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श्रीमद्भगचत् गीता

अष्टादशोऽध्यायः - मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

aṣṭadaśo'dhyāyaḥ - mokṣa saṁny**ā**sa yogaḥ Chapter 18 Volume 12

असक्त बुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः । asakta buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigataspṛhaḥ । नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेन अधिगच्छिति ॥ 18 - 49 naiṣkarmya siddhiṁ paramāṁ saṁnyāsena adhigacchati ॥

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निषोध मे । siddhim prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me । समासेनैच कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ 18 - 50 samāsenaiva kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā ॥

In the past three sessions, Sri Krishna has been talking about चर्ण धर्म varṇa dharma and चर्ण कर्म varṇa karma - the four duty-based groups of people called ब्राह्मणंs brāhmaṇas, क्षत्रियंs kṣatriyas, चैश्यंs vaiśyas and शूद्ध śūdras constituting the entire Vedic society, and their natural duties in the society, arising from their स्यभाव गुणंs svabhaava guṇas - in-born personal qualities. From such चर्ण धर्म varṇa dharma and चर्ण कर्म varṇa karma, arise स्वधर्म svadharma and स्वकर्म svakarma - every person's own natural place in the society at birth (स्वधर्म svadharma), together with one's ever-changing immediate duties (स्वकर्म svakarma) in the social fabric throughout one's life, contributing to the continuing material and spiritual progress of both oneself and the society as a whole.

Sri Krishna's advice to every person is not to reject one's own स्वर्म svadharma and स्वर्म svakarma for any reason, but try to build on them by being totally committed to them, and enjoy doing, as well as one can, one's own duties, whatever they are, because that is the surest and the quickest means for one to reach the ultimate goal of Total Fulfillment in life, which is the same for every person. Recalling Sri Krishna's words again:

स्ये स्ये कर्मणि अभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः। sve sve karmani abhiratah samsiddhim labhate narah।



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By being totally committed to स्वधर्म svadharma and स्वकर्म svakarma in terms of कर्मयोग बुद्धि karma yoga buddhi and बुद्धि buddhi ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि iśvara prasāda buddhi, a person gains संसिद्धि samsiddhi, meaning पूर्ण अन्तः करण शुद्धि pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi - total restoration of the inherent purity and clarity of one's mind and बुद्धि buddhi. That means, Sri Krishna continues:

असक्त बुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः । asakta buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā vigataspṛhaḥ । नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेन अधिगच्छिति ॥ 18 - 49 naiṣkarmya siddhiṁ paramāṁ saṁnyāsena adhigacchati ॥

In terms of one's spiritual progress, कर्मयोग karma yoga gives संसिद्धि samsiddhi, which is अन्तः करण शुद्धि antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi. That means the person now has:

असक्त बुद्धिः सर्पत्र asakta buddhiḥ sarvatra - a बुद्धि buddhi which is totally free from all attachments and bondages, and notions of exclusive possessions with respect to all संसार विषयs samsār viṣayas - all worldly matters, which again means a बुद्धि buddhi which has gained total freedom from one's forces of likes and dislikes, success and failure, pleasure and pain, elevation and depression, etc. and consequently, a बुद्धि buddhi which has gained absolute समत्यं समिचत्तत्यं samatvam samacittatvam - evenness of mind at all times. Further

जितात्मा jitātmā meaning पूर्ण आत्म निग्रह pūrṇa ātma nigraha - total self-control and self-discipline. The person now has complete control over one's organs of perception and action, so that the entire शरीर śarīra - one's body vehicle, has become a helpful instrument for one's सन् मार्ग san mārga, मोक्ष मार्ग mokṣa mārga - one's pursuit of प्रह्म ज्ञानं brahma jñānaṁ, आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ - Self-knowledge, which means the body demands do not stand in the way of one's further spiritual progress in the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ - Self-knowledge, and चिगतस्पृहः vigataspṛhaḥ - the person's अन्तः करण antaḥ karaṇa - mind and पुद्धि buddhi has now become totally free from cravings, longings, anxieties and excitements of any kind. All these recognizable manifestations, namely



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असक्त बुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा asakta buddhiḥ sarvatra jitātmā and विगतस्पृहः vigataspṛhaḥ together are the लक्षणs lakṣaṇas - recognizable distinguishing marks of संसिद्धि samsiddhi, gained by कर्म योग karma yoga and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि īśvara prasāda buddhi.

