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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अष्टादशोऽध्यायः - मोक्षसंन्यासयोगः

aṣṭadaśo'dhyāyaḥ - mokṣa saṁnyāsa yogaḥ

Chapter 18

Volume 7

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।

muktasaṅgo'nahaṁvādī dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ ।

सिद्ध्यासिद्धयोर्निविकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥ 18 - 26

siddhyāsiddhyornivikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate ॥

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।

rāgī karmaphalaprepsuḥ lubdho himsātmako'sucaḥ ।

हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ 18 - 27

harṣa śokānvitaḥ kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ ॥

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृति कोऽलसः ।

ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛta ko'lasaḥ ।

विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ 18 - 28

viṣādī dīrghasūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyate ॥

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणस्त्रिविधं श्रुणु ।

buddherbhedaṁ dhṛteścaiva guṇastrividhaṁ śruṇu ।

प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥ 18 - 29

procyamānamaśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya ॥

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्या कार्ये भयाभये ।

pravṛttiṁ ca navṛttiṁ ca kāryā kārye bhayā bhaye ।

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ 18 - 30

bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī ॥

यया धर्ममधर्मम् च कार्यम् चा कार्यमेव च ।

yayā dharmamadharmam ca kāryam cā kāryameva ca ।



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अथवाचत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ 18 - 31

ayathāvatprajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī ॥

अधर्मम् धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।

adharmam dharmamati yā manyate tamasāvṛtā ।

सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ 18 - 32

sarvārthānviparītāṁśca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī ॥

Sri Krishna has been talking about the different aspects of कर्म *karma*. Anything that one does is कर्म *karma*, whether it is by thought, word or deed. In the matter of impelling a person to do a particular कर्म *karma*, and subsequently in the performance of the कर्म *karma* itself, there are essentially four factors involved, and they are: ज्ञानं *jñānam*, करणं *karaṇam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā*, all of which are born of one's माया गुणसु *māyā guṇas* - one's सत्त्व *sāttva*, राजस् *rājas* and तमस् *tamas* गुणसु *guṇas* prevailing at any particular time. Consequently, each one of the above four factors is of three kinds, based on the differences in one's गुणसु *guṇas*. भगवान् *bhagavān* has already talked about सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvika jñānam*, राजस् ज्ञानं *rājas jñānam* and तामस् ज्ञानं *tāmas jñānam*, and also about सात्त्विक कर्म *sāttvika karma*, राजस् कर्म *rājas karma* and तामस् कर्म *tāmas karma*. Now Sri Krishna is going to talk about कर्ता *kartā* - the doer of कर्म *karma*.

Now, who is the doer of कर्म *karma*? Ordinarily, every one thinks of oneself as the doer of one's कर्म *karma*, and says so "I am the doer of the कर्म *karma* I do". Now, who is that "I"? For most people, The आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I, The Universal Self I, as unfolded in the Upanishads, remains unrecognizable, because, the अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the person involved is not pure enough to transcend all of one's internal obstacles to reach the ब्रह्मपुरि *brahmapuri* region in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*, where alone That आत्मा *ātmā* - The Universal Self I, is available for recognition. Therefore, for any ordinary person, the notion of self in oneself is only in one's अहंकार *ahaṁkar* I - the ego I, the apparent I, one's ever-changing notion of I, undergoing varied experiences in life, so beautifully and effectively illustrated symbolically in the Mundaka Upanishad (3 - 1 - 1), in the language of an allegory of two birds abiding on the same tree, inseparably together. We may recall here the following verse from the Mundaka Upanishad:



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द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते

dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ pariśasvajāte

तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद् अत्ति अनश्ननन् अन्यः अभिचाकशीति ॥ MU 3 - 1 - 1

tayoranyaḥ pippalaṁ svād atti anaśnanan anyāḥ abhicākaśīti ॥

We saw this verse in detail not too long ago. As we have already seen in the Upanishads, आत्मा *ātmā* does no कर्म *karma*. आत्मा *ātmā* is always अकर्ता *akartā* - non-doer. Until Self-realization, Self-recognition takes place, and the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I naturally disappears, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I is the only कर्ता *kartā* - the doer of action, every person naturally recognizes, and hence all of one's actions are naturally governed by one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇas* - the सत्त्व *sattva*, राजस् *rājas* and तमस् गुण *tāmas guṇas* of माया *māyā*. Consequently, the कर्ता *kartā* - the notion of doer I that every ordinary person has, is also of three kinds, namely सात्त्विक कर्ता *sāttvik kartā*, राजस् कर्ता *rājas kartā* and तामस् कर्ता *tāmas kartā*. Describing the लक्षण *lakṣaṇa* - the characteristics of a सात्त्विक कर्ता *sāttvika kartā*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

