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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अष्टादशोऽध्यायः - मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

aṣṭadaśo 'dhyāyaḥ - mokṣa saṁnyāsa yogaḥ

Chapter 18

Volume 5

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारं आत्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

tatraivaṁ sati kartāraṁ ātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ ।

पश्यति अकृतबुद्धित्वात् न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥

18 - 16

paśyati akṛtabuddhitvāt na sa paśyati durmatih ॥

यस्य नाहं कृतो भावो बुद्धिः यस्य न लिप्यते ।

yasya nāhaṁ kṛto bhāvo buddhiḥ yasya na lipyate ।

हत्वापि स इमान् लोकान् न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥

18 - 17

hatvāpi sa imān lokān na hanti na nibadhyate ॥

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।

jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ pariñātā trividhā karmacodanā ।

करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥

18 - 18

kaṛaṇaṁ karma karteti trividhaḥ karma saṁgrahaḥ ॥

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुण भेदतः ।

jñānaṁ karma ca kartā ca tridhaiva guṇa bhedataḥ ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावत् शृणु तान्यपि ॥

18 - 19

procyate guṇasaṁkhyāne yathāvat śṛṇu tānyapi ॥

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावं अव्ययं ईक्षते ।

sarvabhūteṣu yenaikaṁ bhāvaṁ avyayaṁ īkṣate ।

अविभक्तं विभुक्तेषु तत् ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकं ॥

18 - 20

avibhaktaṁ vibhukteṣu tat jñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikaṁ ॥

Sri Krishna has been talking about कर्म karma. Anything one does is कर्म karma.

भगवान् bhagavān says that every कर्म karma involves these five factors, together,



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and only these five factors, serving as the हेतु *hetu* - as the instrumental cause for the performance and successful accomplishment of any कर्म *karma*. These five factors are:

- अधिष्ठान *adhiṣṭhān* - the शरीर *śarīra* - one's physical body vehicle, from where all कर्म *karmas* emanate
- कर्ता *kartā* the doer, one's अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* - the ego, the "I" notion in the person, which considers itself as the doer of the कर्म *karma*
- करणं *karaṇam* - the totality of one's organs of perception and action, including the five ज्ञान इन्द्रियाः *jñāna indriyās*, five कर्म इन्द्रियाः *karma indriyās*, and अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* (mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*)
- विविधा पृथक् चेष्टाः *vividhā pṛthak ceṣṭāḥ* - The पञ्च प्राणः *pañca prāṇas* - the five distinct vital physiological functions, namely प्राण *prāṇa*, अपान *apāna*, व्यान *vyāna*, समान *samāna* and उदान *udāna* - respiration, waste elimination, blood circulation, reaction and digestion (or assimilation), all of which naturally include the external environment in which one lives and the foods and drinks one consumes. And, finally
- दैवं *daivam* - The अधिष्ठान देवताः *adhiṣṭhān devatās* - the presiding Deities of all natural phenomena, manifested as the laws of nature, some known and mostly unknown

Every कर्म *karma* has all these factors involved in it, and no other. While individually, none of the above factors, by itself, is the causal instrument for any कर्म *karma*, all these five factors, together constitute the entire instrumental cause for the accomplishment of any कर्म *karma*, which means there is no other instrumental cause for any कर्म *karma*. That being the case, भगवान् *bhagavān* continues:

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारं आत्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

tatraivaṁ sati kartāraṁ ātmānaṁ kevalaṁ tu yaḥ ।

पश्यति अकृतबुद्धित्वात् न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥

18 – 16

paśyati akṛtabuddhitvāt na sa paśyati durmatih ॥

तत्रैवं सति *tatraivaṁ sati* - When that is the case, these five factors, just mentioned, are the means, the instrumental cause, for any कर्म *karma* to take place. That being so



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तु यः केवलं आत्मानं कर्तारं पश्यति सः दुर्मतिः *tu yaḥ kevalam ātmānam kartāram paśyati saḥ durmatih* - If one sees, if one considers, that आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I in oneself as the doer of कर्म *karma*, that person is दुर्मतिः *durmatih* - that person is simply ignorant. That person does not understand what आत्मा *ātmā* is and what आत्मा *ātmā* is not. आत्मा *ātmā* is केवलं *kevalam*, meaning शुद्धं *śuddham* - Absolutely Pure, uncontaminated by any of those five factors.

