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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

*caturtho 'dhyāyaḥ - jñāna karma sanyāsa yogaḥ*

### Chapter 4

Volume 1

श्री भगवानुवाच *śrī bhagavān uvāca*

इमं विवस्वते योगं, प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्यगम् ।

*imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ, proktavān ahaṁ avyagam ।*

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह, मनुः इक्ष्वाकवे अब्रवीत् ॥ 4 - 1

*vivasvān manave prāha, manuḥ ikṣvākave abravīt ॥*

एवं परम्परा प्राप्तं, इमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

*evaṁ paramparā prāptaṁ, imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ ।*

सकालेनेह महता, योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ 4 - 2

*sakāleneha mahatā, yogo naṣṭaḥ paraṁtapa ॥*

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य, योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

*sa evāyaṁ mayā te'dya, yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanaḥ ।*

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति, रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमं ॥ 4 - 3

*bhakto'si me sakhā ceti, rahasyaṁ hyetaduttamaṁ ॥*

अर्जुन उवाच *arjuna uvāca*

अपरं भवतो जन्म, परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

*aparaṁ bhavato janma, paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ ।*

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वं आदौ प्रोक्तवान् इति ॥ 4 - 4

*kathametadvijānīyāṁ tvaṁ ādau proktvān iti ॥*

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बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

*bahūna me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna ।*

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ 4 - 5

*tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha paraṁtapa ॥*



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अजोऽपि सन् अव्ययात्मा भूतानां ईश्वरोऽपि सन् ।  
*ajo'pi san avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro'pi san ।*  
प्रकृतिं स्वाम् अधिष्ठाय संभवामि आत्ममायया ॥ 4 - 6  
*prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmi ātmamāyayā ॥*

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।  
*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata ।*  
अभ्युत्थानं अधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ 4 - 7  
*abhyutthānaṁ adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmyaham ॥*

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।  
*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām ।*  
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ 4 - 8  
*dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge ॥*

In chapters 2 and 3 भगवान् *bhagavān* has told Arjuna that in order to gain *śreyas śreyas* - total freedom from every kind of sorrow and distress, what is needed is ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* - आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*, ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ* - knowledge about जीव-जगत् *jīva-jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara* - knowledge about absolute reality of all existence, and the means for gaining such knowledge is कर्म योग *karma yoga*, which means doing one's duty as total dedication to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* at all times.

After having said that, भगवान् *bhagavān* could have added "Well Arjuna, I have told you what you wanted to know, and now, you do whatever you want "यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु *yathēcchasi tathā kuru* - do as you like"; that is exactly what भगवान् *bhagvān* tells Arjuna in chapter 18.

But chapter 18 is still far off. At this point, however, भगवान् *bhagavān* does not say that, because, looking at Arjuna's perplexed face, it is obvious that Arjuna's mind is still in a confused state, and some more help, some more education, is needed to pull him out of the difficulty that he is in. भगवान् *bhagavān*, in His infinite love for devotees, is willing to give this help to Arjuna.



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Now, what is the state of Arjuna's mind at this time? Arjuna is still confused. If anything, he feels even more confused now, than what he was at the beginning of Chapter 3. While Sri Krishna has been talking about आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* and कर्म योग *karma yoga*, Arjuna's mind is still concerned with कर्म *karma* itself, and that too, with the particular कर्म *karma* that he is facing at this moment. He seems to be thinking something like this:

I am faced with a particular कर्म *karma* which brings only sorrow and distress to my mind. Therefore I seek Krishna's help to solve my problem. What does Krishna say? He says "What you need is आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, and in order to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, you need कर्म योग *karma yoga*. Therefore do your कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga*, and you will come out of your sorrow and distress".

