



## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

*caturtho 'dhyāyaḥ - jñāna karma sanyāsa yogaḥ*

### Chapter 4

#### Volume 1

श्री भगवानुवाच *śrī bhagavān uvāca*

इमं विवस्वते योगं, प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्यगम् ।

*imaṁ vivasvate yogaṁ, proktavān ahaṁ avyagam ।*

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह, मनुः इक्ष्वाकवे अब्रवीत् ॥ 4 - 1

*vivasvān manave prāha, manuḥ ikṣvākave abravīt ॥*

एवं परम्परा प्राप्तं, इमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।

*evaṁ paramparā prāptaṁ, imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ ।*

सकालेनेह महता, योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ 4 - 2

*sakāleneha mahatā, yogo naṣṭaḥ paraṁtapa ॥*

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य, योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

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

भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति, रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमं ॥ 4 - 3

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

अर्जुन उवाच *arjuna uvāca*

अपरं भवतो जन्म, परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।

*aparaṁ bhavato janma, paraṁ janma vivasvataḥ ।*

कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वं आदौ प्रोक्तवान् इति ॥ 4 - 4

*kathametadvijānīyāṁ tvaṁ ādau proktvān iti ॥*

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बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

*bahūna me vyatītāni janmāni tava cārjuna ।*

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ 4 - 5

*tānyahaṁ veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha paraṁtapa ॥*



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अजोऽपि सन् अव्ययात्मा भूतानां ईश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

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

प्रकृतिं स्वाम् अधिष्ठाय संभवामि आत्ममायया ॥ 4 - 6

*prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmi ātmamāyayā ॥*

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata ।*

अभ्युत्थानं अधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ 4 - 7

*abhyutthānaṁ adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmyaham ॥*

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

*paritrāṇāya 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 *yathecchasi tathā kuru* - do as you like"; that is exactly what भगवान् *bhagavān* 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 *parameśvar*, and makes him ask a simple-looking question, which becomes the starting point of an extraordinary exposition on कर्म योग *karma yoga*, which is again the subject matter of this and the next two chapters. भगवान् *bhagavān* initiates this exposition, saying

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

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

श्री भगवानुवाच *śrī bhagavānuvāca*

इमं विवस्वते योगं, प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्ययम् ।

*imam vivasvate yogam, proktavan aham avyayam ।*

विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह, मनुः इक्ष्वाकवे अब्रवीत् ॥ 4 - 1

*vivasvan manave praha, manuh ikṣvākave abravīt ॥*

भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवान् अहं अव्ययं

*imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam*

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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In any society, as Sri Krishna said earlier, (3-21) यद्यत् आचरति श्रेष्ठः तत्तदेव इतरो जनः *yadyat ācarati śreṣṭhaḥ tattadeva ittarō janaḥ* 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 ṛṣayah viduḥ* - Transmitted in this manner from generation to generation, this योग *yoga* (ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga* and कर्म योग *karma yoga*) is already known to the राज Rishis (the king sages - the royal sages). योग *yoga* is singular. On maturity all योगs *yogas* become ONE. The योग *yoga* knowledge, in fullness, has already been known to the enlightened kings like विवस्वान् *vivasvān*, मनु *manu*, इक्ष्वाकु *ikṣvāku* and later on जनक *janaka*, विश्वामित्र *viśvāmitra* and others. But all kings are not enlightened ones. Therefore,

परन्तप *parantapa* - O! Arjuna,

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



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

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।

*sa evāyaṁ mayā te'dya yogaḥ proktaḥ purātanah |*

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 ayam purātanah 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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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

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 ।*



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

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



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

*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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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

*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 ।



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

*vīta rāga bhaya krodhā manmayā mām upāśritāḥ |*

बहयो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावं 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 मद्भावं 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.



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

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 māṁ prapadyante, tān tathaiḥva 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 māṁ prapadyante, tān tathā eva bhajāmi aham*

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते *ye yathā māṁ 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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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

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 mām 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 māṁ prapadyante tān 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 kṛtam karma, pūrvai rapi mumukṣubhiḥ ।*

कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं, पूर्वं : पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥

4 - 15

*kuru karmaivata smāttvaṁ, pūrvaiḥ pūrvataram 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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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

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 *paramēśvar* - 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 ब्राह्मणा *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 क्षत्रिय *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 वैश्य *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 शूद्र *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, karmabhih 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 *parameśvar* .

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 *parameśvar*.

Therefore, we cannot, and we need not blame परमेश्वर *parameśvar* 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 *parameśvar* 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 *parameśvar* 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 *parameśvar*.

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 *parameśvar* 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 *parameśvar*, 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

### 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 *kiṃ svarūpaṃ karma* - What is the true nature of action? What is the तत्त्व *tatva* or essence of action? Similarly,

किं अकर्म *kiṃ 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 paśyēt* - 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 *ahaṅkārah bhāvāt* - there is no अहंकार *ahaṅkārah* 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 *paramesvar* - as the very creative power of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, as the माया *māyā* of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, as the very glory of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* as ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. Such is indeed the true nature of कर्म *karma*, and the very nature of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*. 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 *paramesvar* in every action and at the same time sees every action in परमेश्वर *paramesvar* as the very Glory of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, 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 *paramesvar*. And such is the goal of life, gaining श्रेयस् *śreyas*.

To realize परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in every कर्म *karma*, and to realize every कर्म *karma* as the very Glory of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, 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 paśyet 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*. कर्मस *karmas* are many and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is one, and कर्मस *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 पूर्ण अदःपूर्णं इदं *pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam 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 कर्मस *karmas* in the same परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, then one will end up with many परमेश्वरस *parameśvars*, which can only promote various kinds of fanaticism, and that is not पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ*.

Again, if one can only see some कर्मस *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 कर्मस *karmas*, and at the same time, see all कर्मस *karmas*, without



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exception in the same one परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Only such पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* 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 jñānaṁ* - 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 *andhaṁ 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 jñānaṁ*.

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 paśyet 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.



## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

### Chapter 4

#### Volume 5

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः काम संकल्प वर्जिताः ।

*yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma saṅkalpa varjitāḥ ।*

ज्ञानाग्नि दग्धकर्माणं तं आहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

4 - 19

*jñānāgni dagdhakarmāṇaṁ taṁ āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ ॥*

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

*tyaktvā karma phalā saṅgaṁ nitya tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ ।*

कर्मणि अभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः ॥

4 - 20

*karmaṇi abhipravṛtto'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ ॥*

निराशीः यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।

*nirāśiḥ yatacittātmā tyaktsarvaparigrahaḥ ।*

शरीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन् न आप्नोति किल्बिषं ॥

4 - 21

*śarīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvan na āpnoti kilbiṣaṁ ॥*

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।

*yadṛcchā lābha saṁtuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ ।*

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥

4 - 22

*samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate ॥*

गतसंगस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थित चेतसः ।

*gatasaṅgasya muktsya jñānāvasthita cetasaḥ ।*

यज्ञाय आचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥

4 - 23

*yajñāya ācarataḥ karma samagraṁ praviliyate ॥*

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणाहुतं ।

*brahmārpaṇaṁ brahmahaviḥ brahmāgnau brahmaṇāhutaṁ ।*

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना ॥

4 - 24

*brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma karma samādhinā ॥*



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Recalling Sri Krishna's words which we saw last time

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 ॥*

The one who sees परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in every action, and at the same time, sees every action in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, 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 योगी *yogī* – a ज्ञानी *jñānī*.

Describing such a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः काम संकल्प वर्जिताः ।

*yasya sarve samārambhāḥ kāma saṅkalpa varjitāḥ ।*

ज्ञानाग्नि दग्ध कर्माणं तं आहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

4 - 19

*jñānāgni dagdha karmaṇaṁ taṁ āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ ॥*

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः *yasya sarve samārambhāḥ*

यस्य *yasya* - For that ज्ञानी *jñānī*, for the ज्ञानी *jñānī* described above

सर्वे समारम्भाः *sarve samārambhāḥ* - all undertakings without exception, whatever the ज्ञानी *jñānī* undertakes to do, they are all समारम्भाः *samārambhāḥ* - सम्यक्

आरम्भाः *samyak ārambhāḥ* - they are all well-begun, meaning they have no obstructions to face, and hence they are bound to succeed for common good, because

काम संकल्प वर्जिताः *kāma saṅkalpa varjitāḥ* - they are all totally free from desire-propelled deliberate action. They are not motivated by any isolated or selfish ends.

संकल्प *saṅkalpa* means a proposal to do something, to accomplish something or gain something.

Initially, a संकल्प *saṅkalpa* is just a thought, a proposal for action in one's thought. Somehow, that thought has come into one's mind for reasons known or unknown. On further deliberation or further enquiry, one may decide to dismiss that thought - dismiss that proposal, for good reasons. Once that thought is dismissed, there is no संकल्प



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*saṁkalpa*. Such dismissal of thought proposal is called विकल्प *vikalpa*. Thus every संकल्प *saṁkalpa* is subject to विकल्प *vikalpa* - dismissal.

On the other hand, if one's natural likes and dislikes, राग *rāga* and द्वेष *dveṣa* are such that one's mind tends to dwell on the original संकल्प *saṁkalpa* continuously, very soon that संकल्प *saṁkalpa* turns into a काम *kāma* - a desire nourished and propelled by one's राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* forces. As Sri Krishna said earlier (2-62) संगान् संजायते कामः *saṁgāt saṁjāyate kāmah* - once the संकल्प *saṁkalpa* becomes a काम *kāma*, it cannot be dismissed. It has to take the form of some deliberate action. Such deliberate action propelled by काम *kāma* is called काम संकल्प *kāma saṁkalpa*.