Having gained That संसिद्धि samsiddhi, the person is now fit for gaining the Highest सिद्धि siddhi - The परमां सिद्धि paramām siddhim - The Most Exalted Fulfillment of human existence called नैष्कम्ये सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi. Sri Krishna says:

परमां नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धिं अधिगच्छित paramām naiṣkarmya siddhim adhigacchati - Having gained that संसिद्धि samsiddhi, the person can ultimately gain also That परमां सिद्धिं paramām siddhim, namely नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - the Supreme Fulfillment of human existence, characterized by the State of Absolute Actionlessness, state of Total Freedom from action of any kind. (How that is possible, we will see a little later).

Such नैष्कर्म्यम् naiṣkarmyam - the state of Absolute Actionlessness, is not gained by giving up one's स्वकर्म svakarma, born of one's स्वधर्म svadharma, by giving up one's duties in life. नैष्कर्म्यम् naiṣkarmyam is not a matter of कर्म karma at all. It is entirely a matter of ज्ञानं jñānaṁ - Knowledge about the true nature of oneself.

Let us understand that कर्म योग karma yoga, by itself, does not give a person नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - the supreme accomplishment of gaining total freedom from action of any kind - The state of Absolute Actionlessness, but, कर्म योग karma yoga provides a person with a body vehicle, namely शुद्ध śuddha अन्तः करण antaḥ karaṇa - a pure mind and खुद्धि buddhi, by which one can gain नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - total freedom from action, even while the body is actively engaged in action. How?

संन्यासेन अधिगच्छित saṃnyāsena adhigacchati - With the vehicle of pure अन्तः करण antaḥ karaṇa by संन्यास saṃnyāsa, meaning सर्च कर्म संन्यास sarva karma saṃnyāsa - by a mind and बुद्धि buddhi totally and naturally free from कर्तृत्व भाव kartṛtva bhāva - the very notion of being the कर्ता kartā of any कर्म karma - the



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doer of any action, which means, the mind and बुद्धि buddhi naturally exist in total dissociation from notions of identification and association with all क्षेत्र धर्मेंs kṣetra dharmas, रारीर धर्मेंs śarīra dharmas - attributes of one's physical body, and those of the world of objects, thoughts and actions.

Such dissociation from all क्षेत्र धर्मेंs kṣetra dharmas is naturally accomplished by सम्यक् आत्मस्यरूप दर्शनं samyak ātma svarūpa daraśanam - by a clear vision of the true nature of ONESELF, the true nature of आत्मा ātmā, The Self I, as It is, as सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं ब्रह्म satyam-jñānam-ananta brahma, as ब्रह्मन् brahman Itself. Such clear vision of ONESELF is, indeed gaining Self-knowledge. Since ब्रह्मन् brahman is ever-free from any कर्म karma, gaining आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānam, recognizing ONESELF as ब्रह्मन् brahman, one recognizes oneself as absolutely free from all कर्मेs karmas.

Therefore, नैष्कर्म्यम् naiṣkarmyam - The state of Absolute actionlessness, has nothing to do with doing or not doing any कर्म karma. नैष्कर्म्यम् naiṣkarmyam is purely a matter of gaining आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānam - Knowledge of oneself as ब्रह्मन् brahman Itself.

Such नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi is indeed the लक्षण lakṣaṇa of an आत्म ज्ञानी ātma jñānī - the distinguishing mark of a Self-realized, Self-recognized, Absolutely liberated person, a ज्ञानी jñānī who is totally and naturally free from any notion of being the कर्ता kartā of any कर्म karma - the doer of any action. It is such a person who is a real संन्यासी sanyāsī - a सर्वकर्म संन्यासी sarvakarma sanyāsī.