I must admit that I have no real experience either with कर्म योग *karma yoga* or आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*. At this moment, they just seem words to me. Accepting that, what I need is कर्म योग *karma yoga* and आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*; still what Krishna says is confusing to me, because आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* is not the result of any कर्म *karma*, which means आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* is not a कर्मफल *karmaphala*. That being so, why should I do कर्म *karma* to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*? What is the connection between कर्म *karma* and आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*? Further, Krishna says that I need कर्म योग *karma yoga* for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*. But कर्म योग *karma yoga* is not a कर्म *karma* either, and there is no कर्म योग *karma yoga* without कर्म *karma*. Then, what is the connection between कर्म *karma* and कर्म योग *karma yoga*?

When does a कर्म *karma* - any कर्म *karma* - every कर्म *karma* - become कर्म योग *karma yoga*? Why should I worry about every कर्म *karma* anyway? Every कर्म *karma* is not my problem. My problem is immediate. It is with reference to one particular कर्म *karma*, and that particular कर्म *karma* is पाप कर्म *pāpa karma*, by any standard. Why is it that I should be facing this पाप कर्म *pāpa karma* situation? Why is it that I should be compelled to do this पाप कर्म *pāpa karma* against my own will? When I ask Krishna "What forces a person to do पाप कर्म *pāpa karma* against



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one's own will?", Krishna says "it is काम एष *kāma eṣa*, क्रोध एष *krodha eṣa* - it is काम *kāma* and क्रोध *krodha* - desire and anger" That answer does not apply to my situation.

I have no desire for this kingdom - that I have already told Krishna. I have no anger with भीष्म *bhīṣma* and द्रोण *droṇa* with whom I have to fight. I am angry with दुर्योधन *duryo dhana*, it is true. But I do not let that anger push me to fight with भीष्म *bhīṣma* and द्रोण *droṇa* whom I respect. I certainly do not want to fight with भीष्म *bhīṣma* and द्रोण *droṇa*. If that means that I must accept defeat in this war, I am willing to accept defeat. But Krishna won't let me do that. He tells me again and again that I must fight this war with my full force, and that is my duty.

Now, who is pushing me into this war? It appears to me that it is not my काम *kāma* or क्रोध *krodha* which is pushing me into this war, but it is this Krishna who is pushing me into this war.

What am I thinking? No, no, it is wrong on my part to indulge in such thoughts. It does not befit me to do so. Certainly Krishna did not bring me into this battlefield. It was I who brought Krishna into this battlefield. Therefore, it is not fair on my part to think that Krishna is pushing me into this war.

Then what is it that Krishna is doing now? He is only responding to my cry for help. He is only trying to help me. He is helping me. Because, in his presence, I somehow feel safe and secure. He is my **only** friend, the **only** strength, and the **only** one who can help me - **that** I am sure of, **that** is clear to me.

Still I am confused. I cannot understand why I should fight this war, and being what I am, how can I fight with भीष्म *bhīṣma* and द्रोण *droṇa*. I have already asked Krishna this question, and he has given his answer. Somehow his answer does not meet my needs. My mind is still full of sorrow and distress. I do not know what to do, and I do not know what more I can ask Krishna."

With such thoughts occupying his mind, Arjuna presents a blank, distressed, depressed and speechless face. That is the Arjuna we are seeing now.

Sri Krishna knows Arjuna's situation exactly. In spite of his continued depression, Arjuna is making progress. He needs some more help, and Sri Krishna is willing to give this help. At this moment, the immediate need is to make Arjuna change his thoughts, redirect Arjuna's mind towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and make him open his mind



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and talk, so that Arjuna regains his ability to listen, and absorb the meaning and practice of कर्म योग *karma yoga*.

Through simple looking words of reassurance, Sri Krishna does exactly that. Sri Krishna uplifts Arjuna's mind and redirects it towards परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*, and makes him ask a simple-looking question, which becomes the starting point of an extraordinary exposition on कर्म योग *karma yoga*, which is again the subject matter of this and the next two chapters. भगवान् *bhagavān* initiates this exposition, saying

"Arjuna, there is nothing new in what I have been teaching you all this time. This knowledge has been there ever since creation itself. So many people have benefited by this knowledge. This knowledge is effective and ageless. However, it needs to be re-told to you, so that you can also benefit by it."

