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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

सप्तदशोऽध्यायः - श्रद्धात्रयविभाग योगः

sapta daśo'dhyāyaḥ - śraddhātrayavibhāga yogaḥ

Chapter 17

Volume 5

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपः क्रियाः ।

tadityanabhisandhāya phalaṁ yajñatapaḥ kriyāḥ ।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्ष काङ्क्षिभिः ॥

17-25

danakriyā śca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣa kāṅkṣibhiḥ ॥

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।

sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sadityetatprayujyate ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥

17-26

praśaste kramaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate ॥

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ saditi cocyate ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥

17-27

karma caiva tadarthīyaṁ sadityevābhidhīyate ॥

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।

aśraddhayā hutaṁ dattaṁ tapastaptaṁ kṛtaṁ ca yat ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥

17-28

asadityucyate pārtha na ca tatpretya no iha ॥

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासु उपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे

iti śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṁ yogāśāstre

श्री कृष्णार्जुन संवादे श्रद्धात्रय विभागयोगो नाम

śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde śraddhātraya vibhāga yogo nāma

सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥

sapta daśo'dhyāyaḥ ॥



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As we may recall, Sri Krishna concluded the last chapter (Chapter 16) advising Arjuna as follows:

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

tasmācchāstram̐ pramāṇam̐ te kāryā kārya vyavasthitau ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ 16-24

jñātvā śāstra vidhānoktam̐ karma kartumahārhasi ॥

For you Arjuna, in determining what is to be done and what is not to be done in any given situation, the Sastras, meaning the mandates of the Vedas and the Upanishads are your guide. With clear knowledge and understanding of what is said in the Sastras, do what you need to do in life, in keeping with the eternal laws of धर्म *dharma*, the सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* - Vedic mandates, for proper conduct in daily life. The above statement from Sri Krishna gives rise to a question from Arjuna. Arjuna says:

अर्जुन उवाच *arjuna uvāca*

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

ye śāstra vidhimutsrjya yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ 17-1

teṣāṃ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa sattvamāho rajastamaḥ ॥

There are people who perform यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* - Vedic rituals of various kinds, with utmost श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, but without strictly following शास्त्रविधि *śāstra vidhi* - the mandates of the Sastra, with respect to the proper performance of such rituals. श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and गुण *guṇa* being directly related, what is the state of disposition of the अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of such people. Is it one of सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*, गुण *rajas guṇa* or तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*? That is Arjuna's question.

भगवान् *bhagavān* points out one's गुण *guṇa*, manifested through one's कर्म *karma*, depends upon one's श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in performing the कर्म *karma* involved. Just like गुण *guṇa*, the nature of श्रद्धा *śraddhā* also is three fold, namely सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā*, राजस् श्रद्धा *rājas śraddhā*, and तामस् श्रद्धा *tāmas śraddhā*, corresponding to सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*, रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* and तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* respectively.



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

When one talks about any कर्म *karma*, as one done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, that श्रद्धा *śraddhā* is generally assumed to be सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā*, because सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā* is the only kind of श्रद्धा *śraddhā* that deserves to be called श्रद्धा *śraddhā*. राजस् श्रद्धा *rājas śraddhā* and तामस् श्रद्धा *tāmas śraddhā* only indicate absence of सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā*. Any कर्म *karma* done with सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā* is naturally a सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma* manifesting the सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa* of the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the person involved. Then the question is, can a यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - a Vedic ritual, done with पूर्ण श्रद्धा *pūrṇa śraddhā*, be a सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma* if it is done improperly in terms of शास्त्र विधि *śāstra vidhi* - the strict rules of the Sastras pertaining to the proper performance of the ritual involved?

The answer is, Yes, even such a यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* can be a सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma* provided it is totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, by simply uttering, with worshipful attitude, any one of the three Veda mantras ओं *om̐*, तत् *tat* or सत् *sat*, either individually or collectively, with understanding and appreciation of their contents, as unfolded by the Upanishads, because each one of the above three Veda mantras reveals ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, already in oneself, available for recognition by one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*.