मुक्तसङ्गोऽनहंवादी धृत्युत्साहसमन्वितः ।

muktasaṅgo'naḥmavādī dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ ।

सिद्ध्यासिद्ध्योर्निविकारः कर्ता सात्त्विक उच्यते ॥

18 - 26

siddhyāsiddhyornivikāraḥ kartā sāttvika ucyate ॥

मुक्तसङ्गः *muktasaṅgaḥ* - The one who has no attachment to कर्म *karma* or कर्मफल *karmaphala* - either to action itself or to the result of action, the one who does the कर्म *karma* simply because it is both right and necessary at this time, and it is to be done, and nothing more. Again

अनहंवादी *anaḥmavādī* - the one who does not talk about अहं *ahaṁ* - "I" all the time, which means, the one who does not entertain अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* - pride and egoism in whatever one does, the one who feels grateful for whatever one can do, and does it, with no trace of egoism or boasting about oneself. Again

धृति उत्साहसमन्वितः *dhṛti utsāha samanvitaḥ* - the one who is endowed with firm perseverance and continued enthusiasm, the one for whom all of one's ज्ञानेन्द्रिय *jñānendriyas* and कर्मेन्द्रिय *karmendriyas* - organs of perception and action,



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including mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, align themselves and continue to cooperate in the performance of the कर्म *karma* one is doing. Again

सिद्धि असिद्धयोः निर्विकारः *siddhyi asiddhayoh nirvikārah* - the one whose अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* remain unchanged, unperturbed and unaffected in the success or failure in one's शास्त्र विहित कर्म *śāstra vihita karma* - in one's obligatory duties enjoined by the scriptures in terms of धर्म *dharma* - one's proper conduct in life

कर्ता *kartā* सात्त्विक उच्यते *sāttvika ucyate* - Such a person is called a सात्त्विक कर्ता *sāttvika kartā* - a doer of action born of सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*, predominantly सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*. We may note here that all the above लक्षणसु *lakṣaṇas* - characteristics of a सात्त्विक कर्ता *sāttvika kartā* are those of a कर्म योगी *karma yogī*. That means, the one who is a कर्म योगी *karma yogī* is naturally a सात्त्विक कर्ता *sāttvika kartā*.

Now, about राजस् कर्ता *rājas kartā*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

रागी कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः लुब्धो हिंसात्मकोऽशुचिः ।
rāgī karmaphalaprepsuḥ lubdho hīnsātmako'śuciḥ ।
हर्षशोकान्वितः कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ 18 - 27
harṣa śokānvitaḥ kartā rājasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ ॥

रागी *rāgī* - the one whose actions are all prompted by राग *rāga* - cravings of various kinds, never considering whether they are proper or improper, the one who is pushed into action by the forces of one's own राग *rāga* - cravings of various kinds. Cravings for what?

कर्मफलप्रेप्सुः *karma phala prepsuḥ* - The one whose cravings are for कर्मफल *karmaphala* all the time. The one who can never understand that कर्मफल *karmaphala* - fruit of action does not belong to the कर्ता *kartā* - the doer of action. The कर्ता *kartā* has only कर्म *karma* to do, and has absolutely no claim whatsoever on कर्मफल *karmaphala* - fruit of action. Again



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लुब्धः *lubdhah* - the one who is greedy. There are two kinds of greediness: One wants other people's wealth, property, etc.; the other kind is never willing to part with any of one's own wealth for any worthy charitable purpose or common good - The one who has greediness of any kind. Again

हिंसात्मिकः *himsātmikah* - the one whose very nature is to hurt others, the one who derives some pleasure in hurting others

