



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अक्षर ब्रह्म योगः

Chapter 8

Volume 4

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Arjuna asks Sri Krishna how one can reach परमेश्वर. In answer, Sri Krishna has been telling in the earlier verses how one can reach परमेश्वर with the help of श्रवणं – listening and understanding the words of the Upanishads, मननं – reflecting on the teachings of the Upanishads, निदिध्यासनं absorbing the content of the Upanishad teachings and also with the help of योगभ्यास – योग exercises such as प्राणायाम, आसन, समाधि etc., and also वेद संस्कारs – Vedic rituals of various kinds.

Sri Krishna implicitly admits that these means are not easy ones, they are not meant for all people, and they are neither necessary, nor are they the only means. There are many ईश्वर भक्तs – devotees of परमेश्वर, who have no knowledge of Upanishadic teachings, or Yoga exercises or Vedic rituals. Still, their devotion to परमेश्वर is nothing less.

Especially for such ईश्वर भक्तs, Sri Krishna tells that there is an easier means to reach परमेश्वर. भगवान् says, “I am easily reached by anyone who thinks of ME – the परमेश्वर and no other at all times, without any distraction whatsoever”.



By so saying, Sri Krishna points out that reaching भगवान् is not a matter of scholarship in Vedic knowledge. Reaching भगवान् is a matter of ईश्वर भक्ति and ईश्वर भक्ति only, which was pointed out earlier as अनन्य भक्ति, परम प्रेम स्वरूप एक भक्ति - unqualified absolute love for परमेश्वर only.

Whatever be one's vision of परमेश्वर, if only one has unqualified, absolute love for That परमेश्वर and That परमेश्वर only, and one is naturally and spontaneously attracted towards That परमेश्वर and nothing else, and one wants to reach That परमेश्वर for no reason other than being परमेश्वर itself, then one will certainly reach that परमेश्वर easily, just by being inseparably conscious of That परमेश्वर at all times, wherever one is, whatever one does, and whatever be one's circumstances.

Sri Krishna gives this message in the following verses. भगवान् says:

अनन्यचेताः सततं, यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ, नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

8 – 14

पार्थ - O! Arjuna

तस्य अहं सुलभः - For that person, I am सुलभः. I am easily obtained, I am easily reached. That person reaches ME - The परमेश्वर, easily, naturally and spontaneously. Who is that person?

यः मां स्मरति - the one who thinks of ME - The परमेश्वर - whatever be one's vision of That परमेश्वर.

Everybody is blessed with the faculty of thinking. Everyone is thinking of something or other, all through one's waking hours. Now we are talking about a person who is thinking about परमेश्वर, whatever be his or her vision of परमेश्वर, in the following manner.

अनन्यचेताः, सततं, नित्यशः

अनन्यचेताः means with a mind not thinking about अन्य, meaning any other. With a mind thinking about परमेश्वर only and not any other, if the thinker looks upon परमेश्वर as one different from oneself, then परमेश्वर also becomes अन्य - "another" for that person. Here we are talking about a person who, when he thinks of परमेश्वर, does not think of परमेश्वर as अन्य - as another, When he thinks of परमेश्वर, he identifies



himself totally with that परमेश्वर Itself. For such a person, the thinker, the thought and परमेश्वर are all one and the same. For such a person, the प्रत्यग आत्मा - one's Innermost Self, is परमेश्वर Itself. Any thought he has at any time, anywhere, under any circumstance, is परमेश्वर only. A person so inseparably conscious of परमेश्वर is अनन्यचेताः .

सततं means सर्वदा – always. नैरंतर्यम् – a mind thinking of परमेश्वर constantly, with no distraction whatsoever, a mind that is neither distracted nor distractible from its total identity with परमेश्वर.

नित्यशः means दीर्घ कालं – a mind so being for a long time. A long time means how long? The question of “how long” will arise only when, what you think is different from what you ultimately want to be. But if you think of परमेश्वर totally identifying yourself with परमेश्वर, and what you ultimately want to be is also That परमेश्वर, the question of “how long” you should be thinking of परमेश्वर does not arise. Therefore, नित्यशः means a mind thinking of परमेश्वर throughout one's life time.

Thus, अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः means the one who thinks of परमेश्वर, totally identifying oneself with परमेश्वर, constantly with no distraction whatsoever, throughout one's lifetime. Such a person is a नित्ययुक्तः योगी. That is the kind of योगी Sri Krishna talked about at the end of Chapter 6 in ध्यान गोग.

योगिनां अपि सर्वेषां मद्वतेन अन्तरात्मना ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

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नित्य युक्तः योगी is युक्ततमः योगी – the one for whom the mind is never displaced from God-consciousness. The one for whom the mind ever remains totally absorbed in परमेश्वर. That person is the most exalted among all योगीs. That योगी is referred here as अनन्य चेताः and नित्य युक्तः .