Let us now see how exactly भगवान् *bhagavān* reintroduces the topic of कर्म योग *karma yoga* in this chapter called ज्ञान-कर्म-सन्यास-योग *jñāna-karma-sanyāsa-yoga* - Renunciation of कर्म *karma* through knowledge.

श्री भगवानुवाच *śrī bhagavānuvāca*

इमं विवस्वते योगं, प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्ययम् ।

*imam vivasvate yogam, proktavan aham avyayam ।*

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह, मनुः इक्ष्वाकवे अब्रवीत् ॥ 4 - 1

*vivasvan manave praha, manuh ikṣvākave abravīt ॥*

भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्ययं

*imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam*

इमं अव्ययं योगं *imam avyayam yogam* - This योग *yoga* which I described to you in chapters 2 and 3, and which ever remains unchanged

अहं विवस्वते प्रोक्तवान् *aham vivasvate proktavan* - I taught and explained it to विवस्वान् *vivasvan* at the beginning of creation.

This योग *yoga* is अव्ययं *avyayam*, it ever remains the same. It is unchanging and unchangeable, because, what comes out of this योग *yoga* is अव्ययम् *avyayam* -



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unchanging and unchangeable. This योग *yoga* is nothing but a clear vision of oneself, the world and ईश्वर *īśvara* as it is. It's फल *phala* - its result is only मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Absolute Freedom which is not subject to any change.

I taught this योग *yoga* to विवस्वान् *vivasvān*, until he became the very embodiment of this योग *yoga*. विवस्वान् *vivasvān* is सूर्य देवता *sūrya devatā*, the presiding deity for eyes, who came into existence at the beginning of this creation. विवस्वान् *vivasvān* may also be taken as the first king in the सूर्य *sūrya* dynasty.

In the old order of society, the king is the leader among क्षत्रियस *kṣatriyas*. From among the क्षत्रियस *kṣatrayas*, the most able and the most worthy emerges as the leader, who is called the King. It is the duty and the responsibility of the क्षत्रियस *kṣatriyas* in general, and the king in particular, to establish, maintain and protect धर्म *dharma* in society, so that everybody in society may progress in life without hindering others.

It is particularly important to impart Vedantic knowledge to the kings for giving them the strength to rule the kingdom. Every king has indeed an army which represents his physical power. Without spiritual power, every other source of strength soon becomes a source of greediness, which ultimately destroys both the king and the kingdom.

Therefore, the real strength for a king, and hence his kingdom, comes only from ज्ञानयोग *jñāna yoga* and कर्मयोग *karma yoga* - an enlightened approach to private and public life. It is for this reason that Sri Krishna imparted this योग *yoga* knowledge - ज्ञानयोग *jñāna yoga* and कर्मयोग *karma yoga* to विवस्वान् *vivasvān* at the beginning of creation.

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह, मनुः इक्ष्वाकवे अब्रवीत्  
*vivasvān manave prāha, manuḥ ikṣvākave abravīt*

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह *vivasvān manave prāha* - विवस्वान् *vivasvān* imparted this knowledge to his son मनु *manu*

मनुः इक्ष्वाकवे अब्रवीत् *manuḥ ikṣvākave abravīt* - मनु *manu* then imparted this knowledge to his son इक्ष्वाकु *ikṣvāku*

There is also another reason why Vedanta should be taught to the kings. It is यथा राजा तथा प्रजा *yathā rājā tathā prajā* - as is the king, so are his subjects. If the king is good, the people also tend to be good.





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In any society, as Sri Krishna said earlier, (3-21) यद्यत् आचरति श्रेष्ठः तत्तदेव इतरो जनः *yadyat ācarati śreṣṭhaḥ tattadeva ittarō janah* whatever the leader does, that is followed by other people. Therefore the people go by the example set by the king. If the king is corrupt and bad, very soon the whole society becomes corrupt and bad. Therefore the proper education of the king is extremely important for the welfare of the society as a whole.