By such devotional utterance of ओं *om̐*, तत् *tat* or सत् *sat*, or, any यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, even though done improperly in terms of शास्त्र विधि *śāstra vidhi*, naturally becomes transformed into शास्त्र विधान उक्त कर्म *śāstra vadhāna ukta karma* - कर्म *karma* done totally in accordance with the mandates of the Sastras, not in form, but in effect. That is the power of the mantras ओं *om̐*, तत् *tat* and/or सत् *sat*. Thus, with the devotional utterance of ओं *om̐*, तत् *tat* or सत् *sat* mantra, every कर्म *karma* done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, whatever be its form, becomes सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma* manifesting the सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa* nature of the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the person involved.



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Having said that, भगवान् *bhagavān* talked about ओं *om* mantra last time, and now says something more about the तत् *tat* and सत् *sat* mantras

तदित्यनभिसंधाय फलं यज्ञतपः क्रियाः ।

tadityanabhisandhāya phalaṁ yajñatapaḥ kriyāḥ ।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्ष काङ्क्षिभिः ॥

17-25

danakriyā śca vividhāḥ kriyante mokṣa kāṅkṣibhiḥ ॥

The word तत् *tat* literally means "that", referring to some object. But, when the word तत् *tat* is used without reference to any particular object, तत् *tat* refers to परंब्रह्म *parambrahma*, as in the Upanishad declaration तत् त्वं असि *tat tvam asi* - That परंब्रह्म *parambrahma* You are. For example, while doing any कर्म *karma*, if one says तत् अर्पणं अस्तु *tat arpaṇam astu*, it means ब्रह्मार्पणं अस्तु *brahmārpaṇam astu* - whatever I do, may it be total dedication to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. That is the attitude behind the action. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says here:

तत् इति *tat iti* (उदाहृत्य *udāhṛtya*) - with the devotional utterance of the word तत्

फलं अनभिसंधाय *tat phalaṁ anabhisandhāya* - without seeking or expecting any fruit of action, any result in view

विविधाः यज्ञक्रियाः तपः क्रियाः दानक्रियाः च मोक्ष काङ्क्षिभिः क्रियन्ते *vividhāḥ yajña kriyāḥ tapaḥ kriyāḥ danakriyāḥ ca mokṣa kāṅkṣibhiḥ kriyante* - various kinds of यज्ञ कर्मसु *yajña karmas*, तपस् कर्मसु *tapas karmas* and दान कर्मसु *dana karmas* are done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, by those who live a life in the exclusive pursuit of मोक्ष *mokṣa*, such as कर्मयोगीसु *karma yogīsu* and संन्यासीसु *sanyāsīsu*.

यज्ञ कर्मसु *yajña karmas*, तपस् कर्मसु *tapas karmas* and दान कर्मसु *dana karmas* are to be done by everybody, whether one is a संसारी *saṁsārī* or कर्मयोगी *karma yogī* or संन्यासी *sanyāsī*. Even though Sanyasis have freed themselves from their obligations to do many worldly duties, still they have यज्ञ *yajña*, दान *dana* and तपस् कर्मसु *tapas karmas* to do from time to time. And, when they do such कर्मसु *karmas*,



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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

they always commence their कर्मs *karmas* with the word तत् अर्पणं अस्तु *tat arpaṇam astu*, thus dedicating the कर्म *karma* totally to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

A Sanyasi does not do any कर्म *karma* for any result, because मोक्ष *mokṣa* is his only goal and reaching that goal is not the result of any कर्म *karma*. मोक्ष *mokṣa* is gained only by knowledge, not by कर्म *karma*. Then why should Sanyasis do any कर्म *karma*? A Sanyasi does a कर्म *karma* only for अन्तः करण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - to keep the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* clear. We must understand that अन्तः करण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* is not a कर्मफल *karmaphala*, because अन्तः करण *antaḥ karaṇa* is शुद्धं *śuddham* - clean by nature, but अन्तः करण *antaḥ karaṇa* being only an instrument, it is also subject to collecting dust every day, and that dust has to be removed by सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma*, and indeed, that is the purpose of any कर्म *karma* for every person.

Therefore, by doing the कर्म *karma* with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* - फलं अनभिसंधाय *phalam anabhisandhāya* - without seeking or expecting any result, the श्रद्धा *śraddhā* for the कर्म *karma* becomes सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā*. By dedicating that कर्म *karma* with सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā* totally to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, by devotional utterance of तत् *tat* - तत् अर्पणं अस्तु *tat arpaṇam astu*, that कर्म *karma* becomes a means for gaining अन्तः करण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi*.

