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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

त्रयोदशोऽध्यायः - क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञ विभाग योगः

trayodaśo'dhyāyaḥ - kṣetra-kṣetrajñā vibhāga yogaḥ

Chapter 13

Volume 7

अमानित्वं अदंभित्वं अहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

amānitvaṁ adambhitvaṁ ahimsā kṣāntirārajavam ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्म विनिग्रहः ॥

13-7

ācāryopāśanam śaucaṁ sthairyamātma vinigrahaḥ ॥

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यम् अनहङ्कार एव च ।

indriyārtheṣu vairagyam anahāṅkar eva ca ।

जन्म मृत्यु जरा व्याधि दुःख दोषानुदर्शनम् ॥

13-8

janma mṛtyu jāra vyādha duḥkha doṣānudarśanam ॥

असक्तिः अनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।

asaktiḥ anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāragṛhādiṣu ।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वं इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥

13-9

nityaṁ ca samacittatvaṁ iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu ॥

मयि च अनन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

ma ca ananya yogena bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī ।

विविक्त देशसेवित्वं अरतिर्जन संसदि ॥

13-10

vivikta deśasevitvaṁ aratirjana saṁsadi ॥

अध्यात्म ज्ञान नित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थ दर्शनम् ।

adhyātma jñāna nityatvaṁ tatvajñānārtha darśanam ।

एतत् ज्ञानं इति प्रोक्तं अज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥

13-11

etat jñānam iti proktaṁ ajñānam yadato'nyathā ॥

Sri Krishna is in the process of pointing out here a set of 20 personal qualities as ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – as wisdom helpful for gaining purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, necessary for making oneself fit for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-



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knowledge. Last time, we briefly talked about the first five such personal qualities, namely अमानित्वं *amānitvaṃ*, अदंभित्वं *adambhitvaṃ*, अहिंसा *ahimsā*, क्षान्ति *kṣānti*, अर्जयं *ārjavam*. Let us now continue with the next one.

6. आचार्य उपासनं *ācārya upāsanam*– With reference to ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* – आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge, आचार्य उपासनं *ācārya upāsanam* is, the person having an attitude of reverential respect and worshipful service to the teacher and the teaching. The greatest service one can do to a teacher is to listen to the teaching with undivided attention, and that is possible only if the person has unqualified श्रद्धा *śraddhā* – faith and interest, in the knowledge being taught. As Sri Krishna said earlier, श्रद्धायान् लभते ज्ञानं *śraddhāvān labhate jñānam* (4-39) - only that person who has श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* gains ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*.

The words of the Upanishads cannot be properly understood and appreciated, just with the help of a dictionary of word-meanings, because, the limited meaning of words cannot convey the content of the Upanishad knowledge involved. It is the संप्रदाय *sampradāya* – the well established methodology of projecting Upanishad words towards the ultimate destination to be reached, which conveys the meaning of Upanishad words.

Therefore, in order to understand the Upanishad words, one necessarily needs an appropriate teacher, who himself or herself has been exposed to such teaching, which has come down from generation to generation through a succession of enlightened teachers. And, we must always remember that the original teacher is indeed परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. That being so, आचार्य उपासनं *ācārya upāsanam* is, in fact, परमेश्वर उपासनं *parameśvar upāsanam* – worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as the abode of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* – आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge.

Such आचार्य उपासनं *ācārya upāsanam* is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – wisdom helpful for gaining Self-knowledge, or recognizing, by oneself, The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I - The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself. Therefore, diligently cultivate an attitude of reverential respect and worshipful service to the teacher who properly teaches



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आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge, together with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* – unqualified faith and interest, in the knowledge being taught.

7. शौचं *śaucam* – शौचं *śaucam* means cleanliness, both external and internal.

External cleanliness is with respect to one's external environment, one's dwelling place, physical body, clothing, food, etc. Anything we use collects dust and dirt, and they need to be cleaned from time to time. Fortunately, such cleaning is easily accomplished due to the common availability of various cleaning agents and cleaning appliances.