Sri Krishna has already talked about आत्मा *ātmā* extensively. As भगवान् *bhagavān* said earlier in Chapter 13, आत्मा *ātmā* is उपद्रष्टा अनुमन्ता च *upadraṣṭa anumantā ca* - The nature of आत्मा *ātmā* is Pure Consciousness, Pure Awareness, Pure Witness, in whose presence alone all actions take place in this शरीर *śarīra* - in this physical body. By lending Existence and lighting it up, आत्मा *ātmā* blesses every कर्म *karma*. Self-luminosity is the very nature of आत्मा *ātmā*. Just as the sun lights up everything under the sun, by its very nature, and it does not perform any कर्म *karma*, nor does it gets affected or contaminated by any कर्म *karma* that takes place under the sun, so is आत्मा *ātmā*.

All the five factors mentioned above (which together serve as the instrumental cause for any कर्म *karma*) are क्षेत्र धर्मः *kṣetra dharmas* - the attributes of one's स्वभाव गुणः *svabhāva guṇas* - one's incidental qualities born of the ever-changing expressions of one's सत्त्व *sattva*-रजस् *rajas*-तमस् *tamas* गुणः *guṇas* of माया *māyā*, whereas, आत्मा *ātmā* is क्षेत्रज्ञः *kṣetrajñah* - the very knower of all those five factors. That क्षेत्रज्ञ *kṣetrajñā* is, as the महावाक्य *mahāvākya* says (13 - 2)

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्व क्षेत्रेषु भारत ।

kṣetrajñam cāpi mām vidhdi sarva kṣetreṣu bhārata ।

That क्षेत्रज्ञ *kṣetrajñā*, That आत्मा *ātmā* is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. It is असंगः *asaṅgaḥ* - unconnected, uncontaminated, uninvolved, and totally independent. Therefore, आत्मा *ātmā* is असंगः *asaṅgaḥ*, and hence अकर्ता *akartā*. आत्मा *ātmā* is not the कर्ता *kartā* - the doer of any कर्म *karma*. If one considers that आत्मा *ātmā* is the doer of कर्म *karma*, that person is दुर्मतिः *durmatih* - that person is simply ignorant.



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Why is one so ignorant? Because

अकृतबुद्धित्वात् *akṛtabuddhitvāt* - that person's बुद्धि *buddhi* has not yet become mature enough to understand and recognize the nature of आत्मा *ātmā* as It is. That person needs वेदान्त आचार्य उपदेश *vedanta ācārya upadeśa* - that person needs teachings of Vedantic Knowledge, taught by a qualified teacher of Vedanta.

वेदान्त उपदेश *vedanta upadeśa* and आचार्य उपदेश *ācārya upadeśa* are not two different things. वेदान्त उपदेश *vedanta upadeśa* should be from an आचार्य *ācārya*, and आचार्य उपदेश *ācārya upadeśa* should be on the basis of वेदान्त *vedanta*. Fortunately for us, Sri Narayana Itself, in the Form of Sri Krishna, is our teacher here, and the Vedantic knowledge Itself is a manifestation of That Sri Narayana. As Sri Krishna says in Chapter 15

वैदेश्य सर्वैः अहमेव वेद्यो वेदान्तकृत् वेदविदेव चाहं ॥ 15-15

vaidaiśca sarvaiḥ ahameva vedyo vedāntakṛt vedavideva cāham ॥

Hence, one needs a proper understanding of the entire भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* in order to recognize clearly that आत्मा *ātmā* is अकर्ता *akartā*. आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I is NOT the doer of कर्म *karma*. If one does not have such clarity of understanding about the nature of oneself

पश्यति *paśyati*, सः न पश्यति *sah na paśyati* - that person, even though he sees, he does not see, which means, even though one thinks that one knows all about oneself, one really does not know oneself. Further

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिः यस्य न लिप्यते ।

yasya nāhaṁkṛto bhāvo buddhiḥ yasya na lipyate ।

हत्वापि स इमांन् लोकान् न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ 18 – 17

hatvāpi sa imān lokān na hanti na nibadhyate ॥

यस्य अहंकृत भावः न *yasya ahaṁkṛto bhāvah na* - That person for whom the egoistic notion of "I" as the कर्ता *kartā* of a कर्म *karma* - as the doer of an action, is totally absent, and consequently

यस्य बुद्धिः न लिप्यते *yasya buddhiḥ na lipyate* - whose बुद्धि *buddhi* does not get touched, affected or afflicted by any of one's नियत कर्म *niyata karmas* - obligatory duties, done with सात्त्विक त्याग बुद्धि *sāttvik tyāga buddhi*, giving up both कर्म सङ्ग



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karma saṅga and कर्मफल *karma phala*. Such a person is indeed a mature कर्म योगी *karma yogī*, a सर्वकर्मफल त्यागी *karma phala sarva karma phala tyāgī*, an absolute संन्यासी *saṁnyāsī*, a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, an embodiment of ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge. For such a कर्म योगी *karma yogī*

इमान् लोकान् हत्या अपि *imān lokān hatvā api* - even if he were to kill all these people standing in the battlefields as an obligatory duty (नियत कर्म *niyata karma*) by virtue of one's prevailing station in life

सः न हन्ति न निबध्यते *sah na hanti na nibadhyate* - that person, in fact, neither kills, nor does he get bound to the पुण्य पाप कर्म *puṇya pāpa karmas* involved in such an act of killing, says भगवान् *bhagavān* to Arjuna.