Supposing a person is able to gain such नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi and becomes an आत्म ज्ञानी ātma jñānī, what does such a ज्ञानी jñānī do with the rest of his life? As भगवान् bhagavān said already in Chapter 5

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी। sarvakarmāṇi manasā sanyasyāste sukhaṁ vaśī । नच द्वारे पुरे देही नैच कुर्चन् न कारयन्॥ 5 - 13 nava dvāre pure dehī naiva kurvan na kārayan ॥



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The आत्म ज्ञानों ātma jñānī, even though fully engaged in स्वरुप svakarma - one's own duties in life, stands totally dissociated from the notion of being the कर्ता kartā of any कर्म karma - the doer of any action, by virtue of one's आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ - Self-knowledge. He is ever-cheerful, and ever at peace within himself, because he has no weariness born of कर्म karma. He realizes, and recognizes that he is simply sitting in his physical body as a witness for the जीच jīva to exhaust itself of all its प्रारब्ध कर्म फल शेष prārabdha karma phala śeṣa - whatever fruits of past actions which the physical body has still to experience. Though acting, the आत्म ज्ञानों ātma jñānī, in fact, neither acts nor causes any action to take place. All his actions take place spontaneously, by his very presence and in his very presence.

Such state of being is the state of नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - the state of Absolute Actionlessness, which is indeed मोक्ष mokṣa - Total Fulfillment in life.

Now, the question is, after gaining संसिद्धि samsiddhi through कर्मयोग karma yoga, how does one gain नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi? In other words, is there a distinct state of existence between संसिद्धि samsiddhi and नैष्कर्म्य सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi? If so, what is that state of existence and how does one go through that state of existence?

The answer is: Yes, there is indeed a distinct in-between State of Existence called ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā, which is both the means as well as the end of that state of existence. As the means, ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā is the process by which one gains absolute certainty of knowledge about one's true identity as ज्ञानिक brahman Itself, which is पूर्ण आत्मज्ञानं pūrṇa ātma jñānam - Self-knowledge. As the end, ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā is नैष्कम्यं सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - the certainty of knowledge of ONESELF being ज्ञान brahman Itself. Calling attention to That ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā, भगवान् bhagavān says:

सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म तथाप्नोति निबोध मे । siddhim prāpto yathā brahma tathāpnoti nibodha me । समासेनेच कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा ॥ 18 - 50 samāsenaiva kaunteya niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā ॥



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सिद्धिं प्राप्तः siddhim prāptah - The one who has gained सिद्धि siddhi, meaning संसिद्धि samsiddhi, namely पूर्ण अन्तः करण शुद्धि pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi - absolute purity and clarity of mind and बुद्धि buddhi through कर्मयोग karma yoga and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि īśvara prasāda buddhi

यथा yathā - in the manner described earlier (18 - 46), namely, by doing all of one's कर्मs karmas as acts of worship of परमेश्चर parameśvar, and thereby gaining संसिद्धि saṁsiddhi, which gives the person ज्ञान निष्ठा योग्यता jñāna niṣṭha yogyatā - fitness for gaining पूर्ण ईश्चर ज्ञानं pūrṇa īśvara jñānaṁ, आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ - Self knowledge. Having gained that fitness

यथा-तथा-येन प्रकारेण yathā-tathā-yena prakāreṇa - by what exact means, likewise

ब्रह्म आप्नोति brahma āpnoti - one gains ब्रह्म ज्ञानं brahma jñānam, आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānam - Self-knowledge in the form of

निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा niṣṭha jñānasya yā parā - absolute certainty of परमात्म ज्ञानं paramātma jñānaṁ - Knowledge of one's identity as परमात्मा paramātmā, the Self of all selves there are, which means, Knowledge of oneself identified with ब्रह्मन् brahman Itself. Gaining that Knowledge is ज्ञानस्य परा निष्ठा jñānasya parā niṣṭha - The Ultimate destination, the ultimate end of the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ, namely नैष्कम्ये सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - gaining the state of Absolute Actionlessness, absolute freedom from all notions and bondages of कर्म karma itself.

