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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 vyatitāni 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 sādhūnām 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 bhagavān uvāca*

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 *viśvāmītra* 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 purātanaḥ ।

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 purātanaḥ 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 sambhvāmi 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

स्वां 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.



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

Chapter 4

Volume 2

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यं, एवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

janma karma ca me divyam, evam yo vetti tattvataḥ ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म, नैतिमामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ 4 - 9

tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma, naitimāmeti so'rjuna ॥

वीत राग भय क्रोधा, मन्मया मां उपाश्रिताः ।

vīta rāga bhaya krodhā, manmayā mām upāśritāḥ ।

बाहवो ज्ञानतपसा, पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ 4 - 10

bāhavo jñānatapasā, pūtā madbhāvamāgatāḥ ॥

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते, तान् तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

ye yathā mām prapadyante, tān tathaiva bhajāmyaham ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते, मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ 4 - 11

mama vartmānuvartante, manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ ॥

कांक्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं, यजन्त इह देवताः ।

kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṁ siddhiṁ, yajanta iha devatāḥ ।

क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके, सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ 4 - 12

kṣipram hi mānuṣe loke, siddhirbhavati karmajā ॥

After revealing Himself to Arjuna as the अवतार पुरुष *avatār puruṣa* - God Incarnate - meaning परमेश्वर *parameśvar* assuming the appearance of a human being from time to time, by the creative power of his own inherent माया शक्ति *māyā śakti* - all powerful nature, for the sole purpose of re-establishing धर्म *dharma* in society, for the benefit of entire humanity, Sri Krishna continues:

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यं, एवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

janma karma ca me divyam, evam yo vetti tattavataḥ ।

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म, नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ 4 - 9



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tyaktvā dehaṁ punarajanma, naiti māmeti so'rjuna ॥

जन्म कर्म च, मे दिव्यं, एवं यः वेत्ति तत्त्वतः

janma karma ca, me divyaṁ, evaṁ yaḥ vetti tattvataḥ

एवं *evaṁ* - in this manner

यः वेत्ति तत्त्वतः *yaḥ vetti tattvataḥ* - the one who knows the तत्त्व *tattva*- the real fact of the matter, the one who understands the truth about मे जन्म *me janma*, मे कर्म *me karma ca*, my birth and my actions as

दिव्यं *divyaṁ* means दिवि भावं *divi bhāvaṁ* or ईश्वर भावं *īśvara bhāvaṁ* - my birth and my actions are of the very nature of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and they are not governed by the limitations of the laws of nature.

My birth and my actions appear peculiar because, I am in-fact, ever-existent, yet I appear to be born. I perform no action, yet I appear to be engaged in action, etc. The one who realizes that the appearances of my birth and actions are only manifestations of the inherent creative power of myself – the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, their real nature is दिव्यं *divyaṁ* - entirely Divine - the one who realizes my real nature, what happens to that person? -

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनः जन्म न एति *tyaktvā dehaṁ punaḥ janma na eti*

त्यक्त्वा देहं *tyaktvā dehaṁ* - Giving up the body, which means giving up the notion of identity with one's body, recognizing one's mistaken identity with one's body-mind-intellect complex

पुनः जन्म न एति *punaḥ janma na eti* - the person never gets another कर्म *karma*-born जन्म *janma* - the person is never reborn again as कर्मफल *karma phala*. The सत्यं *satyaṁ* - the truth about my जन्म *janma* and कर्म *karma* - My birth and actions as अवतार पुरुष *avatār puruṣa* - is also the truth about this entire ever-changing creation, its birth and its actions.

Therefore, the one who realizes the सत्यं *satyaṁ* - the truth about my जन्म *janma* and my कर्म *karma*, is also the one who realizes what is सत्यं *satyaṁ* and what is मिथ्या *mithyā* - what is the never changing truth and what is the ever-changing appearance. Such realization helps one to realize the Truth about one's own Self - Self-knowledge. The moment one gains such Self-knowledge, त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म न एति



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tyaktvā dehaṁ punarjanma na eti - one gives up one's mistaken identity with one's physical body, and one is never again subject to rebirth.

Then what happens to that person?

सः मां एति *saḥ mām eti* - That person comes to ME – the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. That person gains identity with me, becomes one with me. That person recognizes परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself, as प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* - as one's innermost SELF Itself.

Because of one's ignorance about the सत्यं *satyaṁ* - The Truth about अवतार पुरुष *avatār puruṣa*- God Incarnate - one is searching for me - the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, everywhere. As soon as one gains knowledge about me as अवतार पुरुष *avatāra puruṣa*, one also gains knowledge about oneself, and that person gains instant identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in himself as ONESELF - wherever the person may be, whatever the person may do, which means - one gains जीव-ईश्वर ऐक्यं *jīva-īśvara aikyaṁ* instantly. Gaining such identity is indeed gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - Supreme Wisdom.

That is how Sri Krishna makes use of Arjuna's question to redirect his thoughts again towards आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, which is indeed gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas* - gaining the परम पुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha* - the मोक्ष *mokṣa* - The highest goal of life.

"The process of gaining such मोक्ष *mokṣa* is कर्म योग *karma yoga*, as already pointed out by Sri Krishna. This process of gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* through कर्म योग *karma yoga* has been known to the Rishis for a long time. Today I am teaching you that knowledge again, so that you can also gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* and the श्रेयस् *śreyas*, the मोक्ष *mokṣa* that you seek" so says Sri Krishna.

Does it mean that every time someone wants to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, an ईश्वर अवतार *īśvara avatār* must take place? No, that is not necessary. All that one needs to do is to follow कर्म योग *karma yoga*. Is that enough? Sure, that is enough, because भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

वीत राग भय क्रोधा मन्मया मां उपाश्रिताः ।



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vīta rāga bhaya krodhā manmayā mām upāśritāḥ ।

बहयो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भाव आगताः ॥ 4 - 10

bahavo jñāna tapasā pūtā madbhāvaṁ āgatāḥ ॥

In the previous verse, Sri Krishna said:

"Having gained आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*, सः मां एति *saḥ mām eti*, that person becomes ONE with ME - the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*." Continuing that statement, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

बहवः मद्भाव आगताः *bahavaḥ madbhāvaṁ āgatāḥ* - Very many people have thus gained identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which means, giving up the notion of identity with individual जीव *jīva*, they have gained the realization अहं सर्वात्मकं ब्रह्म *ahaṁ sarvātmakam brahma* - My true nature is indeed The All-inclusive, The All-pervading ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. All this, everything in this creation - is Myself.

It is not a process of becoming. It is a process of Being. It is a process of recognition of one's being, one's आत्मा *ātmā* as It is. The realization of truth about आत्मा *ātmā* helps you recognize yourself in everything. To be in everything cannot be recognized unless you recognize yourself to be free from everything.

If you realize that you are free from everything and then if you look at the world, you will find that the world is not free from you. You are free from the world, but the world is not free from you. You are independent of your thoughts, but your thoughts are not independent of you. You are सत्यं *satyaṁ* and the world is मिथ्या *mithyā*. Thus very many people have gained realization of सत्यं *satyaṁ* and मिथ्या *mithyā*. How?

पूताः ज्ञान तपसा *pūtāḥ jñāna tapasā* - When their minds are purified by the fire of knowledge, ignorance of Self is removed by knowledge gained by आत्म विचार *ātma vicāra* - enquiry about the nature of जीव-जगत् *jīva-jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara*. Such enquiry itself is तपस् *tapas* - discipline. It is ज्ञान तपस् *jñāna tapas*. That is the only kind of तपस् *tapas* that is needed to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*.

The fire of that enquiry, the power and enlightenment arising from such enquiry burns all ignorance about oneself, and the mind. The entire अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* gets purified and gains the ability to recognize one's true nature.