Internal cleanliness is with respect to the environment of one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. The dirt in one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* includes cravings of various kinds, greed, anger, selfishness, hatred, jealousy, dishonesty, miserliness, etc. It is not easy to remove these dirts. It requires extraordinary efforts, personal discipline, and maturity of vision to get rid of these dirts from one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, for which mere intellectual efforts alone are not sufficient. For such efforts to be effective, they should be combined with ईश्वर उपासनं *īśvara upāsanam* and प्रतिपक्ष भावनं *pratipakṣa bhāvanam*.

ईश्वर उपासनं *īśvara upāsanam* is prayerful worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, seeking the grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* for gaining अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* – purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. प्रतिपक्ष भावनं *pratipakṣa bhāvanam* is deliberately turning the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* away from undesirable attributes, and dwelling on the desirable attributes and their glory, such as the attributes of a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, described by Sri Krishna in the last chapter (12-13 to 20).

Cultivation of such शौचं *śaucam* – cleanliness of body, mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – wisdom helpful for gaining Self-knowledge, for recognizing, by oneself, The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I - The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself. Therefore, maintain cleanliness of your body and surroundings, and also cleanliness of your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* from unclean thoughts, words and deeds.

8. स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam* – स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam* is स्थिर भावः *sthira bhāvaḥ*, मोक्ष मार्ग एव कृत अध्यवसायत्वं *mokṣa mārga eva kṛta adhyavasāyatvam*. That means steadfastness in the pursuit of ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*



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– Self-knowledge. That is मोक्ष मार्ग *mokṣa mārṅa*. After analyzing all of one's worldly experiences, one comes to the well-ascertained conclusion that being in मोक्ष मार्ग *mokṣa mārṅa* and gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* – Self-knowledge is the only purpose of life, and all other purposes are only incidental, and, with that conclusion, one makes a total commitment to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* by every possible means, undeterred by any obstacle. That is स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam*.

Another meaning for स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam* would be total commitment to one's duties, however difficult they may be. We have already talked about the cultivation of कर्म योग *karma yoga*, कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* and अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvara bhakti* as the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*. Such commitment to the diligent cultivation of कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* and अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvara bhakti* is स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam*.

Such स्थैर्यम् *sthairyam* is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – wisdom helpful for gaining Self-knowledge for recognizing, by oneself, The आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself. Therefore, be steadfast in your continued pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* - आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* – Self-knowledge through the cultivation of कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* and अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvara bhakti* and daily scripture readings.

9 . आत्म विनिग्रहः *ātma vinigrahaḥ* – आत्म विनिग्रहः *ātma vinigrahaḥ* is self-control, so that one's entire body is helpful to one's diligent pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* - आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* – Self-knowledge. Let not my body demands stand opposed to my pursuit of Self-knowledge. That is our daily prayer.

भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः । *bhadraṁ karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devāḥ* ।
भद्रं पश्येम अक्षभिः यजत्राः ॥ *bhadraṁ paśyema akṣabhiḥ yajatrāḥ* ॥

भद्रं *bhadraṁ* is that which is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – that which is helpful for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* – Self-knowledge. The prayer is "O! Lord, may all my organs of perception and action recognize भद्रं *bhadraṁ*, and do only that which



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is भद्रं *bhadraṃ* – that which is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam*, that which is helpful for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* – आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge.

One's शरीर *śarīra* – one's body is the best and the only instrument one has, to gain Self-knowledge. The overriding purpose of one's body is to be one's ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam*. Let the body be what it is meant to be, as ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – as the means for gaining Self-knowledge.

