



## श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अक्षर ब्रह्म योगः

### Chapter 8

Volume 3

- कविं पुराणं अनुशासितारम् अणोः अणीयांसम् अनुस्मरेत् यः ।  
सर्वस्य धातारम् अचिन्त्य रूपम् आदित्यवर्णम् तमसः परस्तात् ॥ 8 – 9
- प्रयाणकाले मनसा अचलेन भक्त्या युक्तः योगबलेन चैव  
भ्रुवोः मध्ये प्राणम् आवेश्य सम्यक् स तं परम् पुरुषम् उपैति दिव्यं ॥ 8 -10
- यत् अक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यत् यतयो वीतरागाः ।  
यत् इच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यम् चरन्ति तत् ते पदम् संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ 8 – 11
- सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य, मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।  
मूर्ध्नि आधाय, आत्मनः प्रणम्, आस्थितो योगधारणां ॥ 8 – 12
- ॐ इति, एकाक्षरम् ब्रह्म व्याहरन्, मां अनुस्मरन् ।  
यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहम्, स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ 8 – 13

As we may recall, in the preceding two verses, Sri Krishna said: Any ईश्वर भक्त – any Devotee of परमेश्वर can uplift oneself to become a ज्ञानी, and recognize and enjoy identity with परमेश्वर in oneself, as ONESELF Itself, in one's own life-time, and also for ever thereafter. The Means for such self-upliftment is:

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन, परमेश्वरम् अनुचिन्तयन्, मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिः सन्,  
सर्वेषु कालेषु मां अनुरमरणं कुर्वन्, स्वधर्मं कुर्वन् च ,  
भक्तः परमं पुरुषं याति ॥

Cultivating भक्तियोग through constant practice of कर्म योग, ध्यान योग and बुद्धि योग, contemplating on परमेश्वर as अक्षरं ब्रह्म, सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं etc., offering one's Mind and बुद्धि totally to परमेश्वर in thought, word and deed, with the mental disposition of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति at all times, and, at the same time performing one's immediate worldly duties as well as one can, at all times, with the attitude of कर्म योग, यज्ञ कर्म and प्रसाद बुद्धि, one can uplift oneself to the State of a



ज्ञानी – a Self-Realized person, in one's own life time, and experience, realize, and enjoy total identity with That परम पुरुष – The पुरुषोत्तम – The परमेश्वर, abiding in one's own self as Oneself Itself, now while living, and forever thereafter.

Continuing that message, Sri Krishna now describes That परम पुरुष – The परमेश्वर, through 8 Upanishad pointer-words to facilitate ईश्वर अनुस्मरणं, ईश्वर अनुचिन्तनं, contemplation on परमेश्वर.

कविं पुराणं अनुशासितारम् अणोः अणीयांसम् अनुस्मरेत् यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारम् अचिन्त्य रूपम् आदित्यवर्णम् तमसः परस्तात् ॥

8 – 9

The ईश्वर भक्त – the Devotee of परमेश्वर, who repeatedly contemplates on परमेश्वर, as indicated by these pointer-words, ultimately reaches That परमेश्वर. That is the Message here.

Now, let us try to understand what exactly Sri Krishna says:

यः अनुस्मरेत् – The one who constantly engages oneself in ईश्वर अनुस्मरणं – contemplation on परमेश्वर. ईश्वर अनुस्मरणं is not necessarily the same as ईश्वर स्मरणं. ईश्वर स्मरणं is just ईश्वर चिन्तनं – Meditation on ईश्वर, thinking about परमेश्वर in some Form and Name. ईश्वर अनुस्मरणं is ईश्वर अनुचिन्तनं – which is Meditation on परमेश्वर consistent with one's Knowledge of परमेश्वर, gained from Upanishads. Such Meditation on परमेश्वर is contemplation on परमेश्वर, which is really निदिध्यासनं – absorption and assimilation of ईश्वर ज्ञानं gained from the Upanishads.

निदिध्यासनं is always after श्रवणं and मननं. श्रवणं is listening and understanding the words of the Upanishads, and मननं is reflection on the content of those words, and gaining a clarity of knowledge on परमेश्वर beyond doubt. After such श्रवणं and मननं, comes निदिध्यासनं – absorption and assimilation of the clearly understood knowledge on परमेश्वर. Such निदिध्यासनं is अनुस्मरणं or अनुचिन्तनं.

There is a difference between meditation and contemplation. In meditation, there is usually a distance between the meditator and The ONE meditated upon. That distance vanishes in contemplation. You are what you meditate on – that is contemplation. Therefore, in निदिध्यासनं, the ईश्वर भक्त progressively becomes the very embodiment



of परमेश्वर. Thus Self-Realization, which means recognition of oneself as परमेश्वर  
Itself, is a matter of knowledge, and it is not simply an object of thought.