The above statement of Sri Krishna is not a divine sanction for any one kill anybody. The above statement is only meant to point out that आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I in oneself is अकर्ता *akartā*. आत्मा *ātmā* does no कर्म *karma*) whatsoever.

We have already seen similar statements, both in the कठोपनिषत् *kāthopaniṣat* (2-18 and 19), and also in भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* (2-19 and 20). One may still raise a doubt here, by suggesting that while आत्मा *ātmā* by Itself may not be the कर्ता *kartā* of a कर्म *karma*- Doer of an action, It may still be so, in association with the body vehicle, इन्द्रियाः *indriyās*, etc.

This suggestion however is untenable, because, for any association with another object, one should have a form, a limb, or connecting part, and also, one should be subject to some change. आत्मा *ātmā* has no form; It has no limb, and It is never subject to any change. Therefore, आत्मा *ātmā* being असंगः *asaṅgaḥ* - totally free, no association of any kind is possible for आत्मा *ātmā*.

Having thus pointed out that आत्मा *ātmā* is not one of the causes for कर्म *karma*, and कर्म *karma* is born entirely of one's मायागुणः *māyā guṇas*, भगवान् *bhagavān* now continues the discussion on the nature of कर्म *karma* in terms of one's मायागुणः *māyā guṇas*. भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ pariñātā trividhā karma codanā ।



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करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥

18 – 18

karaṇam karma karteti trividhaḥ karma saṅgrahaḥ ॥

कर्मचोदना त्रिविधा *karma codanā trividhā* - There are three factors which together prompt a person to do कर्म *karma*. They are ज्ञानं *jñānam*, ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* and परिज्ञाता *parijñātā*.

ज्ञानं *jñānam* is knowledge, ordinary knowledge, some prior knowledge about the कर्म *karma* itself. Only then the question of doing the कर्म *karma* arises. One does कर्म *karma* only to accomplish something, only because there is something to accomplish. That something is the object of ज्ञानं *jñānam* and that is called ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* ज्ञेयं *jñeyam*. Therefore ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* is what is desired to be accomplished by the कर्म *karma*; and परिज्ञाता *parijñātā* is the one who has ज्ञानं *jñānam* (some prior knowledge about कर्म *karma*) and ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* - one who knows what is desired to be accomplished by the कर्म *karma*, and also the will to do the कर्म *karma*. That person is परिज्ञाता *parijñātā*. Thus ज्ञानं *jñānam*, ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* and परिज्ञाता *parijñātā* are the three factors, which together impel a person to do a कर्म *karma*. Again,

करणं कर्म कर्ता इति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः *karaṇam karma kartā iti trividhaḥ karma saṅgrahaḥ* - Being impelled to do the कर्म *karma* by the three factors, namely ज्ञानं *jñānam*, ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* and परिज्ञाता *parijñātā*, one then performs the कर्म *karma*.

त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः *trividhaḥ karma saṅgrahaḥ* - The performance of the कर्म *karma* itself necessarily involves three constituents. They are करणं *karaṇam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā*

करणं *karaṇam* - the means, the instruments, namely the organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*

कर्म *karma* - the details of the कर्म *karma* to be done, and

कर्ता *kartā* - the person willing and ready to do the कर्म *karma*



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Thus करणं *karaṇam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā* are the three essential constituents involved in the performance of any कर्म *karma*.

When one has ज्ञानं *jñānam* - prior knowledge about the कर्म *karma*, ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* - what is desired to be accomplished by the कर्म *karma* is decided by one's बुद्धि *buddhi*, and then, one becomes परिज्ञाता *parijñātā* - the one who has ज्ञानं *jñānam*, ज्ञेयं *jñeyam* and the will to do the कर्म *karma*. That परिज्ञाता *parijñātā* subsequently becomes the कर्ता *kartā* - the doer of कर्म *karma*.

Thus, in the matter of impelling a person to do the कर्म *karma*, and subsequently, in the performance of the कर्म *karma* itself, the factors involved are, ज्ञानं *jñānam*, करणं *karaṇam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā* - all of which are born of माया गुणs *māyā guṇas* only.

