



श्रीमद्भगवद् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

Chapter 4

Volume 8

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इति

श्री मद्भगवद्गीतासु उपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्री कृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानकर्म संन्यासयोगो नाम
चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

As we may recall Sri Krishna's message last time: Perform every कर्म not simply as यज्ञकर्म, but as ज्ञानयज्ञकर्म rooted in ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ईश्वरज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं, ईशाचास्यं इदं सर्वं ज्ञानं. The means for gaining that ब्रह्मज्ञानं is तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया । 4 – 34

When you are ready, when your mind and बुद्धि are ready for ब्रह्मज्ञानं, follow the three-step process of प्रणिपातनं, परिप्रश्नं and सेव

- With a spirit of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति - total surrender to परमेश्वर, as you see it, and with a total commitment to follow the guidance of your own pure consciousness, at all times, approach a qualified teacher with proper attitude, and seek ब्रह्मज्ञानं - self-knowledge from the teacher.
- Then reflect on the content of that teaching by yourself, in yourself, until all your doubts are cleared, and then,
- do every कर्म as ईश्वर सेव - service to परमेश्वर, being just an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर at all times, under all circumstances.

Through such process of learning and discipline, you will ultimately gain पूर्ण ब्रह्मज्ञानं. When that happens, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna

यत् ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहं, एवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतानि अशेषेण, द्रक्ष्यसि आत्मनि अथो मयि ॥

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पाण्डव - O! Arjuna

यत् ज्ञात्वा यत् ब्रह्मज्ञानं ज्ञात्वा - on gaining that ब्रह्मज्ञानं

पुनः एवं मोहं न यास्यसि

पुनः - again

एवं मोहं - this kind of delusion arising from confusion in mind

न यास्यसि - you will never get

Once you gain that ब्रह्मज्ञानं, you will never again get this kind of मोह - delusion caused by mental confusion with which you are suffering now.



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Having heard this much teaching already from Sri Krishna, Arjuna is no longer the same person he was before Sri Krishna started teaching in chapter 2. The nature of ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं - Self-knowledge is such, that it does not allow मोह to come back. A मोह gone, is gone for ever. But only in chapter 18 Arjuna tells Sri Krishna: नष्टो मोहः My delusion is gone; करिष्ये वचनं तव - I will do as you say"

That means from here to chapter 18, Arjuna is seeking further and further clarification of the teachings and the knowledge which have already been imparted to him, and Sri Krishna gladly teaches him further, because, as भगवान् said earlier

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति तेज्ञानं ज्ञानिनः तत्त्वदर्शिनः - The enlightened people are always willing to impart आत्मज्ञानं to anyone who seeks that knowledge. Further, भगवान् continues येन - by that आत्मज्ञानं, ईश्वरज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं भूतानि अशेषेण द्रक्ष्यसि आत्मनि - you will see all beings in this creation, without exception, in your own self. अथो मयि - also, at the same time, in ME the परमेश्वर as well.

You will see all beings, without exception in yourself, and simultaneously in ME too. That means: You are Myself - तत् त्वं असि I am You. there is nothing other than Myself the परमेश्वर, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं as the Upanishad says.

In chapter 11, Sri Krishna blesses Arjuna with Divine eyes so that he can see Sri Krishna in His Cosmic Form, and seeing Sri Krishna as परमेश्वर, Arjuna bursts out in exuberance of joy with these words:

पश्यामि देवान् तव देव देहे - I see in You all Gods and the entire Universe, etc. That is in chapter 11 which we will see later. That is the Glory of आत्मज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं. येन भूतानि अशेषेण, द्रक्ष्यसि आत्मनि अथो मयि - By the आत्मज्ञानं you will see the whole creation in your own self and simultaneously in ME too. Not only that

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः, सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव, वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥ 4 - 36

अपि चेत् असि (त्वं) पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः - Even if you are a super sinner among all sinners



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

पापकृत् तम : - the superlative among sinners, even if you are such a person

सन्नरिष्यसि - you will be able to cross easily and safely

सर्वं वृजिनं - the ocean of all sins. How?