Simply because I think I am परमेश्वर, I do not become परमेश्वर. Likewise, simply  
because I think I am not परमेश्वर, I do not become separate from परमेश्वर. That the  
**one** All-pervading परमेश्वर is the innermost Self of oneself and, indeed, the innermost  
Self of all beings in this creation, is a Fact of Nature which needs to be understood,  
experienced and recognized, and that is Self-realization. Such Self-realization is  
possible only through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं, which involves कर्म योग, ध्यान  
योग and बुद्धि योग together, which means भक्ति योग way of life.

Therefore, यः अनुस्मरेत् means the one who is continuously engaged in भक्ति योग at all  
times. Such a person - परमं पुरुषं याति, reaches परमेश्वर, (please note the present  
tense here), experiences and recognizes his or her identity with परमेश्वर, gains Self-  
realization, while still living in this very life.

As an aid to the process of निदिध्यासनं – contemplation on परमेश्वर, Sri Krishna  
provides here 8 pointers, all of which converge to the same **one** परम पुरुष – The  
परमेश्वर, to be realized, to be reached by knowledge. These pointers are the लक्षण –  
the distinguishing marks of परमेश्वर, which one can recognize through contemplation on  
परमेश्वर, being in भक्ति योग.

कविं – Ordinarily, कवि means a poet. In the Upanishads, कवि means क्रान्तदर्शी – one  
who is able to see the entire past, present and future in all details, which means सर्वज्ञः –  
**one** who is Omniscient.

पुराणं – चिरंतनं, सनातनं, पुरा अपिनवं – eternal, always new as ever before, never  
subject to change

अनुशासितारम् means सर्वस्य जगतः प्रशासितारम् – The **one** who is the Ordainer of the  
entire creation, The **one** who is The Law Maker, The Law Wielder and The Law Itself  
governing the entire universe.

अणोः अणीयांसं

सूक्ष्मात् अपि सूक्ष्मतरं – The **one** who is the more subtle than the most subtle one can  
think of, which means The **one** who pervades all forms, being Itself free from all forms.  
Being so, परमेश्वर has no dimensions. परमेश्वर is अणोः अणीयान् महतो महीयान् (कठ2



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

– 20) – more subtle than the most subtle and at the same time bigger than the biggest. It is Limitless and Infinite in all planes and in all directions.

सर्वस्य धातारं

कर्मफलजातस्य सर्वस्य धातारं विधातारं – The **one** who gives the appropriate कर्मफल – fruit of action to all people to all beings born of कर्म.

अचिन्त्य रूपं – The **one** whose form is inconceivable, either by words or by the mind – why?

सर्वात्मक स्वभावात् – Being the Self of everything there is. What one cannot conceive by the mind can also be non-existent. It is not so with respect to आत्मा. आत्मा is NOT शून्यं. आत्मा has a नित्य स्वरूप – It has a definite स्वरूप namely सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप. In fact, आत्मा is the only **one** which has a definite स्वरूप which never changes. Every object in this creation is subject to change in time and hence has no definite स्वरूप – a Form of its own. Even though आत्मा is available all the time, as It is, It is available only for recognition by knowledge – by one's बुद्धि. It is not available for objectification.

आदित्य वर्णं – means आदित्य वर्णं इव. आदित्य is Sun and वर्णं is प्रकाशः. Like the Sun, which is Self-effulgent, so is आत्मा – The परमेश्वर

आदित्यस्य इव नित्य चैतन्य प्रकाशः – Just like the Sun lights up the entire world, आत्मा illumines the entire creation by Its Eternal Awareness, All-Consciousness. But, while the Sun is opposed to darkness, आत्म चैतन्यं – Self-awareness, is not opposed to ignorance of Self-knowledge. भगवान् makes that clear by saying:

तमसः परस्तात् – **one** who is above ignorance, **one** who is not opposed to ignorance but transcends all ignorance. आत्मा is not opposed to ignorance of the Nature of आत्मा. आत्मा being Pure Awareness, illumines both Knowledge and ignorance about anything including oneself.

यः अनुस्मरेत् – The one who contemplates on परमेश्वर at all times, in the above manner, the one who contemplates on आत्मा – the innermost Self of oneself and of every being, in the above manner at all times.

सः परमं पुरुषं याति (from the previous verse) - that person reaches, experiences, recognizes, and realizes परमेश्वर in oneself, as oneself Itself, and indeed as the self of every self in this creation.



## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Up till now, भगवान् has been talking about ईश्वर भक्तस whose commitment is only to gain ईश्वर ज्ञानं and nothing else, for such ईश्वर भक्तस, as explained above, भक्तियोग is the means for reaching परमेश्वर in oneself. Now, भगवान् goes on to talk about others whose mind and बुद्धि, by virtue of their पूर्व जन्म (past life) associations, are naturally set into the practice of various योगाभ्यासस – physical and mental exercises, such as प्राणायाम, आसन, समाधि, etc. The ultimate objective of such exercises also is to reach परमेश्वर.

Such योग exercises, if done properly, give योगबलं, which is चित्तस्थैर्य – tranquility and firmness of mind and बुद्धि to the individual, which is beneficial in itself. But the योग exercises by themselves do not give any ईश्वर ज्ञानं, which is necessary for reaching परमेश्वर, for recognizing परमेश्वर.

Therefore, भगवान् says in the next verse that those who are committed to the various योग exercises, can also reach परमेश्वर, if only they combine their योगबलं – the strength of योग exercises, together with भक्ति योग. भगवान् says:

प्रयाणकाले मनसा अचलेन भक्त्या युक्तः योगबलेन चैव ।  
भ्रुवोः मध्ये प्राणम् आवेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषं उपैति दिव्यं ॥

8 – 10

For a person whose अन्तःकरण – mind and बुद्धि has remained committed to योग exercises throughout most of one's life, his manner of leaving the physical body at the time of death is also a kind of योग exercise. Therefore, for such a person, भगवान् says

प्रयाणकाले – At the time of departure from one's physical body, which means at the time of death

योगबलेन – by virtue of his योगबल, चित्तस्थैर्य – the tranquility and firmness of अन्तःकरण

भ्रुवोः मध्ये प्राणं आवेश्य सम्यक् – drawing and placing one's प्राण – vital air, between the eye-brows, not breathing anymore, but being alert and conscious at the same time (which is his योग exercise at this time)

अचलेन मनसा – with the mind remaining steady and undisturbed



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

भक्त्या युक्तः एव – only by contemplating on परमेश्वर through भक्ति योग, which means through ईश्वर अनुस्मरणं, अनुचिन्तनं – being aware of one's identity as परमेश्वर Itself, as अक्षरं ब्रह्म, as सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, as तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं .

सः तं दिव्यं पुरुषं उपैति – That person reaches That Divine परम पुरुष – The परमेश्वर after death (As one thinks at the time of death, so one becomes after death). That means, even those ईश्वर भक्तस who have chosen to commit themselves to various forms of योग exercises as their Means for reaching परमेश्वर, can do so only if they have simultaneously cultivated Upanishad Knowledge on परमेश्वर together with भक्ति योग way of life.

Next, Sri Krishna talks about ईश्वर भक्तस who are committed to various Vedic rituals for their ultimate goal of reaching परमेश्वर. For such people, Sri Krishna prescribes ॐ कार उपासन – contemplation on ॐ शब्द – The Sound OM, as the means for reaching परमेश्वर at the time of departure from one's body, because of their life-long association with ॐ शब्द in all Vedic rituals.

As we may recall, Sri Krishna has already said ” सर्व वेदेषु अहं प्रणवः (7 – 8) – I am the प्रणव मन्त्र ॐ in all the Vedas”, which means ॐ is शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् – The Sound OM is direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन्, the immediately recognizable form of अक्षरं ब्रह्मन् – सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म – तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं – The परमेश्वर already in oneself as प्रत्यग आत्मा – one's innermost Self I, which is evident for all those who have cultivated Upanishad knowledge on ब्रह्मन्.

This is how Sri Krishna introduces ॐ कार उपासन for those who are deeply committed to Vedic rituals.

यत् अक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यत् यतयो वीतरागाः ।  
यत् इच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत् ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥

8 – 11

यत् अक्षरं वेदविदः वदन्ति – That अक्षरं ब्रह्म about which वेदविदः – the knowers of the Vedas, those who understand, appreciate and recognize the meaning of the Vedas, talk about.



## ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यत् अक्षरं यतः वीतरागाः विशन्ति - That अक्षरं ब्रह्म into which people liberated from  
द्वन्द्व मोह by their own efforts

(वीतरागाः) - enter and become ONE with

यत् अक्षरं इच्छन्तः ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति - That अक्षरं ब्रह्म, for gaining knowledge of which,  
people study the Upanishads with the help of Knowledgeable Teachers

तत् पदं - The means of reaching That अक्षरं ब्रह्म at the time of departure from one's  
physical body

ते संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये - I will tell you now briefly. This is how one who is deeply committed to  
Vedic ritual can reach अक्षरं ब्रह्म - The परमेश्वर, following one's death.

