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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अष्टादशोऽध्यायः - मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

aṣṭadaśo 'dhyāyaḥ - mokṣa saṁnyāsa yogaḥ

Chapter 18

Volume 11

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ ।

स्वकर्मनिरातः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥ 18 - 45

svakarmanirātaḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tacchṛṇu ॥

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततं ।

yataḥ pravṛttibhūtānāṁ yena sarvamidaṁ tataṁ ।

स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ 18 - 46

svakarmaṇā tam abhyarca siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ ॥

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् ।

śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt su anuṣṭhitāt ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ 18 - 47

svabhāvaniyataṁ karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam ॥

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

sahajaṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣamapi na tyajet ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण दूमेन अग्निरिव आवृताः ॥ 18 - 48

sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dūmena agniriva āvṛtāḥ ॥

Sri Krishna has been talking about वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* in terms of the four broad areas of occupational duties in the society, natural to each of the four distinct groups of people, namely the ब्राह्मणः *brāhmaṇas*, क्षत्रियः *kṣatriyas*, वैश्यः *vaiśyas* and शूद्रः *śūdras* constituting the entire Vedic society, based on their स्वभाव गुणः *svabhāva guṇas* - in-born personal qualities.



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As pointed out already, one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* itself is the result of one's पूर्व संस्कारs *pūrva saṁskārs*, which means, one's accumulated impressions - the वासनs *vāsanās* left behind in one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* by one's past कर्मs *karmas*, education, training, experience and cultivated awareness in all of one's countless past lives.

Thus one's वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth is a manifestation of one's own spiritual wealth, one's संपत् *saṁpat*, earned through all of one's countless past lives. Naturally, therefore, one's वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth provides an extraordinary and unbeatable opportunity to make full and effective use of one's already earned wealth - one's संपत् *saṁpat*, for one's continued material and spiritual progress in one's present life, by the quickest means possible. That is why Vedanta advises every person not to reject one's own वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth, but try to build on it for reaching one's own ultimate goal of परम पुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha* - goal of life, Total Fulfillment in life.

How to do that, भगवान् *bhagavān* tells in today's verses.

One's self-earned, self-inherited spiritual wealth at birth naturally includes both दैव संपत् *daiva saṁpat* and असुर संपत् *asura saṁpat* - both positive qualities, as well as negative qualities. For one's further material and spiritual progress in life, one must first recognize these qualities as they are, and then, one must assiduously cultivate one's positive qualities without ever nourishing, sustaining or surrendering to one's negative qualities. By continuously strengthening one's already earned positive qualities, the power of the already existing negative qualities will be progressively weakened and incapacitated, and it will ultimately vanish by itself, as Sri Krishna pointed out already in Chapter 2:

परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते *paraṁ dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate* (2 - 59)

In terms of reaching one's ultimate goal of life, in terms of gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Fulfillment in life, one's वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth itself makes no difference. How one utilizes one's self-earned spiritual wealth at birth, makes all the difference. One's वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth provides one's स्वधर्म *svadharmā* - one's own place in society, which in turn provides one's स्वकर्म *svakarma* - one's own particular duties in life, at any given time. Vedanta says - stick to your स्वकर्म *svakarma* with joy



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and enthusiasm, and do your duties, whatever they are, with कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि *īśvara prasād buddhi*. By being so and doing so, you will get what best can be gained by any कर्म *karma*, namely अन्तः करण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, fit for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

Communicating the above message, Sri Krishna says:

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।

sve sve karmaṇyabhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ ।

स्वकर्मनिरातः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥

18 - 45

svakarmanirātaḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati tacchṛṇu ॥

स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः *sve sve karmaṇi abhirataḥ* - The one who is committed to doing one's स्वकर्म *svakarmas* - one's own कर्म *karmas*, whatever they are at any given time, and enjoy doing one's स्वकर्म *svakarmas* as duties to be done, mandated by परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

संसिद्धिं लभते नरः *saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ* - that person gains संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi*, पूर्ण अन्तः करण शुद्धि *pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - Absolute clarity and purity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, fit for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Fulfillment in life.