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Thus, purely by enquiry, one can gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* and realize identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. And, the necessary prerequisite for such enquiry is कर्म योग *karma yoga*, which is

वीत *vīta* - राग भय *rāga bhaya* - क्रोधाः *krodhāḥ* - freeing oneself, releasing oneself from the forces of राग *rāga* (passion, likes and dislikes), भय *bhaya* (fear) and क्रोध *krodha* (anger). Again

मन्मया *manmayā* - identifying oneself with ME – the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, in all of one's actions

मां उपाश्रिताः *māṁ upāśritāḥ* - with the mind directed towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar* at all times, that is कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi*.

By such कर्म योग *karma yoga*, followed by knowledge gained by enquiry on the nature of जीव-जगत् *jīva-jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara*, many people have realized जीव-ईश्वर-एक्यं *jīva-īśvara-ekyaṁ* - identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and gained श्रेयस् -मोक्ष *śreyas-mokṣa* - liberation from all sorrow and distress.

So saying, Sri Krishna has brought Arjuna's mind again to the subject of ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga* and कर्म योग *karma yoga*. From what भगवान् *bhagavān* has said already, it is clear that कर्म *karma* is necessary for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, and the purpose of कर्म *karma* is to make one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* fit for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*. That purpose can be accomplished only by performing कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga*.

कर्म योग *karma yoga* means a state of existence where the mind is totally free from राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* (passion and hatred - intense likes and dislikes), and the mind is always directed towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar* while performing all actions as dedication to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Only those who have this कर्म योग *karma yoga* state of existence, this कर्म योग *karma yoga* disposition of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, can gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*.



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For some it may appear as though भगवान् *bhagavān* has His own राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa*, favoring कर्म योगीs *karma yogī*s preferentially with respect to the ability to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*. There should be no misunderstanding here. भगवान् *bhagavān* has no राग *rāga* or द्वेष *dveṣa* with respect to anybody, because भगवान् *bhagavān* says

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते, तान् तथैव भजाम्यहं ।

ye yathā mām prapadyante, tān tathaiḥ bhajāmyaham ।

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते, मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ 4 - 11

mama vartmānuvartante, manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ ॥

This is one of the famous verses in the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*. In the first line भगवान् *bhagavān* says

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते, तान् तथा एव भजामि अहं - *ye yathā mām prapadyante, tān tathā eva bhajāmi aham*

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते *ye yathā mām prapadyante* - In whatever manner, in whichever form, with whatever motive and to whatever extent people worship ME - the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

तान् तथा एव भजामि अहं *tān tathā eva bhajāmi aham* - I bless them exactly in the same manner, and precisely to the same extent. As you approach, so you reach - so far, and no further. What you seek is what you get, so much and nothing more.

As the Upanishad says, तत् त्वं असि *tat tvam asi* - I am in fact in you, and I am you. Whatever you seek from me, it is already in you. And whatever you seek from ME is what you will find in ME. You will get what you seek, nothing more and nothing less.

Nothing in this world is separate from ME. I am in everything, and I am everything. I say to you, the जीव *jīva*, "I am You, please realize that I am indeed you, you are indeed myself. If you realize that, you will also realize that you are also everything, which means that there is no need for you to ask from ME anything special, because you are already everything.

On the other hand, if you choose to disown me in yourself, and you only want some small little things from me as fruits of your actions, surely I will give you the fruits of your actions in full measure. There is no राग *rāga* or द्वेष *dveṣa* - like or dislike on my part.



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I am already you, whether you know it or not. The fruits of your actions are already in your actions, whether you know it or not, and you will get the fruits of your action in full measure whether you want it or not.

You are a जीव *jīva*. You are blessed with a बुद्धि *buddhi*, an instrument by which you can discriminate between good and bad, and real and unreal. You are also blessed with a free will to be able to do as you choose to do. To help you in your daily life, a प्रमाण *pramāṇa* - a means of knowledge has also been given to you in the form of Vedas and Upanishads. With all these blessings, if you have a problem, the problem is you and you alone. It is your choice of action, more particularly your motive behind your action that decides what you get out of yourself, because you are indeed everything. What you get out of yourself depends only on yourself alone, and nothing outside of yourself. I bless you exactly the way you seek my blessings. I have neither राग *rāga* nor द्वेष *dveṣa* for any one, nor am I a कर्ता *kartā* - Doer of action. I am you, and you get entirely what you deserve, nothing more, nothing less.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तान् तथैव भजाम्यहम् *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tān tathaiva bhajāmyaham* - You may invoke me in any name, in any form, in any manner. Remaining as परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, I will bless you through the same name, through the same form and in the same manner. Through whichever कर्म *karma* you invoke me, through the same कर्म *karma* I will bless you.

I am everywhere, in hell or heaven, in joy or sorrow. I am the कर्म फल दाता *karma phala dātā* for all actions good or bad. The कर्म फल *karma phala* of good actions give you सुख *sukha* and that of bad actions give you दुःख *duḥkha*. I am the Giver of fruits of all actions whether they are good or bad.

I am like Fire. If you want fire to boil your water, it does. If you put your finger in the fire, it burns your finger. In either case, the fire does nothing. It remains what it is. Your water got what you wanted and your finger got what it sought. So is the case with ME, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. I bless you exactly as you seek me.

I am like an ocean. One comes to the ocean with a small vessel, and carries away a vessel full of water. Another comes to the ocean with a truck and carries away a truck full of water. One cannot complain why the ocean gives only a vessel full of water to one and a truck full of water to another. How much water you can get from the ocean depends on you alone.



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With whatever motive you invoke परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, it is reflected fully and exactly in कर्म फल *karma phala*. The same कर्म *karma* done with different motives produces different results according to the motives. The one who does कर्म *karma* simply as कर्म *karma* gets only the results of कर्म *karma*. The one who does the same कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga* gets not only the result of the कर्म *karma*, but also अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi*, which is ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* - the means for gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas*. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* has no राग *rāga* or द्वेष *dveṣa* for anyone.

If one does not seek मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Liberation - one naturally does not get it, simply because one does not seek it. For the same person, liberation from desire as well as desire for the result of an action do not take place at the same time, because desire for liberation and desire for a कर्म फल *karma phala* cannot co-exist in the same person.

If one does not seek any कर्म फल *karma phala* for one's कर्म *karma*, then what for does one do any कर्म *karma*, and what for does one worship the Lord through that कर्म *karma*?

One does one's कर्म *karma* because it is धर्म कर्म *dharma karma*, it is नियतं कर्म *niyataṁ karma*, it is तेन त्यक्तेन कर्म *tena tyaktena karma*, it is कर्म *karma* to be done as a matter of duty, being an active participant in this creation for the welfare of the society, welfare of the community, welfare of the world, and it is the कर्म *karma* that has been specially left for one to do by the very Grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. It is ईश्वर प्रसाद कर्म *īśvara prasāda karma*. By worshipping परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with such कर्म *karma*, what one seeks is only ज्ञान वैराग्यं *jñāna vairāgyam* - steadfastness in the pursuit of ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* and nothing else.

Thus as you approach the Lord, as you seek the Lord, so the Lord blesses you, and to that extent you realize identity with the Lord already in you. That is the meaning of the first line of the verse

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तान् तथैव भजाम्यहम्



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ye yathā mām prapadyante tām tathaiva bhajāmyaham

In the second line, Sri Krishna says

मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः

mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ

पार्थ *pārtha* - O! Arjuna

मनुष्याः *manuṣyāḥ* - people who follow धर्म *dharma*, whether they are people in distress or whether they are people seeking fruits of actions, or whether they are people seeking मोक्ष *mokṣa*, whatever be their kind

सर्वशः *sarvaśaḥ* - in whatever name or in whatever form they worship the Lord, so long as they follow the path of धर्म *dharma*

मम वर्त्म (एव) अनुवर्तन्ते: *mama vartma (eva) anuvartanteḥ* - they follow, they pursue only मम वर्त्म *mama vartma* - My मार्ग *mārga* - My path, My धर्म *dharma*, the ईश्वर धर्म *īśvar dharma* - the way of life ordained by परमेश्वर *parameśvar* for the welfare and progress of human society. Everyone following धर्म *dharma*, is approaching परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only, each one in one's own way, in accordance with one's own स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* - natural mental disposition.

