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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

गुणत्रय विभाग योगः

guṇatraya vibhāga yogaḥ

Chapter 14

Volume 1

श्री भगवान् उवाच *śrī bhagavān uvāca*

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam ।

यत् ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिं इतो गताः ॥

14-1

yat jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhim ito gatāḥ ॥

इदं ज्ञानं उपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यम् आगताः ।

idaṁ jñānaṁ upāśritya mama sādharmaṁ āgatāḥ ।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥

14-2

sarge'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca ॥

मम योनिः महत् ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भम् दधाम्यहं ।

mama yoniḥ mahat brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmyaham ।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥

14-3

sambhavaḥ sarvabhūtānām tato bhavati bhārata ॥

सर्वे योनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ॥

sarva yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ ॥

तासां ब्रह्म महत् योनिः अहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥

14-4

tāsām brahma mahat yoniḥ aham bijapradaḥ pitā ॥

The 14th chapter of the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* is entitled गुणत्रय विभाग योग *guṇatraya vibhāga yoga* – the threefold division of गुण *s guṇas* and their distinct characteristics. Sri Krishna has been talking about गुण *s guṇas* in everyone of his earlier discourses, with particular reference to the subject matter under discussion. In this chapter, the subject matter itself is: The three-fold गुण *s guṇas* - qualities of beings in this creation. As we may recall, in the last chapter भगवान् *bhagavān* said:

कारण गुण सद्गोऽस्य सदसत् योनि जन्मसु

13 -21



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kāraṇa guṇa saṅgo'sya sadasat yoni janmasu

For the birth of an individual person in various good and bad wombs, the reason is the mistaken association of प्रकृति गुणs *prakṛti guṇas* with those of the आत्मा *ātmā* – The Self I Itself. In this discourse, भगवान् *bhagavān* tells specifically

- What the प्रकृति गुणs *prakṛti guṇas* are
- How their apparent association with the आत्मा *ātmā* takes place
- How one can uplift oneself from such association, and
- What are the distinguishing marks of a person who is released from the bondages of गुणs *guṇas*

भगवान् *bhagavān* opens the discourse with two introductory verses.

श्री भगवान् उवाच *śrī bhagavān uvāca*

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi jñānānām jñānamuttamam ।

यत् ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिं इतो गताः ॥

14-1

yat jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhim ito gatāḥ ॥

भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि *bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi* – I will tell you again, in more details, about

परं ज्ञानं, ज्ञानानां ज्ञानम् उत्तमम् *param jñānam, jñānānām jñānam uttamam* – the Supreme Knowledge, the ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* which is ज्ञानानां ज्ञानम् उत्तमम् *jñānānām jñānam uttamam* – the highest and the most exalted among all disciplines of knowledge.

Even though I have given you that knowledge already, I am going to talk about it again, because, the communication of that knowledge needs repetition for your own benefit.

While ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* is easily gained by those who have absolute अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* – purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, it is hardest to gain for those who are still committed to various kinds of worldly pursuits. Therefore, that knowledge needs to be communicated again and again, from different points of view, until it is grasped clearly and firmly by one's own mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*.



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ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* is परम् ज्ञानं *param jñānam*, because it is परमात्म ज्ञानं *paramātma jñānam* – it is knowledge about परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself, and ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* is उत्तमं ज्ञानं *uttamaṁ jñānam* – the highest and the most exalted among all disciplines of knowledge, because of its उत्तम फलं *uttama phalaṁ* – what one gains from ब्रह्म ज्ञानं परम् *brahma jñānam param* is the highest and the most exalted among all पुरुषार्थs *puruṣārthas* – all the needs and goals of life, namely मोक्ष *mokṣa* itself.

No discipline of objective knowledge, by itself, can lead one to मोक्ष *mokṣa*. Only ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* can lead one to मोक्ष *mokṣa* – the ultimate destination for human life.