Usually, the word तत् *tat* is uttered in the form

ओं तत् सत् *om tat sat* or तदर्पणं अस्तु *tadarpaṇam astu*

Devotional utterances of ओं *om* and or तत् *tat* and /or सत् *sat* have the same effect. In the next two verses, भगवान् *bhagavān* tells something about the word सत् *sat* in particular.

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।
sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca sadityetatprayujyate ।
प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥

17-26



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

praśaste karamaṇi tathā sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate ॥

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ saditi cocyate ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥

17-27

karma caiva tadarthīyaṁ sadityevābhidhīyate ॥

सत् इति एतत् प्रयुज्यते सत् भावे साधुभावे च *sat iti etat prayujyate sat bhāve sādhu bhāve ca* - The word सत् *sat* is particularly used referring to सत् भाव *sat bhāva* and साधुभाव *sādhubhāva*. सत् भाव *sat bhāva* refers to something good and auspicious, which has come into existence as a perceptible entity. For example, the birth of a child is auspicious. That child is सत् *sat*.

The word सत् *sat* literally means "Is", indicating something in existence. In reality, the only existence is परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Therefore, the very utterance of the word सत् *sat* refers to something that manifests शुभं *śubham* and पवित्रं *pavitraṁ* - auspicious and purifying. When you say "this is, that is, something else is" and so on, what you are really telling is "परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is सत् *sat*, परंब्रह्म *param brhma* is" because ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम् *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvam* - all that is manifest is indeed परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

साधुभाव *sādhubhāva* is सत्पुरुषु भाव *satpurṣa bhāva* - the disposition of one who is committed to the pursuit of ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam* - such a person is a साधु *sādhu*. Here again, one who has come into existence as a साधु *sādhu*, which means, the person was not a साधु *sādhu* before, but he is a साधु *sādhu* now, because of his new awakening to सत् बुद्धि *sat buddhi*.

तथा पार्थ *tathā pārtha* - In a similar manner, O! Arjuna

सत् शब्दः युज्यते प्रशस्ते कर्मणि *sat śabdaḥ yujyate praśaste karamaṇi* - the word सत् *sat* is used for any sacred कर्म *karma*, any sanctifying कर्म *karma*. For example, marriage, Upanayanam, etc. are considered सत् कर्म *sat karmas*. Any कर्म



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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

karma done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and ईश्वर अर्पण बुद्धि *īśvara arpaṇa buddhi* is a प्रशस्त कर्म *praśasta karma* - auspicious कर्म *karma*, and such कर्म *karma* is सत् कर्म *sat karma*.

We may briefly recall here how Sri Krishna described कर्म *karma* in Chapter 8. Arjuna asks the question किम् कर्म *kim karma* - What is कर्म *karma*? भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

भूतभाव उद्भवकरः विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः *bhūtabhāva udbhavakaraḥ visargaḥ karma samjñitaḥ* - कर्म *karma* is विसर्ग कर्म *visarga karma*, which means ईश्वर अर्पित कर्म *īśvara arpita karma* - कर्म *karma* dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. श्रद्धा *śraddhā* here is understood, because without श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, there can be no dedication to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. The कर्म *karma* dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, what does it do?

भूतभाव उद्भवकरः *bhūtabhāva udbhavakaraḥ* - It becomes the cause for the birth of दृष्ट फल *drṣṭa phala* and अदृष्ट फल *adrṣṭa phala* - results seen and unseen, helpful for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam*, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge. Such कर्म *karma* is सत् कर्म *sat karma*, a शुभ कर्म *śubha karma*, a प्रशस्त कर्म *praśasta karma*, an auspicious कर्म *karma*.

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सत् इति उच्यते *yajñe tapasi dāne ca sthitiḥ sat iti ucyate* - A committed steadfastness in the performance of any यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, तपस् कर्म *tapas karma* and दान कर्म *dāna karma*, with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* is also called सत् *sat*, which means such steadfastness itself is a direct manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Not only that

तदर्थीयं कर्म च एव सत् इति एव अभिधीयते *tadarthīyaṁ karma ca eva sat iti eva abhidhīyate* - any कर्म *karma* related to the above यज्ञ दान तपस् कर्म *yajña dāna tapas karmas* said above, again done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, that कर्म *karma* also



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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

is called सत् *sat*. It is also a manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself, or any कर्म *karma* done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, for the sake of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, i.e., with the attitude of being simply an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, that कर्म *karma* also is called सत् *sat*, that कर्म *karma* is also a manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself.

