



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

सप्तमोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानविज्ञानयोगः

Chapter 7

Volume 5

बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते, ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते । वासुदेवः सर्वं इति, स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥	7-19
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As we saw last time, ईश्वर भक्ति in its mature state is एक भक्ति, अनन्य भक्ति, परम प्रेम स्वरूप भक्ति, पूर्ण ईश्वर भक्ति - uncontaminated, undistracted, absolute and total Love and Devotion for परमेश्वर.

ईश्वर ज्ञानं in its mature state is ब्रह्मवित् ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Realized Knowledge of सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, पूर्णं अदः पूर्णं इदं ज्ञानं, अपरोक्ष पुरुषोत्तम ज्ञानं. It is direct and immediate recognition of आत्मा - The ब्रह्मन् - The परमेश्वर in oneself as ONESELF Itself, and also the SELF of all existence in this creation and beyond this creation. Such सर्वात्मक ब्रह्मज्ञानं is पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं.

Such ईश्वर भक्ति and such ईश्वर ज्ञानं are indeed identical, in the sense that only when there is पूर्ण ईश्वर भक्ति, पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं is possible, and only when there is पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं, पूर्ण ईश्वर भक्ति is possible. Wherever there is natural fusion of ईश्वर भक्ति and ईश्वर ज्ञानं, as indicated above, there is natural ईश्वर शरणागति - which means total disappearance of अहंकार - ego, in oneself.



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

That State of ईश्वर भक्ति, ईश्वर ज्ञानं, ईश्वर शरणागति is the Nature of भक्ति of a ज्ञानी. At That State of भक्ति, the ज्ञानी is ONE with परमेश्वर, which means there is no distinction between a ज्ञानी and परमेश्वर, even though the ज्ञानी may still remain in the form and name of a human being while the प्रारब्ध कर्मs are getting exhausted through a कर्म योग way of life. Now, when does an ईश्वर भक्त – a Devotee, reach the state of a ज्ञानी ? भगवान् says:

बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वं इति, स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

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बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते – After passing through many जन्मs – many life-times cultivating God-consciousness. It is only after going through a number of life-times, wherein one has cultivated one's भक्ति to परमेश्वर through ज्ञानार्थ संस्कार आश्रय, meaning, through कर्मs conducive to gaining ईश्वर भक्ति and ईश्वर ज्ञानं, such as ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर कैङ्कर्यं, ईश्वर अर्पणं, ईश्वर भजनं, etc., all of which are conducive to cultivating ईश्वर भक्ति and ईश्वर ज्ञानं.

Therefore, बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते means, after passing through a series of life-times in which one has acquired the necessary physical and mental disposition to commit oneself to the pursuit of ईश्वर ज्ञानं ,

ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते – the ज्ञानवान् – the one who has परिपाक ईश्वर ज्ञानं – the one who has a clear vision of परमेश्वर, free from doubts, vagueness and mental obstructions, such a ज्ञानवान्

मां (परमेश्वरं) प्रपद्यते – seeks ME, approaches ME, and reaches ME – The परमेश्वर.

The परमेश्वर here is वासुदेव which is another name for Sri Krishna. Here the name वासुदेव is used in a literal sense. वासुदेव is ONE who is both वासु and देव. वासु means सर्वेषु भूतेषु वसति इति वासु – the ONE who abides in the heart of every being.

असौ देवः च वासुदेवः – That वासुदेव is स्वप्रकाशः – Self-effulgent. Thus, वासुदेव is प्रत्यग आत्मा – The आत्मा – The Self which lights up, and unfolds the nature of oneself as well as others.



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Ordinarily, a light lights up only objects. The **स्वप्रकाश आत्मा**, The **प्रत्यग आत्मा** – The **वासुदेव**, lights up, reveals, both the subject as well as the objects, the subject being ONESELF – The **ब्रह्मन्**, and the object being all Its **माया**-powered **मिथ्या** manifestations in the cycle of creation.