ज्ञानेन प्लवेन एव - entirely by the boat of ज्ञानं - wisdom

Even if you are a super sinner among sinners, you will be able to cross easily and safely the entire ocean of sin, by the boat of ज्ञानं - wisdom, which means, the true nature of any sin is only lack of wisdom. With ज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं - wisdom, all sins, all obstructions to happiness simply vanish. That is the glory of ज्ञानं - Wisdom, and every कर्म rooted in such ज्ञानं, ब्रह्मज्ञानं is ज्ञानयज्ञकर्मयोग.

Happiness is one's true nature. Any obstruction to happiness is पापं, and पापं is only lack of wisdom. The path of wisdom is open to everybody, whatever be one's present state of maturity, so says Sri Krishna. Continuing, भगवान् says,

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निः भस्मसात् कुरुतेऽजुन ।

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ॥

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अर्जन - O! Arjuna

यथा समिद्धः अग्निः : एधांसि भस्मसात् कुरुते

यथा - Just as

समिद्धः अग्निः - the fire in full flame,

एधांसि भस्मसात् कुरुते - reduces the pieces of firewood totally to ashes

तथा - similarly

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते - The fire that is wisdom - ब्रह्मज्ञानं - reduces

सर्वकर्माणि all actions - good actions, bad actions, all actions being done, to ashes, which means that all actions, even as they are being done, are rendered seedless or rootless. They cannot sprout further. They cannot produce any further action or reaction. Thus

ज्ञानं - wisdom, which is

सम्यक् आत्मा दर्शनं - a clear vision of the nature of one's own self as ब्रह्मन्, renders all actions even as they are being done, into actionlessness itself, because that is the nature of आत्मा .



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

In सम्यक् दर्शनं - in the clarity of vision of आत्मा, the notion of कर्ता - the notion that I am the doer of a कर्म, that notion itself is wiped out. When there is no कर्ता - the doer, all actions in the account of the doer as संचित कर्म and आगामि कर्म, all such actions are wiped out.

संचित कर्मs are actions done in all of one's previous births, which are still in the seed form, waiting for maturity to sprout into future births, and आगामि कर्मs - are कर्मs yet to come in one's present life time. On gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं - on gaining self-realization, both संचित कर्मs and आगामि कर्मs are wiped out, but not one's प्रारब्ध कर्मs, which are कर्मs which have already started yielding their fruits as one's present life.

A प्रारब्ध कर्म is like a released arrow. It will have to go through its course until its momentum is exhausted. Thus प्रारब्ध कर्मs can be exhausted only through experiences in this life time. That means, even a ज्ञानी has got to go through the प्रारब्ध कर्मs until they are exhausted. ब्रह्मज्ञानं cannot wipe out प्रारब्ध कर्म. प्रारब्ध कर्म is in the hands of परमेश्वर. It is ईश्वर आधीनं.

That I was born to such and such parents is my प्रारब्ध कर्म. It is ईश्वर कर्म. It cannot be changed, whether I am a ज्ञानी or not. When a जीव - a person gains ब्रह्मज्ञानं that can destroy only जीव कर्म, and not ईश्वर कर्म. Thus going through सुख and दुःख in daily life is something that nobody can avoid, whether one is a ज्ञानी or not. But on gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं, one gains release from all संचित and आगामि कर्मs naturally. Therefore, भगवान् says:

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पक्वित्रं इह विद्यते ।
तत् स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेन आत्मनि विन्दति ॥

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हि - Indeed

पक्वित्रं - in its capacity to restore the original purity of one's mind and बुद्धि

ज्ञानेन सदृशं इह न विद्यते - there is nothing in this world comparable to, or equal to,

ज्ञानं - ब्रह्मज्ञानं. In its capacity to purify one's अन्तःकरण mind and बुद्धि, there is nothing in this world comparable or equal to ब्रह्मज्ञानं



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तत् – this fact

स्वयं आत्मनि चिन्दति – one will realize by oneself

कालेन – in due course

योग संसिद्धः – through diligent practice of ज्ञानयज्ञ कर्मयोग

The purpose of कर्म is only for the purpose of अन्तःकरण शुद्धि – self-purification, purification of one's mind and बुद्धि. In its capacity for such self-purification, there is nothing equal to or comparable to the diligent practice of ज्ञानयज्ञ कर्मयोग. That one will realize by oneself in due course of time.

