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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

द्वादशोऽध्यायः - भक्ति योगः

dvādaśo 'dhyāyaḥ - bhakti yogaḥ

Chapter 12

Volume 2

अर्जुन उवाच

arjuna uvāca

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।

evaṁ satatayukta ye bhaktastvāṁ paryupāsate ।

ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ 12 - 1

ye cāpyakṣaramavyaktaṁ teṣāṁ ke yogavittamāḥ ॥

श्री भगवानुवाच

śrī bhagavān uvāca

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

mayyāveśya mano ye mām nityayukta upāsate ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ 12 - 2

śraddhayā parayopetāste me yuktatamā matāḥ ॥

येत्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।

yetvakṣaramanirdeśyam avyaktaṁ paryupāsate ।

सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवं ॥ 12 - 3

sarvatragamacintyaṁ ca kūṭasthamacalaṁ dhruvaṁ ॥

सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र सम बुद्धयः ।

sanniyamyendriyagrāmaṁ sarvatra sama buddhayaḥ ।

ते प्रप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ 12 - 4

te prapnuvanti mām eva sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ ॥

क्लेशोऽधिकरस्तेषाम् अव्यक्त आसक्त चेतसाम् ।

kleśo 'dhikarasteṣāṁ avyakta āsakta cetasām ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्विरवाप्यते ॥ 12 - 5

avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṁ dehavadbhīravāpyate ॥



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Briefly recalling what we saw last time, Arjuna wants to know what kind of ईश्वर उपासन *īśvar upāsana* – mode of worship of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* is appropriate for his own needs, under his present circumstances. Therefore, he asks Sri Krishna this question. “ There are ईश्वर भक्तस *īśvar bhaktas* who worship परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in the mode of visualizing परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in various forms, names and attributes. There are also other ईश्वर भक्तस *īśvar bhaktas* who worship परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in the mode of अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*, contemplating on परमेश्वर *paramesvar* with no form, no name, and no attributes. Of these two kinds of ईश्वर भक्तस *īśvara bhaktas*, who are the best in terms of their knowledge and practice of योग *yoga* – the means and end of योग *yoga*?” That is Arjuna’s question.

Responding to Arjuna’s question, भगवान् *bhagavan* points out that for people who are committed to the ever-changing worldly life, a life of activities of various kinds, and a life of कर्मस *karmas* and कर्मफलस *karma phaalas*, which means , for Arjuna, and indeed for almost all of us, there is ONLY ONE way for making spiritual progress by any means of practice of योग *yoga* leading ultimately to मोक्ष *mokṣa* – absolute freedom, peace and happiness, and that way is to simultaneously cultivate अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvar bhakti* and कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi*.

अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvar bhakti* means ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvar bhakti* – devotion to परमेश्वर *paramesvar* wherein परमेश्वर *paramesvar* is not away from oneself, and there is no distance between oneself and परमेश्वर *paramesvar*; and कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* means an attitude of service to परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in everything one does, an attitude consistent with the निमित्त मात्रं भव उपदेश *nimitta mātraṁ bhava upadeś* – an attitude wherein one considers oneself totally as an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* at all times. Such अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvar bhakti* and कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* together constitute the surest and the only means for one’s continued spiritual progress leading to मोक्ष *mokṣa*.

The most proper and the most effective means of cultivating अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvar bhakti* is through सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* with श्रद्धा



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śraddha, सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* is worship of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in forms, names and attributes of one's own choice, and श्रद्धा *śraddha* is unqualified and enlightened faith – faith in oneself, faith in one's mode of worship of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, faith in our scriptures, and faith rooted in an understanding and appreciation of Upanishadic knowledge on the nature of जीव *jīva*, जगत् *jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvar*.