The **ज्ञानवान्** who has a clear and unobstructed vision of such **प्रत्यग आत्मा वासुदेव** मां प्रपद्यते seeks, approaches and reaches ME, The **परमेश्वर**.

How does the **ज्ञानवान्** – reach **परमेश्वर**? Reaching **परमेश्वर** means what? The **ज्ञानवान्** reaches **परमेश्वर** by recognizing **वासुदेवः सर्वं इति**. **वासुदेव** is Everything. **वासुदेव** is All. That **प्रत्यग आत्मा वासुदेव** is **पूर्ण अदः पूर्णं इदं**. That **वासुदेव** is the content of “I” and also anything and everything in this creation.

Thus, reaching **परमेश्वर** is recognizing The ONENESS in everything that exists; recognizing the **सर्वात्म भाव** of **परमेश्वर**, **परमेश्वर** as **वासुदेव** is The SELF of all that exists. The one who recognizes **वासुदेव** in that manner,

सः महात्मा – That **ज्ञानवान्** is indeed a **महात्मा**. A **महात्मा** is one who recognizes **आत्मा** as **ब्रह्मन्**, one who recognizes **ब्रह्मन्** in oneself. Thus a **ब्रह्मचित्** is a **महात्मा**.

सः महात्मा सुदुर्लभः – Such a **महात्मा** is very rare to find. It is very difficult to find such a Self-Realized **ज्ञानवान्** – such a **महात्मा**.

Why is it so difficult for an **ईश्वर भक्त** to recognize **वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति** – **वासुदेव** is everything ?The difficulty is not in the knowledge itself. The difficulty is in gaining **अन्तःकरण शुद्धि** – in overcoming one’s own internal forces of obstruction to gaining **ईश्वर ज्ञानं**. Therefore, **भगवान्** says:

कामैः तैः तैः हृतज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्ते अन्यदेवताः ।

तं तं नियमं आस्याय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया ॥

7-20

तैः तैः कामैः – Each in one’s own way, overpowered by the forces of one’s own desires
हृतज्ञानाः – People have been robbed away of their power of discrimination. People lose their ability to discriminate between **आत्मा** and **अनात्मा** – Self and non-self. People are



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

unable to recognize आत्मा as परमेश्वर. People are unable to reach परमेश्वर in oneself. Therefore, people feel themselves remote from, separate from, परमेश्वर. People have no clear understanding of परमेश्वर, nor do they understand what they really need. Consequently

प्रपद्यन्ते अन्य देवताः - People approach and seek the Grace of other देवताs, the अधिष्ठान देवताs, seeking fulfillment of their desires.

The Presiding Deities responsible for different specific and limited aspects of Life and Nature are called अधिष्ठान देवताs. They are countless in number, each endowed with limited powers over specific aspects of Life and Nature. The function of each अधिष्ठान देवता is only to maintain The Eternal Order under The Law of परमेश्वर. We may recall here the Vedic quotation from the Taittiriya Upanishad, which says:

भीषास्माद्भ्रातः पवते । भीषोदेति सूर्यः ।

भीषास्मादग्निश्चेन्द्रश्च । मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चम इति ।

(तै -2-8)

Because of the Fear of परमेश्वर, which means under the Unchanging Laws of परमेश्वर, the wind blows, the sun rises, Agni, Indra and all the other Devtas do their respective jobs unerringly. All natural changes in this creation are taking place spontaneously and unerringly, only according to the never-changing Laws of परमेश्वर, which are Eternal. To disobey the eternal laws of Nature results in unwelcome consequences, and that is the भीषा – the Fear, the Upanishad talks about in the above Vedic quotation.

Thus all the देवताs like अग्नि, वायु, वरुण, इन्द्र etc. and also the many other देवताs we are familiar with, all of them are not independent of परमेश्वर. All of them operate only under the lordship of परमेश्वर. Those who do not understand the nature of परमेश्वर, look upon the देवताs as the ईश्वर to be worshipped to satisfy the needs of their धर्म, अर्थ, काम pursuits. Consequently,

प्रपद्यन्ते अन्य देवताः -they approach, they worship other देवताs seeking fulfillment of their desires. How do they worship them?

