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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

षोडशोऽध्यायः - दैवासुर सम्पद्विभागयोगः

ṣoḍaśo'dhyāyaḥ - daivāsura sampadvibhāga yogaḥ

Chapter 16

Volume 1

श्री भगवानुवाच śrī bhagavān uvāca

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिः ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

abhayaṁ sattva saṁśuddhiḥ jñāna yoga vyavasthitiḥ ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ 16-1

dānaṁ damaśca yajñaśca svādhyāyastapa ārjavam ॥

Sri Krishna has been teaching ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* - आत्म ज्ञानं *ātmā jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge in all the first 15 chapters of the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*, which we have seen already. All this teaching is primarily focused on knowledge about one's स्वरूप *svarūpa* - true identity of oneself, more particularly, the सर्वात्म स्वरूप *sarvātma svarūpa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - knowledge about the overriding fact that परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is Everything - वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति ज्ञानं *vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti jñānaṁ*. "Everything" means everything, manifest, unmanifest, and all that is beyond manifest and unmanifest. That परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, That पुरुषोत्तम *puruṣottama*, is indeed ALL that exist, All in existence, Existence Itself.

The realization of That Knowledge means that the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of oneself is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. Such Self-realization makes a person बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān*, a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, a wise person. That is what ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* teaches.

Even with all this teaching from Sri Krishna Himself, Arjuna has not become a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, and most of us have not yet become ज्ञानी *jñānīs* either. That only shows that simply understanding ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* knowledge by itself is not sufficient for one to become the very embodiment of that knowledge.



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In addition to understanding that knowledge, one needs an अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, fit for absorbing that knowledge. One needs a स्वभाव *svabhāva*, properly aligned to merge with one's स्वरूप *svarūpa* totally.

One's स्वभाव *svabhāva* is concerned with one's गुण *guṇas* and कर्म *karmas* - one's personal qualities, values, attitudes and dispositions governing all of one's actions. What is that स्वभाव *svabhāva*, the गुण-कर्म *guṇa-karma* combination that is conducive to bring about Self-realization, as परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself? That is the subject matter of Sri Krishna's discourses in the next three chapters, which are focused primarily on the cultivation of स्वभाव *svabhāva*, the गुण-कर्म *guṇa-karma* combination, appropriate for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total fulfillment in life, Self-realization, Self-recognition of one's true identity. Fortunately स्वभाव *svabhāva* is प्रकृति धर्म *prakṛti dharma* - the distinguishing mark of every individual body-mind-intellect complex, and being so, one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* is always subject to change, which means, one can order, and reorder one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* to meet one's requirements.

If one's destination is gaining the परमपुरुषार्थ *parama puruṣārtha* - मोक्ष *mokṣa* in this very life, or at least, as soon as possible in one's evolution, what are the गुण-कर्म *guṇa-karma* combinations one must cultivate now, and what are those one must avoid at all times, and how to order and reorder one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* from time to time, to align one's स्वभाव *svabhāva* to one's स्वरूप *svarūpa*, so that they naturally merge into ONE स्वरूप *svarūpa* - स्वभाव *svabhāva* combination, that is what Sri Krishna teaches in the next three chapters.

These teachings are of immediate practical interest to every human being, because

- ◇ one can never fully understand, appreciate and realize what मोक्ष *mokṣa* is, until one gains मोक्ष *mokṣa*
- ◇ until one gains मोक्ष *mokṣa*, every one is subject to the experiences of सुख *sukha* and दुःख *duḥkha* - joys and sorrows of worldly life, however transient they may be
- ◇ for every person who is not yet a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, all worldly experiences are real, and they have to be faced and dealt with, without hurting oneself any further, which is the immediate need for every person



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- ◇ any help, any real help one can get to meet one's immediate need, is always welcome, and that is exactly what the knowledge and practice of the Gita teachings do to every person, under all circumstances of life.