मनुष्याः *manuṣyāḥ* - means human beings. According to Vedanta, human beings are only those who use their faculty of choice to follow धर्म *dharma*. Those who achieve or try to achieve a result through अधर्म *adharma* - improper means, are less than human beings.

Eating, sleeping, etc. are common to all living beings. Only विवेक *viveka* makes a difference between such beings. विवेक *viveka* means using one's बुद्धि - one's faculty of judgment to do what is right and proper, and that is धर्म *dharma*. धर्म *dharma* is ईश्वर धर्म *īśvara dharma* - the natural road leading to मोक्ष *mokṣa*, the natural order for human society, the path of life ordained by परमेश्वर *parameśvar* for the welfare and progress of all human beings. All people who follow धर्म *dharma*. which is the धर्म *dharma* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - the way of life ordained by परमेश्वर



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parameśvar, are only seeking परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, each in one's own way, whether one knows it or not.

If परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is really what people are seeking by living a life of धर्म *dharma*, then why people pray for various kinds of blessings in this creation by worshipping various देवताs *devatās*, instead of worshipping परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, seeking परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself and nothing less. That is because

कांक्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।

kāṁkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṁ siddhiṁ yajanta iha devatāḥ ।

क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ 4 - 12

kṣipraṁ hi mānuṣe loke siddhirbhavati karmajā ॥

कांक्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं *kāṁkṣantaḥ karmaṇāṁ siddhiṁ* - Longing for success in their actions, praying for the results of their actions -

यजन्ते इह देवताः *yajante iha devatāḥ* - इह *iha* - in this world of human beings, people worship different देवताs *devatās* like इन्द्र *indra*, अग्नि *agni*, वरुण *varuṇa* etc., instead of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as शिव *śiva* or विष्णु *viṣṇu*. This is because of their limited vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Ordinary people are only interested in दृष्ट फल *dṛṣṭa phala*- the fruits of actions which they can perceive. On the other hand, मोक्ष *mokṣa* is अदृष्ट फल *adṛṣṭa phala* - it is not something that can be perceived.

From the कर्म काण्ड *karma kāṇḍa* of the Vedas, people understand that if one worships such and such देवता *devatā*, one can get such and such results. They are interested in those results only. Therefore they go in for such worship.

If people worship अग्नि *agni*, परमेश्वर *parameśvar* becomes अग्नि *agni* to them, and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* blesses them as अग्नि *agni* only and nothing more. If people worship वरुण, परमेश्वर *parameśvar* blesses them as वरुण *varuṇa* only. Similarly with respect to the worship of every other देवता *devatā*. Unless people worship any देवता *devatā* as परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, as the Lord of everything, unless one seeks



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identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is not available to them as the Lord of everything.

Ordinary people do not seek identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. They only want a few little things from परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Most people worship देवताs *devatās* as देवताs *devatās* only because it is easier and quicker to get their desires fulfilled by such worship, as भगवान् *bhagavān* says here:

मानुषे लोके *mānuṣe loke* - in this world of human beings

हि *hi* - indeed, it is well known

कर्मजा सिद्धिः क्षिप्रं भवति *karmajā siddhiḥ kṣipraṁ bhavati* - the results of actions happen quickly by the worship of specific देवताs *devatās*. People want quick and immediate results. They are obtained more easily by the worship of specific देवताs *devatās*.

देवताs *devatās* are presiding deities of Divine Power, which means that the देवताs *devatās* derive their power from परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only. They are not independent of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. By worshipping the देवताs *devatās* one is really worshipping only the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. But each देवता *devatā* is limited in power. अग्नि *agni* cannot give you what only the वरुण *varuṇa* can give. Both cannot give what only इन्द्र *indra* can give, etc.

But the worship of देवताs *devatās* is also relatively easy. The Vedas prescribe the उपासन *upāsana* - the form of worship appropriate for each देवता *devatā*. These उपासनs *upāsanas* are limited in scope, in effort, and in the required discipline. Performing the appropriate उपासन *upāsana* is enough to gain the grace of the देवता *devatā*, and be blessed by the दृष्ट फल *dr̥ṣṭa phala* - perceived fruit of action obtainable from the देवता *devatā*.

On the other hand, to gain identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, to gain जीव-ब्रह्म ऐक्यं *jīva-brahma aikyaṁ*, one must gain total अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* must be totally free from राग *rāga*, द्वेष *dveṣa*, भय



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bhaya, क्रोध *krodha*, etc., which requires a lot of discipline on the part of the individual. And that is not enough. One must also be able to comprehend the existence of अदृष्ट फल *adr̥ṣṭa phala* - the imperceptible fruit of धर्म *dharma*, namely मोक्ष *mokṣa* - which one gains only from Upanishad knowledge, which requires even greater effort and personal discipline.

Both the above requirements arise only from विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi*. Because of lack of such विवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi*, people worship देवताs *devatās*, seeking the grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in bits and pieces, for the needs of their daily life. But so long as they follow the path of धर्म *dharma*, they are still on the right path, because the path of धर्म *dharma* is मम वर्त्म *mama vartma* - it is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - it is the path ordained by परमेश्वर *parameśvar* for the welfare and progress of the entire human society.

The “मम वर्त्म: *mama vartmaḥ* “परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* is the universal सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* for the human society as a whole. So long as people follow the परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* - the सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* in its entirety, every one will ultimately gain मोक्ष *mokṣa*. Sri Krishna talks more about the universal परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* in the next verse, which we will see next time



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श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

Chapter 4

Volume 3

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुण कर्म विभागशः ।

cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ ।

तस्य कर्तारं अपि मां विद्धि अकर्तारं अव्ययम् ॥

4 - 13

tasya kartāraṁ api mām viddhi akartāraṁ avyayam ॥

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्म फले स्पृहा ।

na mām karmāṇi limpanti na me karma phale sprhā ।

इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिः न स बध्यते ॥

4 - 14

iti mām yo'bhijānāti karmabhiḥ na sa badhyate ॥

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म, पूर्वं रपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।

evam jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma, pūrvai rapi mumukṣubhiḥ ।

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं, पूर्वं : पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥

4 - 15

kuru karmaivatasmāttvaṁ, pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṁ kṛtam ॥

As we may recall, Sri Krishna said earlier:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तान् तथैव भजाम्यहं ।

ye yathā mām prapadyante tān tathaiva bhajāmyaham ।

मम वर्त्म अनुवर्तन्ते, मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

mama vartma anuvartante, manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ ॥

In whatever manner, in whatever form, with whatever motive, to whatever extent people worship ME – the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, I bless them exactly in the same manner, and precisely to the same extent.

Further, people, whatever be their kind, whatever be their goals in life from time to time, in whatever way they worship me, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, to achieve their goals, all of them, so long as they follow the path of धर्म *dharma* - the path of duty, propriety and gratitude, they are really living a life of मम वर्त्म *mama vartma* - meaning मम



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धर्म *mama dharma* - my धर्म *dharma* - the परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* - the way of life ordained by ME the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, for the welfare and progress of the entire human society, which means, the परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* in its entirety, is assured of progress towards श्रेयस् *śreyas* - the परम पुरुषार्थ *parama puruṣārtha* - the Highest Goal of Life - total fulfillment in life, naturally.

Now, what is this मम वर्त्म *mama vartma* - the परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* - the natural order of life that भगवान् *bhagavān* refers to here? That मम वर्त्म *mama vartma* - the परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* is the universal वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma*, the वर्णाश्रम धर्म *varṇāśrama dharma*, the सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* - in the integrated social organization and community life of the ancient Vedic society. Referring to this वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं, गुण कर्म विभागशः ।

cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam, guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ ।

तस्य कर्तारं अपि मां, विद्धि अकर्तारं अव्ययम् ॥ 4 - 13

tasya kartāraṁ api mām, viddhi akartāraṁ avyayam ॥

In this verse, Sri Krishna refers to the four fold कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāga* - natural occupational divisions, in the integrated community life of the ancient Vedic society, which is popularly known in the present day world as the four major caste divisions in the Hindu Society.