The expression स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः *sve sve karmaṇi abhirataḥ* has the same meaning as

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मागृधः कस्यस्वित् धनं *tena tyaktena bhujñithāḥ māgrdhaḥ kasyasvit dhanam*

As an active participant in this creation,

- enjoy life, doing whatever has been left for you to do by परमेश्वर *parameśvar* enjoy life through त्याग बुद्धि *tyāga buddhi* and संन्यास बुद्धि *saṁnyāsa buddhi*, by dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as ईश्वर उपासन *īśvara upāsana*, seeking only ज्ञान प्रसादं *jñāna prasādam*



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- cultivate ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ*, ईशावस्य इदं सर्वम् ज्ञानं *īśāvasyaṁ idaṁ sarvam jñānaṁ* by overcoming all internal and external obstacles for the realization and recognition of That ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ*; and
- never covet , never develop an attachment for the wealth of someone else, including the wealth which you consider to be your own.

All that is स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः *sve sve karmaṇi abhirataḥ* - being committed to and enjoy doing one's स्वकर्म *svakarma*, one's own duties, whatever they are, at any given time.

By so being and so doing, संसिद्धि लभते नरः *saṁsiddhi labhate naraḥ* - a person gains संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi*. सिद्धि *siddhi* is accomplishment of any particular कर्म *karma* - well done and completed. संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi* refers to the accomplishment of all of one's स्वकर्म *svakarmas* - one's own duties, as well as one can, as a result of which one gains the best one can get by any कर्म *karma*, namely पूर्ण अन्तः करण शुद्धि *pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi*, by which one gains ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *jñānaniṣṭhā yogyatā* - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ*.

There is another kind of सिद्धि *siddhi* called नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि *naiṣkarmya siddhi*, which is Total Fulfillment in life, मोक्ष *mokṣa* itself, about which we will talk later. Such नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि *naiṣkarmya siddhi* has nothing to do with any कर्म *karma*.

In terms of one's spiritual endeavor, through कर्म *karma*, सिद्धि *siddhi* always means संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi*.

स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति *svakarmanirataḥ siddhiṁ yathā vindati* - By being स्वे स्वे कर्मणि अभिरतः *sve sve karmaṇi abhirataḥ*, so committed and devoted to one's स्वकर्म *svakarma* - one's own कर्म *karmas*, how does one get such संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi* - such ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *jñānaniṣṭhā yogyatā* - a fitness for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*?

तत् श्रुणु *tat śruṇu* - That I am going to tell you now. Please listen, so says भगवान् *bhagavān*.



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Continuing, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततं ।

yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānām yena sarvamidam tataṁ ।

स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥ 18 – 46

svakarmaṇā tam abhyarca siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ ॥

This is an important verse in भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*. Let us understand the message here clearly.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वम् इदं ततं *yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānām yena sarvam idam*

tataṁ - That is परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

स्वकर्मणा तम् अभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः *svakarmanā tam abhyarca siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ* - By worshipping That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* by स्वकर्म

svakarma - one's own कर्म's *karmas* - whatever they are at any given time, a human being finds संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi* in the form of ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *jñānaniṣṭha yogyatā* - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānam* - Total Fulfillment in life - मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

This is the simple meaning of this verse. Now let us see how this message is communicated.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां *yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānām* - That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* from which this entire world of beings has come into existence

As we may recall from Taittiriya Upanishad (3 - 1)

यतो वा इमामि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि जीवन्ति यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति

yato vā imāmi bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayantyaabhi saṁviśanti

That from which all that is in this creation is born. That by which, those which are born, live and grow; and That into which all that live and grow, ultimately go back, giving up their forms and names, and become ONE from which they came - That ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, That परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.