अशुचिः *asuciḥ* - the one who is devoid of cleanliness, both internal and external. Internal cleanliness is with reference to anger, hatred, jealousy, etc., and external cleanliness is with reference to one's body, clothing, food, environment, etc. The one who has neither internal nor external cleanliness

हर्षशोक अन्वितः *harṣa śoka anvitaḥ* - The one who is susceptible to excessive elation (when desirable events occur) and excessive depression (when undesirable events occur)

कर्ता राजसः परिकीर्तितः *kartā rājasah parikīrtitaḥ* - Such a doer of action is well recognized as राजस् कर्ता *rājas kartā* - one born of रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*, predominantly रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*.

Now, about तामस् कर्ता *tāmas kartā*

अयुक्तः प्राकृतः स्तब्धः शठो नैष्कृति कोऽलसः ।
ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ śaṭho naiṣkṛti ko'lasaḥ ।
विषादी दीर्घसूत्री च कर्ता तामस उच्यते ॥ 18 - 28
viṣādi dīrghasūtrī ca kartā tāmasa ucyate ॥

अयुक्तः *ayuktaḥ* - The one whose mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* are never focused, the one who is always disturbed, restless and indecisive

प्राकृतः *prākṛtaḥ* - The one who is immature, one whose mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* have never undergone adequate discipline of thinking, the one whose बुद्धि *buddhi* has never gained clarity with reference to any field of knowledge. Again

स्तब्धः *stabdhaḥ* - The one who is like a pillar, unbending and irreverent in attitude. Again



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शठः *śaṭhaḥ* - means कपटः *kaṇṭhaḥ*, वंचकः *vañcakaḥ* - the one who cheats, deceives and conceals oneself from one's real nature. The one who is unreliable and deceptive

नैष्कृतिः *naiṣkṛtiḥ* - The one who is cruel, and intent upon destroying others. The one who is malicious

अलसः *alasaḥ* - The one who is too lazy to do what needs to be done

विषादी *viśādī* - The one who is always depressed and complaining about something or other, without doing anything about it. and

दीर्घसूत्री च *dīrghasūtrī ca* - The one who is also a procrastinator over everything one needs to do

कर्ता तामस् उच्यते *kartā tāmas ucyate* - Such a person is called तामस् कर्ता *tāmas kartā* - a कर्ता *kartā*, a doer born of predominantly तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*.

Having already talked about ज्ञानं *jñānam*, कर्म *karma* and कर्ता *kartā*, भगवान् *bhagavān* now talks about करणं *karaṇam* - the instrument of action. Since all instruments of action ultimately depend on one's बुद्धि *buddhi* - one's faculty of judgment, and also धृति *dhṛti* - how firm, how resolved one's बुद्धि *buddhi* is, भगवान् *bhagavān* talks about करणं *karaṇam* in terms of one's बुद्धि *buddhi* and धृति *dhṛti*. Introducing the topic, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

बुद्धेर्भेदं धृतेश्चैव गुणस्त्रिविधं श्रुणु ।

buddherbhedam dhṛteścaiva guṇastrividham śruṇu ।

प्रोच्यमानमशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन धनञ्जय ॥

18 - 29

procyamānamaśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena dhanañjaya ॥

बुद्धेः भेदं *buddheḥ bhedam* - The difference in one's बुद्धि *buddhi* - in one's faculty of discrimination and decision

धृतेः भेदं चैव *dhṛteḥ bhedam caiva* - and also the difference in one's resolve, in one's firmness of बुद्धि *buddhi*

गुणतः त्रिविधं *guṇataḥ trividham* - in terms of the three-fold गुण *guṇas*

प्रोच्यमानं अशेषेण पृथक्त्वेन *procyamānam aśeṣeṇa pṛthaktvena* - which I am going to explain completely as well as separately



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धनञ्जय श्रुणु *dhanañjaya śruṇu* - O! Arjuna, please listen. Now I am going to explain fully the differences in one's बुद्धि *buddhi* - faculty of judgment, as well as in one's धृति *dhṛti* - resolve, firmness of that बुद्धि *buddhi*, in terms of the three-fold गुणसु *guṇas* - सत्त्व *sattva*, रजस् *rajas* and तमस् *tamas*. Arjuna, please listen.