References to caste divisions in the Vedas and the Upanishads are widely misunderstood, and often, very effectively exploited by various groups and organizations for their own ends. Consequently, the existence of caste divisions in Hindu Society is often looked upon either defensively or resentfully, even by the well-meaning intelligentsia of the modern Hindu Society.

There is absolutely no reason, either to be defensive, or to be resentful about the concept of वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma* - caste divisions in the organization of community life in human society, because, it is both natural and universally valid for all times, if only it is properly understood and properly practiced in its entirety, totally in accordance with धर्म *dharma*.

Having said that, it must be pointed out clearly and emphatically, that references to वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma* - caste divisions in our Vedas and the Upanishads, do not, in any



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way, justify or condone the improprieties, injustices, malpractices and sectarian loyalties which have crept widely and deeply into all levels of our social fabric under the name of caste divisions and sub-caste divisions.

Whatever spiritual and social degradations and their consequences in worldly life that we see in our society today, arise directly from ignorance and indifference to our scriptures and their teachings, such ignorance and indifference being cultivated, knowingly or unknowingly by generations of Hindu population in spite of the many isolated appearances of महात्माs *mahātmās*, ईश्वर भक्तs *īśvar bhaktas*, distinguished आचार्यs *ācāryas*, गुरुs *gurus* and teachers from time to time.

Why is this so? What is it that one can do - one must do, to arrest the continuing degradations in our society as a whole? This question should be a matter for serious thought for every educated Hindu who cares.

In any case, in terms of भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*, it is important for us to understand and appreciate the true nature and significance of वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma* in the light of Upanishadic knowledge, to educate ourselves spiritually, and at the same time to dedicate, and rededicate ourselves to the service of our society, and indeed the entire humanity, including oneself. Let us now see briefly what भगवान् *bhagavān* says here:

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुण कर्म विभागशः ।

cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ ।

चातुर्वर्ण्यं *cāturvarṇyam* - There are four वर्णs *varṇas* -four broad groups of people in human society. These groups are not man-made. They are, Sri Krishna says,

मया सृष्टं *mayā sṛṣṭam* - created by ME, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - which means the existence of these four वर्णs *varṇas* is natural to human society.

As we all know, in the ancient Vedic society, and so it is today, at least by name in the Hindu society, these four वर्णs *varṇas* go by the names ब्राह्मणाs *brāhmaṇās*, क्षत्रियs *kṣatriyas*, वैश्यs *vaiśyas* and शूद्रs *śūdras*. What is the basis for the existence of these four वर्णs *varṇas* in human society? भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

गुण कर्म विभागशः *guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ* - Each वर्ण *varṇa* - each group is a विभाग *vibhāga* (भाग *bhāga* means division, विभाग *vibhāga* means a natural division, not man made division). Each वर्ण *varṇa* is a natural division. What kind of division?



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There are two factors governing this natural division. They are गुण विभाग *guṇa vibhāg* and कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāg*.

गुण विभाग *guṇa vibhāg* is division based on one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇas* - natural mental disposition, quality of one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, and कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāg* is the division based on one's duty in the society. In Vedic society, these were duties carried out by each family from generation to generation, by choice, but nobody is bound to any कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāg*.

One is born in a particular family by virtue of one's गुण विभाग *guṇa vibhāga*, स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* at the time of birth. After birth, the स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* of the person continues to change and the person naturally takes up such duties in the society to which one is qualified by virtue of one's गुण *guṇas* from time to time. Whatever be the person's occupation from time to time, the entire human society functionally operates under the four वर्ण *varṇas*, whether or not these वर्ण *varṇas* are called by any particular name, in any particular society.

Sri Krishna talks about गुण विभाग *guṇa vibhāg* and कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāg* in detail in chapters 14 and 18 respectively, which we will see later. Let us now consider the four वर्ण *varṇas* from the point of view of गुण विभाग *guṇa vibhāga* - one's mental disposition, governed by one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa*. The स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* of a person is a mixture of सत्व गुण *satva guṇa*, रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* and तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*.

- ✓ सत्व गुण *satva guṇa* - accounts for a person's natural ability to think properly, discriminate, judge and acquire knowledge of all kinds, both objective knowledge and spiritual knowledge.
- ✓ रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* - accounts for a person's ability to act with vigor, leadership, heroism and generosity.
- ✓ तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* - accounts for a person's ability to remain inert, ignorant and insensitive.

Every person has naturally all these three गुण *guṇas* to different extents. The precise texture of one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* changes continuously, due to the ever-changing गुण-गुण *guṇa-guṇa* interactions. Depending on the relative predominance



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of each one of these three गुणs *guṇas* in one's mental make-up, four broad groups of people are possible in human society.

In the first group are people in whom सत्य गुण *satva guṇa* is predominant and it is strongly complemented by रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*; तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* in them is relatively weak and powerless. The people who have this combination of गुणs *guṇas* are said to have ब्राह्मण गुण *brāhmaṇa guṇa*.

In the second group are people in whom रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* is predominant and it is strongly complemented by सत्य गुण *satva guṇa*. Again, तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa* in them is relatively weak and powerless. The people who have this combination of गुणs *guṇas* are said to have क्षत्रिय गुण *kṣatriya guṇa*.

In the third group are people in whom, again रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa* is predominant, but it is strongly complemented by तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*, सत्य गुण *satva guṇa* in them is relatively weak and powerless. The people who have this combination of गुणs *guṇas* are said to have वैश्य गुण *vaiśya guṇa*.

In the fourth group are people in whom तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*, is predominant and it is strongly complemented by रजस् गुण *rajas guṇa*. Again सत्य गुण *satva guṇa* in them is relatively weak and powerless. The people who have this combination of गुणs *guṇas* are said to have शूद्र गुण *śūdra guṇa*.

Since सत्य गुण *satva guṇa* and तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*, are mutually opposed to each other, there cannot be a group of people in whom सत्य गुण *satva guṇa* and तमस् गुण *tamas guṇa*, complement each other. Thus there are, and there can only be, four groups of people - four वर्ण गुणs *varṇa guṇas*, based on combinations of सत्य *satva*, रजस् *rajas* and तमस् गुणs *tamas guṇa*, and within each group, there can be, and there are, infinite shades and variations.

Let us now consider the four वर्णs *varṇas* from the point of view of कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāga* - natural division of duties in the Vedic society. Corresponding to each गुण



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विभाग *guṇa vibhāga*, there is also a कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāga*, natural division of duties in the society.

The ब्राह्मण गुण *brāhmaṇa guṇa* is particularly needed and appropriate for कर्म *karmas* which demand strict mental and physical discipline, total commitment to सत्यं *satyaṁ* and धर्म *dharma* in daily life, together with the diligent pursuit of both objective knowledge and ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* knowledge, and serving society in teaching and practice of such knowledge in the society. Those who are fit for such and related कर्म *karmas*, and who carry on such duties properly and effectively in the society, are called ब्राह्मणाः *brāhmaṇās*.

The क्षत्रिय गुण *kṣatriya guṇa* is particularly needed and appropriate for कर्म *karmas* which demand heroism, vigor, firmness, military prowess, leadership in public life, maintenance of law and order, and protection of the weak and the disadvantaged in the society. Those people who are fit for such and related कर्म *karmas* and who carry on such duties properly and effectively in the society are called क्षत्रियः *kṣatriyas*.

The वैश्य गुण *vaiśya guṇa* is particularly needed and appropriate for producing wealth and material prosperity for the society through agriculture, industry, trade and commerce. Those people who are fit for such and related कर्म *karmas*, and who carry on such duties properly and effectively in the society are called वैश्यः *vaiśyas*.

The शूद्र गुण *śūdra guṇa* is particularly needed and appropriate for कर्म *karmas* demanding physical labor and also for कर्म *karmas* involved in all kinds of support services in every occupational group. Those people who are fit for such and related कर्म *karmas*, and who carry on such duties properly and effectively in the society are called शूद्रः *śūdras*.