As we may recall, in Taittiriya Upanishad, भृगु *bṛgu* asks his father, Lord Varuna "Please teach me how to reach ब्रह्मन् *brahman*". Lord Varuna replies:

अन्न प्राणं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाचं इति *anna prāṇam cakṣuḥ śrotram mano vācam iti* – which means "In order to reach ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, you do not have to go anywhere outside your own body - the organs of perception and action you are already blessed with. Make proper use of your body instruments and you will discover ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, already in yourself".

We must understand that one's body vehicle can be ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – a helpful means for discovering ब्रह्मन् *brahman* already in oneself, only through आत्म विनिग्रहः *ātma vinigrahaḥ* – proper self-control and self-discipline, so that the body demands are never allowed to stand opposed to one's pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge. That is आत्म विनिग्रहः *ātma vinigrahaḥ* as a value to be cultivated in daily life.

Therefore, cultivate self-control in every thing you do. Let your body demands be a help, and not a hindrance to your pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge, for recognizing by yourself, The आत्मा *ātmā* The Self I, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in yourself.

10. इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यं *indrayārtheṣu vairagyam* means इन्द्रिय विषयेषु वैराग्यं *indriya viṣayeṣu vairagyam* – a natural dispassion towards sense objects, which give rise to various kinds of worldly pleasures and enjoyments, real and imaginary, all of which being transient in nature. वैराग्यं *vairagyam* – dispassion means total absence of any longings or cravings for such objects of sense enjoyments. वैराग्यं *vairagyam*



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must be understood properly. It is not born of disappointments in life, nor is it an aversion for worldly pleasures and enjoyments. It is born of a clear understanding and evaluation of such worldly enjoyments, a clear evaluation of the limitations of exclusive pursuits of such enjoyments, a clear realization that such pursuits do not, and cannot, lead to **आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ** - Self-knowledge.

Once that is understood, one naturally develops a dispassion for such transient pleasures of worldly life, and also develops the capability to use one's blessings of the senses of hearing, touch, form, taste and smell, and all their powers, as **ज्ञान साधनं jñāna sādhanam** – as a means for the cultivation of **आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ** – Self-knowledge, which can lead to a far higher level of joy and fulfillment in life.

Therefore, cultivate dispassion towards all objects of transient pleasure, so that such dispassion becomes **ज्ञान साधनं jñāna sādhanam** – wisdom helpful for gaining Self-knowledge, for recognizing, by oneself, The **आत्मा ātmā** – The Self I, The **परमेश्वर parameśvar** already in oneself.

11. **अनहंकार एव च anahaṁkār eva ca** – And, also release yourself from the hold of **अहंकार ahaṁkār** – ego. **अहंकार ahaṁkār** is the commonly held notion of "I", "Me", and "Mine", etc. – the **मम बुद्धि mama buddhi**. **अहंकार ahaṁkār** is not an object, which can be given up by any process of giving up. It has to disappear naturally. Such disappearance happens only in the wake of **पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति pūrṇa īśvara śaraṇāgati** – one's total surrender to **परमेश्वर parameśvar** already in oneself. Such surrender is possible only in the wake of **परम प्रेम स्वरूप ईश्वर भक्ति param prema svarūpa īśvara bhakti**, which is **पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ**.

भगवान् bhagavān is not talking about **पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ** here. **भगवान् bhagavān** is presenting **अनहंकार anahaṁkār** – absence of ego, as **ज्ञान साधनं jñāna sādhanam** – an aide helpful for gaining **पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ**, which means the absence of **अहंकार ahaṁkār** called for here is only in a relative sense. Therefore, **अनहंकार anahaṁkār** – release from the hold of ego simply refers to being free from the hold of pride, arrogance, vanity, etc.

For example, a person may feel very proud of one's beauty, accomplishments, riches, family, etc. and be very arrogant about them. Such pride and arrogance are detrimental



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to one's spiritual progress. On the other hand, when the person realizes that such blessings are manifestations of the very grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, pride, arrogance, etc. naturally vanish, yielding place to ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvara bhakti* – devotion to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which is surely ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – wisdom helpful for gaining Self-knowledge.

