् विद्धि - Learn that means of gaining आत्मज्ञानं by प्रणिपातेन, परिप्रश्नेन, सेवया by the three- fold means of श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं

प्रणिपातेन - प्रणिपातेन literally means, by falling at the feet of the teacher. Let us understand this. The teacher is only परमेश्वर. There is really no other teacher. Thus, प्रणिपातनं is only ईश्वर शरणागति - mind and बुद्धि being totally surrendered to परमेश्वर. That परमेश्वर is already within oneself as सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप आत्मा - as one's Pure consciousness, consciousness totally free from one's कर्म generated माया गुणs. One's Pure consciousness is the real and the only teacher. That pure consciousness is the eternal limitless ब्रह्मन्.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

All teachings - Vedas, Upanishads and the भगवत् गीता arise directly from ब्रह्मणो मुखं - from that ब्रह्मन् - from that pure consciousness only. Therefore, भगवान् says "Learn to surrender your mind and बुद्धि totally, to your pure consciousness and learn to listen and understand the teachings arising from that pure consciousness in you, at all times. Being tuned to one's pure consciousness at all times is, being God-conscious at all times."

When your mind and बुद्धि become ready for being in such God Consciousness at all times, ready to listen to the words of the Vedanta, an appropriate teacher in some form and name will already be there to help you to remove all apparent obstructions to Vedantic knowledge. Approach that teacher with proper attitude, and listen to the words of Vedanta being explained to you by the teacher, just as Arjuna is doing right now. Such listening and understanding is श्रवणं by प्रणिपातनं, the first step in the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. The next step is

परिप्रश्नेन - by repeated questioning of your own understanding of the words of the Upanishads, by your own self, in your own self, and thereby resolving all your doubts through your own means of logic. This step is called मननं - reflection on the teachings of the Upanishads.

Because of the peculiar make-up of one's own mind and बुद्धि, the questions which arise in one's mind are peculiar to oneself. Therefore, the mode of reflection is different for different people. No person other than yourself can clear the doubts that arise in your mind. If someone tries to clear your doubts, that will only create other doubts. Therefore, मननं - reflection can only be by your own self. No second person is involved in your own process of reflection on the words of the Upanishads. Thus मननं is the second step in the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. The third and the final step is

सेवया - by service. By doing every कर्म as सेव - Service. Service to परमेश्वर - कर्म totally dedicated to परमेश्वर. Every सेव is only ईश्वर सेव. Service to anybody, to any cause or anything is only service to परमेश्वर. Service to one's own self, rooted in whatever ईश्वर ज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge that one has. Such service is निदिध्यासनं - absorption of Upanishadic knowledge gained by श्रवणं and मननं in daily life.



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ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus this three-step process श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं - प्रणिपातेन, परिप्रश्नेन, सेवया - this three-step process is the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं, and for doing every कर्म as ज्ञानयज्ञ. In this three step process, the very first process is प्रणिपातनं - going to a teacher seeking ब्रह्म ज्ञानं. If you seek ब्रह्मज्ञानं with proper attitude,

ज्ञानिनः - the enlightened people

तत्त्वदर्शिनः - those who have the clear vision of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - spiritual knowledge

ते ज्ञानं उपदेक्ष्यन्ति - they will teach you that knowledge. Why?

Because that is the nature of an enlightened person. Just as a lighted lamp naturally lights another lamp, an enlightened person enlightens another person naturally, if only that other person is ready for such enlightenment, just as Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna just now.

By these words, Sri Krishna is not suggesting that Arjuna should go to some other teacher to gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं. Sri Krishna is just telling the क्रम - the उपाय - the proper means for gaining Self Knowledge. Arjuna already has a great teacher in Sri Krishna, whom he did approach with proper attitude, and from whom he is already gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. So it is for all of us. If we approach Sri Krishna in the भगवत् गीता with proper attitude, we will also, likewise, gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं from the भगवत् गीता, by the very Grace of Sri Krishna.

When one gains ब्रह्मज्ञानं through the three step process of श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं, then what happens? That we will see next time