Such सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* with श्रद्धा *śraddha* is the most proper and the most effective means for one's spiritual progress leading ultimately to मोक्ष *mokṣa*. That is Sri Krishna's उपदेश *upadeśa*, (teaching) for Arjuna on सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana*, which is the one that is appropriate for his own immediate needs at this time. Sri Krishna is going to talk about सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* in detail a little later. भगवान् *bhagavan* now proceeds to talk about अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन, *akṣara brahma upāsana* its nature and what it does to people capable of doing such उपासन *upāsana*. भगवान् *bhagavan* says

ये तु अक्षरम् अनिर्देश्यम् अव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।

ye tu akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktaṁ paryupāsate ।

सर्वत्रगं अचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थम् अचलं ध्रुवं ॥

12 – 3

sarvatragam acintyaṁ ca kūṭastham acalaṁ dhruvaṁ ॥

सन्नियम्य इन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।

sanniyamya indriyagrāmaṁ sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ ।

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति माम् एव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

12 - 4

te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ ॥

तु *tu* - on the other hand

भगवान् *bhagavan* is now talking about a totally different class of ईश्वर भक्तस *īśvar bhaktas* – the अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासकस *akṣara brahma upāsakas* who are ज्ञानीस *jñānīs*, ज्ञान कर्म संन्यसीस *jñāna karma sanyasīs* who cannot be directly compared with people who are committed to a life of worldly activities. Referring to those अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासकस *akṣara brahma upāsakas*, भगवान् *bhagavan* says



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ये अक्षरम् परि उपासते *ye akṣaram pari upāsate* – those who worship **परमेश्वर** *paramesvar* by meditation and/or contemplation on **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* with no form, no name and no attributes. About such worshippers of **परमेश्वर** *paramesvar*, **भगवान्** *bhagavan* has something to say. Before we see that, let us understand what is **उपासन** *upāsana*.

उपासनं *upāsanam* is an Upanishad word. **उप आसनं** *upa asanam* is **उपासनं** *upāsanam*. **उप** *upa* means “near”, **आसनं** *āsanam* means **स्थिति** *sthiti* – state of being. Therefore **उपासनं** *upāsanam* means, “state of being on the part of a person having reached closer and closer to the object of worship through some form of physical or mental activity”. In any form of **ईश्वर उपासन** *īśvar upāsana*, the object of worship is **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* – the **परमेश्वर** *paramesvar*. In **अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन** *akṣara brahma upāsana*, **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* is worshipped purely through a **मानस कर्म** *mānasa karma* – an activity of the mind and **बुद्धि** *buddhi*, namely meditation and contemplation, more particularly contemplation.

Now the question is, how can one contemplate on something, which has no forms, no name and no attribute whatsoever? It is undoubtedly difficult for ordinary people, but it is possible to understand. How? The means of such contemplation is through **प्रत्यय प्रवाहं** *pratyaya pravāhaṁ* – continuous flow of knowledge. As we know, it is common experience in any process of objective enquiry that by continuous flow of knowledge, one’s **बुद्धि** *buddhi* – faculty of discrimination, moves closer and closer to the target of enquiry. That is true with respect to **ईश्वर उपासन** *īśvar upāsana* also.

Even though **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* cannot be reached by immediate meaning of any word, or by one’s **इन्द्रिय** *indriyas* – organs of perception and action, **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* is **बुद्धि ग्राह्यं** *buddhi graahyaṁ* – It can be reached by one’s **विवेक वैराग्य बुद्धि** *viveka vairāgya buddhi*. Just as, if only I can properly point out a far off target in many different ways by my finger, even though my finger itself does not reach the target following the directions pointed out by the finger, one can reach the target by one’s **बुद्धि** *buddhi*.

In **ब्रह्म उपासन** *brahma upāsana*, such pointing out is accomplished by Upanishad words, indicating **ब्रह्म लक्षणं** *brahma lakṣaṇaṁ* – words capable of directing and propelling one’s cultivated **बुद्धि** *buddhi* closer and closer to **परमेश्वर** *parmeśvar*



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within oneself. Upanishad words such as ओम् *om*, शान्ति *śānti*, शिवोहं *śivoham*, ब्रह्मोहं *brahmoham*, etc. are examples of such words of ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam*.

अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* is natural for ज्ञानी *jñānīs*, because they already have ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. Their आत्मबुद्धि *ātma buddhi* – knowledge about oneself, is already in ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Therefore any Upanishad word indicating ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam* is enough to keep their अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* as a जीव *jīva*, in continuous joy of ब्रह्मानन्दं *brahmānandam*.

On the other hand, due to the environment of the world we live in, some dust may collect in the अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the ज्ञानी *jñānīs* also from time to time, which may temporarily blur their direct vision of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* already in themselves, in which case, अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*, directing and propelling बुद्धि *buddhi* through different words indicating ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam*, can cleanse their अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* and restore their direct vision of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – The परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in themselves.

Here भगवान् *bhagvan* gives few examples of word-pointers - words of ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam* used by ज्ञानी *jñānīs* in their अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*, to direct and propel their अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, towards the परमेश्वर *paramesvar* already in themselves. These word pointers are

अक्षरं *akṣaram*, अनिर्देश्यं *anirdeśyam*, अव्यक्तं *avyaktam*, सर्वत्रगं *sarvatragam*, अचिन्त्यं *acintyam*, कूटस्थं *kūtaṣṭham*, अचलं *acalam*, ध्रुवं *dhruvam*

All these different words indicate the distinguishing marks of the same One ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – the परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, already in oneself.

अक्षरं *akṣaram* means That which is immutable, never subject to change, decay or destruction. That which is ever as it is. That is the same अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* Sri Krishna pointed out in Chapter 8 as अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं *akṣaram brahma paramam*



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(8 – 3). That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* is अक्षरं *akṣaram*, ब्रह्म *brahma* and परमं *paramam*, all words indicating the same One ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

अक्षरं *akṣaram* – unchangeable

ब्रह्म *brahma* – limitless and infinite in any dimension,

अणोः अणीयान् *aṇoḥ aṇīyān* – महतो महीयान् *mahato mahīyān* (कठ *kaṭha* 2-20) – smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest one can think of, and

परमं *paramam* – supreme, incomparable and incomprehensible

Thus अक्षरं *akṣaram*, ब्रह्म *brahma* and परमं *paramam* are themselves word pointers indicating ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, usually expressed as अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman*. Again,

अनिर्देश्यं *anirdeśyam* – that which is indescribable and indefinable. That which is beyond the reach of words, mind and all organs of perception and action.

अव्यक्तं *avyaktam* – that which is unmanifest, not available for objectification by any instrument of perception, and hence That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* is अनिर्देश्यं *anirdeśyam*

सर्वत्रगं *sarvatragam* – that which is all pervasive, everywhere. That which is not limited to any particular location. That which is सर्वात्मकं *sarvātmakam* – the self in one is also in all beings, which means अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* is one's प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* – one's innermost self.

अचिन्त्यं *acintyam* – that which is not the object of any thought. During अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*, some extraneous and irrelevant thoughts might creep up in the mind. All such thoughts have to be rejected by one's बुद्धि *buddhi*, and the mind has to be educated and disciplined not to disturb the course of the बुद्धि *buddhi* towards the प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* – the अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* – the परमेश्वर *paramesvar* already in oneself. As भगवान् *bhagavan* said earlier in ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga*,

आत्म संस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चित् अपि चिन्तयेत्

6 – 25

ātma saṁstham manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcit api cintayet

Use your विवेक वैराग्य बुद्धि *viveka vairāgya buddhi* to fix your wandering mind firmly to आत्मा *ātma* – The ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – the परमेश्वर *paramesvar*. Do not think



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of anything else. That is governing law of ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga*, which makes the Upanishad word अचिन्त्यं *acintyaṃ* as ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇaṃ*, as the word pointer for अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman*.

The बुद्धि *buddhi* has to recognize that आत्मा एव सर्वम् *ātmā eva sarvam* - आत्मा *ātmā* alone is everything.