यत् ज्ञात्वा *yat jñātvā* – Gaining that ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*

सर्वे मुनयः *sarve munayaḥ* – सर्वे मननशीलाः *sarve mananaśīlāḥ* – सर्वे अधिकारिणः *sarve adhikāriṇaḥ* – all sages, all the Rishis, all those who are qualified for this knowledge

इतः *itah* – have uplifted themselves from the bondages of गुण *guṇa*, कर्म *karma* and कर्मफल *karma phala* and

परां सिद्धिं गताः *parāṁ siddhim gatāḥ* - they have gained total fulfillment in life. They have gained मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

मोक्ष *mokṣa*, once gained, is gained for ever, because, भगवान् *bhagavān* says in the next verse:

इदं ज्ञानं उपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यम् आगताः ।

idaṁ jñānam upāśritya mama sādharmaṁ āgatāḥ ।

सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥

14-2

sarge'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti ca ॥

इदं ज्ञानं उपाश्रित्य *idaṁ jñānam upāśritya* – अनुष्ठाय *anuṣṭaya* – Pursuing ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* through cultivation of अमानित्वादि *amānitvādi* qualities, the 20 personal qualities भगवान् *bhagavān* described earlier (13-7 to 11), together with श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* – hearing, listening and understanding Upanishad knowledge, followed by reflection through



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repeated questioning of one's own understanding and absorbing Upanishad knowledge through contemplation and ईश्वर कैङ्कर्यम् *īśvara kainkaryam* – service to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, thus pursuing ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*.

मम साधर्म्यम् आगताः *mama sādharmaṃyāṃ āgatāḥ* – the enlightened ones, the sages, the Rishis have come to discover परमेश्वर स्वरूपं *parameśvar svarūpaṃ* – सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूपं *sat cit ānanda svarūpaṃ* in themselves, which means they have become ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*, they have gained मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

As भगवान् *bhagavān* said earlier (7-18)

ज्ञानी तु अत्मैव मे मतं *jñānī tu atmaiva me mataṃ* – a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is indeed Myself, a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is परमेश्वर स्वरूपं *parameśvar svarūpaṃ*
मम साधर्म्यम् *mama sādharmaṃyāṃ* means परमेश्वर स्वरूपं *parameśvar svarūpaṃ*. For any ईश्वर भक्त *īśvara bhakta*, identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is only in terms of one's स्वरूप *svarūpa* and not स्वभाव *svabhāva*. So long as one has physical body, the physical body will always have its own limitations arising from one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* – प्रारब्ध कर्मफल *prārabdha karma phala* – results of one's past actions, and the consequent unique disposition of one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. That means, a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself only in terms of knowledge. On exhaustion of the प्रारब्ध कर्म *prārabdha karmas*, when the body falls, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* having gained मोक्ष *mokṣa* already, has no further individuality, and becomes ONE with the all-pervading ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself. Consequently.

सर्गेऽपि न उपजायते *sargeḥ api na upajāyate* – even at the time of creation, the ज्ञानीs *jñānīs* do not come into being, again as individuals. The ज्ञानीs *jñānīs* are not reborn. Similarly

प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च *pralaye na vyathanti ca* – even at the time of dissolution of the universe, the ज्ञानीs *jñānīs* do not go into the state of dissolution, because, having already gained मोक्ष *mokṣa*, the ज्ञानीs *jñānīs* have already gained नित्यत्वम् *nityatvaṃ* – eternal existence, ONE with ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself. The ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*



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neither die, nor are they reborn. Thus, मोक्ष *mokṣa* once gained, is gained forever. That is the glory of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*.

In the first two introductory verses, भगवान् *bhagavān* thus calls attention to the glory of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, so that Arjuna 's attention may not be dissipated by what may appear as repetition of what has been said already. In fact, in the matter of communicating ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, there is, and there can be, no real repetition, because, every time a statement is formally repeated, a new dimension of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* unfolds itself, depending on the state of one's spiritual maturity at that moment.

Consequently, every repetition of Upanishad words on ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* is always welcome, and no amount of repetition can be enough until one gains पूर्ण ईश्वरज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānam*, until one reaches मोक्ष स्थानं *mokṣa sthānam*. Until that time, if any seeker of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* thinks that he knows all about ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, he is grossly mistaken, so warns केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat* in these words:

यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति, दभ्रमेवापि नूनं
yadi manyase suvedeti, dabhramevāpi nūnam
त्वं चेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूपं । (केनो 2-1)
tvam vettha brahmaṇo rūpaṁ ।

If you think that you know very well about ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, then you know very little indeed about ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. So says केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat*. This is a timely warning for every one of us.

After thus creating renewed interest and enthusiasm for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* in Arjuna, by the above introduction, Sri Krishna now opens the subject matter of this discourse.

Sri Krishna first talks about the birth of beings, how this entire creation has come into existence. भगवान् *bhagavān* uses here words in common use, namely योनि *yoni* the womb, पिता *pitā* the father, बीज *bīja* the seed and गर्भम् *garbham* the pregnancy, to tell how this entire creation has come into existence. These words must



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be understood properly, in terms of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*, to understand clearly how भगवान् *bhagavān* is both the mother as well as the father for this entire creation.