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Again, प्रवृत्ति *pravṛtti* also means any kind of action. My ears hear, my eyes see, my mind thinks and all my organs of perception and action do their respective jobs. All these are glories of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Therefore

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां *yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānām* means, That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* whose glories these actions are

येन सर्वम् इदं ततं *yena sarvam idaṁ tataṁ* - That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* by Whom this entire world of objects is pervaded

As Sri Krishna said in Chapter 9 (9-4, 5)

मया ततमिदं सर्वम् जगत् अवयक्त मूर्तिना ।

mayā tatamidaṁ sarvam jagat avyakta mūrtinā ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेषु अवस्थितः ॥ 9-4

matsthāni sarva bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣu avasthitaḥ ॥

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् । 9-5

na ca matsthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram ।

By Me, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, this entire world of objects is pervaded in My Unmanifest Form as सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप अक्षरब्रह्मन् *sat cit ānand svarūpa akṣara brahman*. While all beings in this creation have their abode in Me, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, I am not confined to anything in this creation. While I lend reality of existence to all names and forms in this creation, My own existence is totally independent of and apart from all of them. That is परमेश्वर योग *parameśvar yoga*. That is what I am, says Sri Krishna. Therefore,

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वम् इदं ततं *yataḥ pravṛttirbhūtānām yena sarvam idaṁ tataṁ* refers to That Ever Existent, All-inclusive, All-pervading सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप परब्रह्मन् *sat cit ānand svarūpa para brahman*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, already in oneself.

स्व कर्मणा तम् *sva karmaṇā tam* (परमेश्वर *parameśvar*) अभ्यर्च्य *abhyarcya* -

By worshipping That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* by स्वकर्म *svakarma* - one's own कर्म *karmas*, which means, regarding स्वकर्म *svakarma* - one's own कर्म *karma* as duties to be done in conformity with one's वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* - the Eternal ORDER in which one is born, and therefore, doing those कर्म *karmas* with कर्मयोग बुद्धि *karma*



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yoga buddhi and ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि *īśvara ārādhana buddhi*, with the attitude of total dedication to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Just as you worship परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with पत्रं *patraṁ*, पुष्पं *puṣpaṁ*, फलं *phalaṁ*, तोयं *toyam* - leaves, flowers, fruits, water, etc., you worship परमेश्वर *parameśvar* by performing स्वधर्म *svadharma* - one's own duties, whatever they are, as well as you can, in total conformity with स्वधर्म *svadharma*, recognizing स्वधर्म *svadharma* is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. Because the कर्म *karma* is totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, there is no कर्मफल *karmaphala* involved. Whatever one gets as a result of such worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, that is ईश्वर प्रसाद *īśvara prasāda* - the very Grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which always brings one closer to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself, by such worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः *siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ* - a person gains संसिद्धि *saṁsiddhi*, materially in the form of excellence in स्वकर्म *svakarma*, and spiritually in the form of पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* and hence ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *jñāna niṣṭhā योग्यता* - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānam*.

Sri Krishna is telling here something very important. Usually people associate worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with some special कर्म *karmas* such as some special rituals, prayers, meditations, etc. That narrow concept of worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is negated here. In order to worship परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, no special कर्म *karmas* is necessary, even though all such कर्म *karmas* are generally helpful in one's spiritual endeavors. What is necessary is to recognize स्वधर्म *svadharma*, which is an expression of one's वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth, and hence स्वकर्म *svakarma* - one's own कर्म *karma* at any time, arising from one's स्वधर्म *svadharma* is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. Therefore, any कर्म *karma* one does in conformity with स्वधर्म *svadharma* is worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. By such worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, one naturally gains संसिद्धि ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *saṁsiddhi jñāna niṣṭhā योग्यता*, an अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - a mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* fit for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Fulfillment in life.