For a king who is strong by virtue of योगबल *yoga bala* - spiritual strength, the best thing that he can do for his son, is to educate his son also in ज्ञानयोग *jñāna yoga* and कर्मयोग *karma yoga*, so that he can also enjoy योगबल *yoga bala*. To give the kingdom to the son is easy but to give योगबल *yoga bala* to the son is not easy. The son should be worthy of it, otherwise he cannot absorb it. Therefore भगवान् *bhagvān* says

एवं परम्परा प्राप्तं, इमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

*evam paramparā prāptam, imam rājarṣayo viduḥ ।*

स कालेनेह महता, योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥

4 - 2

*sa kāleneha mahatā, yogo naṣṭha paramtapa ॥*

एवं परम्परा प्राप्तं इमं (योगं) राज ऋषयः विदुः *evam paramparā prāptam imam (yogam) rāja rṣayah viduḥ* - Transmitted in this manner from generation to generation, this योग *yoga* (ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga* and कर्म योग *karma yoga*) is already known to the राज Rishis (the king sages - the royal sages). योग *yoga* is singular. On maturity all योगs *yogas* become ONE. The योग *yoga* knowledge, in fullness, has already been known to the enlightened kings like विवस्वान् *vivasvān*, मनु *manu*, इक्ष्वाकु *ikṣvāku* and later on जनक *janaka*, विश्वामित्र *viśvāmitra* and others. But all kings are not enlightened ones. Therefore,

परन्तप *parantapa* - O! Arjuna,

सः योगः इह (लोके) कालेन महता नष्टः *saḥ yogaḥ iha (loke) kālena mahatā naṣṭaḥ* - that योग *yoga* in the course of long time has been lost and has become unavailable to the general population. The योग *yoga* knowledge is still there in isolated places in persons like भीष्म *bhīṣma*, द्रोण *droṇa*, व्यास *vyāsa*, शुक *śuka*, विदुर *vidur*, etc. But the free flow of this knowledge into the society has stopped, because



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the political power now is in the hands of people like दुर्योधन *duryodhana*, who has no योगबल *yoga bala*. With दुर्योधन *duryodhana* as the king, impropriety, अधर्म *adharma* has permeated all aspects of this society and the benefits of the योगबल *yoga bala* is now lost to the society as a whole

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

*sa evāyaṁ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātaṇaḥ ।*

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमं ॥

4 - 3

*bhakto'si me sakhā ceti rahasyaṁ hyetaduttamaṁ ॥*

स एव अयं पुरातनः योगः, अद्य मया ते प्रोक्तः *sa eva ayaṁ purātaṇaḥ yogaḥ, adya mayā te proktaḥ* - the same ancient योग *yoga* knowledge has been taught to you today by me. Why? Because

भक्तः असि *bhaktaḥ asi* - you are my भक्त *bhakta*, you are my devotee

मे सखा च *me sakhā ca* - you are also my friend

If you ask me "I have been your friend all along; why did you not teach me before", the answer is, until now, you have been just my friend. Only now you are my भक्त *bhakta* - devotee. Because only today you said

शिष्यस्तेऽहं, शादि मां त्वां प्रपन्नं *śiṣyaste'haṁ, śādi māṁ tvāṁ prapannaṁ* - I am your disciple. I detach myself from everything that is binding on me and I commit myself to your advice totally. Please teach me.

यत् श्रेयः स्यात् *yat śreyaḥ syāt* - that which is श्रेयस् *śreyas*, the परम पुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha* - the highest goal of life. That श्रेयस् *śreyas* is आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, and the means for gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* is कर्मयोग *karma yoga*. Thus, only today, you became fit for this योग *yoga* knowledge. Therefore, I am teaching you

एतत् योगं उत्तमं रहस्यं *etat yogam uttamaṁ rahasyaṁ* - This Yoga knowledge which is the greatest of all secrets, is a public secret, in the sense that unless you are ready for this knowledge, you cannot gain this knowledge, even if it is told to you.