The inherent infinite power of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – the माया *māyā* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the स्वभाव *svabhāva* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, is the mother for all creation, because this entire creation is born from माया *māyā* only, from the inherent infinite power of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only. The स्वरूप *svarūpa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – the सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप *sat cit ānanda svarūpa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is the father for this entire creation.

As we have seen already in the last chapter, the स्वरूप *svarūpa* and स्वभाव *svabhāva* are not two different beings. They are two-fold aspects of one and the same being, namely परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself. The स्वरूप *svarūpa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is called पुरुष *puruṣa*, and the माया *māyā* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is called प्रकृति *prakṛti*. Thus पुरुष *puruṣa* and प्रकृति *prakṛti* are the two-fold aspects of ONE and the same परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

Every person is an inseparable combination of स्वरूप *svarūpa* and स्वभाव *svabhāva*. It is only by the presence of the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself that one is able to activate one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* – one is able to exercise one's will. The intrinsic unchanging and unchangeable nature of all beings is the स्वरूप *svarūpa* – The सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahma*, and the incidental ever-changing and ever changeable nature peculiar to each being is the स्वभाव *svabhāva* of the particular being, manifested as त्रिगुणात्मिका माया *triguṇātmikā māyā* in the form of one's transient गुणः *guṇas* - personal qualities and attributes. Every one is different from every one else, only in terms of one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* – incidental nature, and not in terms of one's स्वरूप *svarūpa* – intrinsic nature. With this understanding, let us hear now what भगवान् *bhagavān* says here:

मम योनिः महत् ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भम् दधाम्यहं ।

mama yoniḥ mahat brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmyaham ।

संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥

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sambhavaḥ sarvabhūtānām tato bhavati bhārata ॥

In our prayers, we recognize भगवान् *bhagavān* both as mother as well as the father for this entire creation, and consequently for every being in this creation. How भगवान् *bhagavān* becomes both the mother and the father for this entire creation is being told here. First भगवान् *bhagavān* talks about the mother aspect.

मम योनिः महत् ब्रह्म *mama yoniḥ mahat brahma* – My womb is महत् ब्रह्म *mahat brahma*

तस्मिन् गर्भम् दधामि अहं *tasmin garbham dadhāmi ahaṁ* – In that womb, I give pregnancy

ततः *tataḥ* - Then, thereby

सर्वभूतानां संभवः भवति *sarvabhūtānām sambhavaḥ bhavati* – the birth of all beings takes place,

भारत *bhārata* – O! Arjuna

That is the literal meaning of the above verse. As pointed out earlier, भगवान्'s *bhagavān*'s words here must be understood properly in terms of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. Please listen.

मम योनिः *mama yonih* – My womb, the womb of परमेश्वर माया *parameśvar māyā*, which is the inherent creative power of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – the माया *māyā*. Therefore, मम योनिः *mama yonih* means मम माया *mama māyā*. The माया *māyā* is called योनि *yoni* – the womb, because माया *māyā* is the प्रकृति *prakṛti* – the cause for birth of all beings in this creation.

The माया *māyā*, the प्रकृति *prakṛti* is totally under the will of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – ब्रह्मश्रया माया *brahmaśrayā māyā*. The माया *māyā* has no independent existence and it is inseparable from ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, Therefore the योनि *yoni* of भगवान् *bhagavān* is inseparable from भगवान् *bhagavān*.

Thus मम योनिः *mama yonih* – the मम माया *mama māyā* – the माया *māyā* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is inseparable from the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of परमेश्वर



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parameśvar. That मम योनि *mama yoni*, the मम माया *mama māyā* is called as महत् ब्रह्म *mahat brahma* – the great ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

How can माया *māyā* be called ब्रह्मन् *brahman*? Because ब्रह्मन् *brahman* has two meanings, That which is incomparably big is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. That is सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् *sat cit ānand svarūpa brahman*. That which sustains everything is also called ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – that is the meaning here.

Since ब्रह्मन् *brahman* sustains माया *māyā*, and hence the entire creation born of माया *māyā*, the मम योनि *mama yoni*, माया *māyā*, is called महत् ब्रह्म *mahat brahma* – the great sustainer of the entire creation. In that योनि *yoni* – the womb, अहं गर्भम् दधामि *aham garbham dadhāmi* – I give गर्भम् *garbham* – pregnancy. That गर्भम् *garbham* is called हिरण्यगर्भम् *hirṇya garbham*, which is the infinite power of माया *māyā* to create and manifest.