भगवान् *bhagavān* says: A ज्ञानी *jñānī*, by one's very nature is totally free from काम संकल्प *kāma saṁkalpa* - desire propelled deliberate action, because the ज्ञानी *jñānī* has already पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānam*.

The ज्ञानी *jñānī* has identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in oneself, which means there is really nothing that a ज्ञानी *jñānī* does not have, and there is nothing that a ज्ञानी *jñānī* has to wish for or gain by any action.

If that is so, does a ज्ञानी *jñānī* do any कर्म *karma* at all? If so, what for? The answer is yes, certainly. The ज्ञानी *jñānī* does कर्म *karma* at all times. And that कर्म *karma* is कर्तव्यं कर्म *kartavyam karma* - कर्म *karma* that needs to be done - that is तेन त्यक्तेन कर्म *tena tyaktena karma*. कर्म *karma* that has been specially left for him to do as an active participant in this creation, by the very Grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. In doing that कर्म *karma*, there is no selfish gain involved. A ज्ञानी *jñānī* has only ईश्वर अर्पित कर्म *īśvara arpita karma* dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as ईश्वर आराधनं *īśvara ārādhanam* - as worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

If that कर्म *karma* is प्रवृत्ति कर्म *pravṛtti karma* - an ever increasing kind of कर्म *karma*, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* does that कर्म *karma* for लोक संग्रहं *loka saṁgraham* - for the welfare of the world. If that कर्म *karma* is निवृत्ति कर्म *nivṛtti karma*, an ever



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decreasing कर्म *karma*, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* does such कर्म *karma* for जीवन मात्रं *jivana mātram* - just to keep the body going, so that all the प्रारब्ध कर्म *prārabdha karmas* associated with this body, totally exhaust themselves, leaving behind no trace whatsoever.

Thus all कर्म *karmas* of a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, whatever be their nature, are completely free from काम *kāma* and संकल्प *saṅkalpa*. That is why all कर्म *karmas* are समारम्भाः, संयक् आरम्भाः *samārambhāḥ, saṁyak ārambhāḥ*, well-begun, well undertaken to serve the welfare of the entire world. Being already a fulfilled person, he has no expectations or cravings with respect to कर्म *karma*. His कर्म *karma* is ईश्वर कर्म *īśvara karma*, and whatever comes out of his कर्म *karmas* is the very glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. So is the vision of a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. Further,

ज्ञानाग्नि दग्धकर्माणं *jñānāgni dagdhakarmāṇam*  
ज्ञानाग्नि *jñānāgni* - By that Fire of knowledge –

दग्धकर्माणं *dagdhakarmāṇam* - all his actions, whatsoever be their nature, are incinerated and rooted out.

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet 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* as the very Glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which is the same as what the ईशावास्य उपनिषत् *īśāvāsya upaniṣat* says, namely

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मनि एव अनुपश्यति ।

*yastu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmani eva anupaśyati ।*

सर्वं भूतेषु च आत्मानं (अनुपश्यति)॥ (ईश - 6)

*sarva bhūteṣu ca ātmānaṁ (anupaśyati)॥ (īśa - 6)*

The one who sees clearly all beings in oneself, and at the same time, sees oneself clearly in all beings, which again is the same as what the कैवल्य उपनिषत् *kaivalya upaniṣat* says, namely

सर्वभूतस्थं आत्मानं सर्वभूतानि च आत्मनि ।



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*sarva bhūtasthaṁ ātmānaṁ sarvabhūtāni ca ātmani |*

संपश्यन् ब्रह्म परमं (याति) ॥ (कैव-10)

*sampaśyan brahma paramaṁ (yāti) ॥ (kaiva-10)*

Seeing clearly oneself in all beings, and at the same time, seeing clearly all beings in oneself, one reaches the Limitless ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

Such vision of oneself, such vision of this creation, such vision of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* - totality of knowledge. Such पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* is ज्ञानाग्नि *jñānāgni* - the fire of knowledge. By that ज्ञानाग्नि *jñānāgni* - all his actions, whatever be their nature, are incinerated and rooted out in the ज्ञानी *jñānī*, as an individual जीव, which means that all कर्म *karmas* of the ज्ञानी *jñānī* are reactionless. No new कर्म *karma* can sprout from the कर्म *karma* of a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. That also means, for the ज्ञानी *jñānī* as an individual जीव *jīva*, there is no आगामि कर्म *āgāmi karma*, there is no कर्म *karma* to be held in storage waiting to be exhausted as कर्मफल *karma phala* in the future.

तं आहुः पण्डितं बुधाः *taṁ āhuḥ paṇḍitaṁ budhāḥ* - Such a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is called a पण्डित *paṇḍita*. A पण्डित *paṇḍita* is one who has परं ज्ञानं *paraṁ jñānaṁ*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ*, ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ*. A पण्डित *paṇḍita* is one who is बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān*, युक्तः *yukṭḥ* and कृत्स्न कर्मकृत् *kr̥tsna karmakṛt*, as said in the previous verse. Thus a पण्डित *paṇḍit* is a wise person – a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. Who says that?

बुधाः आहुः *budhāḥ āhuḥ* – those who are already wise say so, because, only the wise can recognize wisdom wherever wisdom is. Thus the ज्ञानी *jñānī* is a पण्डित *paṇḍita* because the ज्ञानी *jñānī* has total vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and all the कर्म *karmas* of a ज्ञानी *jñānī* are only the manifestations of that total vision – पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ*. Now we may recall what Sri Krishna said earlier in chapter 2 about पण्डिताः *paṇḍitas*.



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गतासून् अगतासून् च न अनुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः *gatāsūn agatāsūn ca na anuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ* (2 - 11) - The पण्डिताs *paṇḍitas* - the wise people, do not dissipate their energies, natural faculties by entertaining शोक *śoka*, sorrow or distress, either with respect to the past events or with respect to the future events. On the other hand, realizing total reality as it is, by the total vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the wise people do what needs to be done right now.

As the Upanishad says: न कर्म लिप्यते नरे *na karma lipyate nare* - such actions do not and cannot bind a ज्ञानी *jñānī*. Further, continuing the description of a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, भगवान् *bhagavān*, says:

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

*tyaktvā karma phalā saṅgaṁ nitya tṛpto nirāśrayaḥ* ।

कर्मणि अभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः ॥

4 - 20

*karmaṇi abhipravṛtto'pi naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ* ॥

त्यक्त्वा *tyaktvā* - naturally and spontaneously giving up, releasing oneself from all bondages - bondages of what?

कर्मफल आसंगं त्यक्त्वा *karma phala āsaṅgaṁ tyaktvā* - आसंगं *āsaṅgaṁ* is fast attachment. कर्म आसंगं *karma āsaṅgaṁ* is कर्तृत्व्यं *katṛtvam*- fast attachment to action, which means, fast attachment to the notion " I am the doer, I am the कर्ता *kartā*" and similarly, फल आसंगं *phala āsaṅgaṁ* is भोक्तृत्व्यं *bhokṛtvam*- fast attachment to the fruits of actions, fast attachment to the notion that I am the भोक्ता *bhokta* - I am the enjoyer of the fruits of actions. Thus,

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं *tyaktvā karma phalā saṅgaṁ* - releasing oneself naturally and spontaneously from attachments to actions and fruits of actions, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* has neither कर्म आसंग *karma āsaṅga*, nor फल आसंग *phala āsaṅga*, because, in the wake of पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ*, all notions of doership and enjoyership vanish as a result of ज्ञानाग्नि दग्ध कर्माणं *jñānāgni dagdha karmāṇaṁ*- all कर्मs *karmas* rooted out by the fire of knowledge and hence rendered reactionless. Thus,



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त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं *tyaktvā karma phalā saṅgam* - having gained release from the bondages of कर्म's *karmas* and कर्मफल's *karmaphalas*, नित्यतृप्तः *nityatṛptaḥ* - the person has now become ever satisfied. The person is now ever full. The person is now कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् *kṛtsna karmakṛt* - the person has achieved all that there is to achieve in life. There is no more आकांक्ष *ākāṅkṣa* - there is no more expectation of any kind

निराश्रयः *nirāśrayaḥ* - आश्रय रहितः *āśraya rahitaḥ* - the person does not take recourse to any action for accomplishing any पुरुषार्थ *puruṣārtha* - any goal of life. The person does not seek any साधनं *sādhanam*, any external means for any self-fulfillment. The person is free from all dependence for one's happiness, which means that the person has now reached a state of आत्मनि एव आत्मना तुष्टः *ātmani eva ātmanā tuṣṭaḥ* as भगवान् *bhagavān* said earlier (2-55), the person has now discovered happiness in oneself by oneself in the wake of ज्ञानं *jñānam*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*, ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam*. Consequently,

कर्मणि अभिप्रवृत्तः अपि *karmani abhipravṛttaḥ api* - even though the ज्ञानी *jñānī* is enthusiastically engaged in ever increasing actions  
नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः *naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ* - सः किञ्चित् एव न करोति *saḥ kiñcit eva na karoti* - the ज्ञानी *jñānī* does not do any action whatsoever. He has no notion of doership in his actions. He is just doing whatever कर्म *karma* has been left for him to do by ईश्वर *īśvara*. There is nothing for him to gain by his actions, those around him, his family, community, world at large - gain something and that is the part that has been left for him to do by ईश्वर *īśvara*. Again

निराशीः यत चित्तात्मा त्यक्त सर्व परिग्रहः ।

*nirāśīḥ yata cittātmā tyakta sarva parigrahaḥ ।*

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन् न आप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

4 - 21

*śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvan na āpnoti kilbiṣam ॥*

If the ज्ञानी *jñānī* is engaged only in निवृत्ति कर्म's *nivṛtta karmas*, ever decreasing mode of actions, living a life of minimum actions, such a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is again

निराशीः *nirāśīḥ* - one from whom all राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* rooted desires have vanished;



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यतचित्तात्मा *yata cittātma* - he is one for whom all internal and external organs of perception and action are always kept under control. For a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, the चित्त *citta* - the faculties of thinking and recollection, and ज्ञान इन्द्रियाः *jñāna indrayās* and कर्म इन्द्रियाः *karma indrayās* - the organs of perception and action are just instruments to be used only when they are needed. Otherwise they are to be kept under total control, and in total readiness, safely in the tool box.

