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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता  
गुणत्रय विभाग योगः

Chapter 14  
Volume 4

कर्मणः सकृत्स्याहुः, सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलं ।  
*karmaṇaḥ sakṛtasyāhuḥ, sāttvikam nirmalam phalam ।*  
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखं, अज्ञानं तमसः फलं ॥ 14-16  
*rajasastu phalam duḥkham, ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam ॥*

सत्वात् संजायते ज्ञानं, रजसो लोभ एव च ।  
*satvāt samjāyate jñānam, rajaso lobha eva ca ।*  
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो, भवतः अज्ञानमेव च ॥ 14-17  
*pramādamohau tamaso, bhavataḥ ajñānameva ca ॥*

ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।  
*ūrdhvam gacchanti sattvasthāḥ madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ ।*  
जगन्गुणवृत्तिस्थाः, अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ 14-18  
*jaganya guṇa vṛttisthāḥ, adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ ॥*

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं, यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।  
*nānyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāram, yadā draṣṭānupaśyati ।*  
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति, मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ 14-19  
*guṇebhyaśca param vetti, madbhāvaṁ so'dhigacchati ॥*

गुणान् एतान् अतीत्य त्रीन्, देही देहसमुद्भवान् ॥  
*guṇān etān atītya trīn, dehī dehasamudbhavān ॥*  
जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-दुःखैः, विमुक्तः अमृतं अश्नुते ॥ 14-20  
*janma-mṛtyu-jara-duḥkhaiḥ, vimuktaḥ amṛtaṁ aśnute ॥*

Sri Krishna has been talking about the three-fold गुणs *guṇas* - सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa*,  
रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* and तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*



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- ❖ What their manifestations are
- ❖ How they bind a person who has no Self knowledge
- ❖ The four natural sequential orders in which these three गुणs *guṇas* naturally co-exist in every person, and what their integrated manifestations are, and
- ❖ How these गुणs *guṇas* persist in a person from one life to the next

All that has been said. Continuing, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः, सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलं ।

*karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasyāhuḥ, sāttvikam nirmalam phalam ।*

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखं, अज्ञानं तमसः फलं ॥ 14-16

*rajasastu phalam duḥkham, ajñānam tamaśaḥ phalam ॥*

आहुः *āhuḥ* – They say, who says?

शिष्टाः आहुः *śiṣṭaḥ āhuḥ* – The enlightened people, people who are knowledgeable and qualified to say so, they say, what do they say?

सुकृतस्य कर्मणः फलं सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलं *sukṛtasyāhuḥ karmaṇaḥ phalam, sāttvikam nirmalam phalam* – The result of सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma* is सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam* and निर्मलं *nirmalam*.

Now, we must understand these Upanishad words सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma*, सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam* and निर्मलं *nirmalam*. सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma* literally means a कर्म *karma* well done, any कर्म *karma* well done. "Well done" means what? In the Upanishad, a कर्म *karma* is a सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma* only if it is totally rooted in सत्यं *satyam*, धर्मम् *dharmam* and सेवनं *sevanam*— truthfulness, propriety and service to the common good of the entire society. Such कर्म *karma* is indeed ईश्वर आराधन कर्म *īśvara ārādhana karma* – a कर्म *karma* in the service of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, as worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, already in oneself.

Again, such कर्म *karma* is indeed स्वधर्म विहितं कर्म *svadharma vihitaṁ karma* – every कर्म *karma* one is called upon to do by virtue of one's स्वधर्म *svadharma* – one's natural function in the society by virtue of one's circumstances of birth, education, training, occupation and station in life, as an active participant in this creation, in



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accordance with ईश्वर नियमं *īśvara niyamamaṁ* – as ordained by परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, already in oneself, for the peace, harmony, and progress (both material progress and spiritual progress) of the entire जीव लोक *jīva loka* – the entire society of living beings. Only such कर्म *karma* is सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma* – a well-done कर्म *karma*, a good कर्म *karma*, a पुण्य कर्म *puṇya karma*, in terms of the Upanishad.