The free flow of योग *yoga* - knowledge in the society got snapped because the families of क्षत्रिय *kṣatriyas* became progressively weak and became incapable of absorbing this knowledge. These kings, intoxicated with power, without योगबल *yoga*





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*bala* - spiritual strength, became दुर्बलवान् *durbalavān* - mentally weak, with no control over their instruments of perception and action. The people began to emulate the weakness of the rulers. Therefore, धर्म *dharma* - discipline, propriety and gratitude got lost in the society.

The अर्थ *artha* and काम *kāma* pursuits without धर्म *dharma*, endeavors for material prosperity and success without any sense of discipline, propriety and gratitude, can only destroy the entire society. Such is the situation today. That is why I am teaching you again the योग *yoga bala* knowledge because you are fit for that knowledge and you are also ready for that knowledge. You as a क्षत्रिय *kṣatriya* have a responsibility to profit by this knowledge, and reestablish and cultivate धर्म *dharma* in the society, so says Sri Krishna.

These words of Sri Krishna spontaneously prompt Arjuna to speak up again, and ask this question

अर्जुन उवाच *arjuna uvāca*

अपरं भवतो जन्म, परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

*aparaṁ bhavato janma, paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ ।*

कथं एतत् विजानीयां, त्वं आदौ प्रोक्तवान् इति ॥ 4 - 4

*katham etat vijānīyām, tvaṁ ādau proktvān iti ॥*

अपरं भवतः जन्म - *aparaṁ bhavataḥ janma* Krishna - later was thy birth

परं जन्म विवस्वतः *paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ* - earlier was the birth of विवस्वान् *vivasvān*. That being the case

कथं एतत् विजानीयां *katham etat vijānīyām* - how am I to understand the statement

त्वं आदौ प्रोक्तवान् इति *tvaṁ ādau proktvān iti* - that you taught this योग *yoga* to विवस्वान् *vivasvān* at the beginning of this creation?

विवस्वान् *vivasvān* was born long time before you. You say that you taught this योग *yoga* to विवस्वान् *vivasvān*. How is this possible? Please make me understand your statement. So speaks up Arjuna.

Please note here that the plane of thought of Arjuna has already changed. Arjuna's mind has now been lifted from the thoughts about कर्म *karma* and कर्मयोग *karma*



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yoga. Arjuna's question now is **not** about कर्म *karma* or कर्मयोग *karma yoga*, Arjuna's question now is about Sri Krishna Himself, who is indeed परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

By seeking knowledge about Sri Krishna, Arjuna's mind is now directed towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and he is now seeking ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ* spontaneously, on his own initiative, whether he realizes it or not. That is the mark of spiritual progress of Arjuna at this time. From now on, Sri Krishna's teaching of कर्म योग *karma yoga* is in a different plane. Before taking up the subject of कर्म योग *karma yoga*, again Sri Krishna answers Arjuna's specific question, directly revealing himself as अवतार पुरुष *avatāra puruṣa* and talks about the nature and purpose of his birth in the following words.

श्री भगवान् उवाच *śrī bhagavāna uvāca*

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि, जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

*bahūni me vyatītāni, janmāni tava cārjuna ।*

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि, न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ 4 - 5

*tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇi, na tvaṁ vettha paraṁtapa ॥*

Answering Arjuna's question, भगवान् *bhagavān* says

अर्जुन *arjuna* - O! Arjuna

मे जन्मानि बहूनि व्यतीतानि, तव च *me janmāni bahūni vyatītāni, tava ca* - Births for me, very many of them, have already gone by. So it is for you too. For me as well as for you, for both of us, many, many births have already gone by

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि *tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇi* - तानि सर्वाणि अहं वेद *tāni sarvāṇi ahaṁ veda* - I know all of them, I know all of those births, but,

न त्वं वेत्थ *na tvaṁ vettha* - you do not know them

परंतप *paraṁtapa* - O! Arjuna

Very many births have gone by for both of us, all of them I know, but you do not know. Why? Because (here comes the whole meaning of अवतार *avatār* - God incarnation) Arjuna, like every one of us is a जीव *jīva*, and Sri Krishna is an अवतार पुरुष *avatāra puruṣa*. A जीव *jīva* is कर्म *karma* -born. We are what we are because of our past



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कर्म *karmas* - past actions. Each one of us is just a result of one's own past actions - कर्मफल *karma phala*. Therefore, every जीव *jīva* is just a manifestation of one's own कर्मफल *karma phala*.