त्यक्त सर्वपरिग्रहः *tyakt sarvaparigrahaḥ* - a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is one who has given up all sense of possessions

परिग्रह *parigrahaḥ* - is a possession held with great avidity, greed, and/or a sense of ownership. A ज्ञानी *jñānī* has no परिग्रह *parigrahaḥ*. He possesses nothing. He is only a trustee of whatever is held by him. Further,

शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन् *śārīraṁ kevalaṁ karma kurvan* - whatever कर्म *karma* he does, it is only for the purpose of sustaining this physical body

केवलं *kevalaṁ* - indicates, even with respect to his physical body, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* has no sense of possession. He has been blessed with a physical body, which he has to sustain for the purpose for which it is intended. The only purpose for this physical body is to exhaust all प्रारब्ध कर्म *prārabdha karma* and free oneself from all संचित *sañcita* and आगामि कर्म *āgāmi karmas*, all past and future कर्म *karmas* and कर्म फल *karma phalas*. Further,

कुर्वन् अपि न आप्नोति किल्बिषं *kurvan api na āpnoti kilbiṣaṁ* - even though doing various कर्म *karmas* for sustaining the physical body, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* does not get any किल्बिषं पाप *kilbiṣaṁ pāpa* or पुण्य *puṇya* - he is not contaminated by undesirable or desirable results of such कर्म *karmas*, because,

ज्ञानाग्नि दग्धकर्माणं *jñānāgni dagdha karmāṇaṁ* - as far as he as a जीव *jīva* is concerned, all कर्म *karmas* have already been incinerated and rendered harmless by ज्ञानं *jñānaṁ* - by पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* - total vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Further,

यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वतीतो विमत्सरः ।

*yadṛcchā lābha sañtuṣṭo dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ ।*

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्यापि न निबध्यते ॥

4 - 22

*samaḥ siddhāvasiddhau ca kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate ॥*



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यदृच्छा-लाभ संतुष्टः *yadṛcchā-lābha saṁtuṣṭaḥ* - A ज्ञानी *jñānī* is always संतुष्टः *saṁtuṣṭaḥ* - as Happy as Happiness can be. What is he happy about?

यदृच्छा लाभः *yadṛcchā lābhaḥ* - he is happy with whatever he gets without going after anything. What he does is ईश्वर कर्म *īśvara karma* and what he gets is ईश्वर प्रसाद *īśvara prasāda* - the very grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

What he does is only an expression of संतुष्टः *saṁtuṣṭaḥ*. What he gets again is only an expression संतुष्टः *saṁtuṣṭaḥ* - Therefore a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is always संतुष्टः *saṁtuṣṭaḥ*, as happy as happiness can be. That happiness is ब्रह्मानन्द *brahmānanda* - Limitless Happiness.

A ज्ञानी *jñānī* goes after nothing. He always has अलं बुद्धि *alam buddhi*, अलं *alam* means "enough". Whatever he has at this moment is enough for him. If he does not seem to have something at this time, it only means that he does not need it now. If he does need something at any time that will surely and naturally come to him in time. There is no need to go after anything. This is अलं बुद्धि *alam buddhi* - the realization of absolute happiness, the state of total fulfillment in daily life. Again

द्वन्द्वतीतः *dvandvātītaḥ* - द्वन्द्व अतीतः - *dvandva atītaḥ* - A ज्ञानी *jñānī* is beyond the reach of the forces of द्वन्द्व *dvandva* - pairs of opposites such as pleasure and pain, profit and loss, success and failure, etc. Even though his physical body may be affected by such pairs of opposites, his बुद्धि *buddhi* remains unaffected, because of his vision of total reality, total vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. A ज्ञानी *jñānī* is a बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān* - Being a wise person

कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मणि च कर्म यः *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ* - Such a बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān*, as Sri Krishna said earlier (2 - 56)

दुःखेषु अनुविग्रमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः *duḥkheṣu anuvignamanāḥ sukheṣu vigatasprīhaḥ* - in times of pain or sorrow, he is not agitated and in times of pleasure or comfort, he has no craving for more. Further



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विमत्सरः *vimatsarah* -विगत मत्सरः *vigata matsarah* - a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is always free from मत्सर *matsarah* - envy, jealousy or वैर बुद्धि *vaira buddhi* - any sense of enmity and

समः सिद्धौ असिद्धौ च *samah siddhau asiddhau ca* - a ज्ञानी *jñānī* remains the same, remains unaffected in success and failure. A ज्ञानी *jñānī* is ever free from elation and depression.

All this Sri Krishna said earlier with respect to a कर्म योगी *karma yogī*. The distinguishing characteristics of a कर्म योगी *karma yogī* and a ज्ञान योगी *jñāna yogī* are the same. The difference is only in the degree of maturity. In कर्म योग *karma yoga*, all these characteristics are साधन *sādhana* - means which are deliberately cultivated by understanding and discipline. In ज्ञान योग *jñāna yoga*, all these characteristics are natural and spontaneous. Further

कृत्वा अपि न निबध्यते *kṛtvā api na nibadhyate*

कृत्वा अपि *kṛtvā api* - even though a ज्ञानी *jñānī* is engaged in actions

न निबध्यते *na nibadhyate* - he does not get bound to any actions, because for a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, in all actions, there is only परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and nothing else, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. Hence, all कर्मs *karmas* are ईश्वर कर्मs *īśvara karmas*, यज्ञ कर्मs *yajña karmas* and he himself is free from any कर्म *karma* - न कर्म लिप्यते नरे *na karma lipyate nare*, and that is the very nature of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. Further,

गतसंगस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थित चेतसः ।

*gata saṅgasya muktsya jñānāvasthita cetasaḥ ।*

यज्ञाय आचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥

4 - 23

*yajñāya ācarataḥ karma samagraṁ praviliyate ॥*

गत संगस्य मुक्तस्य *gata saṅgasya muktsya* - The ज्ञानी *jñānī* naturally releases himself from all bondages. He is spontaneously free from पाप *pāpa* and पुण्य *puṇya* which are all causes for bondage



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ज्ञानावस्थित चेतसः *jñānāvasthita cetasaḥ* means ज्ञान अवस्थित चेतसः *jñāna avasthita cetasaḥ* - his mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* are firmly rooted in आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - in परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in oneself. He is God-conscious at all times यज्ञाय आचरतः कर्म *yajñāya ācarataḥ karma* - he is enthusiastically engaged in all his कर्मस *karmas* as यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* समग्रं प्रविलीयते *samagraṁ praviliyate* - by virtue of his आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - पूर्ण ज्ञानं *pūrṇa jñānaṁ* - totality of knowledge, all bondages of कर्मस *karmas* and कर्म फल *karma phalas* get instantaneously destroyed, even as the कर्म *karma* is being done. That is the nature of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - कर्म *karma* totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

Sri Krishna has already talked about यज्ञ कर्म *karma* before in chapter 3, verses 9 to 11, with reference to a कर्म योगी *karma yogī*. In the next verse, भगवान् *bhagavān* describes the same यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* as it is for a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, with reference to a Havan ritual, taken as an illustration, but the same knowledge applies to any कर्म *karma* performed as यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतं ।

*brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma haviḥ brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutaṁ ।*

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना ॥

4 - 24

*brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma karma samādhinā ॥*

For a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, everything that is involved in any यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, and nothing but ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. The कर्ता *kartā* - the Doer, the करणं *karaṇaṁ* - the means used for doing the कर्म *karma*, the action that is done and the कर्म फल *karma phala* - the result of the action, **all that**, is only ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. That is what is being pointed out in this verse. With reference to a Havan ritual, form a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, ब्रह्मार्पणं *brahmārpaṇaṁ* means अर्पणं ब्रह्म *arpaṇaṁ brahma*. अर्पणं *arpaṇaṁ* is the instrument by which you make the oblation in a Havan. If you make the oblation with your hand, the hand is the अर्पणं *arpaṇaṁ*. If you use some kind of spoon to make the oblation, that spoon is the अर्पणं *arpaṇaṁ*. For a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, that



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अर्पणं *arpaṇam*, that instrument by which the oblation is made, is nothing but ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

How can one see ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in the अर्पणं *arpaṇam*, the instrument by which the realization that other than ब्रह्मन् *brahman* there is nothing else? Just as the one who has knowledge of gold does not miss seeing gold in a gold bracelet, the bracelet has no existence independent of gold. If you remove the form and name from the bracelet, what remains is really gold. Other than gold, there is nothing else in the bracelet. For enjoying the bracelet as gold, no change in bracelet is needed. In a similar manner, the अर्पणं *arpaṇam* - the instrument used in the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is non-separate from ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. When I say "This is अर्पणं *arpaṇam*", this is the instrument by which I offer oblation, that अर्पणं *arpaṇam* is non-separate from my own consciousness, because of my knowledge of that instrument. That knowledge is established in my consciousness which is ONE with ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

In a similar manner, if one analyzes anything that exists, it exists first, and then only it exists in some form and name. Its very existence – सत् स्वरूप *sat svarūpaṁ* is its निर्विशेष स्वरूपं *nirviśeṣa svarūpaṁ* - its unqualified attributeless nature. That existence, that सत् स्वरूपं *sat svarūpaṁ* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. That attributeless, unqualified सत् स्वरूपं ब्रह्मन् *sat svarūpaṁ brahman* is the invariable basis, changeless basis of any existent object with a Form and a Name.