What one gets by doing such सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma* is सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam* and निर्मलं *nirmalam*. सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam* is that which is a manifestation of सत्व गुण *satva guṇa*, namely सुखं *sukham* and ज्ञानं *jñānam*, which means a life of zest and enthusiasm for a meaningful life, peace and happiness, and ज्ञानं *jñānam* – the ability to gain knowledge, contributing to the diligent cultivation of सूक्ष्म बुद्धि *sūkṣma buddhi* – penetrating intellect capable of incisive inquiry, leading to the recognition of increasingly higher and higher orders of subtlety in cause-effect relationships in the natural order of existence, such recognition having been gained through कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi*, ज्ञान लक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति *jñāna lakṣaṇa īśvara bhakti*, सर्व कर्मफल त्याग बुद्धि *sarva karma phala tyāga buddhi* and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि *īśvara prasāda buddhi*. Such is the nature of सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam*.

निर्मलं *nirmalam* is अन्तः करण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* – cleanliness and purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, which is indeed a divine blessing.

Such सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam* and निर्मलं *nirmalam* is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* – helpful for gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge, It is such सात्त्विकं *sāttvikam* and निर्मलं *nirmalam* what one gets by doing सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karma*. On the other hand

रजः तु फलं दुःखं *rajaḥ tu phalam duḥkham* – the result of a कर्म *karma* born of रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*, which means a कर्म *karma* born of राग-द्वेष *raga-dveṣa* forces, forces of likes and dislikes, is simply दुःख *duḥkha* – unhappiness, unfulfillment, pain and distress of some kind. Why? Because, as भगवान् *bhagavān* has pointed out earlier

लोभः प्रवृत्तिः आरम्भः कर्मणाम् अशमः स्पृहा ।



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*lobhaḥ pravṛttiḥ ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśamaḥ sprhā* / 14-12

Greediness, physical and mental restlessness, continuous urge to undertake new projects, and a craving for something or other at all times, these are the manifestations of रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*.

Thus, a person impelled to act by one's रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*, is always under some kind of pressure, and because of that pressure, one cannot always follow the right means. Therefore, impropriety in action becomes inevitable when one is propelled by राग-द्वेष *raga-dveṣa* forces, the forces of likes and dislikes.

We must also understand that actions propelled by रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*, do result in some significant accomplishments, which do give some सुख *sukha* – some satisfaction. But that सुख *sukha* always turns to be अल्प सुख *alpa sukha* – a limited satisfaction. A limited satisfaction only exaggerates one's dissatisfaction. Therefore अल्प सुख *alpa sukha* also is दुःख *duḥkha* – unhappiness of some kind. Further,

अज्ञानं तमसः फलं *ajñānaṁ tamasaḥ phalaṁ* – the result of a कर्म *karma* born of तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* is अज्ञानं *ajñānaṁ* – ignorance, not ignorance of Self-knowledge, but simple ignorance, ordinary ignorance of the kind we deal with in every day life. Because, as we have already seen, अप्रकाश *aprakāśa*, अप्रवृत्ति *aprvṛtti*, प्रमाद *pramāda* and मोह *moha* – lack of discriminative knowledge, dullness in all activities, laziness and indifference, and mental confusion arising from one's inability to use one's intellect - these are the manifestations of तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*. All these are also the results of अज्ञानं *ajñānaṁ* – simple ignorance. Therefore, when action is prompted by simple ignorance, there is not even अल्प सुख *alpa sukha* – meager satisfaction. Therefore, the result of तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* is तमस् *tamas* only. Ignorance produces only ignorance. That is all. From all that has been said above, it is clear that

सत्वात् संजायते ज्ञानं, रजसो लोभ एव च ।

*satvāt saṁjāyate jñānaṁ, rajaso lobha eva ca* ।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो, भवतः अज्ञानमेव च ॥