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श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् ।

śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharamāt su anuṣṭhitāt ।

स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ 18 - 47

svabhāvaniyataṁ karma kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam ॥

स्वधर्म *svadharma* - One's own धर्म *dharma*, one's own duties arising from one's own स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa*, and hence, one's own वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth - one's own parentage, tradition, experiences of life, education, training, skills, cultivated awareness, etc., such स्वधर्म *svadharma* is

श्रेयान् *śreyān* - far better, far superior, far more valuable and favorable to one's own spiritual progress

विगुणः *viguṇaḥ* - Even though your स्वधर्म *svadharma* appears to have no virtue or value interms of your present likes and dislikes, or assumed norms of the social environment in which you live, even if you do not see any virtue or value in स्वधर्म *svadharma* - your own duties which have come to you through your वर्णधर्म *varṇa dharma* at birth - your parentage, doing your own duties following स्वधर्म *svadharma* is far superior to

परधर्मात् सु अनुष्ठितात् *paradharamāt su anuṣṭhitāt* - doing the duties of another, even though well discharged.

If you reject स्वधर्म *svadharma* - your own धर्म *dharma*, and take to somebody else's धर्म *dharma* that is not natural to you, even if you discharge that धर्म *dharma* properly, you can never gain true happiness or fulfillment in your कर्म *karma*, because the moment you see no virtue in स्वधर्म *svadharma* - your own duties, you have already surrendered to your enemies, namely the forces of your likes and dislikes.

You must understand that in स्वधर्म *svadharma* - in performing your own duty, whatever that is, there is no such thing as superior or inferior. Duty is duty, it is कर्तव्यं कर्म *kartavyaṁ karma*, it is कर्म *karma* to be done, that is all and nothing more. Duty in itself has no attributes, virtuous or otherwise. If you see no virtue, or if you see something inferior in your duty, it is only because your राग-द्वेष *raga-dveṣa* forces -



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the forces of your likes and dislikes are overpowering your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* at this time. Further, you must realize

स्वभाव नियतं कर्म कुर्वन् *svabhāva niyataṁ karma kurvan* - by doing the duties to which you have been led naturally by your स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* generated वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma* - स्वधर्म *svadharma* - duties natural to your heritage rooted in सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* - the Eternal Order

न अप्नोति किल्बिषम् *na apnoti kilbiṣam* - you never go wrong, you never go astray, you never gain any fault, any fear or any hurt.

When one does one's own duty, whatever that is, the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* remain free from any conflicts, and that is healthy for one's spiritual progress. Giving the same message earlier in Chapter 3, भगवान् *bhagavān* added: परधर्मो भयावहः *paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ* (3 - 35) - rejecting स्वधर्म *svadharma* - your own धर्म *dharma*, and following somebody else's धर्म *dharma* will bring you only more and more fear, leading to greater unhappiness, discontent and delusion.

Therefore, stick to your own धर्म *dharma*, and do your duty - नियतं कुरु कर्मत्वं *niyataṁ kuru karmatvaṁ* (3 - 8). Do what you have to do at this time and place, and do it with कर्मयोग बुद्धि *karmayoga buddhi* and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि *īśvara prasāda buddhi*. That is the advice of Sri Krishna. Continuing this message, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

sahajāṁ karma kaunteya sadoṣamapi na tyajet ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण दूमेन अग्निरिव आवृताः ॥ 18 - 48

sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa dūmena agniriva āvṛtāḥ ॥

कौन्तेय *kaunteya* - O! Arjuna

सहजं कर्म *sahajāṁ karma* - स्वभावजं कर्म *svabhāvajaṁ karma* - जन्मना उत्पन्नं

कर्म *janmanā utpannaṁ karma* - any duty that has naturally come to you by virtue of वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharmā* at birth - by virtue of your parentage, tradition, education, training, skill, cultivated awareness, etc., that स्वकर्म *svakarma* - one's own कर्म *karma* is सहजं कर्म *sahajāṁ karma*.