When the गुण विभाग *guṇa vibhāga* among people is properly aligned with the कर्म विभाग *karma vibhāga* in the society, धर्म *dharma* prevails in the society and the society as a whole prospers. When this alignment breaks, the society as a whole also disintegrates, giving rise to all kinds of अधर्म *adharma* - social improprieties and degradations.



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We must understand that with respect to कर्म *karma* - duties in the society, there is nothing superior or inferior. All duties, the ब्राह्मण कर्म *brāhmaṇa karma*, the क्षत्रिय कर्म *kṣatriya karma*, the वैश्य कर्म *vaiśya karma* and the शूद्र कर्म *śūdra karma* - all are equally important for the harmony, progress and the welfare of the society as a whole. Every कर्म *karma* well done in accordance with धर्म *dharma* is a manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

Popular notions on the perceived superiority or inferiority with respect to the above duties in the society arise only from ignorance, arrogance, and a false sense of exclusiveness. In every occupational group there are always people having predominantly ब्राह्मण गुण *brāhmaṇa guṇa*, क्षत्रिय गुण *kṣatriya guṇa*, वैश्य गुण *vaiśya guṇa* or शूद्र गुण *śūdra guṇa*. That being the case, there is never any exclusiveness, either with respect to गुण *guṇa* or कर्म *karma*.

Whatever be one's mental make-up from time to time, and whatever be one's choice of duties in the society, every person is a mixture of ब्राह्मण गुण *brāhmaṇa guṇa*, क्षत्रिय गुण *kṣatriya guṇa*, वैश्य गुण *vaiśya guṇa* and शूद्र गुण *śūdra guṇa*, each combination of गुण *guṇas* manifesting itself in different ways at different times, in every one of one's actions in daily life. By following धर्म *dharma* in everyday life, every one can progress towards greater and greater proportion of सत्त्व गुण *satva guṇa* in one's mental make-up, and ultimately transcend all the गुण *guṇas*, transcend माया *māyā*, and gain श्रेयस् *śreyas*, and BE ONESELF, the all-inclusive universal self that one really is.

That is the वर्ण धर्म *varṇa dharma* - the मम धर्म *mama dharma* - the परमेश्वर धर्म *parameśvar dharma* - the सनातन धर्म *sanātana dharma* that Sri Krishna talks about in the first line of the verse, namely

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुण कर्म विभागशः ।
cāturvarṇya mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa karma vibhāgaśaḥ ।

In the next line भगवान् *bhagvān* says:



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तस्य कर्तारं मां विद्धि *tasya kartāraṁ mām viddhi* - Please understand that I, being परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, I am the कर्ता *karta* - I am the Doer, I am the creator of this चातुर्वर्ण्यं *cāturvarṇyaṁ*, these four वर्णसु *varṇas* - these four groups of people in human society. At the same time,

तस्य अकर्तारं अपि मां विद्धि *tasya akatāraṁ api mām viddhi* - I am also अकर्ता *akarta* - I am also NOT the Doer, NOT the creator of this चातुर्वर्ण्यं *cāturvarṇyaṁ* - these four वर्णसु *varṇas* in the human society, and

मां अव्ययं विद्धि *mām avyayam viddhi* - you must understand that I, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* remain actionless, changeless.

Now, what does that mean? How can भगवान् *bhagavān* say that "I am the कर्ता *karta* as well as the अकर्ता *akarta* for these four वर्णसु *varṇas* in human society". We must understand भगवान्'s *bhagvān's* statement here properly.

The existence of the four वर्णसु *varṇas* in human society is not the result of any कर्म *karma* done by भगवान् *bhagavān*. It is not the कर्म फल *karma phala* of any कर्म *karma* done by भगवान् *bhagavān*. भगवान् *bhagavān* ever remains कर्म *karma*-free.

Then how did the four वर्णसु *varṇas* come into existence?

The four वर्णसु *varṇas* arise directly from the very nature of माया *māyā* - the inherent, infinite power of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which माया *māyā* is constituted of the three गुणसु *guṇas* - सत्त्व *satva*, रजस् *rajas* and तमस् *tamas* गुणसु *guṇas*. These three गुणसु *guṇas* and their mutual interactions manifest themselves perceptibly as the four वर्णसु *varṇas* in human society. Thus the immediate कर्ता *kartā* for the four वर्णसु *varṇas* is the माया *māyā* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself. परमेश्वर *parameśvar* ever remains अकर्ता *akartā*.

But then, माया *māyā* has no existence independent of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, while परमेश्वर *parameśvar* exists independent of माया *māyā*, and that makes परमेश्वर *parameśvar* the ultimate source of all that exists in this creation - ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*.



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Therefore when भगवान् *bhagavān* says "चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं *cāturvarṇya mayā sṛṣṭam*" these four वर्णसु *varṇas* are created by me, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, what is pointed out here is a लक्षण *lakṣaṇa* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which means the natural existence of the four वर्णसु *varṇas* in the human society is a ईश्वर विभूति *īśvara vabhūti* - is a perceptible glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - as indeed, this entire creation is. This glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is to be realized and enjoyed.

That is how ईश्वर *īśvara* is both कर्ता *kartā* as well as अकर्ता *akartā* for the four वर्णसु *varṇas* in the human society.

भगवान् *bhagvān* tells Arjuna - Arjuna, if my statement that I am both the कर्ता as well as the अकर्ता *akartā* for the four वर्णसु *varṇas* in human society appears contradictory to you, this apparent contradiction will vanish naturally when you become mature enough to recognize and gain total identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* within yourself. Until that time, all that you have to understand is the true nature of कर्मसु *karmas* with reference to Myself – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति, न मे कर्म फले स्पृहा ।

na mām karmāṇi limpanti, na me karma phale sprhā ।

इति मां योऽभिज्ञानाति, कर्मभिः न स बध्यते ॥

4 - 14

iti mām yo'bhijñānāti, karmabhiḥ na sa badhyate ॥

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति *na mām karmāṇi limpanti* - The सृष्टि कर्मसु *sṛṣṭi karmas* - the कर्मसु *karmas* in this creation, do not touch me at all. They do not taint Me in any way, because there is no notion of Doership in Me.

न मे कर्म फले स्पृहा *na me karma phale sprhā* - consequently, there is no desire in Me for the fruits of सृष्टि कर्मसु *sṛṣṭi karmas*.

I am the Law of all Laws, governing all action in this creation. There is no कर्म *karma* involved on my part. Just as ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - the परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is अनादि *anādi*, beginningless, the माया *māyā* associated with ब्रह्मन् *brahman* is also अनादि *anādi*, beginningless. All जीवसु *jīvas* arise from माया *māyā*. Therefore the जीवसु *jīvas* are also अनादि *anādi* - beginningless. Every जीव *jīva* is endowed with a free will.



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Whatever कर्म *karma* a जीव *jīva* does, for that कर्म *karma*, a कर्म फल *karma phala*, a fruit of action occurs automatically. There is no action, or any partiality involved on my part as परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* .

Therefore one's गुण *guṇa* is the result of one's own कर्म *karma*. In this गुण विभाग *guṇa vabhāg* – the nature of one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇa* at birth, and its continuing changes, because of the succession of one's कर्मस *karmas* and कर्म फलस *karma phalas*, I remain untouched either by कर्मस *karmas* or the कर्म फलस *karma phalas*, so says Sri Krishna, as परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*.

Therefore, we cannot, and we need not blame परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* for our गुणस *guṇas* at any time. They are entirely our own making. We can, and we must, upgrade our गुणस *guṇas* by our own efforts, through कर्म योग *karma yoga*.

Now, if परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* can say " Even though I am the कर्ता *kartā* of every happening in this creation, I am untouched by कर्म *karma* and कर्म फल *karma phala* which take place in this creation", then a जीव *jīva* also can say "even though I am the कर्ता *kartā* of all my कर्मस *karmas*, and the भोक्ता *bhokta* - the enjoyer of all my कर्म फलस *karma phalas*, I am also untouched by any of them", if only the जीव *jīva* realizes one's identity with परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* in oneself, if only the जीव-ईश्वर ऐक्यं *jīva-īśvara aikyaṁ* is realized by the जीव *jīva* – the individual person. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

इति मां यः अभिजानाति *iti mām yaḥ abhijānāti* - The one who realizes identity with my true nature, the one who realizes जीव ईश्वर ऐक्यं *jīva īśvara aikyaṁ*
सः कर्मभिः न बध्यते *saḥ karmabhi na badhyate* – that person is not bound by actions. That person is as free as Myself – the परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*.