14-17

*pramādamohau tamaso, bhavataḥ ajñānameva ca* ॥



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सत्वात् संजायते ज्ञानं *satvāt saṁjāyate jñānam* – From सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa*, naturally arises knowledge helpful for gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge. Since such knowledge has the intrinsic capacity to liberate a person from bondages, one needs to cultivate सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa* by doing सुकृत कर्म *sukṛta karmas* - good कर्म *karmas*, consistent with सत्यं *satyaṁ*, धर्मम् *dharmam*, and सेवनं *sevanam* – truthfulness, propriety and service to the common good of the entire society, as pointed out earlier, and

रजसः लोभ एव संजायते *rajasah lobha eva saṁjāyate* – From रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*, only greediness and related qualities arise naturally

तमसः प्रमादमोहौ एव भवतः अज्ञानं च *tamasah pramāda mohau eva bhavataḥ ajñānam ca* – From तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* arise only indifference and delusion born of confusion, together with a blanket of ignorance covering one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. This verse is essentially a repetition of the last verse. भगवान् *bhagavān* repeats the same message twice only to underline the importance of this message, for every person in daily life. We have to order and reorder our lives continuously, every day, through self-discipline and assimilation of proper values, so that we diligently cultivate सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa* to predominate in our daily living.

That is not enough. One has to uplift oneself, by oneself, from the bondages of all गुण *guṇas*, including सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa*, in order to be able to gain identity with one's स्वरूप *svarūpa* – the आत्मा *ātmā*. Thus, one has to become a गुणातीतः *guṇātītaḥ* – one beyond the hold of all the three गुण *guṇas*, for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*. To point out this human need is the very purpose of this entire discourse in this chapter. Continuing, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।  
*ūrdhvam gacchanti sattvasthāḥ madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ* ।  
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्थाः, अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥ 14-18  
*jaghanya guṇa vṛttisthāḥ, adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ* ॥

How one chooses to live in this life is going to account for what one will be in one's next life. That is what भगवान् *bhagavān* is pointing out in this verse, in terms of positive,



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zero and negative progress in one's ladder of spiritual growth. भगवान् *bhagavān* uses three words here: ऊर्ध्वम् *ūrdhvam* – above, मध्ये *madhye* – middle, and अधः *adhah* – below. Naturally every one needs to move up the ladder of spiritual growth. The verse says:

ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः *ūrdhvam gacchanti sattvasthāḥ* – सत्त्वस्थाः *sattvasthāḥ* means सत्त्व गुण वृत्त्वस्थाः *satva guṇa vṛttvasthāḥ*. Those who are committed to the cultivation of thought forms of सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa* in daily life, ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति *ūrdhvam gacchanti* – they go up the spiritual ladder in the next life, which means they will become even superior human beings in terms of सुख *sukha* and ज्ञानं *jñānam* – happiness and knowledge, or they may even become celestial beings – देव *devas* etc., and

मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः *madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ* – those who are committed to the pursuit of रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*, in this life, performing कर्म *karmas* of various kinds, propelled by one's likes and dislikes for various worldly objects and experiences मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति *madhye tiṣṭhanti* – they stay in the middle, which means they neither move up nor move down in the spiritual ladder in the next life. They continue to remain as they are now in their next life also, and that means they continue to go through their never-ending cycle of birth and death. On the other hand

जघन्यगुण वृत्तिस्थाः तामसाः अधः गच्छन्ति *jaghanya guṇa vṛttisthāḥ tāmasāḥ adhah gacchanti* – Those who abide in the lowest among गुण *guṇas*, they are called जघन्यगुण वृत्तिस्थाः *jaghanya guṇa vṛttisthāḥ*, and they are तामसाः *tāmasāḥ* – those who are committed to तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* – a life of laziness and indifference in this life

अधः गच्छन्ति *adhah gacchanti* – they go down spiritually in their next life, which means if they are reborn as human beings, they will naturally take to a life of degrading and improper activities, or they may take to lower forms of existence in their next life.