A ज्ञानी *jñānī*, when he sees an object, sees that existence itself - the सत् स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् *sat svarūpaṁ brahman* because of which alone that object exists. Thus, for him, अर्पणं *arpaṇam* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, and it is non-separate from ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Similarly,

ब्रह्म हविः *brahma haviḥ* - that which is called हविस् *havis* - the oblation, that is also ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

ब्रह्माग्नौ *brahmāgnau* - the agni, the fire into which the offering is made, that is also ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

ब्रह्मणा हुतं *brahmaṇā hutam* - the one by whom the हविस् *havis* - the oblation is offered, that person is also ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. All that is done in terms of oblation, ritual, etc. is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

If everything is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, what is it that is to be achieved by such यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*?

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं *brahmaiva tena gantavyam* - तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म एव *tena gantavyam brahma eva* - The purpose, the end to be achieved by the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is also ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

By whom is this purpose, this end achieved?

ब्रह्म कर्म समाधिना *brahma karma samādhinā* - By the one whose बुद्धि *buddhi* is in समाधि *samādhī*. By the one whose बुद्धि abides, totally absorbed in the knowledge that the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is indeed ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, which means कर्मणि ब्रह्म यः पश्येत् *karmaṇi brahma yaḥ paśyet* - the one who sees ब्रह्मन् *brahman* the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, in every कर्म *karma*, which is the meaning of the original statement namely कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्येत्, अकर्मणि च कर्म यः *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyet, akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ*

That is the लक्षण *lakṣaṇa* - the distinguishing characteristic of a बुद्धिमान् *buddhimān*, a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, so says Sri Krishna.

Food and eating is an all important function in our daily life. Eating proper food at proper time is a sacred यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* in our tradition – कर्म *karma* totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Knowledgeable people usually recite this verse before eating, in a prayerful and contemplative mood

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविः ब्रह्मग्नौ ब्रह्मणाहुतं ।  
*brahmārpaṇam brahmahaviḥ brhmagnau brahmaṇāhutaṁ* ।  
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥  
*brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma karma samādhinā* ॥

Then we eat our food as यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* – कर्म *karma* dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, recognizing परमेश्वर *parameśvar* within oneself. We will see more about यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* next time.



## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

### Chapter 4

### Volume 6

दैवम् एव अपरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।

*daivam eva apare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate ।*

ब्रह्मग्नौ अपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैव उपजुहति ॥ 4 - 25

*brahmagnau apare yajñam yajñenaiva upajuhvati ॥*

श्रोत्रादीनि इन्द्रियाण्यन्ये सम्यमग्निषु जुहति ।

*śrotrādīni indriyāṅyanye samyama agniṣu juhvati ।*

शब्दादीन् विषयानन्ये इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥ 4 - 26

*śabdādīn viṣayānanye indriyāgniṣu juhvati ॥*

सर्वाणि इन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।

*sarvāṇi indriya karmāṇi prāṇa karmāṇi cāpare ।*

आत्म संयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञान दीपिते ॥ 4 - 27

*ātma saṁyama yogāgnau juhvati jñāna dipite ॥*

द्रव्ययज्ञाः तपोयज्ञाः योगयज्ञाः तथापरे ।

*dravya yajñāḥ tapo yajñāḥ yoga yajñāḥ tathāpare ।*

स्वाध्याय ज्ञानयज्ञाः च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ 4 - 28

*svādhyāya jñāna yajñāḥ ca yatayaḥ saṁśita vratāḥ ॥*

अपाने जुहति प्राणं प्राणे अपानं तथापरे ।

*apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe apānam tathāpare ।*

प्राणापान गती रुद्ध्वा प्राण्याम परायणाः ॥ 4 - 29

*prāṇāpāna gatī ruddhvā prāṇyāma parāyaṇāḥ ॥*

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुहति ।

*apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati ।*



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

सर्वे अपि एते यज्ञविदः यज्ञ क्षपित कल्मषाः ॥ 4 - 30  
*sarve apa ete yajñavidah yajña kṣapita kalmaṣāḥ ॥*

This whole chapter, chapter 4, which we are now reading, is devoted to **सम्यक् आत्म दर्शनं** *samyaka ātma darśanam* - gaining a clarity of vision of one's own Self. The vision of **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* is all that exists in this entire creation, through **कर्म योग** *karma yoga* in the form of **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma*. Any **कर्म** *karma* that helps in bringing that clarity of vision to oneself is a **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma*.

The nature of a **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma* is that it ultimately leads one to the realization that one's transient nature is subject to change, and it can be changed so that one can recognize by one's own self, one's true changeless existence as the all-pervading **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman*. Thus, every **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma* is a form of **कर्म योग** *karma yoga*, leading to **ज्ञान योग** *jñāna yoga* and **संयक् आत्म दर्शनं** *samyak ātma darśanam* - clarity of vision of oneself as one really is. Sri Krishna has been talking about **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma* with particular reference to a Havan ritual. For a **कर्म योगी**, every **कर्म** *karma* is a **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma*, which means that every **कर्म** *karma* is a kind of Havan, and what applies to a Havan ritual, applies to every **कर्म** *karma* done as a **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma*.

In one's daily life, every **कर्म** *karma* can be a **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma* in terms of understanding, attitude, discipline, effort, proper conduct, etc. For example,

- ⇒ when you eat only what you should eat, and never anything you should not eat
- ⇒ when you hear only what you should hear and never hear what you should not hear
- ⇒ when you see only what you should see, and never see what you should not see, etc.

even all this is **यज्ञ कर्म** *yajña karma* for a **कर्म योगी** *karma yogī*.

In all such **यज्ञ कर्म**s *yajña karmas* what is involved is self-control, **शम** *śama*, **दम** *dama* and **त्याग** *tyāga* - control of one's mind and **बुद्धि** *buddhi* - instruments of perception and action, and also a sense of renunciation. Such self-control is like fire in a Havan. All such **यज्ञ कर्म**s *yajña karmas* ultimately find their total fulfillment in **ब्रह्मज्ञानं**



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

*brahma jñānam* - clarity of the vision of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in every action, and indeed in everything that exists, including oneself. That is the content of today's verses.

Let us now see how Sri Krishna brings out this message. Sri Krishna says "Many varieties of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* are described in our Vedas. For example:

दैवम् एव अपरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।

*daivam eva apare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate ।*

ब्रह्माग्नौ अपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैव उपजुहति ॥

4 - 25

*brahmāgnau apare yajñam yajñenaiva upajuhvati ॥*

योगिनः अपरे (च) दैवम् यज्ञं एव पर्युपासते *yoginaḥ apare (ca) daivam yajñam eva paryupāsate*

योगिनः *yoginaḥ* - The कर्म योगी *karma yogīs*

अपरे (च) *apare (ca)* - and also among people like you and me, some of them दैव यज्ञं एव पर्युपासते *daivam yajñam eva paryupāsate* - they perform देव यज्ञ *deva yajña* - which means they offer ritualistic worship to देवता *devatās* like अग्नि *agni*, चरुण *varuṇa*, वायु *vāyu*, इन्द्र *indra*, etc. or in the names of शिव *śiva*, विष्णु *viṣṇu*, दुर्गा *durgā*, etc.

All our Temple पूजा *pūjās* come under the category of देव यज्ञ *deva yajña*. Such देव यज्ञ *deva yajñas* bring about some peace of mind and also अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - purification in our thought processes which ultimately make our mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* fit for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*.

अपरे ब्रह्माग्नौ (देव) यज्ञं पर्युपासते *apare brahmāgnau (deva) yajñam paryupāsate* - On the other hand, those who are already ज्ञानी *jñānīs*, some of them अपरे ब्रह्माग्नौ देव यज्ञं पर्युपासते *apare brahmāgnau deva yajñam paryupāsate* - they also perform देव यज्ञ *deva yajñas*, but they perform देव यज्ञ *deva yajñas* as ब्रह्म यज्ञ *brahma yajña*, How do they do that?



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

ब्रह्माग्नौ *brahmāgnau* - अग्नौ ब्रह्म संपश्यन् *agnau brahma sampaśyan* - The ज्ञानी *jñānī* sees ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in the अग्नि देवता *agni devatā*, and likewise in every देवता *devatā*, whatever be its name and form. Thus with संयक् ब्रह्म दर्शनं *samyak brahma darśanam* - with the clear vision of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in every देवता *devatā*, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* performs the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* as ब्रह्म यज्ञ *brahma yajña*. Further

यज्ञं यज्ञेन एव उपजुहति *yajñam yajñena eva upajuhvati* - which means आत्मानं आत्मना एव उपजुहति *ātmanam ātmanā eva upajuhvati*. A ज्ञानी *jñānī* offers, in terms of knowledge and attitude, one's entire self by one's entire self into that ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, which means a ज्ञानी *jñānī* offers all of one's sense of perceptions, including mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, into that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* by one's act of worship, with the full realization that all that exists is only ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - with full realization ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ*.

By dedicating all actions to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* through such worship, the ज्ञानी *jñānī* surrenders individual consciousness. Thus the individual consciousness naturally merges into the ocean of total consciousness. व्यष्टि *vyaṣṭi* consciousness resolves naturally into समष्टि *samaṣṭi* consciousness.