In every chapter of the भगवत् गीता bhagavat gītā Sri Krishna has already said in detail some aspect of the many steps involved in ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā, gaining आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ - Self-knowledge. That is why every chapter of the भगवत् गीता bhagavat gītā is called a योग yoga. Therefore, भगवान् bhagavān says here,

कौन्तेय kaunteya - O! Arjuna. I am now going to tell you

समासेन एच samāsena eva - only briefly (about ज्ञान निष्ठा jñāna nistha)



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निषोध मे मम चचनात् निश्चयेन अचधाराय nibodha me mama vacanāt niścayena avadhāraya - Please listen to my words and understand clearly That ज्ञानिन्टा jñāna niṣṭhā, the exact sequence of the process involved in gaining absolute certainty of knowledge on the true nature of oneself as ब्रह्मन् brahman Itself, as परमेश्चर parameśvar Itself. So saying, Sri Krishna now proceeds to talk about ज्ञानिन्टा jñāna niṣṭhā briefly in a highly focused manner.

First, we must understand clearly what is ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā, what for is ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā, and how It is accomplished. The process by which the ultimate end of any pursuit is reached, with absolute certainty, is called निष्ठा niṣṭhā. Therefore, ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā is the process by which the Ultimate End, The Ultimate Destination of the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ, namely मोक्ष mokṣa - Total Fulfillment in life is reached, with absolute certainty.

Only with reference to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञान $\bar{a}tma\ j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na\dot{m}$ - Self-knowledge, there can be certainty of an End. With reference to the pursuit of any other kind of knowledge, there can be no end.

In the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ, there are essentially three steps involved. They are: श्रयणं śravaṇaṁ, मननं mananaṁ and निदिध्यासनं nididhyāsanaṁ निदिध्यासनं nididhyāsanaṁ. आत्म ज्ञानं ātma jñānaṁ is communicated by pointer words in all the Upanishads which include The भगवन् गीता bhagavat gītā, श्रयणं śravaṇaṁ is listening and understanding what is communicated by the words of the Upanishads. श्रयणं śravaṇaṁ is primarily a matter of श्रद्धा śraddhā, an abiding interest in such knowledge. मननं mananaṁ is repeatedly reflecting and analyzing the content of That Knowledge in all its aspects, both worldly aspects and spiritual aspects, till one becomes convinced of That knowledge. Gaining such conviction is a very slow process, for which, not only continued श्रद्धा śraddhā and कर्म योग बुद्धि karma yoga buddhi and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि īśvara prasāda buddhi are necessary, but also the final step of निदिध्यासनं nididhyāsanaṁ is absolutely necessary.

निदिध्यासने nididhyāsanam is absorption of That Knowledge in practice, by which one becomes the very embodiment of That Knowledge. This is accomplished through continuous and reverential contemplation (which means, both intellectual understanding and emotional appreciation) of the Upanishad Knowledge on the true



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nature of जीच jīva, जगत् jagat and ईश्चर īśvara, and hence the true nature of आत्मा ātmā - The Self I. Such continuous and reverential contemplation on आत्मा ātmā is ज्ञानिष्ठा jñāna niṣṭhā - सम्यक् आत्म चिचारं samyak ātma vicāraṁ, as we saw in Mundaka Upanishad.

Thus ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā is the natural extension of the कर्म योग karma yoga process, wherein श्रद्धा śraddhā, ईश्चर ध्यानं īśvara dhyānaṁ and ईश्चर भक्ति īśvara bhakti get integrated through ईश्चर ज्ञानं īśvara jñānaṁ and सर्च कर्म फल त्याग चुद्धि sarva karma phala tyāga buddhi - सर्च कर्म संन्यास चुद्धि sarva karma saṁnyāsa buddhi, as unfolded in the Upanishads, which makes ज्ञानिन्छा jñāna niṣṭhā the Highest Form of ईश्चर भक्ति īśvara bhakti, which is ज्ञान लक्षण भक्ति योग jñāna lakṣaṇa bhakti yoga, where ईश्चर भक्ति īśvara bhakti and ईश्चर ज्ञानं īśvara jñānaṁ become identical.