When भगवान् *bhagavān* says श्रुणु *śruṇu* - please listen, it means the matter is not a trivial one in spite of its appearance. Now, describing सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च कार्या कार्ये भयाभये ।

pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca kāryā kārye bhayā bhaye ।

बन्धं मोक्षं च या वेत्ति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ सात्त्विकी ॥ 18 - 30

bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttvikī ॥

First, we must understand that बुद्धि *buddhi* and ज्ञानं *jñānam* are not the same; they are distinct from each other. ज्ञानं *jñānam* is knowledge, and बुद्धि *buddhi* is the receptacle, the container, the उपाधि *upādhi* for that knowledge. Sri Krishna has already talked about ज्ञानं *jñānam*. Now he talks about बुद्धि *buddhi* - the receptacle which is appropriate for containing that ज्ञानं *jñānam*. Only a सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi* can accommodate सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānam*.

What is सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi*? भगवान् *bhagavān* says: If the बुद्धि *buddhi* is capable of recognizing, understanding and appreciating the difference between प्रवृत्ति *pravṛtti* and निवृत्ति *nivṛtti*, कार्य *kāryā* and अकार्य *akārya*, भय *bhaya* and अभय *abhaya*, and बन्धं *bandhaṁ* and मोक्षं *mokṣam*, then that बुद्धि *buddhi* is सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi*, and it is an appropriate container for सात्त्विक ज्ञानं *sāttvik jñānam*. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says here:

प्रवृत्तिं च निवृत्तिं च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति *pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca yā buddhiḥ vetti* -

That बुद्धि *buddhi* which clearly recognizes प्रवृत्ति *pravṛtti* and निवृत्ति *nivṛtti*, which means the प्रवृत्ति मार्ग *pravṛtti mārga* and निवृत्तिमार्ग *nivṛtti mārga*



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The प्रवृत्ति मार्ग *pravṛtti mārga* is कर्म मार्ग *karma mārga*, which is the way of life which is conducive to more and more worldly activity leading to greater and greater worldly prosperity, success and happiness, now and later, both in this life and in all future lives, and the निवृत्ति मार्ग *nivṛtti mārga* is कर्मयोग मार्ग *karma yoga mārga*, which is मोक्ष मार्ग *mokṣa mārga*, and that is the way of life committed to total renunciation of कर्मफल *karmaphala* of all actions, सर्व कर्मफलत्याग मार्ग *sarva karma phala tyāga mārga*, which is the same as सर्व कर्म संन्यास मार्ग *sarva karma saṁnyāsa mārga* - a way of life totally dedicated to knowledge and service of the highest level with कर्मयोग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि *īśvara prasāda buddhi*, which is conducive to gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* ultimately - liberation from all limitations and bondages, in this very life itself.

The बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing clearly such प्रवृत्ति मार्ग *pravṛtti mārga* and निवृत्तिमार्ग *nivṛtti mārga* - such कर्म *karma* मार्ग *mārga* and कर्मयोग मार्ग *karma yoga mārga* and

कार्य अकार्ये च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति *kārya akārye ca yā buddhiḥ vetti* - the बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is proper and what is improper in daily life, taking into consideration time, place and circumstances

भय अभये च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति *bhaya abhaye ca yā buddhiḥ vetti* - the बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing what is to be feared and what is not to be feared. भय here is not fear itself. It is the object of fear. Therefore the बुद्धि *buddhi* which is able to recognize the object of fear, and hence what is to be avoided, and also the object about which there is no need for any fear

बन्धं मोक्षं च या बुद्धिः वेत्ति *bandham mokṣam ca yā buddhiḥ vetti* - the बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing what is बन्धं *bandham* as well as बन्धहेतु *bandha hetu* - what is bondage, as well as the cause for bondage, and also what is मोक्ष *mokṣa* as well as मोक्ष हेतु *mokṣa hetu* - what is liberation, Real Freedom, as well as the means for liberation, the means for gaining Real Freedom

सा बुद्धिः पार्थ *sā buddhiḥ pārtha* - O! Arjuna, That बुद्धि *buddhi* is सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi*, बुद्धि *buddhi* born of सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*.