ज्ञानं – ब्रह्मज्ञानं – is never produced. It is always there. It is ever existent. But, for the time being, one's mind is covered by अज्ञानं – self-ignorance, ignorance of आत्मा – the true nature of oneself. One needs a प्रमाण – a means of gaining that knowledge. प्रमाण does not produce ज्ञानं. It only produces वृत्ति – a state of being, a state of mental disposition necessary for ज्ञानं, to reveal itself to the mind and बुद्धि.

We do not really gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं from somewhere. That knowledge is there already in oneself. By श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं, one gains a state of being which destroys the cover which isolates one from ब्रह्मज्ञानं. And when that cover is destroyed, ब्रह्मज्ञानं reveals itself. Thus there is a prior condition for ब्रह्मज्ञानं to take place in one's mind.

If ब्रह्मज्ञानं does not take place in spite of one having a good teacher, good studying, etc., it simply means that there are still some obstructions to gaining self-knowledge. It is only for removing those obstructions that कर्मयोग is necessary. That is why भगवान् says " कालेन – in due course of time" – which means, some time is required for one to get rid of all obstructions to gaining self-knowledge. How much time is required? That depends on the composition of one's mind, in terms of सत्त्व, रजस्, and तनस् गुणs.

Now, anyone can go to a teacher and put him, and also oneself, all the right questions, and also be engaged in various kinds of services to the society. Does this necessarily assure self-knowledge for that person? No, after all, going to a teacher, reflecting on the teachings and doing various social services – all these are external expressions. Any one can act out such expressions. They are not the surest means of gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं unless one also has the necessary internal make up of mind and बुद्धि.



Then what is the surest means of gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge? भगवान् says

श्रद्धायान् लभते ज्ञानं, तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिं, अचिरेण अधिगच्छति ॥

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This is a very profound statement in भगवत् गीता

श्रद्धायान् लभते ज्ञानं – The one who has श्रद्धा gains ब्रह्मज्ञानं, so assures Sri Krishna

Thus श्रद्धा is the surest means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं – आत्मज्ञानं – Self Knowledge, which is श्रेयस् – मोक्ष – The Supreme Goal of Life, which is what Arjuna seeks, and indeed every human being seeks.

Now what is श्रद्धा? श्रद्धा is abiding faith, faith in oneself, faith in the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, faith in one's ability to gain that knowledge and reach the परम पुरुषार्थ – the Supreme Goal of life – श्रेयस्, मोक्ष. The one who has such श्रद्धा in ब्रह्मज्ञानं does gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं, so assures Sri Krishna.

The word श्रद्धा here is उपलक्षण, an illustration standing for the entire साधनचतुष्टयं – the four-fold qualifications needed for anyone for the successful pursuit of Upanishadic knowledge which we talked about in our Introduction to Upanishads. As we may recall, these qualifications are:

1. नित्य-अनित्य चस्तु विवेकः : – ability to discriminate between that which is eternal and that which is transient.
2. इह आमुत्र अर्थफल, भोग-विरागः : – total dispassion to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions, here or hereafter.
3. शमादि षट्क संपत्ति- the six-fold virtues of शम, दम, उपरम, तितिक्षा, श्रद्धा and समाधानं
 - शम - mastery over one's mind
 - दम - mastery over one's external organs of perception and action
 - उपरम - doing whatever one needs to do according to one's own धर्म
 - तितिक्षा - happy endurance of whatever comes one's way, and a sense of प्रसाद बुद्धि at all times
 - श्रद्धा - enlightened faith in oneself and in the words of the Upanishads



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

- समाधानं - single-minded devotion to the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, and finally

4. मुमुक्षुत्वं - an overriding desire to gain मोक्ष - to be free

These are the four-fold qualifications for the successful pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं. In our present verse, श्रद्धावान् means the one who has all the above four qualifications. Such a person does gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं. Such a श्रद्धावान् is

तत् परः - naturally committed to the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं as the only true goal of life, and

सम्यत इन्द्रियः means जितेन्द्रियः - one who has mastery over all of one's internal and external organs of perception and action at all times.