Thus when a ज्ञानी *jñānī* performs देव यज्ञ *deva yajña* - worship of ईश्वर *īśvara* in any form, he is in a state of संगमं *saṅgamam* - holy confluence of व्यष्टि चैतन्यं *vyaṣṭi caitanyam* and समष्टि चैतन्यं *samaṣṭi caitanyam* - holy confluence of the individual consciousness of oneself and the total consciousness of every self that there is - the cosmic consciousness - the totality of knowledge. Such यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is ज्ञान यज्ञं *jñāna yajñam*. Further,

श्रोत्रादीनि इन्द्रियाण्यन्ये सम्यम अग्निषु जुहति ।

*śrotrādīni indriyāṅyananye samyama agniṣu juhvati ।*

शब्दादीन् विषयानन्ये इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥

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*śabdādīn viṣayānanye indriyāgniṣu juhvati ॥*



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Two diametrically opposite types of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* are described here. In one case, the fire for the यज्ञ *yajña* is control of the organs of perception. In the other case, the organs of perception themselves constitute fire for the यज्ञ *yajña*.

Since there are several organs of perception, and each one of them has to be controlled, each control is a fire in the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. Thus there are several fires in the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. That is why the plural अग्निषु is used in this verse. One kind of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is *agniṣu*.

श्रोत्र आदीनि इन्द्रियाणि अन्ये सम्यम अग्निषु जुहति *śrotra ādini indriyāṇi anye samyama agniṣu juhvati*. Some योगी *yogīs* - some people offer their sense organs into the fire of self-control, which means that they deny the sense objects to the sense organs. For example, they may choose to close their eyes for some time every day, as a matter of self-discipline. They may deny their tongue certain kinds of food, etc. By such self-denial or self-restraint, they try to turn their mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. This kind of कर्म योग *karma yoga* is called संयम योग *saṁyam yoga*.

On the other hand, there are some other योगी *yogīs* - there are some other people, who do just the opposite. What do they do?

शब्दादीन् विषयान् अन्ये इन्द्रिय *śabdādīn viṣayān anye indriya* - अग्निषु जुहति *agniṣu juhvati* - They offer the sense objects such as - शब्द *śabda*, स्पर्श *sparsā*, रूप *rūpa*, रस *rasa*, गन्ध *gandha* - sound, touch, form, taste and smell as यज्ञ *yajña*, as धर्म कर्म *dharma karma* into the fires of the sense organs - the ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue and the nose, and also the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, keeping all of them under full control at all times. This is full and effective use of sense organs for enlightenment.

If you offer the eyes, everything which gives pleasure to the eyes, and the tongue, everything that gives pleasure to the tongue, etc. that is not यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. That is indeed foolish indulgence which will surely lead to self-destruction.

On the other hand, if you offer the eyes, everything that is proper and necessary to see for gaining आत्म ज्ञान *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge and deny the eyes those things



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

which should not be seen, and in a similar way, if you follow the principle of going as far as you can, so long as it is proper and necessary, but never do anything improper with respect to every sense object and every sense organs, such a kind of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - कर्म योग *karma yoga* is called नियम योग *niyama yoga* - control of actions governed by propriety - right conduct at all times.

Such नियम योग *niyama yoga* is conducive to the fullest development of one's abilities of perception and action, and ultimately to one's ability to gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - self-knowledge. When the sense objects fed to the sense organs are of unquestionable propriety in terms of धर्म *dharma* leading to मोक्ष *mokṣa*, then the इन्द्रियाः *indriyās* - the sense organs, including mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, become the fire for the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*.

Total withdrawal of sense organs from sense objects is relatively far easier, compared to the proper and the fullest enjoyment of sense objects by the sense organs, without ever being improper. It is this later kind of self-control, the नियम योग *niyama yoga*, which is the characteristic of a स्थितप्रज्ञ *sthitaprajña*, as we may recall Sri Krishna's words in chapter 2:

राग द्वेष वियुक्तैस्तु विषयान् इन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।  
*rāga dveṣa viyuktaistu viṣayān indriyaiścāran |*  
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादं अधिगच्छति ॥  
*ātmavaśyairvidheyātmā prasādaṁ adhigacchati ||*

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विषयान् इन्द्रियैः चरन् *viṣayān indriyaiḥ caran* - Experiencing the world of objects, using fully and effectively, all your इन्द्रियाः *indriyas* - all your faculties of perception and action, doing whatever is to be done, and never doing whatever should not be done, and at the same time,  
आत्मवश्यैः इन्द्रियैः *ātmavaśyaiḥ indriyaiḥ* - keeping all of one's instruments of perception and action under one's full control  
विधेयात्मा प्रसादं अधिगच्छति *vidheyātmā prasādaṁ adhigacchati* - a self-controlled person gains प्रसाद-बुद्धि *prasāda-buddhi*

That is कर्म योग *karma yoga*. That kind of कर्म योग *karma yoga* is नियम योग *niyama yoga*. Such नियम योग *niyama yoga* is यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. Further,



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

सर्वाणि इन्द्रिय कर्माणि, प्राण कर्माणि चापरे ।  
*sarvāṇi indriya karmāṇi, prāṇa karmāṇi cāpare ।*  
आत्म संयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ 4 - 27  
*ātma saṁyama yogāgnau juhvati jñānadīpīte ॥*

On the other hand, those who are already ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*, those who already have ब्रह्म ज्ञान *brahma jñāna*,

ज्ञानदीपिते *jñāna dīpīte* - those who are already enlightened by ज्ञानदीपं *jñāna dīpam* - by the shining light of the lamp of knowledge which leaves no shadows of ignorance about oneself in one's बुद्धि *buddhi*, which means that those who already have विवेक ज्ञानं *viveka jñānaṁ* (we will see more about ज्ञान दीपं *jñāna dīpam* in chapter 10 -11). Thus, those who are already ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*, they offer आत्म संयम योग *ātma saṁyama yoga* as यज्ञ *yajña*.

In the previous verse Sri Krishna talked about संयम योग *saṁyama yoga*. Here He talks about आत्म संयम योग *ātma saṁyama yoga*, which is the same as ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga* - control of the mind through meditation, which means getting the mind absorbed in सत् *sat*, चित् *cit*, आनन्द स्वरूप आत्मा *ānanda svarūp ātmā* - सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahma* - the प्रमेश्वर *parameśvar* in oneself.

ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga* is another form of कर्म योग *karma yoga*; ध्यान *dhyāna* is, as the गीता ध्यानं *gītā dhyānaṁ* says:

ध्यानावस्थित तद्गतेन मनसा, पश्यन्ति यं योगिनः *dhyānāvasthita tadgatena manasā, paśyanti yaṁ yoginaḥ*

ध्यान अवस्थित *dhyāna avasthita* - with the mind held steadfast, unperturbed and absorbed in the ज्ञान वस्तु *jñāna vastu*, The

तत् गतेन मनसा *tat gatena manasā* - all thoughts are flowing towards and emptying into the ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, the प्रमेश्वर *parameśvar* in oneself.



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That state of mind is called आत्म संयम योग *ātma saṁyama yoga*, which is possible for ज्ञानदीपिते *jñānadīpīte* - those who are already enlightened on the nature of जीव-जगत् *jīva-jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara*. For such enlightened ones, आत्म संयम योग *ātma saṁyama yoga* is the अग्नि *agni* in the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, where they empty सर्वाणि इन्द्रिय कर्माणि *sarvāṇi indriya karmāṇi*, प्राण कर्माणि च *prāṇa karmāṇi ca*. In the fire of आत्म संयम योग *ātma saṁyama yoga*, which means in the fire of ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyaanam*, they empty all actions of their इन्द्रियसु *indriyas*, including their physiological functions of प्राण *prāṇa*, अपान *apāna*, व्यान, *vyāna*, उदान *udāna* and समान *samāna* (respiration, evacuation, circulation, reaction and assimilation or digestion).

For the enlightened ones, all the इन्द्रिय कर्मसु *indriya karmas* and प्राण-कर्मसु *prāṇa-karmas* join the ocean of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. All कर्मसु *karmas* are naturally resolved only in ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Further,

द्रव्ययज्ञाः तपोयज्ञाः योगयज्ञाः तथापरे ।

*dravya yajñāḥ tapoyajñāḥ yoga yajñāḥ tathāpare ।*

स्वाध्याय ज्ञानयज्ञाः च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥

4 - 28

*svādhyāya jñāna yajñāḥ ca yatayaḥ saṁśita vratāḥ ॥*

तथा अपरे *tathā apare* - Likewise, there are other people who do other kinds of यज्ञसु *yajñas*. For example, such people are द्रव्ययज्ञाः *dravya yajñāḥ*, तपोयज्ञाः *tapoyajñāḥ*, योगयज्ञाः *yoga yajñāḥ*, स्वाध्याय यज्ञाः *svādhyāya yajñāḥ* and also ज्ञान यज्ञाः *jñāna yajñāḥ*. They are all यतयः *yatayaḥ* and संशितव्रताः *saṁśita vratāḥ*.

यतयः *yatayaḥ* - means those who are full of effort, interest and dedication, which means श्रद्धा, and

संशितव्रताः *saṁśita vratāḥ* - means those who are of firm resolve. Their श्रद्धा *śraddhā* is not transient or of temporary nature. Their श्रद्धा *śraddhā* is deep rooted; therefore,

यतयः संशितव्रताः *yatayaḥ saṁśita vratāḥ* - All the people about whom we are now talking, are people who are full of efforts, firm resolve and deep rooted श्रद्धा *śraddhā*.



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For them, their efforts and deep rooted श्रद्धा *śraddhā* constitute the अग्नि *agni* - the fire in the Havan of their यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. Who are those people? They are: द्रव्ययज्ञाः *dravya yajñāḥ* - Those who offer their material wealth as यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - those who give away their wealth with proper attitude and dedication to various kinds of ईश्वर कर्म *īśvara karmas*, कर्म *karmas* contributing to the material and spiritual progress of the society as a whole. Such people are called द्रव्ययज्ञाः *dravya yajñāḥ*.