Since every कर्म *karma* is different, every कर्मफल *karma phala* is also different. Since every कर्म *karma* is limited, every कर्मफल *karma phala* is also limited. Therefore, every जीव *jīva* is different and is also limited - limited in powers, limited in knowledge, etc. Consequently, a जीव *jīva* does not know all its previous births and manifestations.

On the other hand, an अवतार पुरुष *avatār puruṣa* is not a जीव *jīva*. It is not कर्म *karma* -born. It is not a कर्मफल *karma phala*. An अवतार पुरुष *avatār puruṣa* is a manifestation of ईश्वर *īśvar* who is नित्य शुद्धः *nitya śuddhaḥ* - eternally pure, free from कर्म *karma*, नित्य मुक्तः *nitya muktaḥ* - eternally free from all limitations, and hence नित्य बुद्धः *nitya buddhaḥ* - eternally enlightened.

ईश्वर *īśvar* is सर्वज्ञः *sarvajñah* - All knowledge. Therefore ईश्वर *īśvara* knows all his manifestations, all his births.

कर्म *karma*, मोक्ष *mokṣa*, and अवतार *avatār* are three unique concepts arising from the Vedantic view of life. In अवतार *avatār*, ईश्वर *īśvar* assumes the appearance of birth - a birth not caused by the force of कर्म *karma*, but then, there is still the appearance of birth, body, actions, etc. Such a birth belongs only to ईश्वर *īśvara*.

According to our पुराणाs, every अवतार *avatār* is भगवान्'s *bhagvān's* answer to the prayers of the देवताs *devatās* and also धार्मिकाs *dhārmikās* - people committed to धर्म *dharma*. Thus, prayers become the material cause for भगवान्'s *bhagvān's* appearance. The devotees of Sri Krishna can see Sri Krishna at any time, wherever they are, which means, through prayer, every one of us can see Sri Krishna as भगवान्'s *bhagvān's* अवतार *avatār* in any form, at any place, at any time. The next verse tells exactly what अवतार *avatār* is.

अजोऽपि सन् अव्ययात्मा भूतानां ईश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

*ajo'pi san avyayātmā bhūtānām īśvaro'pi san ।*



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प्रकृतिं स्वाम् अधिष्ठाय संभवामि आत्मायया ॥ 4 - 6  
*prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhāvāmi ātmāyayā ॥*

अजः अपि सन् *ajah api san* - even though I am and continue to be unborn, similarly  
अव्यय आत्मा अपि सन् *avyaya ātmā api san* - even though I am and I continue to  
be omniscient - all knowledge at all times, and also, even though I am of imperishable  
nature

भूतानां ईश्वरः अपि सन् *bhūtānām īśvaraḥ api san* - even though I am and I  
continue to be the Lord of all that exists, the Lord of all this creation

स्यां प्रकृतिं अधिष्ठाय *svām prakṛtiṁ adhiṣṭhāya* - always keeping my प्रकृति  
*prakṛti*, my माया *māyā* power under my control

संभवामि आत्ममायया *sambhavāmi ātmamāyayā* - I am born by the power of my  
own माया *māyā*, by the power of my inherent all-powerful nature.

For a जीव *jīva*, there is only भवामि *bhavāmi*, birth by the force of कर्म *karma* - there  
is no choice. For an अवतार *avatār*, there is संभवामि *sambhavāmi* - सम्यक् भवामि  
*samyak bhavāmi* - birth by choice. Such a birth is only for ईश्वर *īśvara*.