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।

मूर्ध्नि आधाय आत्मनः प्राणं आस्थितो योगधारणां ॥

8 - 12

ॐ इति एकाक्षरम् ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मां अनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥

8 - 13

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य - Having closed all the gates through which the knowledge of the  
external world enters into one's mind and बुद्धि, which means, keeping one's sense  
organs, mind and बुद्धि totally under control away from the sense objects and sense  
experiences of the external world, which again means

आवृत्त चक्षुः - as the कठोपनिषत् says ( कठ 4 - 1) by turning all of one's sense organs  
and the mind and also all actions governed by them, inward towards one's बुद्धि, trying  
to reach The Absolute Reality of one's own SELF

मनः हृदि निरुध्य च - withdrawing the mind into one's Divine Heart Space, which means  
engaging the mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं wherein परमेश्वर is visualized as अंगुष्ठमात्रं हृत्  
पुण्डरीकं - as Thumb size Full Bloom Lotus Flower already in one's heart space,  
revealing आत्मा - The Self I, as आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्. This mode of ईश्वर ध्यानं reveals  
आत्मा - The Self I as सत्य स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप, आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् - as परमेश्वर  
Itself, already in oneself as ONESELF Itself ( कठ 4 - 12/13)

मूर्ध्नि आधाय आत्मनः प्राणं - bringing one's प्राण - vital air, to the head through the नाडि  
connecting the Divine Heart Space and the head.

आस्थितः योगधारणां - holding the breath in the head, without exhaling, and at the same  
time



## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

ॐ इति एकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् - chanting orally or mentally The ONE – all-inclusive – ॐ  
शब्द – The Sound ॐ – The Word ॐ – recognizing ॐ **as** शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् – the  
Direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् in the form of Sound ॐ – The word ॐ .

मां अनुस्मरेत् - contemplating on ME, The परमेश्वर as आत्मा – The SELF “I” in oneself  
– as ONESELF Itself

यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं - the one who departs from one’s physical body, the one who  
gives up one’s physical body

सः याति परमां गतिं - that person reaches The Supreme गति – The Supreme  
Destination, or the road leading to The Supreme Destination.

The word गति is a revealing word here.

गम्यते इति गतिः - The word गति is like the word योग. The ultimate destination is called  
गति. The road leading to that ultimate destination is also called गति.

The गति for the person leaving his physical body depends on the nature of his ॐ कार  
उपासन. If his उपासन on ॐ is contemplation on ब्रह्मन् itself as अक्षरं ब्रह्म, as सत्यं ज्ञानं  
अनन्तं ब्रह्म, as तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं – the person reaches ब्रह्मन्, becomes One with  
ब्रह्मन्, directly, straight away. On the other hand, if his उपासन on ॐ is meditation on a  
symbol for ब्रह्मन्, which is not identical with ब्रह्मन्, he reaches only the road leading to  
ब्रह्मन्, namely ब्रह्म लोक (कठ 6 – 16)

ब्रह्मलोक is still within संसार. He may stay in ब्रह्म लोक for a long time, and get further  
educated and enlightened, until he recognizes that ॐ is ब्रह्मन् Itself. Afterwards, he  
may continue to remain in ब्रह्मलोक, or anywhere else in संसार, and, finally reach  
ब्रह्मन् at the end of the cycle of creation. This गति, this path to reach ब्रह्मन् is called क्रम  
मुक्ति.

Thus both जीवन मुक्ति and क्रम मुक्ति are possible through ॐ कार उपासन at the time  
one departs from one’s physical body. That is what is pointed out in the above two  
verses.

Let us stop here for today. Before we conclude, let us be clear about something.  
Matters concerning “Death or after death” is not the subject matter of भगवत् गीता. Sri  
Krishna is talking about such matters in this chapter simply because Arjuna has brought





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## ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

up that topic, and the only way to uplift his mind and बुद्धि totally from that topic is to give him a complete answer, which is what Sri Krishna is doing in this chapter.

Death happens when it happens, and there is nothing one can do about it at that time. And there is nothing to worry about it now.

भगवत् गीता is really concerned only with life and fullness of life, what one should know about life now, and what one should do to gain that fullness of life now, in terms of absolute happiness, absolute freedom, and absolute immortality in this very life itself, while one is living with all good health, body, mind and intellect. Sri Krishna resumes His Discourse on this real topic of भगवत् गीता in the next chapter. Until then, let us simply listen, with full attention, to what Sri Krishna says in the rest of this chapter, to complete his response to Arjuna's 7<sup>th</sup> question.

We will continue next time.