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Let us be clear in our mind about what is सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi*. The बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing what is कर्म मार्ग *karma mārga*, and what is कर्मयोग मार्ग *karma yoga mārga*, the way of life committed to ever increasing prosperity, success and happiness, and also the way of life totally dedicated to knowledge and service at the highest level with no trace of attachment either to कर्म *karma* or कर्मफल *karamaphala*.

- The बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing what is to be done and what is not to be done, what is proper and what is improper in daily life.
- The बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing the object to be feared, and the object from which there is nothing to be feared.
- The बुद्धि *buddhi* which is capable of recognizing what is bondage, as well as the cause for such bondage, and also what is liberation from any bondage and the means of gaining such liberation
- The बुद्धि *buddhi* which recognizes that the cause for bondage is ignorance about the true nature of oneself, and the means for gaining freedom from all bondages is gaining Self-knowledge.

That बुद्धि *buddhi* which recognizes all the above is सात्त्विक बुद्धि *sāttvik buddhi* - born of सत्त्व गुण *sattva guṇa*.

Now about राजस् बुद्धि *rājas buddhi*

यया धर्ममधर्मम् च कार्यम् चा कार्यमेव च ।

yayā dharmamadharmam ca kāryam cā kāryameva ca ।

अयथावत्प्रजानाति बुद्धिः सा पार्थ राजसी ॥ 18 - 31

ayathāvatprajānāti buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī ॥

यया बुद्धिः अयथावत् प्रजानाति *yayā buddhiḥ ayathāvat prajānāti* - The बुद्धि *buddhi* by which one understands wrongly, one convincingly misinterprets the words of the scripture - about what?

धर्मम् अधर्मम् च कार्यम् च अकार्यम् एव च *dharmam adharmam ca kāryam ca akāryam eva ca* - about what is proper and what is improper, and also about what is to be done and what is not to be done



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

सा बुद्धिः पार्थ राजसी *sā buddhiḥ pārtha rājasī* - that बुद्धि *buddhi* is राजसी बुद्धि *rājasī buddhi*, बुद्धि *buddhi* born of रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*.

O! Arjuna. The बुद्धि *buddhi* born of रजस् कर्म *rajas karma* convincingly misinterprets scriptural mandates with respect to धर्म *dharma* and अधर्म *adharma* - what is proper and what is improper, and also with respect to कार्यम् *kāryam* and अकार्यम् *akāryam* - what is to be done कर्म *karma* and what is prohibited कर्म *karma*.

Now, about तामस बुद्धि *tāmas buddhi*

अधर्मम् धर्ममिति या मन्यते तमसावृता ।

adharmam dharmamati yā manyate tamasāvṛtā ।

सर्वार्थान्विपरीतांश्च बुद्धिः सा पार्थ तामसी ॥ 18 - 32

sarvārthānviparītāṁśca buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī ॥

या बुद्धिः तमसा आवृता *yā buddhiḥ tamasā āvṛtā* - the बुद्धि *buddhi* which is covered by ignorance, governed by false values, and because of that

या बुद्धिः अधर्मम् धर्मम् इति मन्यते *yā buddhiḥ adharmam dharmam iti manyate*

- the बुद्धि *buddhi* which considers अधर्मम् *adharmam* as धर्मम् *dharmam* - that which is improper as proper. Again

या बुद्धिः सर्वार्थान् विपरीतां च मन्यते *yā buddhiḥ sarvārthān viparītāṁ ca manyate*

- the बुद्धि *buddhi* which views all things, all aspects of life as the opposite of what they really are, because of perverted thinking and judgment

सा बुद्धिः पार्थ तामसी *sā buddhiḥ pārtha tāmasī* - That बुद्धि *buddhi* is तामस बुद्धि *tāmas buddhi*,

बुद्धि *buddhi* born of तमस कर्म *tamas karma*

Thus तामस बुद्धि *tāmas buddhi* cultivates only improper judgment and intellectual degradation, which are not conducive to gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātmajñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge. Then भगवान् *bhagavān* talks about धृति *dhṛti* - one's resolve, one's firmness of बुद्धि *buddhi*, which we will see next time.