Thus, what Sri Krishna can say about Himself, any जीव *jīva* - any person, can also say if only the जीव *jīva* realizes identity with परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* in oneself.

That is exactly what Sri Krishna said earlier.



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जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यं एवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tatvataḥ ।

त्यत्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म, नैति मां एति सोऽर्जुन ॥

4 - 9

tyattvā dehaṁ punarjanma, naiti māṁ eti so'rjuna ॥

which we saw last time. Thus भगवान् *bhagavān* tells Arjuna:

Arjuna, this is not something new that I am telling you now. This fact has been known for a long, long time. Even before your present context today, people performed कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga*, and then subsequently gained आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, at which time they also recognized, each for oneself, what I am telling you now, namely,

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्म फले स्पृहा *na māṁ karmāṇi limpanti na me karma phale spr̥hā* - actions do not touch me, nor do I have any thirst for कर्म फल *karma phala*. My part is only to be a participant in this creation as ordained by परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - enjoying life in this world, totally dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

Therefore, O! Arjuna:

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैः अपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।

evam jñātvā kṛtaṁ karma pūrvaiḥ api mumukṣubhiḥ ।

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात् त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥

4 - 15

kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam pūrvaiḥ pūrvatarāṁ kṛtam ॥

एवं ज्ञात्वा *evam jñātvā* - realizing the true nature of one's own self in this manner, namely, that on gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* one realizes

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति, न मे कर्म फले स्पृहा - इति -

na māṁ karmāṇi limpanti, na me karma phale spr̥hā - iti-

कृतं कर्म पूर्वैः अपि मुमुक्षुभिः *kṛtaṁ karma pūrvaiḥ api mumukṣubhiḥ* - all actions

to be done were done by the freedom seekers - मुमुक्षुभिः *mumukṣubhiḥ* - by the

people committed to the pursuit of मोक्ष *mokṣa*, even in olden times. Having correctly



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understood the nature of कर्म *karma*, as well as the Nature of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*, people have been following कर्म योग *karma yoga* from ancient times, as the means for gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas*, मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

तस्मात् *tasmāt* - therefore, you can also do likewise, namely

कुरु कर्म त्वं, एव *kuru karma tvam, eva* - Do perform कर्म *karma*, do not try to run away from कर्म *karma*. You must perform whatever कर्म *karma* has come to you as your duty

पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतं *pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram kṛtam* - just as the Freedom seekers have been doing from ancient times

कर्म योग *karma yoga* is a time tested and proven means for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - self-knowledge - Self-realization. As it was pointed out earlier, कर्म योग *karma yoga* is for अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - purification of your mind and बुद्धि before gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*. And after gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*, कर्म योग *karma yoga*, is for the welfare of the world, in harmony with all existence. Therefore, कुरु कर्म *kuru karma* - perform कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga* at all times.

The Raja Rishis who ruled the kingdom before you, and the Freedom seekers throughout the ages have been doing कर्तव्यं कर्म *kartavyam karma* - all actions to be done, as कर्म योग *karma yoga*. Therefore, the कर्म योग *karma yoga* that I have been teaching you today, is not anything new. You are a well-born and a well-brought-up क्षत्रिय *kṣatriya*, both by गुण *guṇa* and कर्म *karma*, and you seek श्रेयस् *śreyas* by virtue of your own maturity. कर्म योग *karma yoga* is precisely for you.

Therefore, कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात् त्वं *kuru karmaiva tasmāt tvam* - please do perform कर्म *karma* as कर्म योग *karma yoga* and that will ultimately take you to the श्रेयस् *śreyas* - the परम पुरुषार्थ *parama puruṣārtha*, namely the मोक्ष *mokṣa* that you seek. So saying Sri Krishna returns back to the main theme of his teaching, namely कर्म योग *karma yoga*.

Having uplifted Arjuna to a higher plane of listening mood, and recognizing that Arjuna is still having difficulty in understanding the connection between कर्म *karma* and आत्म



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ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, Sri Krishna now proceeds to explain the true nature of कर्म *karma*, any कर्म *karma* whatsoever, as it relates to ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ* for a Freedom seeker. What Sri Krishna says about कर्म *karma* we will see next time.



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श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

caturtho 'dhyāyaḥ - jñāna karma sanyāsa yogaḥ

Chapter 4

Volume 4

किं कर्म किं अकर्मति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।

kiṁ karma kiṁ akarmeta kavayo'pyatra mohitāḥ ।

तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यत् ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसे अशुभात् ॥ 4 - 16

tatte karma pravakṣyāmi yat jñātvā mokṣyase aśubhāt ॥

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

karmaṇo hyapi boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ 4 - 17

akarmaṇaśca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ ॥

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ 4 - 18

sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt ॥

In today's verses, Sri Krishna talks about कर्म karma, its relationship with परमेश्वर parameśvar, and what that relationship has got to do with one gaining श्रेयस् śreyas - the परम-पुरुषार्थ parama-puruṣārtha - The Supreme Goal of life - namely मोक्ष mokṣa - Total Fulfillment in life.

Sri Krishna says

किं कर्म किं अकर्मति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।

kiṁ karma kiṁ akarmeti kavayo'pyatra mohitāḥ ।

तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यत् ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसे अशुभात् ॥ 4 - 16

tatte karma pravakṣyāmi yat jñātvā mokṣyase aśubhāt ॥

किं कर्म *kiṁ karma* - What is कर्म karma? What is action?



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किं स्वरूपं कर्म *kiṁ svarūpaṁ karma* - What is the true nature of action? What is the तत्त्व *tatva* or essence of action? Similarly,

किं अकर्म *kiṁ akarma* - What is अकर्म *akarma*? What is it which is not action, or what is it which is inaction? What is the तत्त्व *tatva* - the essence of the inaction?

इति *iti* - considering such questions

अत्र *atra* - in this matter, in the matter of कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma*, action and inaction

कवयः अपि मोहिताः *kavayaḥ api mohitāḥ* - even the कविस *kavis*, even those who have dexterity with words, even those who have skills to handle words effectively to bring out their full meaning, even such people are

मोहिताः *mohitāḥ* - confused.

Even well-read people, even those who have superior ability to understand words and their meanings, even those who have the ability to handle words effectively to convey the message, even they get confused as to what to say about कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma* - Action and Inaction in daily life, because for any human being, the entire life is nothing but a bundle of actions.

तत् ते प्रवक्ष्यामि *tat te pravakṣyāmi* - Therefore, I will teach you what कर्म *karma* really means

वक्ष्यामि *vakṣyāmi* means "I will tell you"

प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakṣyāmi* means "I will make it clear to you beyond doubt", which means I will teach you, I will teach you what exactly कर्म *karma* is.

यत् ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसे अशुभात् *yat jñātvā mokṣyase aśubhāt*

यत् ज्ञात्वा *yat jñātvā* - knowing which, realizing which

मोक्ष्यसे अशुभात् *mokṣyase aśubhāt* - you shall be liberated from

अशुभ *aśubh* - everything that is not conducive to happiness

If only you realize the true nature of कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma* - Action and Inaction, that realization itself will release you from every kind of bondage, sorrow and distress. Therefore, I will teach you what exactly कर्म *karma* is, and also what अकर्म *akarma* is.

The realization of knowledge about कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma* - Action and Inaction, is extremely important for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*, because that realization itself



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brings you मोक्ष *mokṣa*. You do not have to do anything else for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*. But you must understand what realization means.

Here Sri Krishna is telling something very significant. The popular notion is any activity involving body, mind and/or intellect is कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma* is the opposite of कर्म *karma*, which means, for example, sitting quietly, doing nothing is अकर्म *akarma*. Such being the case, one might think "What is there for one to know about कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma*, their nature is obvious".