तं तं नियमं आस्थाय - आस्थाय following,

तं तं नियमं the stipulated prayers and rituals appropriate for the particular objects to be achieved.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

There are prescribed forms of prayers, rituals etc. to approach and seek the Grace of specific देवताs for gaining specific objects of their desire. One can gain the same objects of desire by worshipping with श्रद्धा and भक्ति, any इष्ट देवता in any Form and name. When that is the case, why does one choose a particular देवता and a particular form of worship to get what one wants? That is because,
प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया – people are impelled by their own innate tendencies and mental dispositions, established through their own previous संस्काराs – previous experiences of such worship either in this or in their past lives.

Thus, robbed of their विवेक बुद्धि – power of आत्म-अनात्म discrimination – by the forces of their worldly desires, and driven by their particular mental dispositions, people propitiate different देवताs through prescribed prayers, rituals etc. in their धर्म, अर्थ, काम pursuits. Being content with such pursuits, they do not seek ME – The परमेश्वर – says Sri Krishna.

In the next verse, Sri Krishna says, “in whatever form people worship, in that form, I bless them.”

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धया अर्चितुं इच्छति ।
तस्य तस्य अचलां श्रद्धां, तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥ 7-21

यः यः भक्तः – Whoever be the भक्त – the Devotee, whether one is in distress seeking help, or one is seeking fulfillment of one’s अर्थ-काम pursuits, or one is merely seeking clarity of mind and बुद्धि for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं, whoever be the भक्त
यां यां तनुं (तनुं means देवता रूपं) what ever be the देवता रूपं – the Form and Name of देवता to which one is devoted, primarily or exclusively,
श्रद्धया अर्चितुं इच्छति – if the भक्त desires to worship That देवता with श्रद्धा – unqualified faith and devotion
तस्य तस्य – for that भक्त, for each and every one of them,
अहं विदधामि तां श्रद्धां एव – I make that श्रद्धा itself – that faith and devotion itself
अचलां श्रद्धां – as unshakable faith and devotion – as unshakable श्रद्धा. I make their श्रद्धा more firm. The important thing here is श्रद्धा – unqualified faith and devotion, not the form and name of the देवता invoked in the worship.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Earlier, Sri Krishna said “ श्रद्धायान् लभते ज्ञानं – the one who has श्रद्धा gains ईश्वर ज्ञानं ”. In this verse, Sri Krishna says: “whatever श्रद्धा a भक्त has, I make that श्रद्धा even more firm for him. How? By being the कर्म फल दाता – by giving the result he seeks through his यज्ञ कर्म done with श्रद्धा.

A भक्त does an appropriate यज्ञ कर्म with श्रद्धा – unqualified faith and devotion through worship of a देवता of his choice and he gets also the कर्म फल – the results he has been seeking. Thereby, his श्रद्धा – his faith in himself, in his यज्ञ कर्म, and in the देवता whose Grace he invokes, all get strengthened. How does that help in gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं ?

With continued strengthening of one’s श्रद्धा – faith and devotion in some देवता of one’s own choice, one’s अन्तःकरण – mind and बुद्धि ultimately matures into seeing all forms and all names, including oneself, in That देवता, and, such vision of That देवता is indeed Vision of परमेश्वर. That is why Sri Krishna says:

तस्य तस्य अचलां श्रद्धां तां एव विदधामि अहं -By being the कर्म फल दाता, I strengthen the श्रद्धा of everyone, whatever be the Form and Name of the देवता one worships.