If all this creation is ईश्वर श्रृष्टि *īśvar śṛṣṭi*, an additional creation in the form of an  
अवतार *avatār*, makes no difference to ईश्वर *īśvar*. Just as one can assume a  
thought and still continue to exist as oneself, similarly, ईश्वर *īśvara* can assume a  
certain form at a certain time at a certain place for a certain purpose, and still continue  
to exist as all-pervading, all-powerful, all-inclusive, all-knowledge ईश्वर *īśvara*. That is  
the nature of the birth of भगवान्'s अवतार *bhagavān's avatār*. When does such birth  
take place and what for? भगवान् *bhagavān* says

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।  
*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata ।*  
अभ्युत्थानं अधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहं ॥ 4 - 7  
*abhyutthānaṁ adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmyahaṁ ॥*

भारत *bhārata* - O! Arjuna

हि *hi* - indeed, certainly,



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यदा यदा धर्मस्य ग्लानिः भवति *yadā yadā dharmasya glāniḥ bhavati* - whenever deliberate destruction of धर्म *dharma* in the society takes place, and also, as a consequence

अधर्मस्य अभ्युत्थानं भवति *adharmasya abhyutthānaṁ bhavati* - अधर्म *adharma* - impropriety increases and gains power and momentum in society

तदा अहं आत्मानं सृजामि *tadā ahaṁ ātmānaṁ sṛjāmi* - then, at that time, I create myself, I assume a माया शरीर *māyā śarīra* with a form and a name. What for?

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृतां ।

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtāṁ ।*

धर्म संस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ 4 - 8

*dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge ॥*

साधूनां परित्राणाय *sādḥūnāṁ paritrāṇāya* - for the effective protection of all those who follow the path of धर्म *dharma*

दुष्कृतां विनाशाय *duṣkṛtāṁ vināśāya* - for uprooting the powers of those who have no regard for धर्म *dharma*, and hence who make the lives of धर्म *dharma*-abiding people miserable, and

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय *dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya* - for the firm re-establishment of धर्म *dharma* in the society

संभवामि युगे युगे *sambhavāmi yuge yuge* - I am born as an अवतार पुरुष *avatār puruṣa* in every युग *yuga*, in every time cycle

Therefore, the purpose of भगवान्'s *bhagvān's* अवतार *avatār* is to reestablish धर्म *dharma* in the society so that everybody has an opportunity to uplift oneself and fulfill oneself.

Now, what is धर्म *dharma*, and why is धर्म *dharma* so important? As we have seen already, धर्म *dharma* is duty, propriety and gratitude in action. The Vedic society is based on the Vedic vision of the overriding purpose of life. That purpose is मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Absolute Freedom and Happiness, which is identical with आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge through Self-recognition and self-realization.



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For gaining such मोक्ष *mokṣa*, the essential pre-requisite is अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - purity of one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, and this is gained only through कर्म योग *karma yoga*, and कर्म योग *karma yoga* is possible only if one is governed by धर्म *dharma* in all of one's actions.

That is why the Vedic society is a धर्म *dharma*-based society. If one has no sense of duty, propriety and gratitude with respect to all of one's actions, कर्म योग *karma yoga* is not possible. Thus धर्म *dharma* becomes the means for any kind of पुरुषार्थ *puruṣārtha* - any kind of progress or achievement in life.

Whether one is interested in अर्थ *artha*, काम *kāma* or मोक्ष *mokṣa* - material prosperity, personal achievements of various kinds, or freedom from any kind of bondage, धर्म *dharma* - actions governed by a sense of duty, propriety and gratitude, constitutes the only means for such accomplishment.

धर्म *dharma* gives equal opportunity for everybody to progress. The one who destroys धर्म *dharma* verily destroys oneself, and also the society. Such a destructive person is a दुष्कृत *duṣkṛta*, and his powers of destruction are fit to be destroyed. That is what धर्म *dharma* संस्थापनं *saṁsthāpanam* means, and that is the purpose of अवतार *avatār* - so says भगवान् *bhagavān* Sri Krishna. We will continue next time.