भगवान् *bhagavān* says here "No, it is not obvious. There is something for you to think about it, because

कर्मणोऽपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

karmaṇohyapi boddhavyaṁ boddhavyaṁ ca vikarmaṇaḥ il

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥

4 - 17

akarmaṇaśca boddhavyaṁ gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ ॥

हि *hi* - Indeed, in this matter about कर्म *karma*

बोद्धव्यं *boddhavyaṁ* - There is something for you to know

There is indeed something for everyone to realize through all the three-fold means of realization namely श्रवणं *śravaṇaṁ*, मननं *mananaṁ* and निदिध्यासनं *nididyāsaṇaṁ*.

श्रवणं *śravaṇaṁ* is listening and understanding the word of the Upanishads

मननं *mananaṁ* is reflecting on the knowledge communicated by the Upanishads by oneself, through repeated questioning of one's own understanding of the words of the Upanishads, keeping the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* totally committed to knowledge and service at the highest possible level, and thereby clearing all of one's doubts by oneself, and finally

निदिध्यासनं *nididyāsaṇaṁ* is absorbing that Upanishad knowledge in its entirety, ultimately becoming the very embodiment of that knowledge in one's own daily life through such Realization.

कर्मणः बोद्धव्यं विकर्मणः बोद्धव्यं, अकर्मणः च बोद्धव्यं *karmaṇaḥ boddhavyaṁ vikarmaṇaḥ boddhavyaṁ, akarmaṇaḥ ca boddhavyaṁ* - one must know what



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is कर्म *karma* - proper action what is विकर्म *vikarma* - improper action and what is अकर्म *akarma* - inaction.

In order to understand beyond doubt what is कर्म *karma*, what is proper action, one must also understand what are विकर्म *vikarma* and अकर्म *akarma* - improper action and inaction, because

गहना कर्मणो गतिः *gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ* - the ways of कर्म *karma* are inscrutable, mysterious, not available for comprehension. Which action will bring about what results and when, one can never know. That is the nature of action.

After such an elaborate introduction, Sri Krishna tells Arjuna what कर्म *karma* is, in a simple looking and extraordinary way in the next verse, which is one of the famous verses in भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् ॥ 4 - 18

sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna karmakṛt ॥

All the words here are important. Let us first see the word meaning of this verse.

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet*

कर्मणि *karmaṇi* - In कर्म *karma* - in action

अकर्म यः पश्येत् *akarma yaḥ paśyet* - the one who sees No Action where there is action, and at the same time

अकर्मणि च कर्म यः (पश्येत्) *akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ (paśyet)* - the one who sees

कर्म *karma* in अकर्म *akarma* - the one who sees action where there is no action

सः बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु *saḥ buddhimān manuṣyeṣu* - that person is wise among people

सः युक्तः *saḥ yuktaḥ* - that person has mastered the art of living a life of Total Fulfillment

सः कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् *saḥ kṛtsna karmakṛt* - that person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life



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The one who sees No action where there is action, and at the same time sees action where there is no action, that person is wise among people. That person has mastered the art of living a life of total fulfillment and that person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life. All this achievement is not by doing anything but simply by seeing, which means, realizing what is already there, namely, अकर्म *akarma* in कर्म *karma* and कर्म *karma* in अकर्म *akarma* - No Action in Action and Action in No Action. That is the word meaning of the verse.

Ordinarily, one sees action where there is action and no action where there is no action. That is not wisdom, according to this verse. On the other hand, how can one be wise by seeing no action where there is action and also by seeing action where there is no action? That seems unnatural.

Therefore the word meaning of this verse makes no sense, which means, we must reflect on the words again and try to understand this verse in Upanishadic terms, in terms of लक्ष्यार्थ *lakṣyārtha* - the meaning indicated by the words as Pointers. Therefore, let us look at the words again.

In the previous verse, Sri Krishna talked about कर्म *karma*, विकर्म *vikarma* and अकर्म *akarma*. In this verse Sri Krishna talks only about कर्म *karma* and अकर्म *akarma*. What happened to विकर्म *vikarma* then?

कर्म *karma* means action. Whether the action is धर्म-कर्म *dharma-karma* - proper action or विकर्म *vikarma* - improper action, it is still कर्म *karma*, it is still action, which means that the word कर्म *karma* as an indicator or pointer, includes all कर्म's *karmas*, including विकर्म *vikarma*. That explains how the word विकर्म *vikarma* got absorbed in the indicator word कर्म *karma*. That also means that विकर्म *vikarma* ceases to exist on realization of what कर्म *karma* is.

Now, let us reflect on the word अकर्म *akarma*. अकर्म *akarma* means "No action" or Inaction. Inaction means what? In our daily business of life, there are generally two kinds of actions, namely प्रवृत्ति कर्म *pravṛtti karma* and निवृत्ति कर्म *nivṛtti karma*.

प्रवृत्ति कर्म *pravṛtti karma* is explicit action, which means doing something. निवृत्ति कर्म *nivṛtti karma* is deliberate withdrawal from action, which means not doing something, which is commonly looked upon as अकर्म *akarma* or inaction. On the other



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hand, whether the action is a प्रवृत्ति *pravṛtti* or निवृत्ति *nivṛtti*, it is still a कर्म *karma*, it is still an action.

This must be understood. Suppose I say "I did this कर्म *karma*". There is of course an action involved, I being the agent of the action. Every कर्म *karma* is centered on a कर्ता *kartā* - a Doer as an agent for the action. A कर्म *karma* is a कर्म *karma* only because there is a कर्ता *kartā*, there is a Doer for the action.

Suppose I say " I did not do this कर्म *karma* " even then an action is involved. This time, I as the कर्ता *kartā*, the Doer, have been engaged in a निवृत्ति कर्म *nivṛtti karma* - an action which involves withdrawal from some activity. Thus, whether I do something or I do not do something, so long as I feel that I am the कर्ता *kartā*, I am doing a कर्म *karma*, whether that कर्म *karma* is doing something or doing nothing. Therefore, anything that has a कर्ता *kartā* is a कर्म *karma*.

Consequently, for a person who entertains the notion that "I am the कर्ता *kartā* - I am the doer", for that person, कर्म *karma* is a कर्म *karma*, विकर्म *vikarma* is also a कर्म *karma*, and अकर्म *akarma* is also a कर्म *karma*, which means a कर्ता *kartā* has nothing but कर्म *karma*. A कर्ता *kartā* is inseparable from कर्म *karma* at all times. For a कर्ता *kartā*, there is no अकर्म *akarma* independent of कर्म *karma*. For a कर्ता *kartā*, there is no escape from कर्म *karma* at any time. That being the case, how does a wise man look upon कर्म *karma* in every day life? भगवान् *bhagvān* says

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet* - सः बुद्धिमान् *saḥ buddhimān* - the one who is wise, sees अकर्म *akarma* in कर्म *karma* - No action in action, which means, for a person who is wise, there is an अकर्म *akarma* which is independent of कर्म *karma*. If that is so, what is that अकर्म *akarma*?

Whether a person is wise or not, the entire life of a person is only a bundle of कर्म *karma*. Such being the case, when is it that a कर्म *karma* is in fact an अकर्म *akarma*? When is it that an action is only an appearance of action, and it is, in fact, no action at all?



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The answer to this question arises from the very nature of कर्म *karma* itself. As pointed out already, a कर्म *karma* is a कर्म *karma* only because there is a कर्ता *kartā*, there is a Doer for the action. Consequently, anything that has a कर्ता is a कर्म *karma*. Likewise, then, anything that has an अकर्ता *akartā* is an अकर्म *akarma*. अकर्ता *akartā* means non-existence of doership.

What is it that has अकर्ता *akartā* - non-doership? Only That whose very nature is non-doership has अकर्ता *akartā*, and that is indeed आत्मा-ब्रह्मन्-परमेश्वर *ātmā-brahman-parameśvar*.