भगवान् *bhagavān* first talks about ज्ञानं *jñānam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā* and then He talks about factors governing करणं *karaṇam*. Talking about ज्ञानं *jñānam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधैव गुण भेदतः ।

jñānam karma ca kartā ca tridhaiva guṇa bhedataḥ ।

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने यथावत् शृणु तान्यपि ॥ 18 – 19

procyate guṇasaṅkhyāne yathāvat śṛṇu tānyapi ॥

ज्ञानं कर्म च कर्ता च त्रिधा एव गुणभेदतः *jñānam karma ca kartā ca tridhā eva guṇa bhedataḥ*

ज्ञानं *jñānam* - The knowledge about any कर्म *karma*, the details of the कर्म *karma* itself, and कर्ता च *kartā ca* - the doer of the कर्म *karma*

त्रिधा एव गुणभेदतः *tridhā eva guṇa bhedataḥ* - each one of these constituents is of three kinds, based on differences in one's गुणs *guṇas*, which means, with respect to ज्ञानं *jñānam*, there are three kinds, namely सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānam*, राजस ज्ञानं *rājas jñānam* and तामस ज्ञानं *tāmas jñānam*



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Similarly, with respect to कर्म *karma*, there are three kinds, namely सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvik karma*, राजस कर्म *rājas karma* and तामस कर्म *tāmas karma*, and with respect to कर्ता *kartā*, there are three kinds, namely सात्त्विक कर्ता *sāttvik kartā*, राजस कर्ता *rājas kartā* and तामस कर्ता *tāmas kartā*. In each of these three kinds, there can be infinite shades and combinations, but in terms of predominance of गुण *s guṇas*, there are only three kinds:

प्रोच्यते गुणसंख्याने *procyate guṇasamkhyāne* - All these three kinds, based on गुण *s guṇas*, are described in detail in गुणसंख्या *guṇasamkhyā* - in Vedanta Sastra dealing with गुण *s guṇas*. This aspect of Vedanta Sastra is attributed to sage कपिल *kapila*. भगवान् *bhagavān* reminds Arjuna on कपिल शास्त्र *kapila śāstra* here (ॐ कपिलाय नमः *om kapilāya namaḥ*)

तानि अपि यथावत् शृणु *tāni api yathāvat śrṇu* - I will tell you about ज्ञानं *jñānam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā*, just as they are told in कपिल शास्त्र *kapila śāstra*. Please listen. भगवान् *bhagavān* now describes what is सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānam*.

सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावं अव्ययं ईक्षते ।

sarvabhūteṣu yenaikam bhāvaṁ avyayaṁ īkṣate ।

अविभक्तं विभुक्तेषु तत् ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकं ॥

18 - 20

avibhaktaṁ vibhukteṣu tat jñānam viddhi sāttvikaṁ ॥

येन ज्ञानेन ईक्षते *yena (jñānena) īkṣate* - That ज्ञानं *jñānam*, That Knowledge, by which a person is able to see, is able to recognize clearly, directly and immediately, what?

सर्वभूतेषु एकं भावं अव्ययं *sarvabhūteṣu ekam bhāvaṁ avyayaṁ* - in all beings in this creation, whether manifest or unmanifest, animate or inanimate, big or small, in all beings in this creation, a person is able to recognize clearly, directly and immediately एकं अव्ययं भावं *ekam avyayaṁ bhāvaṁ* - ONE Supreme Being Which is never subject to change, which means, ONE आत्म वस्तु *ātma vastu*, ONE सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं



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ब्रह्म *satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahma*, ONE परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, That ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* - That Knowledge. Further

येन *yena* (ज्ञानेन *jñānena*) ईक्षते *īkṣate* - That ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* - That knowledge by which a person is able to see, is able to recognize, clearly, directly and immediately
एकं अविभक्तं विभुक्तेषु *ekam avibhaktaṁ vibhukteṣu* - That ONE आत्म वस्तु *ātma vastu*, ONE परं ब्रह्म *paraṁ brahma*, ONE परमेश्वर *parameśvar* remaining undivided, among all that appears divided in this creation

तत् ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकं *tat jñānaṁ viddhi sāttvikam* - That ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ*, That Knowledge must be understood and recognized as सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvika jñānaṁ* - ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* born of सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*. In other words, That ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* - That Knowledge by which a person is able to see, is able to recognize and appreciate clearly, directly and immediately that

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम् ॥

īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvam ॥

ब्रह्म एव इदं विश्वं ॥

brahma eva idaṁ viśvam ॥

The ONE परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The ONE ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, is in everything, everywhere, at all times, That ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ*, That Knowledge is सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānaṁ* - ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* manifested by सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*. Such सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānaṁ* is obtainable only from श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* of Upanishad knowledge.

We will talk some more about सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānaṁ* before we go to राजस् *rājas* ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* and तामस् *tāmas* ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* next time.