अनन्य चेताः is with reference to what is not in the mind. The one whose mind has no अन्य – another, and नित्य युक्तः is with reference to what is in the mind, the one whose mind remains totally absorbed in परमेश्वर. It is such a person, Sri Krishna described earlier as मद्वतेन अन्तरात्मना युक्ततमः योगी – such a युक्ततमः योगी is a नित्ययुक्तः योगी



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

तस्य नित्य युक्तस्य योगिनः, अहं सुलभः – For such a योगी whose mind is ever absorbed in परमेश्वर, I am easily reached. Such a भक्त reaches me easily. Easily in the sense, for such a person, ईश्वर ज्ञानं and recognition of परमेश्वर in oneself as Oneself Itself comes naturally and spontaneously. Talking about people who reach परमेश्वर in the above manner, भगवान् says,

मां उपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयं अशाश्वतम् ।
न आप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धं परमां गताः ॥

8 – 15

मां उपेत्य means मां परमेश्वर उपेत्य, मद्भावं आपद्य – Reaching Me – the परमेश्वर in the above manner, gaining for themselves the very nature of परमेश्वर Itself, namely सर्वात्मकत्वं, शाश्वतत्वं, etc., each recognizing oneself as all-pervading, ever-existent, unchanging, etc. in terms of knowledge

पुनर्जन्म न आप्नुवन्ति – they do not get any rebirth. They become जीवन् मुक्त. They are released from birth and death forever while still living, because they are now महात्मानः संसिद्धं परमां गताः – they are महात्माः – they are महात्माs, which means they are नित्य युक्ताः – being ever absorbed in परमेश्वर, they are one with परमेश्वर already. They are those for each of whom “I” is limitless and infinite. Further, they are संसिद्धं परमां गताः – which means they are संसिद्धाः – they are totally fulfilled people in life, and also, they are परमां गताः. They have already accomplished the परम पुरुषार्थ – the highest purpose of life. They have already reached the highest goal of life. They have gained मोक्ष – absolute freedom. Living, they are free. When they depart from their bodies, then also they are free. They are ब्रह्मवित्. They have gained, they have realized identity with ब्रह्मन् naturally. They have gained Self-realization.

Thus, through परमेश्वर स्मरणं – thinking of परमेश्वर, totally identifying themselves with परमेश्वर at all times throughout their lives, they have become महात्माs, they have gained मोक्ष in their own lifetimes, and there is no rebirth for them when their प्रारब्ध कर्म s are exhausted and their bodies fall naturally.

For those ईश्वर भक्तस who have not yet reached that exalted state of existence and who may like to gain rebirth again and again to enjoy whatever pleasure such rebirth may offer, भगवान् says that every rebirth in this संसार – this transient world is दुःखालयं and अशाश्वतं .



दुःखालयम् – Every rebirth is only an abode of दुःख – sorrow and pain, and caused by either oneself or by one's surroundings, or by unknown forces over which one has no control. Even supposing that one enjoys some heavenly pleasures of life, all such pleasures are, अशाश्वतं – not permanent. They are अनवस्थित स्वरूपं – they are of transient nature. Hence it only makes sense to seek मोक्ष in life which yields ब्रह्मानन्दं – perennial joy and happiness.

Just like मनुष्य लोक – the world of human beings, several different worlds are said to exist in this हिरण्यगर्भ – this manifest creation. In the तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्, we have seen the mention of other worlds such as गन्धर्व लोक, देव लोक, इन्द्र लोक, ब्रह्म लोक, etc. of which the ब्रह्म लोक is mentioned as the most exalted one. These लोकs, wherever they are and whatever they may be, are not of any particular interest for our purpose now, except as a matter of general information, because Sri Krishna Himself tells us that all these लोकs themselves have only a transient existence, functioning under the over lordship of परमेश्वर Itself.

There is no reason for any person to wish to go to any heaven – any of these celestial worlds, to enjoy anything there, because all such enjoyments are also only of transient nature. By reaching परमेश्वर, by recognizing परमेश्वर already in oneself as Oneself Itself, here and now, one enjoys all pleasures of all लोकs (all worlds) at will, here itself, now itself, and for ever. That is the message of the Taittiriya Upanishad, and that is also the message of Sri Krishna here.

With reference to all the other लोकs – the celestial worlds in this creation, भगवान् says

आब्रह्मभुवनात् लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनः अर्जुन ।

मां उपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

8 – 16

आब्रह्म भुवनात् लोकाः, पुनः आवर्तिनः – All लोकs, up to and including ब्रह्म लोक, have the nature of coming back again. All लोकs, and consequently all the people in these लोकs, are by nature, subject to appearance, disappearance and reappearance; manifestation, de-manifestation and re-manifestation again and again. That is the nature of the cycle of creation.

तु – whereas

मां उपेत्य पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते – reaching ME, the परमेश्वर, there is no पुनर्जन्म – rebirth for anyone. For those who recognize one's identity with परमेश्वर, there is no rebirth for



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

them. The cause for rebirth is अज्ञानं – ignorance of आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge. On recognizing one's identity with परमेश्वर, there is no more rebirth for them.