As Sri Krishna said earlier मां विद्धि अकर्तारं अव्ययं *mām viddhi akartāraṁ avyayaṁ* (4-13). Please understand ME, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as अकर्ता *akartā* - Non-Doer, अव्ययं *avyayaṁ* - Actionlessness Itself". परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is अकर्ता *akartā* because अहंकार अभावात् *ahaṅkārahāvāt* - there is no अहंकार *ahaṅkārahāvāt* in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. There is no notion of Doership in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, because, everything in this universe is already in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and there is nothing independent of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* .

Everything in this universe is only a manifestation of the माया *māyā* of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. There is no doing involved on the part of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* . We may recall Sri Krishna's words earlier (2-25). I am अविकार्योऽयं उच्यते *avikāryo'yaṁ ucyate* - I am अविकार्य *avikārya* - I am not an object available for any change - I am free from all forms of action".

From this it is clear, अकर्म *akarma* - Absence of doership is the very nature of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the nature of आत्मा *ātmā*. Therefore, कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyēt* means the one who sees in every action the action-free आत्मा *ātmā*, the unchanging, unchangeable, ever existing ब्रह्मन् *brahman* with all its creative power – the माया *māyā*, which means the one who sees परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in all its infinite glory in every action.



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Such a person will also see naturally अकर्मणि च कर्म यः *akarmani ca karma yah* - every action in परमेश्वर *parameshvar* - as the very creative power of परमेश्वर *parameshvar*, as the माया *mayā* of परमेश्वर *parameshvar*, as the very glory of परमेश्वर *parameshvar* as ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. Such is indeed the true nature of कर्म *karma*, and the very nature of परमेश्वर *parameshvar*. Once that is understood, the meaning of the verse becomes clear.

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत्, अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

karmani akarma yah paśyet, akarmani ca karma yah ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु, स युक्तः कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् ॥ 4 – 18

sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu, sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna karmakṛt ॥

The one who sees परमेश्वर *parameshvar* in every action and at the same time sees every action in परमेश्वर *parameshvar* as the very Glory of परमेश्वर *parameshvar*, that person is wise among people. That person has mastered the art of living a life of total fulfillment, and that person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life, which means that person is a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. Such is the true nature of कर्म *karma*. Such is the connection between कर्म *karma* and परमेश्वर *parameshvar*. And such is the goal of life, gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas*.

To realize परमेश्वर *parameshvar* in every कर्म *karma*, and to realize every कर्म *karma* as the very Glory of परमेश्वर *parameshvar*, is indeed gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas* - gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* - gaining Total Fulfillment in life, and the means for gaining such श्रेयस् *śreyas* is कर्म योग *karma yoga* and ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga*. Thus Sri Krishna projects another vision of कर्म योग *karma yoga* as the means for gaining total fulfillment in life. Let us listen to the words of Sri Krishna again.

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत्, अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

karmani akarma yah paśyet akarmani ca karma yah ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् ॥ 4 - 18

sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna karmakṛt ॥



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The one who sees परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in every कर्म *karma* and at the same time sees every कर्म *karma* in परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as the very Glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, that person is

बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु *buddhimān manuṣyeṣu* - a wise person among people

युक्तः *yuktaḥ* - that person has learnt the art of living a life of total fulfillment and

कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् *kṛtsna karmakṛt* - that person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life

In other words, that person is a unique person, a full person, a happy person. That person is a पूर्ण-पुरुष *pūrṇa-puruṣa* - an embodiment of Absolute Happiness, so says Sri Krishna. This is an extraordinary statement. This is Vedanta in its entirety. This is the substance of the entire Vedantic education. Therefore, what is pointed out by भगवान् *bhagavān* in the above verse must be fully understood and assimilated.

There are three pointer words used in the second line of the above verse to indicate the state of being of that unique person, namely बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān*, युक्तः *yuktaḥ* and कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् *kṛtsna karmakṛt*.

बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān* means one who has properly and fully utilized one's faculty of discrimination and judgment for the only purpose for which human beings are endowed with such faculty.

युक्तः *yuktaḥ* means one who has used that faculty to uplift oneself from the human to the Divine State of Being, and

कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् *kṛtsna karmakṛt* means one who has fulfilled oneself, totally

These three attributes are not for three different persons. They are just three different visions of the same person, and the extraordinary state of being of that person. Vedanta calls that person a योगी *yogī*, and the state of being of that person, the योग *yoga*.

In order to uplift oneself to the state of योग *yoga* and continue to be a योगी *yogī* throughout one's remaining lifetime, two extraordinary conditions must be satisfied simultaneously so that one may not mistake oneself to be a योगी *yogī* when one is really not. Only when these two conditions are satisfied simultaneously, can one truly realize the state of योग *yoga*, not otherwise. What are those two conditions? In the words of Sri Krishna



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कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyeta akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ* - The one who sees परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in every कर्म *karma*, and at the same time sees every कर्म *karma* in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, that person alone is a योगी *yogī*. कर्म *karmas* are many and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is one, and कर्म *karmas* and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* together constitute one inseparable, indivisible total reality. It is that knowledge - knowledge of total reality, पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* that Sri Krishna points out here.

सत्यं *satyaṁ* and मिथ्या *mithyā* together, ब्रह्मन् *brahman* and माया *māyā* together, the changeless परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and this entire creation with its ever-changing appearances together constitute the one inseparable, indivisible, absolute reality. That is the totality of knowledge - पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ*. It is that पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* that is pointed out repeatedly in our Upanishads through the words पूर्णं अदःपूर्णं इदं *pūrṇaṁ adaḥ pūrṇaṁ idaṁ*, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ* and प्रतिबोध विदितं मतं *pratibodha viditaṁ mataṁ* which we have already seen in the ईशावास्य उपनिषत् *īśāvāsyā upaniṣat* and केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat*.

To realize that पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* is indeed the overriding purpose of human life, and the means for realizing such पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* is कर्म योग *karma yoga* and ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga*. We must also understand that if one can see परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in every कर्म *karma* but cannot see all कर्म *karmas* in the same परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, then one will end up with many परमेश्वर *parameśvars*, which can only promote various kinds of fanaticism, and that is not पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ*.

Again, if one can only see some कर्म *karmas* in परमेश्वर *parameśvar* but not others, that is not going to bring any enlightenment or happiness either. Therefore, that is also not पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ*.

Therefore, पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* means being able to see the same one परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in all कर्म *karmas*, and at the same time, see all कर्म *karmas*, without exception in the same one परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Only such पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa*



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jñānam is योग *yoga*, and the one who is the very embodiment of such योग *yoga* is a योगी *yogī*. In the style of Vedanta, the one who is in the process of uplifting oneself to that state of योग *yoga* through कर्म योग *karma yoga* and ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga*, is also called a योगी *yogī*, as a लक्षण *lakṣaṇa* - as a distinguishing characteristic of the person involved.

Using different word pointers, all our Upanishads expound the philosophy of पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānam* - Total vision, leading to the unity of all that is comprehensible, and also all that is beyond comprehension - the unity of the world-external and the world-internal.

The Isavasya Upanishad, as we have already seen, tells us that to concentrate our attention only on the external world and neglect the inner world of आत्मन् *ātman* is as good as pushing oneself into blinding darkness (अन्धं तमः *andham tamaḥ*), but on the other hand, to neglect this world, which we can see, touch, feel and handle, and to become involved exclusively in the incomprehensible world within is as good as pushing oneself into an even greater darkness.

What is needed is, to understand that absolute reality is ONE, untouched by the limitations such as the outer and the inner, "the Not-Self and the Self", the "many and the ONE", and to order and re-order one's life in the light of the All-inclusive Totality of knowledge – पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānam*.

If the many and the ONE are indeed the same, inseparable, indivisible reality, then, indeed, all modes of work, all modes of endeavour, all modes of creation, and all modes of worship naturally become the means for realizing That one all-inclusive reality through कर्म योग *karma yoga* and ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga*. Such is the scope and content of Sri Krishna's message

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।

karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyetaḥ akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ ।

स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् ॥

sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna karmakṛt ॥

Let us contemplate on this message. We will continue next time.