This is being said here only to show the importance of cultivating सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa* in this very life itself, when one still has an opportunity to uplift oneself spiritually.

One must also realize that सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa* also is binding in nature. Ultimately one must uplift oneself from all the three गुण *guṇas*, including सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa*.



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How is that possible? Only through a clear vision of आत्मा *ātmā* – The Self I, as the very स्वरूप *svarūpa* of oneself, which means only through such आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं, यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।

*nānyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṁ, yadā draṣṭānupaśyati ।*

गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति, मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥ 14-19

*guṇebhyaśca paraṁ vetti, madbhāvaṁ so'dhigacchati ॥*

अनुपश्यति *anupaśyati* means the one who sees clearly, not seeing something as an object in existence, but recognizing the Reality of Existence Itself in the wake of knowledge gained from the teachings of the Upanishads. The one who has absolute clarity of vision of such Upanishad knowledge is the one who sees clearly - अनुपश्यति *anupaśyati*. Such a person is a द्रष्टा *draṣṭā* – a seer, a wise person.

The Upanishad knowledge involved here is what भगवान् *bhagavān* has been teaching in the last chapter and in this chapter, namely:

- The स्वरूप *svarūpa* of every person, The self of every being in this creation is The आत्मा *ātmā*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The Universal Awareness, ever-existent changeless unbound and uninvolved. On the other hand
- The स्वभाव *svabhāva* of every person is one's own गुणः *guṇas* - unique and peculiar to oneself, transient, ever-changing, and ever manifesting in some form or other.

Every person is different from every other person only in terms of one's गुणः *guṇas*, one's स्वभाव *svabhāva*, and not स्वरूप *svarūpa*. All that one does, all of one's likes and dislikes, actions, experiences, etc. are all manifestations of one's गुणः *guṇas*, only. There is no कर्ता *kartā* – there is no doer in oneself, other than one's own गुणः *guṇas*. The one who is clear about this knowledge is a द्रष्टा *draṣṭā* – the seer of reality of existence as It is. Such a person अनुपश्यति *anupaśyati* – sees clearly, recognizes reality as It is. Referring to such a द्रष्टा *draṣṭā* – the wise person, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:



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यदा द्रष्टा, गुणेभ्यः अन्यं कर्तारं न अनुपश्यति *yadā draṣṭā, guṇebhyaḥ anyam katāram na anupaśyati* – Being awake to the teachings of the Upanishads, when one does not see a कर्ता *kartā* – a doer other than one's गुणस *guṇas*, which means when one realizes and recognizes, through Upanishad knowledge, that one's गुणस *guṇas* are the only कर्ता *kartā* – the doer in oneself.

सः गुणेभ्यः च परं वेत्ति *saḥ guṇebhyaḥ ca param vetti* – that person understands, appreciates, realizes and recognizes The Self in oneself as गुणेभ्यः परं *guṇebhyaḥ param* – ONE other than all of one's गुणस *guṇas*, transcending all of one's गुणस *guṇas* - independent of all of one's गुणस *guṇas*, and beyond the reach of all of one's गुणस *guṇas*. In the wake of Upanishad knowledge, one recognizes one's स्वरूप *svarūpa* – The Self I in oneself as

गुणेभ्यः परं *guṇebhyaḥ param* – above one's गुणस *guṇas*, independent of one's गुणस *guṇas*, beyond the reach of one's गुणस *guṇas*. So recognizing

सः मद्भावं, मत् स्वरूपं, ईश्वर स्वरूपं, अधिगच्छति *saḥ madbhāvam, mat svarūpam, īśvara svarūpam, adhagacchati* – That person gains identity with Me, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. That person recognizes परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as ONESELF Itself, independent of all of one's गुणस *guṇas*. That person thus gains identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. How does that identity happen? भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