We must understand the connection between the देवता and परमेश्वर. No देवता is separate from परमेश्वर – but परमेश्वर is more than the देवता s. परमेश्वर being ONE, every Form being His Form, every Name being His Name, in any Form and any name one worships, परमेश्वर is worshipped. This concept of Worship of परमेश्वर is ingrained in Vedic culture:

सर्व देव नमस्कार : श्रीकेशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

All worship of any देवता goes towards श्री केशव – The वासुदेव – the परमेश्वरः. This is part of Basic Vedic Education. We usually remind ourselves this Basic Vedic Teaching during सन्ध्याचन्दनं, our daily prayers:

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेव नमस्कार : श्री केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Just as every drop of rain ultimately reaches the ocean, every prayer to any देवता ultimately reaches श्री केशव – The वासुदेव – The परमेश्वर.

परमेश्वर is All-वासुदेवः सर्व. One can worship परमेश्वर in any form. Any देवता – every देवता – is only परमेश्वर. As परमेश्वर, there is no separation of one देवता from any other देवता. Then, what is देवता ? If one looks upon परमेश्वर through a limited phenomenon in this creation, then परमेश्वर becomes a देवता – a Presiding Deity limited to that phenomenon, with corresponding limited powers.

For example, SUN - सूर्य is a blessing in this creation. If one looks upon परमेश्वर as सूर्य then परमेश्वर becomes सूर्य देवता. Since सूर्य – the SUN is not everything in this creation, by identifying परमेश्वर with सूर्य देवता one limits परमेश्वर to a particular phenomenon only in this creation. On the other hand, if one wants to worship सूर्य देवता as परमेश्वर, then one invokes all Forms, all Names including oneself and all phenomenon, known and unknown, in सूर्य देवता. Then the worship of सूर्य देवता becomes the worship of परमेश्वर.

In the absence of such vision of परमेश्वर, each देवता becomes different from every other देवता, and also remote from oneself, and there would seem to be countless देवताs, each with specific and limited powers.

Continuing, भगवान् says:

स तथा श्रद्धया युक्तः, तस्य आराधनं ईहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्, मयैव विहितान् हि तान् ॥

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सः भक्तः - the devotee who worships some इष्ट देवता as the Presiding Deity of some aspect of creation, the भक्त who worships such a देवता seeking some objects of desire

तथा श्रद्धया युक्तः : - supposing that भक्त is endowed with श्रद्धा – faith and devotion already strengthened by ME – The परमेश्वर, though his previous संस्कारs- through his previous acts of devotion

तस्य आराधनं ईहते – if such a भक्त continues to engage himself in the worship of his इष्ट देवता, देवता of this choice, appropriately in the pursuit of his desires

ततः कामान् लभते च हि – as a result of his worship, he certainly gains his objects of desire. That is the efficiency of prayer and worship.



How does he gain them? Who gives him his objects of desire? भगवान् says,

मया एव विहितान् तान् (कामान्) - he gains those objects of desire as ordained by ME -
The परमेश्वर.

People perform rituals, or offer prayers with श्रद्धा, and certainly obtain the desired results, but such results are determined by परमेश्वर only. Whatever be the देवता worshipped, the कर्म फल दाता - the ONE who gives the results is only परमेश्वर. But people think that the results come from the देवता, because they do not recognize परमेश्वर. Such thinking really does not matter for the time being. The prayer has given the result, and thereby their श्रद्धा - faith and devotion becomes even more firm, more strong. Therefore, next time, the prayer will be better, the results also will be better, and their mind and बुद्धि will also get more mature, and their power of discrimination will progressively improve, and such improvement will contribute to their gaining clarity of understanding, leading ultimately to ईश्वर ज्ञानं. That is how a श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं - one who has श्रद्धा ultimately gains ईश्वर ज्ञानं.

For, अचिवेकिनः भक्ता : - for those ईश्वर भक्त s who are still immature, who do not yet have आत्म विवेक - an appreciation of the true nature of परमेश्वर, the worship of an अधिष्ठान देवता - Presiding Deity for gaining one's objects of desire, is nothing more than अन्तवत् साधन व्यापार - a worldly transaction involving a limited means to achieve a limited end.

Sri Krishna elaborates on this message in the next verse, which we will see next time.