The person who has all the qualifications indicated by the words of श्रद्धा, तत् परः and सम्यत इन्द्रियः will naturally have external expressions of प्रणिपातनं, परिप्रश्नं and सेव described earlier for seeking and gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. Such a person,

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिं अचिरेण अधिगच्छति

अचिरेण - in a short time

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा - gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं

परां शान्तिं अधिगच्छति means मोक्षं अधिगच्छति - gains enduring Peace, not simply relative to peace, but enduring peace born of total fulfillment in life.

Thus श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं - the one who has श्रद्धा will certainly gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं, let there be no doubt about it, so assures Sri Krishna. Such doubt is Arjuna's problem at this moment. Sri Krishna advocates श्रद्धा and ब्रह्मज्ञानं on one hand, and at the same time wants me to fight the war that I am in. Is fighting this war श्रद्धा ? Is this श्रद्धा going to bring me ब्रह्मज्ञानं ? Even if it does, is that going to relieve me of all my sorrow and distress? That is Arjuna's doubt at this moment.

That is also the doubt for most of us. All this talk about श्रद्धा and ब्रह्मज्ञानं is quite interesting. Are they really going to uplift me from all the pains that I am going through in daily life? That is the doubt for most human beings. Addressing those who have such doubts, भगवान् says,



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अज्ञश्च अश्रद्धधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥

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अज्ञः means **अनात्मज्ञः** – the one who is ignorant about one's own self, the one who lives a life of spiritual ignorance. A person is like that because

अश्रद्धधानः – the person has no **श्रद्धा**, the person does not have the qualifications needed for gaining **ब्रह्मज्ञानं** – Self Knowledge. Consequently, the person is a

संशयात्मा – a self-doubting person. The doubt is not based on any enquiry. It is simply due to ignorance, indifference and indiscipline. Such a person has no self-confidence at all with respect to higher levels of human endeavour. It is such a person who doubts the powers of **श्रद्धा** and **ज्ञानं**. Such a person

विनश्यति – Such a person is an obstacle to one's own happiness. Such a person obstructs himself or herself in any worthwhile endeavour. Such a person dissipates one's life in trivialities, does not gain **मोक्ष** and continues to be in **संसार**, experiencing the world of sorrow and distress of one kind or another due to confusion and delusion. For such a person

संशयात्मनः – for the one who is committed to doubts about the power of **श्रद्धा** and **ब्रह्मज्ञानं**, for a person committed to self-doubt

न अयं लोकः अस्ति – this world is not for that person, which means, such a person cannot enjoy even the ordinary pleasures of life.

न परः अस्ति – such a person can never gain the superior joys of life arising from **ब्रह्मज्ञानं**

न सुखं – such a person cannot even have a moment of happiness, because he makes the momentary happiness even more momentary by his lingering doubts

Therefore, even if one cannot be a **ज्ञानी** – a person of spiritual wisdom, one must at least avoid being a **संशयात्मा** – a doubting self. That means, even if one is not a **ज्ञानी** yet, one should at least be an **आस्तिकः** – *faith in Eternal Existence, the nature of which one is yet to know*. Otherwise one will fall into the state of **संशयात्मा** – a doubting self, and develop a cynical attitude towards life, resulting in absolutely no confidence in anything truly great. Summing up the entire subject matter of this chapter, Sri Krishna concludes by saying:

योगसंन्यस्त कर्माणं, ज्ञान संछिन्न संशयम् ।

आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि, निबध्नन्ति धनंजय ॥

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तस्मात् अज्ञान संभूतं, हृत्स्यं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
क्षित्त्वेन संशयं योगं, आतिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥

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धनंजय -O! Arjuna

न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति - कर्मs do not bind that person, कर्मs do not bring sorrow or distress to that person whose लक्षण - whose characteristics are indicated by three words, namely योगसंन्यास्तकर्माणं, ज्ञानसंछिसंशयम् and आत्मवन्तं

योगसंन्यास्तकर्माणं - the one who is released from all कर्मs by virtue of being well established in ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास योग at all times, which means, the one who does all कर्मs with the mental disposition of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति - Total surrender to परमेश्वर, already in oneself; the one from whom all traces of अहंकार - egoism has naturally disappeared, and consequently, the one from whom all कर्तृत्व भाव - all notions of being the कर्ता of any कर्म - the doer of any action, has naturally and completely disappeared.

Where there is no कर्ता, there is no कर्म, and still the person is always engaged in ईश्वर कर्मs, simply as an instrument serving the will of परमेश्वर at all times by the very grace of परमेश्वर. That state of existence for a person is ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास योग, at which state the person recognizes and enjoys the vision of परमेश्वर in all actions and at the same time, recognizes and enjoys all actions as the very manifestation of परमेश्वर, as the very Glory of परमेश्वर.

It is that state of existence, it is such ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यास योग which is indicated by the word योगसंन्यास्तकर्माणं, which state of existence is reached by ज्ञान संछिन्न संशयं - the one for whom all doubts about the power of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - self-knowledge have been cut asunder by wisdom. That wisdom is आत्म-ईश्वर-एकत्व-दर्शनं - the vision of the identity of जीव and ईश्वर, one's true self and परमेश्वर, and also आत्म-ब्रह्म-एकत्व-चिज्ञानं - the realization of the identity of one's true self and ब्रह्मन्, and also आत्मवन्तं - the one whose organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि are always alert and under full control. Before gaining that wisdom, अत्मवन्तं - alertness and self-control



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

is a साधनं - a means for gaining wisdom. After gaining wisdom, आत्मवन्तं is the spontaneous nature, the natural disposition of a person in the state of ज्ञान-कर्म-संन्यास-योग. Such a person of wisdom

न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति - never gets bound by कर्म's. कर्म's do not create reactions in such a person.

तस्मात् - Therefore, O! Arjuna

छित्त्वा एनं संशयं - Get rid of this self-destroying doubt about the power of श्रद्धा and ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, and realizing

अज्ञानसंभृतं - that this doubt is born of

अज्ञानं, अविचेकं - one's inability to discriminate between

सत्यं and मिथ्या - that which is real and that which is only a transient appearance

हृत्स्यं हृदि स्थितं - बुद्धौ स्थितं - this doubt is firmly lodged in one's बुद्धि and

आत्मनः (संशयं) - this doubt is one's own doubt about one's own self, and consequently, one has to uplift oneself from one's own doubt by one's own self. Therefore, O! Arjuna

ज्ञानासिना एनं संशयं छित्त्वा - getting rid of this self-doubt by the sword of wisdom

योगं प्रतिष्ठ - get firmly established in

ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास योग - In your present context this means "Do what you need to do as your duty at this time and place, not for gaining or losing a kingdom, but as कर्म योग leading ultimately to ज्ञान योग, for अन्तःकरण शुद्धि leading ultimately to ब्रह्मज्ञानं - the श्रयेस्, the मोक्ष you seek. Therefore

भारत - O! Arjuna,

उत्तिष्ठ - Get up, wake up to Absolute Reality. Uplift your self to a higher plane of consciousness through ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास योग.

With this उत्तिष्ठ मन्त्र - a clarion call to Arjuna to uplift himself, Sri Krishna concludes the fourth chapter of the भगवत् गीता entitled ज्ञान कर्म संन्यास योग.