When भगवान् *bhagavān* says तस्मिन् गर्भम् दधामि अहं *tasmin garbham dadhāmi aham* – In That माया योनि *māyā yoni* I give गर्भम् *garbham*, that means "I bless माया *māyā* so that creation and manifestation can take place". Blessing माया *māyā* means giving existence and consciousness - सत् *sat* and चित् *cit* to माया *māyā*. With such blessing, माया *māyā* gains power to create and to manifest, and thereby माया *māyā* becomes the cause for the entire creation.

भगवान् *bhagavān* being सर्वशक्तिमान् *sarva śaktimān*, all powerful, by activating माया *māyā* through हिरण्यगर्भ सर्वभूतानां संभवः भवति *hirṇya garbha sarva bhūtānām sambhavaḥ bhavati* – from the हिरण्यगर्भ *hirṇya garbha* the birth of all beings takes place.

गर्भ दानं *garbha dānam* – "Giving pregnancy to माया *māyā*" should be understood properly.

गर्भ दानं *garbha dānam* is ईश्वर कटाक्षं *īśvara kaṭākṣam* – ईश्वर संकल्पं *īśvara saṅkalpaṁ* – the desire, the will of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as we saw in Taittiriya Upanishad,



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सोऽकामयत so'kāmayata । बहु स्याम प्रजायेयेति bahu syāma prajāyeyeti ।

The सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् sat cit ānand svarūpa brahman – desired "may I manifest Myself as many , by creation". When, and why did that ब्रह्मन् brahman so desire?

In every cycle of creation, just prior to creation ब्रह्मन् brahman so desired. Why? Out of compassion for the welfare and spiritual progress of the countless जीवs jīvas, currently existing within Itself in the unmanifest state, but soon becoming mature enough for remanifestation and fulfilling themselves in the natural cycle of creation

सः अकामयत sah āmayata –That ब्रह्मन् brahman, That परमेश्वर parameśvar desired. That desire is the seed " बीज bīja" for गर्भ दानं garbha dānam – हिरण्यगर्भ hiraṇya garbha, the activation of माया māyā.

ईश्वर संकल्पं īśvara saṅkalpaṁ – The will of परमेश्वर parameśvar, being the necessary seed-requirement for activation of माया māyā into हिरण्यगर्भ hiraṇya garbha, ईश्वर īśvara becomes the पिता pitā – the father for this creation, which is pointed out in the next verse.

सर्व योनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ॥

sarva yoniṣu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ ॥

तासां ब्रह्म महत् योनिः अहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥

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tāsāṁ brahma mahat yoniḥ ahaṁ bījapradāḥ pitā ॥

कौन्तेय kaunteya - O! Arjuna

याः मूर्तयः सर्व योनिषु संभवन्ति yāḥ mūrtayaḥ sarva yoniṣu sambhavanti – the infinite varieties of physical bodies born from the infinite varieties of wombs in this entire creation

तासां - मूर्तीनां योनिः महत् ब्रह्म tāsāṁ - mūrtināṁ yoniḥ mahat brahma – for all of them, the cause is that महत् ब्रह्म mahat brahma – the माया māyā and अहं बीजप्रदः पिता ahaṁ bījapradāḥ pitā – I am the father, the गर्भ दान कर्ता garbha dāna kartā – I am the giver of pregnancy to माया māyā – I am the activator of माया māyā into हिरण्यगर्भ hiraṇya garbha by My will.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus परमेश्वर *parameśvar* identifies Itself as पिता *pitā* – The father, as the निमित्त कारणं *nimitta kāraṇam* – as the efficient cause, the instrumental cause, the cause involving knowledge, power and skill for this entire creation. Thus we understand that the स्वभाव *svabhāva* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which is the inherent, infinite power of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the माया *māyā*, whose very nature is the three-fold गुणसु *guṇas*, is the mother. And the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* whose very nature is सत् चित् आनन्द ब्रह्मन् *sat cit ānand brahman* is the father for this entire creation. That is how ONE परमेश्वर *parameśvar* becomes both the उपादान कारणं *upādana kāraṇam* as well as the निमित्त कारणं *nimitta kāraṇam* – the material cause as well as the efficient (or the instrumental) cause, the mother as well as the father, for this entire creation.

Having said that, Sri Krishna now turns to the subject matter of this particular discourse, namely the three-fold गुणसु *guṇas*, which constitute the very nature of माया *māyā*.

We will talk about manifestations of the three-fold गुणसु *guṇas* next time.