Thus, in the foregoing verses, भगवान् *bhagavān* has pointed out that any कर्म *karma* done with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, simply by the devotional utterance of the mantra ओं *om*, तत् *tat* or सत् *sat*, either individually or collectively, makes that कर्म *karma* a सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma*, manifesting the सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa* component of अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* of the person involved.

Thus it is one's attitude in performing the कर्म *karma*, and not the actual mode of performing the कर्म *karma*, that determines whether the कर्म *karma* is a सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma* or a राजस कर्म *rājas karma* or तमस् कर्म *tamas karma*. That is the complete answer to Arjuna's question at the beginning of this discourse.

Having answered Arjuna's question, भगवान् *bhagavān* now concludes this discourse with the following important message.

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।
aśraddhayā hutam dattam tapastaptam kṛtam ca yat ।
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ 17-28
asadityucyate pārtha na ca tatpretya no iha ॥

पार्थ *pārtha* - O! Arjuna, please understand this

यत् अश्रद्धया हुतं *yat aśraddhayā hutam* - any Vedic ritual performed without श्रद्धा *śraddhā*

यत् अश्रद्धया दत्तं *yat aśraddhayā dattam* - any charity given without श्रद्धा *śraddhā*

यत् अश्रद्धया तपः तप्तं *yat aśraddhayā tapah taptam* - any religious act of personal discipline undertaken without श्रद्धा *śraddhā*, and indeed



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

यत् अश्रद्धया कृतं च *yat aśraddhayā kṛtaṁ ca* - any duty performed, or any action done without श्रद्धा *śraddhā*

तत् असत् इति उच्यते *tat asat iti ucyate* - that action is called असत् *asat*, such action is असत् *asat* कर्म *karma*

तत् न इह न प्रेत्य च *tat na iha na pretya ca* - that असत् कर्म *asat karma* is as good as not done. It is fruitless, both here and hereafter, both while living and after death.

Why that is so, must be understood. As भगवान् *bhagavān* has already pointed out, सत् *sat* is existence of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, existence of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Therefore असत् कर्म *asat karma* is a denial of the very existence of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, existence of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

As we have already seen in the Taittiriya Upanishad
असन्नेव स भवति *asanneva sa bhavati* - असत् ब्रह्मेति वेद चेत् *asat brahmeti veda cet* (2 - 6)

By denying the very existence of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, one denies one's own very existence. Hence

असत् एव स भवति *asat eva sa bhavati* - one becomes as good as non-existent.

That means, such a person has no पुरुषार्थ *puruṣārtha* - has no overriding purpose in life. There is no such thing as धर्म *dharma* or अधर्म *adharma* for that person. That is why there is no श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in that person. For such a person, life is only a matter of expediency. Such a person is always propelled and enslaved by one's own राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* forces - forces of likes and dislikes. Such a person is never free. Consequently, such a person does not hesitate to degrade oneself into any action, to meet the immediate demands of his fancies, leading ultimately to one's own self-degradation and self-destruction.

The one who cannot recognize the existence of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - the existence of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, cannot pursue anything of lasting value in life. Therefore, श्रद्धा *śraddhā* - सात्त्विक श्रद्धा *sāttvik śraddhā* which involves सत् बुद्धि *sat buddhi* -



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

आस्तिक्य बुद्धि *āstikya buddhi* - परमेश्वर *parameśvar* consciousness, is all important for every person. With this important message, Sri Krishna concludes this discourse on श्रद्धात्रय विभागयोग *śraddhātraya vibhāga yoga* as the 17th chapter of भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*.

We will go to the last chapter, Chapter 18 next time.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासु उपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
iti śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyām yogaśāstre
श्री कृष्णार्जुन संवादे श्रद्धात्रय विभागयोगोनाम
śrī kṛṣṇārjuna saṁvāde śraddhātraya vibhāga yogo nāma
सप्तदशोऽध्यायः ॥
sapta daśo'dhyāyaḥ ॥