We must always remember these words of the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।

nehābhikramanāśo'sti pratyavāyo na vidyate ।

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ 2 - 40

svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt ॥

यत्र योगेश्वर कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।

yatra yogēśvar kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanurdharaḥ ।

तत्र श्रीः विजयो भूतिः ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ 18 - 78

tatra śrīḥ vijayo bhūtiḥ dhruvā nītirmatirmama ॥

In the pursuit of Gita knowledge, together with the practice of Gita teachings, there is never any loss of effort. Even a very little Gita knowledge, together with even a very little practice of Gita teachings, protects one from the fears and dangers of every kind of sorrow and distress, and contributes enormously to one's sense of peace, prosperity, success and happiness in daily life. That is what Gita is.

Thus भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* is a perennial source of unfailing strength, peace and progress in worldly life, for everyone committed to its knowledge and teachings. With this firm conviction, we now go to Chapter 16 of भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*, entitled दैवासुर सम्पद्भिर्भाग योगः *daivāsura sampadvibhāga yogah* - The distinction between दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* and असुर सम्पत् *asura sampat*. सम्पत् *sampat* generally means "wealth" - wealth of all kinds. Whatever one has, is one's wealth. In the context of this chapter, सम्पत् *sampat* refers to one's गुणः *guṇas* - one's personal qualities, values and dispositions governing one's actions at any given time.

There are two kinds of सम्पत् *sampat* - one is दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* and the other is असुर सम्पत् *asura sampat*. दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* are qualities, values and dispositions which are helpful to one's progress, both worldly progress and spiritual progress, which means, they are the "good qualities" which one must recognize, and try to cultivate. असुर सम्पत् *asura sampat* are qualities, values and dispositions which are opposed to one's progress in every way. Hence they are "bad qualities" which must be recognized as such, and one must try to avoid them at all times.



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Therefore the subject matter in this chapter is दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* and असुर सम्पत् *asura sampat* - clarity of knowledge about the *good qualities* to be recognized and cultivated and the *bad qualities* to be recognized and avoided at all times. Generally speaking, details about good qualities and bad qualities may be considered as matters of common knowledge. But frequent failure to recognize the distinction between the two, and the occurrence of improper actions arising from such failure are also matters of common knowledge.

Therefore, clear and definite knowledge on good and bad personal qualities and the philosophy for proper actions in daily life form an essential part of ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* knowledge, and that is the subject matter for this and the next two chapters.

As we may recall the words of Sri Krishna in Chapter 9:

मोघाशाः मोघकर्माणः मोघज्ञानाः विचेतसः ।
moghāsāḥ mogha karmāṇaḥ mogha jñānāḥ vicetasah ।
राक्षसीम् आसुरीम् चैव प्रकृतिम् मोहिनीम् श्रिताः ॥ 9 - 12
rakṣasīm āsurīm caiva prakṛtim mohnīm śritāḥ ॥

Describing the personal qualities and dispositions of राक्षस *rākṣasas* and असुर *asuras*, meaning people who have predominantly रजस् *rajas* and तमस् *tamas* गुण *guṇas* respectively, भगवान् *bhagavān* says, they are:

मोघाशाः *moghāsāḥ* - people of false hopes

मोघकर्माणः *mogha karmāṇaḥ* - all their कर्म *karmas* are really fruitless, because they cannot yield what they really need, namely peace and happiness

मोघज्ञानाः *mogha jñānāḥ vicet* - their knowledge is totally inadequate to meet their real needs, and

विचेतसः *vicetasah* - they do not have विवेक ज्ञानं *viveka jñānam*. They cannot really discern what is proper and what is improper in daily life

The above kinds of personal qualities are described in this chapter in detail as असुर सम्पत् *asura sampat*. On the other hand, there are those people who have predominantly सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*, and some among them have even transcended all the three. They have become गुणातीतः *guṇātītaḥ*, which means they are ज्ञानी



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jñānīs. Those people are called महात्माs *mahatmās*. Their personal qualities are described as

भजन्ति अनन्य मनसः ज्ञात्वा भूतादिम् अव्ययं ॥ 9 - 13
bhajanti ananya manasaḥ jñātvā bhūtādim avyayaṁ ॥