That being the nature of ज्ञाननिष्ठा jñāna niṣṭhā, it itself involves neither कमें karma nor कर्म फल karma phala. It involves only चिचेक बुद्धि viveka buddhi - a बुद्धि buddhi which can discriminate between what is " आत्मा ātmā" and what is "NOT आत्मा ātmā", what is "I" and what is not "I". That is बुद्धि योग buddhi yoga (2-49) and That is ज्ञाननिष्ठा jñāna niṣṭhā.

What for is this ज्ञाननिष्ठा jñāna niṣṭhā? ज्ञाननिष्ठा jñāna niṣṭhā is not for discovering সান্দো ātmā, not for discovering oneself. সান্দো ātmā is always Self-evident as Oneself Itself, as "I" Itself. Even in total darkness, one recognizes oneself as "I".

But even with all Upanishad Knowledge on आत्मा ātmā, and the clarity and purity of mind and बुद्धि buddhi gained through कर्म योग karma yoga, one has only an indirect knowledge of "I", because a variety of long-standing, deep-rooted mental obstructions to the direct and immediate recognition of "I" as It truly is, as the Upanishads say It is. Consequently, one still entertains the notions such as:

[&]quot;I am this body"

[&]quot;I am all the attributes and limitations of this body"

[&]quot;I am the doer of कर्म karma, and enjoyer of कर्म फल karma phala"

[&]quot;I am happy now and then, and I am unhappy now and then".



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"I am mortal", etc., etc.

All these descriptions are erroneous superimpositions of what are "NOT I" on the true nature of "I". These superimpositions are obstructions to the direct, clear and immediate recognition of "I" as It truly is. These obstructions have to disappear naturally in order for one to gain certainty about one's knowledge of ONESELF, one's knowledge of 31741 174

Thus, to remove all obstructions to the direct and immediate recognition of आत्मा $\bar{a}tm\bar{a}$ - The Self I as It is, is the purpose of ज्ञानिन्छा $j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$ $nisth\bar{a}$. How is this purpose accomplished? In ज्ञानिन्छा $j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$ $nisth\bar{a}$, the mission is to search for Absolute Truth, and nothing else. By ज्ञानिन्छा $j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$ $nisth\bar{a}$, by ज्ञान लक्षण भक्ति योग $j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$ lakṣaṇa bhakti yoga, the obstructions to आत्म ज्ञानं $\bar{a}tma$ $j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na\dot{m}$ progressively and naturally disappear, because all such obstructions have no independent reality.

The natural disappearance of all obstructions to आत्म ज्ञानं $\bar{a}tma~j\tilde{n}\bar{a}na\dot{m}$ - Self-knowledge, enables one's चुद्धि buddhi, by the Grace of परमेश्वर parameśvar, to recognize आत्मा $\bar{a}tm\bar{a}$ - The Self I, clearly, directly and immediately as It is, already available for such recognition in the ज्ञह्मपूरि brahmpuri region of one's own चुद्धि buddhi, by which one gains absolute certainty of knowledge of oneself as:

ब्रह्मेचाऽहं अस्मि brahmaivā'ham asmi - I am indeed ब्रह्मन् brahman.

आनन्द रूपं अमृतं यत् विभाति ānand rūpam amṛtam yat vibhāti - That ब्रह्मन् brahman shines by Itself, revealing Itself as The Immortal Ever-existent सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् sat cit ānanda svarūpa brahman. Gaining such certainty of Knowledge of ONESELF as ब्रह्मन् brahman Itself is indeed the very destination of ज्ञाननिष्ठा jñāna niṣṭhā and That is नैष्कम्यं सिद्धि naiṣkarmya siddhi - The state of Absolute Actionlessness, The मोक्ष mokṣa, Total Fulfillment of life.

Sri Krishna describes the process of **রানািন্ডা** $j\tilde{n}$ ana nistha in concise terms in the next five highly focused verses, which we will see next time.