Proper attitude means what? That means दत्तं *dattaṁ*, न मम *na mama* - once given, the wealth does not belong to me any more. I have no right or any claim on account of it. I feel more free, I feel more fulfilled on account of such giving" that is the proper attitude. Such giving is द्रव्य यज्ञ *dravya yajñā*.

तपो यज्ञाः *tapo yajñāḥ* - Those for whom तपस् *tapas* is यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* are called तपो यज्ञाः *tapo yajñāḥ*. They live a life of enlightened discipline at all times, with firm resolve, and श्रद्धा *śraddhā* in whatever that they are doing. Such तपस् *tapas* is primarily to overcome one's राग-द्वेष *rāga-dveṣa* forces, and cultivate one's will power to follow the path of धर्म *dharma* under all circumstances.

योग यज्ञाः *yoga yajñāḥ* - Those who are totally committed to one or more of the योग *yogas* described in the Vedas, such as, for example

शम-दम-योग *śama-dama-yoga* - control of mind and organs of perception and action

नियम योग *niyama yoga* - adhering to the path of धर्म *dharma* at all times, under all circumstances

आसन योग *āsana yoga* - discipline of the body and the mind through Yoga exercises

प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga* - control of body and mind primarily through breathing exercises

प्रत्यहार योग *pratyahāra yoga* - Abstaining from certain activities as a matter of discipline

धारण योग *dhāraṇa yoga* - Fixing the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* on something for a length of time

ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga* - Meditation

समाधि योग *samādhi yoga* - absorption, etc.



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All these are forms of कर्म योग *karma yoga*, and those who are committed to one or more of these are called योग यज्ञाः *yoga yajñāḥ*. Similarly,

स्वाध्याय यज्ञाः *svādhyāya yajñāḥ* - Learning to recite properly the Vedas in the tradition of one's own family is स्वाध्याय *svādhyāya* with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* - with dedication, keeping it in memory and communicating that knowledge to others in the community, again, in the proper manner with श्रद्धा *śraddhā* and dedication. That is called स्वाध्याय यज्ञ *svādhyāya yajña*, and those whose major occupation is such स्वाध्याय यज्ञ *svādhyāya yajña* are called स्वाध्याय यज्ञाः *svādhyāya yajñāḥ*. Again,

ज्ञान यज्ञाः *jñāna yajñāḥ* - The ज्ञान यज्ञाः *jñāna yajñāḥ* are people who are totally dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and service at the highest possible level at all times. In addition to the pursuit of objective knowledge and related services, they also learn, study, understand, appreciate and practice the content of Vedas and Upanishads, and they pass on that understanding and appreciation to others in the community who are qualified to receive that knowledge. Thus there are a number of यज्ञ कर्मसु *yajña karmas* described in the Vedas. Continuing, भगवान् *bhagavān* says

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणे अपानं तथा अपरे ।

*apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe apānam tathā apare ।*

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायाम परायणाः ॥

4 - 29

*prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma parāyaṇāḥ ॥*

In this verse Sri Krishna makes particular mention of one of the योग यज्ञ कर्मसु *yoga yajña karmas*, namely

प्राणायाम *prāṇāyāma* - breathing exercises, which is considered to be very good for cultivating discipline and also good health. प्राणायाम *prāṇāyāma* has three components in one. they are पूरकं *pūrakam*, रेचकं *recakam* and कुम्भकं *kumbhakam*. पूरकं *pūrakam* is inhalation, filling up the lungs with air. रेचकं *recakam* is exhaling - outgoing breath, emptying the lungs. कुम्भकं *kumbhakam* is holding the breath, either inside or outside. अन्तः कुम्भकं *antaḥ kumbhakam* is holding the breath inside and बहिः कुम्भकं *bahiḥ kumbhakam* is holding the breath outside.



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By controlling the duration of each one of these three components, one can achieve certain results. There is obviously some close relationship between one's mental state and one's mode of breathing. Unwholesome mental situations such as fear, lust, anger, etc., disturb and hinder the flow of breath. Similarly wholesome mental atmosphere such as calmness, contentment, etc. leads to rhythm, steadiness and smoothness in breathing.

The practice of प्राणायाम *prāṇāyāma* as an exercise is not an easy one. While its correct practice can be beneficial, its incorrect practice can be harmful. Some people practice प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga* as यज्ञ *yajña* by controlling their रेचकं *recakam*, पूरकं *pūrakam* and कुम्भकं *kumbhakam* - by controlling their breathing out, breathing in and holding the breath inside or outside. That is what this verse says:

अपरे प्राणायाम परायणाः *apare prāṇāyāma parāyaṇāḥ* - Some people practice प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga* as परायणं *parāyaṇam*, which means for them, प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga* is परं अयनं *param ayanam* - Supreme Abode – ब्रह्मन् *brahman* itself, the highest destination to be reached, which means that they are totally committed to प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga*. How do they practice प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga*? भगवान् *bhagavan* says:

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं *apāne juhvati prāṇam* - प्राण *prāṇa* is रेचकं *recakam* - outgoing breath and अपान *apāna* is पूरकं *pūrakam* - inhalation. They offer the प्राण *prāṇa*, the outgoing breath as आहुति *āhuti* - as oblation, in the fire of अपान *apāna* - the inhalation, which means when they inhale, they take the air in a controlled manner deliberately. They do not breath out involuntarily.

तथा *tathā* - in a similar manner

प्राणे अपानं जुह्वति *prāṇe apānam juhvati* -- They offer अपान *apāna* - the incoming breath as आहुति *āhuti* - as oblation in the fire of प्राण *prāṇa* - the outgoing breath, which means that they breath out for the full length of time needed, preventing inhalation in the meantime. Again, the discipline is continued by:

प्राणापान गती रुद्ध्या *prāṇāpāna gatī ruddhvā*

प्राण गती रुद्ध्या *prāṇa gatī ruddhvā* - stopping the movement of the outgoing breath, which means holding the breath inside, and also

अपान गती रुद्ध्या *apāna gatī ruddhvā* - stopping the movement of the ingoing breath, which means holding the breath outside. Therefore,



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प्राणापान गती रुद्ध्या *prāṇāpāna gatī ruddhvā* means cultivating discipline by कुम्भकं *kumbhakam*, holding the breath inside or outside.

That is how they practice प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga*. Those who practice such प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga* are called प्राणायाम परायणाः *prāṇāyāma parāyaṇāḥ*. If practiced properly, the practice of प्राणायाम योग *prāṇāyāma yoga* as यज्ञ *yajña* is another form of कर्म योग *karma yoga*. It brings about certain tranquility in the mind which is conducive to gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. In the next verse, Sri Krishna refers to one more kind of यज्ञ *yajña* called नियत आहार यज्ञ *niyata āhāra yajña*.

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।

*apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati ।*

सर्वे अपि एते यज्ञविदः यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥

4 - 30

*sarve api ete yajña vidah yajña kṣapita kalmaṣāḥ ॥*

अपरे *apare* - Some people cultivate discipline by

नियत आहाराः *niyata āhārāḥ* - regulating or restricting their food. It is not just dieting, it is much more than that. Food in a general sense includes all sensory activity - food for the ear, food for eyes, food for touch, taste, smell, etc.

प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति *prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati* - They offer the प्राणाs *prāṇās* - physiological functions, into the प्राणाs *prāṇās* as आहुति *āhuti* - as oblation. That is यज्ञ *yajña*.

That means, by controlling one kind of activity, one also controls every other kind of human activity. That is the discipline here.

सर्वे अपि एते यज्ञविदः *sarve api ete yajñavidah* - All these people who cultivate discipline through the various kinds of यज्ञाs *yajñās* described above, they are all यज्ञ विदः *yajña vidah* - they are knowers of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. They know what यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* really means, because

यज्ञ क्षपित कल्मषाः *yajña kṣapita kalmaṣāḥ* - their sins are destroyed by their यज्ञ कर्मs *yajña karmas*. They redeem themselves from the obstructions to their spiritual progress by their यज्ञ कर्मs *yajña karmas*. Thus, citing the various kinds of यज्ञ कर्मs *yajña karmas*, Sri Krishna points out that performance of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is



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the only way for redeeming oneself from obstructions to one's spiritual progress. That is Sri Krishna's message today.

Sri Krishna has more to say on यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* which we will see next time.



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## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः - ज्ञानकर्मसंन्यासयोगः

*caturtho 'dhyāyaḥ - jñāna karma sanyāsa yogaḥ*

### Chapter 4

Volume 7

यज्ञं शिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनं ।

*yajña śiṣṭāmṛtabhujo yānti brahma sanātanaṁ ।*

नायं लोकोऽस्ति अयज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥

4 - 31

*nāyaṁ loko'sti ayajñasya kuto'nyaḥ kurusattama ॥*

एवं बहुयविधा यज्ञाः वितताः ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।

*evaṁ bahuyavidhā yajñāḥ vitatāḥ brahmaṇo mukhe ।*

कर्मजान् विद्धि तान् सर्वान् एवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥

4 - 32

*karmajān viddhi tān sarvān evaṁ jñātvā vimokṣyase ॥*

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् ज्ञानं यज्ञः परंतप ।

*śreyān dravyamayāt yajñāt jñāna yajñaḥ paramtapa ।*

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥

4 - 33

*sarvaṁ karmākhalam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate ॥*

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

*tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā ।*

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनः तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

4 - 34

*upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninaḥ tattvadarśinaḥ ॥*

Sri Krishna has been talking about कर्म योग *karma yoga* practiced in the form of various यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* in daily life, such as देव यज्ञ *deva yajña*, ब्रह्म यज्ञ *brahma yajña*, द्रव्य यज्ञ *dravya yajña*, तपो यज्ञ *tapo yajña*, स्वध्याय यज्ञ *svadhyāya yajña*, ज्ञान यज्ञ *jñāna yajña*, प्राणायाम यज्ञ *prāṇāyāma yajña*, नियताहार यज्ञ *niyatāhāra yajña*, etc. to point out that performance of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas*



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*yajña karmas* is the only way for uplifting oneself from all kinds of obstructions to one's spiritual progress.