गुणान् एतान् अतीत्य त्रीन्, देही देहसमुद्भवान् ॥

*guṇān etān atītya trīn, dehī dehasamudbhavān ॥*

जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-दुःखैः, विमुक्तः अमृतं अश्नुते ॥ 14-20

*janma-mṛtyu-jara-duḥkhaiḥ, vimuktaḥ amṛtam aśnute ॥*

एतान् त्रीन् गुणान् अतीत्य *etān trīn guṇān atītya* – Uplifting oneself from these three गुणस *guṇas*, namely सत्य *satva*, रजस् *rajas* and तमस् *tamas* गुणस *guṇas*. How can one uplift oneself from one's गुणस *guṇas* which one already has? Only by knowledge, only by clearly recognizing that these three गुणस *guṇas* are





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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

देह समुद्भवान् *deha samudbhavān* – these गुणः *guṇas* constitute the entire cause for the very existence of one's body-mind-intellect complex. One's शरीर *śarīra* – one's body as it is, has come into existence entirely from one's own गुणः *guṇas*, past and present. Other than these three गुणः *guṇas*, there is no कर्ता *kartā*, there is no doer in oneself.

One's स्वरूप *svarūpa*, The आत्मा *ātmā* – The Self I in oneself is NOT the doer in oneself. The आत्मा *ātmā* – The Self I Itself transcends all the गुणः *guṇas*, and exists totally independent of all of one's गुणः *guṇas*. So realizing and recognizing oneself clearly, by one's विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi*, one uplifts oneself from one's गुणः *guṇas* by not identifying oneself with one's गुणः *guṇas*, and by totally identifying oneself with one's स्वरूप *svarūpa*, The आत्मा *ātmā*. By so doing, what happens?

जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-दुःखैः, विमुक्तः *janma-mṛtyu-jara-duḥkhaiḥ, vimuktaḥ* – one is naturally freed from birth, death, old age and the sorrows and distresses of daily life. The freedom comes by knowledge, through Self-realization and Self-recognition by one's own विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi*. By virtue of such freedom

देही अमृतं अश्नुते *dehī amṛtaṁ aśnute* – the person gains immortality, gains मोक्ष *mokṣa*, because आत्मा *ātmā* – the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of the person, the true nature of the person, is not subject to birth and death, and आत्मा *ātmā* is ever free and ever existent. Recognizing one's identity with The आत्मा *ātmā*, one naturally recognizes oneself as immortal.

Recognizing one's identity with the आत्मा *ātmā*, gaining such मोक्ष *mokṣa*, such freedom from जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा *janma-mṛtyu-jara* and दुःखः *duḥkha* can only be through clearly recognized Upanishad knowledge on the true nature of oneself. Gaining such मोक्ष *mokṣa* – Absolute Liberation, is identical with जीव ईश्वर ऐक्यं *jīva īśvara eikyam* – becoming ONE with the all-pervading परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself, ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself, which state of existence one can gain even in one's own life time. How is that possible?



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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

It is only common experience that one gets older every day, and one is certain to die one day. When that is the case, how can one gain freedom from old age and death in this world of mortal existence. The answer is: one can gain freedom from old age and death in this very life, only by recognizing one's स्वरूप *svarūpa*, i.e. one's true nature is The आत्मा *ātmā*. That आत्मा *ātmā* is not subject to birth and death. That आत्मा *ātmā* is immortal, and one can gain immortality in this mortal world by realized Self-knowledge – आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*.

Thus, we must clearly understand that Immortality is not for this transient physical body, but immortality is for ONESELF, The Self in oneself, which is possible through Self-realization, through आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* – Self-recognition by knowledge.

This statement from भगवान् *bhagavān* to the effect that even a mortal human being can gain Immortality through Self-knowledge by uplifting oneself from the hold of all the three गुणसु *guṇas*, gives an opportunity for Arjuna to ask Sri Krishna a few questions on the subject.

Arjuna's questions, and Sri Krishna's answers form the concluding part of this chapter, which we will see next time.