Reaching any लोक is a matter of कर्म फल – fruit of one's action, whereas reaching परमेश्वर is a matter of gaining आत्म ज्ञानं – Self-knowledge, which is true for any person, in any लोक, at any time. On gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं – on gaining Self-realization, अज्ञानं vanishes, and along with that, पुनर्जन्म also vanishes.

Thus the cause for the rebirth of a person is clear, but why should the लोकs also have to come and go again and again? The reason is कालपरिच्छिन्नत्वात् – all लोकs are created in time, and hence they are limited by time. Any thing limited by time is अनित्यं – impermanent, transient. If so, what is the time limitation for लोकs? भगवान् says

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तं अहः यत् ब्रह्मणः विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां ते अहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥

8 – 17

यत् अहोरात्रविदः जनाः

अहोरात्रविदः जनाः are कालसंख्याविदः – people who are knowledgeable in the computations of day time, night time, etc., which means people who are astronomers. Therefore,

यत् अहोरात्रविदः जनाः विदुः : means that which is well known, that which is common knowledge for our ancient astronomers, namely

ब्रह्मणः अहः : – the day time of ब्रह्माग्नि or प्रजापति – the presiding deity of ब्रह्मलोक, which means the day time of ब्रह्म लोक, which includes all other लोकs, is

सहस्र युगपर्यन्तं – limited to 1000 yugas, and likewise,

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां – the night time of ब्रह्म लोक is again limited to 1000 yugas

The yuga here is महायुग, which includes all the four yugas of the world of human beings, namely कृत युग (also called सत्य युग), त्रेता युग, द्वापर युग and कलि युग. It is common knowledge for our ancient astronomers that for Brahmaji, for the प्रजापति, which means for ब्रह्म लोक, the day time is 1000 महायुगs and likewise the night time is another 1000 महायुगs, in terms of our time scale, the time scale in the world of human beings.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

It may be of interest to note here that we are currently in कलि युग year 5104. According to some commentators, the normal length of कलि युग is 432000 years on earth, the द्वापर युग is twice as long as कलि युग, and त्रेता युग is three times as long as कलि युग, and the कृत युग is four times as long as कलि युग. Consequently, one complete महायुग is 4,320,000 years on earth. One thousand of these constitute one day of Brahma ji, which is 4 billion, 320 million earth years, and so is one nighttime for Brahma ji. In terms of His own time scale, Brahma ji also has His own days, months and years, and has a full life span of 100 years.

Therefore, in each cycle of creation, the life time of Brahma ji, which is the life time of ब्रह्म लोक – the lifetime of हिरण्यगर्भ – manifested creation, in each cycle of creation is equivalent to 4 billion 320 million x 2 x 360 x 100 human years on earth, which is indeed a very long time, but still finite and hence limited. Are these numbers credible? We do not know. But it is not our purpose here to authenticate those numbers regarding the length of युगs and महायुगs. Our purpose here is only to show that in time, there is no eternity. There is eternity only in That which is not bound by time. And That is only आत्मा – The परमेश्वर – The ब्रह्मन् .

Now, what happens in Brahma ji's time? During his daytime, He is awake and active, and so are all His लोकs. When His night comes, He goes to sleep, and all His लोकs also go to sleep, except the ब्रह्म लोक, and the पञ्चमहाभूताs - The five great elements, namely आकाश, वायु, अग्नि, आपः and पृथिवी – The space, air, fire, water and earth. That “लोकs go to sleep” means their activities subside, they appear dissolved and remain unmanifested in the ocean of creation all through Brahma ji's night time. This state of existence is called प्रलय.

The Brahma ji's day breaks. He wakes up. All his लोकs also wake up, re-manifest themselves again, and resume their activities again, just from where they left off the night before they went to sleep, just as we do. This process of प्रलय followed by पुनर् उत्पत्ति – de-manifestation and re-manifestation of लोकs - created worlds, takes place night and day, every day, all through the 100 years of Brahma ji's life time in His own time scale.

After such 100 years, all the लोकs, including the ब्रह्म लोक – which means the entire हिरण्यगर्भ, all that is manifested in the current cycle of creation, disappear into the unlimited ocean of माया, devoid of all manifestations. And this is called महाप्रलय, which subsequently yields place to another cycle of creation.



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ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

All through such प्रलयs and महाप्रलयs, ever before and ever after, there remains One being – Eternal, Unchanging, Ever-conscious and All-inclusive, and That is परमेश्वर – The अक्षरं ब्रह्म, and it is that अक्षरं ब्रह्म whom we recognize in the ॐ कार मन्त्र when we chant ॐ as शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् – direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् as sound ॐ , as the word ॐ.

Sri Krishna talks about these matters in the next few verses, which we will see next time.