They recognize परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as the source of all happiness. For them, परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is indeed everything, and hence they worship परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with single-minded devotion. Such people do already have the twenty personal qualities, ज्ञानसाधनं *jñānasādhanaṁ*, described in Chapter 13 as अमानित्वं *amānitvaṁ*, अदम्बित्वं *adambhitvaṁ*, अहिंसा *ahimsā*, क्षान्तिः *kṣāntiḥ*, अर्जवम् *ārjavam*, etc. Those are the personal qualities which are capable of yielding peace, prosperity and happiness, leading ultimately to the परमपुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha*, the मोक्ष *mokṣa*, for every qualified person. Those personal qualities, along with a few more, are presented again in this chapter as दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* - divine dispositions, spiritual wealth, meaning "good qualities" to be recognized and cultivated by every one who seeks peace, prosperity and happiness in daily life.

Thus Sri Krishna opens this discourse with a list of दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* - good qualities, spiritual wealth, as follows:

श्री भगवानुवाच *śrī bhagavān uvāca*
अभयं सत्त्व संशुद्धिः ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।
abhayaṁ sattva saṁśuddhiḥ jñāna yoga vyavasthitiḥ ।
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप अर्जवम् ॥ 16-1
dānaṁ damaśca yajñaśca svādhyāyastapa ārjavam ॥

अभय *abhayaṁ* - Fearlessness is the foremost among all दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat* - divine dispositions. This is not the fearlessness of a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. For a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, there is nothing other than परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself. A ज्ञानी *jñānī* has none to fear from. We are not talking here about people who are already ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*. We are talking about अज्ञानीs *ajñānīs* - people who have not yet become ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*.



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For अज्ञानीs *ajñānīs* - for people who have not yet gained Self-realization, Self-recognition, which means for most of us, there are, of course, many sources of fear in daily life, such as the possibility of losing something, or getting hurt in some way, or mental conflicts, guilt feelings, bondages, weak heartedness, perceived inadequacies, disappointments, etc., all of which are common sources of fear. परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself is a great source of fear for all अज्ञानीs *ajñānīs*.

Thus fear of some kind or other is common for most people. When that is so, how does one gain freedom from भय *bhaya* - fear? It is important for all of us to know what one needs to do to gain freedom from fear. There should be an existent and conscious Being in whom one can take refuge, under whose protection one can gain भय निवृत्ति *bhaya nivṛtti* - total redemption from fear of any kind, which means, a शरणागति वस्तु *śarṇāgati vastu* is necessary for भय निवृत्ति *bhaya nivṛtti*. That वस्तु *vastu* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - The सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyaṁ-jñānaṁ-anantaṁ brahma*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The ज्योति स्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा *jyoti svarūpa śuddha caitanya ātmā*, The Self I already in oneself as ONESELF Itself, as Pure Consciousness Itself.

Therefore पूर्ण ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *pūrṇa brahma jñānaṁ*, together with the mental disposition of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śarṇāgati*, is the only means for gaining total freedom from every kind of fear. That is what we learn from the teachings of our Upanishads. As we may recall, this is what the Taittiriya Upanishad says (2 - 7) on the subject of भय *bhaya* - fear.

यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन् अदृश्ये अनात्म्ये अनिरुक्ते,
yadā hyevaiṣa etasmin adṛśye anātmnye anirukte,
अनिलयने (ब्रह्मणि) अभयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते ।
anilayane (brahmaṇi) abhayaṁ pratiṣṭhāṁ vindate ।
अथ सो अभयं गतो भवति ।
atha so abhayaṁ gato bhavati ।
यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन् (ब्रह्मणि) उद् अरं (अल्पं अपि) अन्तरं कुरुते ।
yadā hyevaiṣa etasmin ud aram (alpaṁ api) antaraṁ kurute ।
अथ तस्य भयं भवति ।
atha tasya bhayaṁ bhavati ।
तत्त्वेव भयं विदुषो अमन्वानस्य । (तै 2 - 7)



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tattveva bhayaṁ viduṣo amanvānasya | (taittiriya 2 – 7)

All this we have seen already. When a person has matured enough to recognize one's identity with ब्रह्मन् *brahman* itself, then, that person becomes one who has reached the state of अभयं *abhayam* - fearlessness. How does one get the notion of fear in the first place? The Upanishad says:

Due to lack of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātmā jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge, when one entertains a notion of separateness from ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, even to a minute extent, then ब्रह्मन् *brahman* becomes the source, the cause, and the means for fear. So long as one does not recognize ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as पूर्णम् *pūrṇam*, as पुरुषोत्तम *puruṣottama*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in everything there is, one will continue to entertain the notions of fear. Even scholars who may know the words of the Vedas and the Upanishads, but do not really recognize the nature of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, even for such scholars, ब्रह्मन् *brahman* becomes the source, the cause and the means for fear.