When one does any kind of the above यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas*, what does one get out of it? भगवान् *bhagvān* says:

यज्ञ शिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनं ।

*yajña śiṣṭāmṛtabhujo yānti brahma sanātanam ।*

नायं लोकोऽस्ति अयज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुत्तम ॥

4 - 31

*nāyam loko'sti ayajñasya kuto'nyah kuruttama ॥*

यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृतभुजः *yajña śiṣṭa amṛta bhujah* - Those who enjoy what is left over after performing the यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, are called

यज्ञ शिष्टं *yajña śiṣṭa* means यज्ञ शेषं *yajña śeṣam* - what is left over after performing the यज्ञ *yajña*. That यज्ञ शिष्टं *śiṣṭa yajña* is अमृतं *amṛtam*, means प्रसादं *prasādam*. Therefore, यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः *yajña śiṣṭa amṛta bhujah* means, those who eat what is left over after performing यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, those who eat the प्रसाद *prasādam* of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*.

When we do देव यज्ञ *deva yajña* - any kind of पूजा *pūjā* to a देवता *devatā*, we always offer some food to the देवता *devatā*. After performing the यज्ञ *yajña*, that food is no longer what it was before, It is now प्रसादं *prasādam*. Therefore, with respect to people who perform देव यज्ञ *deva yajña*, यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः *yajña śiṣṭa amṛta bhujah* means those who eat the प्रसाद *prasāda* of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*.

Now, with respect to people who do other kinds of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* which do not involve any food as such, for them, whatever they get as a result of their यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is प्रसाद *prasāda* for them.

Therefore, whatever be the kind of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* that one does, यज्ञ शिष्ट अमृत भुजः *yajña śiṣṭa amṛta bhujah* means those who live a life of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña*



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*karmas*, enjoying the results of their यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* as the very Grace of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*.

यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनं *yānti brahma sanātanaṁ* - They ultimately go to ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, reach ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, which is eternal, which means they gain ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* in due course. The word यान्ति *yānti* means गच्छन्ति *gacchanti* - they go or they reach, which indicates that some time factor (some distance) is involved here.

Simply because one eats some good food, one does not grow up all of a sudden. It takes time to grow. Similarly, every यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is only a kind of discipline. यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is not ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*. Simply because one lives a life of discipline and also धर्म *dharma*, one does not gain ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*. यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is only a pre-requisite, and it is a necessary pre-requisite, for gaining ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*, because it makes the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* fit for gaining ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*.

If such यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is also simultaneously followed by श्रवणं *śravaṇaṁ*, मननं *mananaṁ* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsaṇaṁ* - listening and understanding, reflection and absorption of Upanishadic knowledge, one can ultimately reach ब्रह्म सनातनं *brahma sanātanaṁ* - one can gain ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*. One can recognize ब्रह्मन् *brahman* everywhere and in everything, including in oneself.

That is with respect to one who lives a life of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*. Now what about one who has no यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* at all in one's daily life. Such a person is called अयज्ञः *ayajñah* - one who has absolutely no discipline and consequently cannot live a life of धर्म *dharma* at all times. Regarding such अयज्ञः *ayajñah*, भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

अयज्ञस्य न अयं लोकः अस्ति *ayajñasya na ayaṁ lokaḥ asti* - This world is not for such अयज्ञः *ayajñah*, which means such a person cannot enjoy even the ordinary pleasures of life that this world offers to every one, whether one is a ज्ञानी *jñānī* or an अज्ञानी, *ajñānī*, whether one is enlightened or not. Even to enjoy the ordinary



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pleasures of life, one must lead a life of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* - self-control, discipline and renunciation (त्याग बुद्धि *tyāga buddhi*) in daily life. That being the case

कुतोऽन्यः *kuto'nyah* - कुतः अन्यः *kutaḥ anyah* - For such an अयज्ञ *ayajñah*, for the one whose daily life is devoid of यज्ञ *yajña*, where is the question of gaining the superior joys of life arising from ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, which requires not only यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* but much more

कुरुसत्तम *kurusattama* - O! Arjuna -

एवं बहु विधाः यज्ञाः वितताः ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।

*evam̐ bahu vidhāḥ yajñāḥ vitatāḥ brahmaṇo mukhe ।*

कर्मजान् विद्धि तान् सर्वान् एवं ज्ञत्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥

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*karmajān viddhi tān sarvān evam̐ jñatvā vimokṣyase ॥*

एवं बहु विधाः यज्ञाः वितताः ब्रह्मणो मुखे

*evam̐ bahu vidhāḥ yajñāḥ vitatāḥ brahmaṇo mukhe*

एवं *evam̐* - In this manner, in the manner described earlier

बहु विधाः यज्ञाः *bahu vidhāḥ yajñāḥ* - many varieties of यज्ञ कर्मs वितताः *yajñāḥ karmas vitatāḥ* are described and elaborated.

ब्रह्मणे मुखे *brahmaṇe mukhe* means वेद द्वारेण *veda dvāraeṇa* - through the Vedas, in the Vedas. Thus many varieties of यज्ञs *yajñas* - disciplines and actions are elaborated through the sounds of the Vedas. Vedic words are not mere words. They are more than words. They are शब्द प्रमाण *śabda pramāṇa*. They are indicators of knowledge beyond the scope of words. The Vedic words describing यज्ञs *yajñas* - rituals of various kinds, have to be understood properly. The most important thing to understand about all यज्ञs *yajñas* - all rituals is the following

कर्मजान् विद्धि, तान् सर्वान् *karmajān viddhi, tān sarvān*

विद्धि *viddhi* - Addressing Arjuna, भगवान् *bhagavān* says

विद्धि *viddhi* you must understand clearly, what?

तान् सर्वान् कर्मजान् *tān sarvān karmajān* - all the यज्ञs *yajñas* are कर्मजान् *karmajān*, कर्म *karma* born, which means that every यज्ञ *yajña* - every ritual,



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whatever be its name and form, is only a कर्म *karma*. It is not ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. By doing a कर्म *karma*, one cannot gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* - Self-knowledge.

Sri Krishna tells here something very significant. "Arjuna, you say that you want श्रेयस् *śreyas*, the परम पुरुषार्थ *parama puruṣārtha* - the highest goal of life. That श्रेयस् *śreyas* is मोक्ष *mokṣa*, and That is ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* - that श्रेयस् *śreyas* is not the result of a यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* or any कर्म *karma*. You must clearly understand the nature of कर्म *karma*, what it can do and what it cannot do." What are the things that a कर्म *karma* can do?

उत्पत्ति *utpatti*, कर्म *karma* can produce something that is potential

संस्कार *saṁskār*, कर्म *karma* can purify, and it can bring something back to its original state

विकार *vikār*, कर्म *karma* can change something from one form to another form. कर्म *karma* can modify one into another, and

आप्ति: *āptiḥ*, कर्म *karma* can get something that is already there. कर्म *karma* can make one reach a place that is already there.

All the above four attributes of कर्म *karma* do not apply to मोक्ष *mokṣa*, because मोक्ष *mokṣa* cannot be produced. It is not an object. To realize that "I am ब्रह्मन् *brahman*" is मोक्ष *mokṣa*. Between the knower and the known, there is no distance.

मोक्ष *mokṣa* cannot be purified. It is ever pure.

नित्य शुद्ध : *nitya śuddhaḥ* - It cannot be contaminated with anything

मोक्ष *mokṣa* cannot be changed or modified, because it is not subject to any change

मोक्ष *mokṣa* is identical with आत्मा *ātmā* - the SELF, which is all-pervasive

What is all-pervasive need not be reached. What is to be reached should be away from you, and it should be different from you. मोक्ष *mokṣa* is neither away from you nor different from you. The moment you want to reach मोक्ष *mokṣa* you are already moving away from मोक्ष *mokṣa*. मोक्ष *mokṣa* is being yourself.



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That is the nature of कर्म *karma* and मोक्ष *mokṣa*. But there is no contradiction between कर्म *karma* and मोक्ष *mokṣa*. They are not opposed to each other. You need कर्म *karma* to become fit for मोक्ष *mokṣa*. The only कर्म *karma* that can make you fit for मोक्ष *mokṣa* is यज्ञ कर्म *karma*, and that is indeed कर्म योग *karma yoga*. Thus यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is मोक्ष साधनं *mokṣa sādhanam*, the means for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

एवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे *evam jñātvā vimokṣyase* - Understanding the nature of कर्म *karma* in this manner, you gain release from all mistaken notions of कर्म *karma*. You will then be able to appreciate the glory of कर्म *karma* as यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, as the only means for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

If यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas* are the means for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* and there are so many different kinds of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karmas*, then what kind of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is best suited for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa* as early as possible? Obviously, all यज्ञ *yajñas* cannot be equal, since each one is different from the others in terms of कर्म फल *karma phalas*. That being the case, what is the best kind of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* which is most conducive to gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*? Answering this question, भगवान् *bhagavān* says,

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् ज्ञान यज्ञः परंतप ।

*śreyān dravyamayāt yajñāt jñāna yajñah paramtapa ।*

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥

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*sarvaṁ karmākhilam pārtha jñāne pari samāpyate ॥*

परंतप *paramtapa* - O! Arjuna. परंतप *paramtapa* literally means one who totally destroys one's enemies, both internal and external enemies. परंतप *paramtapa* is one of the most endearing names for Arjuna. O! Arjuna.