Therefore, free yourself from the hold of ego, pride, arrogance, vanity, etc. through the cultivation of ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvara bhakti* and प्रसाद बुद्धि *prasād buddhi*.

12. जन्म मृत्यु जरा व्याधि दुःख दोषानुदर्शनम् *janma mṛtyu jarā vyādhi duḥkha doṣānudarśanam* – We may recall that in chapter 9, referring to life in this human body, Sri Krishna said

अनित्यं असुखं लोकं इमं प्राप्य भजस्य मां 9-33

anityam asukham lokam imam prāpya bhajasva mām

This human body, even though it is अनित्यं *anityam*, transient and temporary, and it is असुखं *asukham* – not always happy or comfortable, still this human body is a great blessing for experiencing all the पुरुषार्थs *puruṣārthas* - all-human endeavors towards the various goals of life. Therefore, having been fortunate enough to be born in this world with this human body, do not fritter away, do not waste it. Make full use of it effectively as ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – as the means for gaining Self-knowledge. That is exactly what भगवान् *bhagavān* tells here again in a different way.

जन्म मृत्यु जरा व्याधि दुःख दोषानुदर्शनम् *janma mṛtyu jarā vyādhi duḥkha doṣānudarśanam* – For a human being, जन्म मृत्यु *janma mṛtyu*, जरा व्याधि *jarā vyādhi* – birth, death, old age, various ailments, etc. are all sources of दुःख *duḥkha* – pain in life. The worldly life being what it is, such sources of pain in life are inevitable and unavoidable. Therefore, recognize clearly and repeatedly their inevitability, unavoidability and their limitations. They are not pains to run away from. They are pains to be handled properly, so that while you must do whatever needs to be done, you do not let yourself be swept away by such pains, and you still appreciate, enjoy, utilize this human body, even with all its limitations as ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – as an effective instrument for the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge.

The message here is this. Based on repeated analysis, a clear and confirmed recognition of the limitations of all the inevitable and unavoidable sources of pain in



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human life (that is दुःख दोष अनुदर्शनम् *duḥkha doṣa anudarśanam*) - that recognition itself is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* - a help in committing one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge. That means, if you have to pass through some painful times in life, please recognize that pain itself as the means for you to uplift yourself from that pain and indeed all other pains, by directing your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, already in yourself, and continuously being in the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge.

13. असक्तिः *asaktiḥ* – Total freedom from any sense of exclusive ownership. This is a very important value to be cultivated in daily life. We must understand that ownership is very different from possession. Everybody possesses a few things, at least for the time being, and such possession is unavoidable. Even one's body, mind and intellect are only one's possessions. While one cannot avoid some possessions, one can totally avoid any sense of ownership. In fact, there is no such thing as exclusive ownership. There are only temporary possessions. Ownership is purely a notion based on one's relationship to an object.

One can look upon oneself as the owner of an object, or one can see that object as something placed in one's possession for the time being, in which case, one is just a trustee for the object, and that too for the time being. The problem about the notion of ownership is this. If you say that you own something, it also means that you do not own other things. However much you own is so little, compared to what you do not own, which means embedded in one's sense of ownership is also the sense of being small and isolated.

Thus, on the one hand, you restrict yourself as small and isolated, and on the other hand you seek to become ONE with ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – which is all-inclusive Bigness, not isolated from anything in this universe. These two notions are mutually opposed to each other. That is why you have to give up the notion of smallness and isolation (which is what the notion of ownership implies) and educate yourself to the notion of सर्वात्मिकत्वं *sarvātmikatvaṁ* – the self non-separate from anything in existence.

That is how असक्तिः *asaktiḥ* – total freedom from any sense of exclusive ownership becomes ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – wisdom helpful for gaining Self-knowledge, for recognizing, by oneself, The आत्मा *ātmā* – The Self I, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself. Therefore, never entertain any sense of exclusive ownership of anything. We will see the rest of these personal qualities next time.