From the foregoing, it is clear that gaining realized पूर्ण ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *pūrṇa brahma jñānaṁ* is the means for gaining total freedom from fear. As we have already seen in Chapter 7, such realized पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ* is possible only when one has पूर्ण ईश्वर भक्ति *pūrṇa īśvara bhakti* and the natural fusion of पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ* and पूर्ण ईश्वर भक्ति *pūrṇa īśvara bhakti* is indeed पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śaraṇāgati*. Therefore, it is clear that पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ* together with पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śaraṇāgati* is the only means for gaining total freedom from every kind of fear.

Again, as we may recall, in Chapter 1 of भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*, we see Arjuna afflicted by fear. Sri Krishna then opens the Gita Upadesa with उत्तिष्ठ मन्त्र *uttiṣṭha mantra*

क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वा उत्तिष्ठ परंन्तप 2 - 3
kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurabalyaṁ tyaktvaa uttiṣṭha paramntapa

Arjuna, get rid of this fear and weak-heartedness. उत्तिष्ठ *uttiṣṭha* - wake up, grow up to your real nature" which means, commit yourself to the pursuit of पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ*, and finally, Sri Krishna closes the Gita Upadesa, advising Arjuna



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मां एकं शरणं व्रज *mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* - Develop the attitude of total surrender to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*." which shows that पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ* together with पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śaraṇāgati* is the solution, the only solution, for overcoming fear of any kind. Thus the entire भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* is The Scripture for gaining total freedom from every kind of fear.

Gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ* and cultivating the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śaraṇāgati* are not easy accomplishments. They are matters of constant endeavor over very long periods of time. But, one can start that process of endeavor today, right now. How?

By a total commitment to a life of ethical behavior, proper conduct and good moral character in every day life, together with a total commitment to follow भगवान्'s *bhagavān's* "निमित्त मात्रं भव *nimitta mātraṁ bhava*" उपदेश *upadeśa* at all times, under all circumstances.

The three Vedic commands, namely सत्यं वद *satyaṁ vada*, धर्मं चर *dharmam cara*, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः *svādhyāyāt mā pramadaḥ* constitute the very basis of all ethical life.

सत्यं वद *satyaṁ vada* - Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times

धर्मं चर *dharmam cara* - Follow धर्म *dharma*. Do what is proper, and never do what is improper

स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः *svādhyāyāt mā pramadaḥ* - Do not neglect scripture readings every day, which means, never lose contact with That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already within yourself.

Being truthful, following धर्मम् *dharmam*, and daily scripture readings are themselves प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् *pratyakṣa brahman* - direct manifestations of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. By holding on to that परमेश्वर *parameśvar* at all times, under all circumstances, one is already in the active pursuit of पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ*. Further, following भगवान्'s *bhagavān's* "निमित्त मात्रं भव *nimitta mātraṁ bhava*" उपदेश *upadeśa* means one looks upon oneself only as an instrument to serve the will of



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परमेश्वर *parameśvar* at all times and under all circumstances. By so doing, one is actively cultivating the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śarṇāgati*.

Therefore, by the above two commitments, namely living a life of सत्यं *satyaṁ* and धर्मम् *dharmam*, and being only an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* at all times and under all circumstances, one naturally progresses in one's accomplishment of both gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ* and cultivating the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śarṇāgati* simultaneously, and consequently, all fears in oneself will also naturally disappear progressively, and ultimately, completely.

That is how one gains अभयं *abhayaṁ* - fearlessness which is the foremost among divine virtues - दैव सम्पत् *daiva sampat*.

We will continue next time.