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सदोषमपि *sadoṣamapi* - That स्वकर्म *svakarma*, even though it may have some दोष *doṣa* - some defects, some blemishes, shortcomings or some unsatisfactory elements न त्यजेत् *na tyajet* - it should not be given up. It should not be abandoned. You should not abandon your स्वकर्म *svakarma*, arising from your स्वधर्म *svadharma* - your natural duty, even if it has some दोष *doṣa* - some defect, or blemish or some unsatisfactory elements in it, because every कर्म *karma* has some दोष *doṣa* in it by its very nature. That is because every कर्म *karma* is also त्रिगुणात्मिका *triguṇātmikā* - all three माया गुण *māyā guṇas* गुण *guṇa* are in every कर्म *karma*. No कर्म *karma* is pure सत्त्व *sattva* or pure रजस् *rajas* or pure तमस् *tamas*. Any दोष *doṣa* in any कर्म *karma* arises from its रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* and तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* components. Consequently, some दोष *doṣa* is inherent in every कर्म *karma*.

If you give up your स्वकर्म *svakarma* arising from your स्वधर्म *svadharma*, you will be doing some other कर्म *karma* which will also have some दोष *doṣa* in it. Therefore, हि *hi* - please understand this

सर्वारम्भा दोषेण दूमेन अग्निः इव आवृताः *sarvārambhā doṣeṇa dūmena agnih iva āvṛtāḥ*

अग्निः दूमेन इव *agnih dūmena iva* - Just as fire is always associated with some smoke, so also

सर्व आरम्भाः (सर्व कर्माणि) दोषेण आवृताः *sarva ārambhāḥ (sarva karmāṇi) doṣeṇa āvṛtāḥ* - all कर्म *karmas* are associated with some दोष *doṣa* - defects, blemishes or shortcomings. Any कर्म *karma* you do has some दोष *doṣa* in it. That is no reason to abandon your स्वकर्म *svakarma*, सहजं कर्म *sahajāṁ karma*.

If you regard your स्वकर्म *svakarma* as कर्तव्यं कर्म *kartavyaṁ karma* - as duty to be done, then you realize that in duty, there is no preference. Only by doing one's स्वकर्म *svakarma* as ईश्वर आराधन कर्म *īśvara ārādhana karma* - as an act of worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, a person gains संसिद्धि *samsiddhi* - पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *jñāna niṣṭha*



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yogyatā - a fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānam*, मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Fulfillment in life. Even after gaining that पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi*, that ज्ञाननिष्ठा योग्यता *jñāna niṣṭha yogyatā* - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānam*, there is still one more step to go, to actually gain पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं *pūrṇa īśvara jñānam* - Self-knowledge, which is मोक्ष *mokṣa*. It is about that final step to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge that Sri Krishna is going to talk in the next few verses, which we will see next time.



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Just for the Record

Last time, following the scripture reading session, a mature looking gentleman stopped me for a brief conversation, the gist of which is as follows:

He said: "All that you said today was interesting, but is it really relevant in the world of today". I replied "Yes. Sri Krishna has been talking about सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* - The Eternal Order, which is relevant at all times. That was relevant then, in Arjuna's time, and that is relevant today, and that will be relevant tomorrow as well."

Then he said "I was born in a वैश्य *vaiśya* family, but I am not doing any business these days, then what is my duty now?"

I replied "By virtue of your past कर्म *karmas*, you are blessed to be born in a वैश्य *vaiśya* family. With that birth as your base, you have been growing and evolving in your own way all these years and as a result, you and I are now talking here today, which is not a matter of accident. You are asking me now what your duty is at this time. May I know whether you are comfortable doing whatever you are doing these days", to which he replied "Yes, I am comfortable".

I continued "If you are comfortable with what you are doing today, that is all your duty for today. Please continue doing whatever you are doing comfortably from time to time, with कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* and ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि *īśvar ārādhana buddhi*. The rest of your life will take care of itself. That is the end of the conversation.

I am referring to that conversation at this time just to point out that whatever is being said in these scripture readings has nothing to do with me personally. I simply say what The Gita says, what the Upanishads say, to the best of my understanding and appreciation.

All this is pure knowledge. After having listened to this knowledge, every one is totally free to do whatever one wishes to do.

यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु *yathēcchasi tathā kuru* (G. 18 - 63)

As you desire, so you do, do as you like. That is also Sri Krishna's advice to Arjuna, and, indeed, to all of us.

Let us now continue with today's verses.