श्रेयान् ज्ञानयज्ञः *śreyān jñāna yajñah* - ज्ञान यज्ञ *jñāna yajña* - is superior to all other forms of यज्ञ *yajña*. ज्ञान यज्ञ *jñāna yajñah* is total commitment and dedication to knowledge and service at the highest possible level, at all times. Such ज्ञान यज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is the best among यज्ञ *yajñas* for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*.



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The people who are committed to the pursuit of ज्ञान यज्ञ *jñāna yajña* are those who not only learn the Vedas and the Upanishads, which means both objective knowledge and spiritual knowledge, properly with dedication, understanding and appreciation, they also practice the content of that knowledge in daily life. They also pass on that knowledge to others in the community, who are qualified to receive that knowledge, as service to परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* and the world at large. In other words, ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is the way of life for such people.

To start with, ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is also a साधन *sādhana* - a means, a discipline for gaining मोक्ष *mokṣa*. However, as the person matures in such discipline, one ultimately grows up to be a ज्ञानी *jñānī* - a wise person. ज्ञानी *jñānī* means one whose nature is कर्मणि अकर्म यः पश्यत्, अकर्मणि च कर्म यः *karmaṇi akarma yaḥ paśyat, akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ*. The ज्ञानी *jñānī* is one who sees, who recognizes परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* in every कर्म *karma*, and at the same time recognizes every कर्म *karma* as the Glory of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*. For such a person, as Sri Krishna said earlier

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणाहुतं ।

*brahmārpaṇam brahmahaviḥ brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam ।*

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ॥

*brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarma samādhinā ॥*

Thus for an enlightened person, for a ज्ञानी *jñānī*, every कर्म *karma* is a ब्रह्मयज्ञ *brahma yajña*, a ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*. Such ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is श्रेयस् *śreyas* and is superior to द्रव्यमयात् यज्ञात् *dravyamayāt yajñāt*, यज्ञस यज्ञस *yajñas yajñas* which involve only objects or materials of some kind because a द्रव्यमय यज्ञ *dravyamaya yajña* - a यज्ञकर्म *yajña karma* involving only objects and materials of some kind is only an initiator of results – कर्मफलस *karma phalas*. An ordinary person does such यज्ञ *yajña* for a purpose in view. यज्ञ *yajña* being a कर्म *karma*, naturally produces some results which initiate another action, another यज्ञ *yajña*, another action, etc., and the process is endless.

On the other hand, in ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*, ज्ञानं *jñānam* itself is the result. It does not produce any result external to oneself. While ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* does not



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produce any material result, it does accomplish something. The accomplishment is सिद्धस्य सिद्धिः *siddhasya siddhiḥ*. It is the accomplishment of something that is already accomplished, which means, it is the realization and enjoyment of the fact that one is already a सिद्ध पुरुष *siddha puruṣa*, a पूर्ण पुरुष *pūrṇa puruṣa* - a full person, a free person, free from all bondages.

Anything that is produced at a particular time is subject to disappearance at another time. Thus any created object is bound by time. It is अनित्यं *anityam* - not eternal. मोक्ष *mokṣa* is not created, that is why it is नित्यं *nityam* - eternal. मोक्ष *mokṣa* is not an event in time. It is already there. It is already ONESELF. तत् त्वं असि *tat tvaṁ asi* - That you are, says the Upanishad. "अहं नित्य मुक्तः *ahaṁ nitya muktaḥ* - I am ever Free" Realization of that knowledge - Recognition of that freedom is ज्ञानं *jñānam*, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, ईश्वरज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge.

An action which makes you fit for gaining that ज्ञानं *jñānam* is ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*. Such ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is superior to any other kind of यज्ञ *yajña*. Therefore perform every कर्म *karma*, not only as यज्ञ *yajña*, but as ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*. Let everyone of your actions be an enlightened action. Because, Sri Krishna says

पार्थ *pārtha* - O! Arjuna

सर्व कर्म अखिलं *sarva karma akhilaṁ* - all actions without exception

ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते *jñāne pari samāpyate* - find their total fulfillment in ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*

Just as a river reaches its destination when it joins the ocean, all actions which constitute the river of कर्म *karma*, performed as ज्ञानयज्ञ कर्म *jñāna yajña karma*, find their total fulfillment in ज्ञानं *jñānam*, ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahmajñānam*, ईश्वरज्ञानं *īśvarajñānam*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self knowledge, which is the destination of ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge itself is मोक्ष *mokṣa* - freedom. Between आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* and मोक्ष *mokṣa*, there is no distance, which means that between ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* and मोक्ष *mokṣa* there is no distance. Between every other kind of यज्ञ *yajña* and मोक्ष *mokṣa* there is some



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distance. That is why ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is superior to all other forms of यज्ञकर्म *yajña karma*.

How can one do every कर्म *karma* as ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*? In other words, what is the means for gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self Knowledge, which will enable one to do every कर्म *karma* as ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*? भगवान् *bhagavān* says

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

*tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā ।*

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनः तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

*upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninaḥ tattva darśinaḥ ॥*

That which will enable one to do every कर्म *karma* as ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña* is total commitment to knowledge and service at the highest possible level at all times. What that means with respect to Self-knowledge is being told here. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna - which means you and me

तत् विद्धि *tat viddhi* - Learn that means of gaining आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* by प्रणिपातेन *praṇipātena*, परिप्रश्नेन *paripraśnena*, सेवया *sevayā*

by the three-fold means of श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyaasanam*

प्रणिपातेन *praṇipātena* - प्रणिपातेन *praṇipātena* literally means, by falling at the feet of the teacher. Let us understand this. The teacher is only परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

There is really no other teacher. Thus, प्रणिपातनं *praṇipātanam* is only ईश्वर शरणागति *īśvara śaraṇāgati* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* being totally surrendered to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is already within oneself as सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप आत्मा *sat cit ānanda svarūp ātmā* - as one's Pure consciousness, consciousness totally free from one's कर्म *karma* generated माया गुणः *māyā guṇaḥ*.

One's Pure consciousness is the real and the only teacher. That pure consciousness is the eternal limitless ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

All teachings - Vedas, Upanishads and the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* arise directly from ब्रह्मणो मुखं *brahmaṇo mukham* -from that ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - from that pure consciousness only. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says "Learn to surrender your mind



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and बुद्धि *buddhi* totally, to your pure consciousness and learn to listen and understand the teachings arising from that pure consciousness in you, at all times. Being tuned to one's pure consciousness at all times is, being God-conscious at all times.”

When your mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* become ready for being in such God Consciousness at all times, ready to listen to the words of the Vedanta, an appropriate teacher in some form and name will already be there to help you to remove all apparent obstructions to Vedantic knowledge. Approach that teacher with proper attitude, and listen to the words of Vedanta being explained to you by the teacher, just as Arjuna is doing right now. Such listening and understanding is श्रवणं *śravaṇam* by प्रणिपातनं *praṇipātanam*, the first step in the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. The next step is

परिप्रश्नेन *pari praśnena* - by repeated questioning of your own understanding of the words of the Upanishads, by your own self, in your own self, and thereby resolving all your doubts through your own means of logic. This step is called मननं *mananam* - reflection on the teachings of the Upanishads.

Because of the peculiar make-up of one's own mind and बुद्धि *buddhia*, the questions which arise in one's mind are peculiar to oneself. Therefore, the mode of reflection is different for different people. No person other than yourself can clear the doubts that arise in your mind. If someone tries to clear your doubts, that will only create other doubts. Therefore, मननं *mananam* - reflection can only be by your own self. No second person is involved in your own process of reflection on the words of the Upanishads. Thus मननं *mananam* is the second step in the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. The third and the final step is

सेवया *sevayā* - by service. By doing every कर्म *karma* as सेव *seva* - Service. Service to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - कर्म *karma* totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Every सेव *seva* is only ईश्वर सेव *īśvara seva*. Service to anybody, to any cause or anything is only service to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Service to one's own self, rooted in whatever ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānam*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge that one has. Such service is निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* - absorption of Upanishadic knowledge gained by श्रवणं *śravaṇam* and मननं *mananam* in daily life.



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Thus this three-step process श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* - प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन *praṇipātena paripraśnena*, सेवया *sevayā* - this three-step process is the means for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, and for doing every कर्म *karma* as ज्ञानयज्ञ *jñāna yajña*. In this three step process, the very first process is प्रणिपातनं *praṇipātena* - going to a teacher seeking ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. If you seek ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* with proper attitude,

ज्ञानिनः *jñāninaḥ* - the enlightened people

तत्त्वदर्शिनः *tatva darśinaḥ* - those who have the clear vision of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* - spiritual knowledge

ते ज्ञानं उपदेक्ष्यन्ति *te jñānam upadekṣyanti* - they will teach you that knowledge. Why?

Because that is the nature of an enlightened person. Just as a lighted lamp naturally lights another lamp, an enlightened person enlightens another person naturally, if only that other person is ready for such enlightenment, just as Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna just now.

By these words, Sri Krishna is not suggesting that Arjuna should go to some other teacher to gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam*. Sri Krishna is just telling the क्रम *krama* - the उपाय *upāya* - the proper means for gaining Self Knowledge. Arjuna already has a great teacher in Sri Krishna, whom he did approach with proper attitude, and from whom he is already gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. So it is for all of us. If we approach Sri Krishna in the भगवत् गीता *bhagvat gītā* with proper attitude, we will also, likewise, gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* from the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā*, by the very Grace of Sri Krishna.

When one gains ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam* through the three step process of श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam*, then what happens? That we will see next time.