तत् अन्यत् किञ्चित् अपि नास्ति *tat anyat kiñcit api nāsti* other than आत्मा *ātmā*, there is indeed nothing, which means

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyāṃ idaṃ sarvaṃ* - पूर्णं अदः पूर्णं इदं *pūrṇaṃ adaḥ pūrṇaṃ idaṃ* - there is in fact, no distance between जीव *jīva* and ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

Just as I never lose sight of clay even while I see the pot, and I never lose sight of gold even while I see the ornament, I never lose sight of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* - the परमेश्वर *paramesvar* even while I see many forms, names and attributes. That is the discipline of the mind in ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga*, in any ईश्वर उपासन *īśvara upāsana*, including अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*.

कूटस्थं *kūṭasthaṃ* - The word कूट *kūṭa* ordinarily means something that is false as seen. It also means माया *māyā*. It also means anvil. As an Upanishad pointer word, कूटस्थं *kūṭasthaṃ* stands for that which is behind all false appearances; that which is behind the ever-changing manifestations of माया *māyā*. That which remains unchanged while allowing all changes to take place upon It, That is indeed अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman*.

A thought bubble is कूट *kūṭa*, and the चैतन्य *caitanya* - the awareness behind the thought bubble is कूटस्थं *kūṭasthaṃ*. The thought itself has no independent existence. The कूटस्थम् *kūṭastham* - the pure awareness by which the thought is maintained is कूटस्थम् ब्रह्मन् *kūṭastham brahman* - अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* and that is the ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇaṃ* for कूटस्थम् *kūṭastham*. That is how कूटस्थम् *kūṭastham* becomes a pointer word for अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman*.

अचलं *acalam* - That which has no चलनत्वं *calanatvaṃ* - susceptibility to move, because It is all-pervading and hence there is no place it can move into. As भगवान् *bhagavan* said earlier,



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मया ततमिदं सर्वम् जगत् अव्यक्त मूर्तिना

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mayā tatamidaṁ sarvam jagat avyakta mūrtinā

By Me, the परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, in My Unmanifest Form, this entire universe is pervaded. Consequently, अचलं *acalam* – That which has no susceptibility for any kind of movement is the ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇaṁ* for the Upanishad pointer word अचलं *acalam*.

ध्रुवं *dhruvaṁ* – Because अक्षर ब्रह्मन *akṣara brahman* is अचलं *acalam*, it is also ध्रुवं *dhruvaṁ* – means नित्यं *nityaṁ* – Eternal, stable, not bound by time.

Thus, these words of ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇaṁ*, namely अक्षरं *akṣaraṁ*, अनिर्देश्यं *anirdeśyaṁ*, अव्यक्तं *avyaktaṁ*, सर्वत्रगं *sarvatragaṁ*, अचिन्त्यं *acintyaṁ*, कूटस्थं *kūṭasthaṁ*, अचलं *acalaṁ*, ध्रुवं *dhruvaṁ* are some of the pointer words used by ज्ञानीs *jñānīs* in their अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* to direct and propel their अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* towards the unmanifest ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – the परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, already in themselves. There are also many other such pointer words in our Upanishads. Whatever pointer words they use, they do their अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* with the following disposition of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, namely

संनियम्य इन्द्रियग्रामं *saṁnīyamya indriyagrāmaṁ* – keeping their ज्ञान इन्द्रियs *jñāna indriyas* and कर्म इन्द्रियs *karma indriyas* – organs of perception and action totally and properly under their control, keeping all their internal and external faculties under total discipline

सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः *sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ* – maintaining an attitude of equanimity towards all beings and in all situations

सर्वभूतहिते रताः *sarva bhūtahite ratāḥ* – being delighted in the well-being of all beings, all people

Mental and physical discipline, attitude of equanimity towards all beings in all situations, and the natural ability to feel delighted in the well-being of all people, indeed all living beings – these are some of the लक्षणs *lakṣaṇas* – distinguishing marks of अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासकs *akṣara brahma upāsakas* – worshippers of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* through अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*. When they do worship of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in that manner, what happens to them? भगवान् *bhagavan* says:



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ते प्रप्नुवन्ति मां एव *te prapnuvanti mām eva* – they gain Me, they gain identity with Me, the परमेश्वर *paramesvar* straight away, which means any apparent distance between them and परमेश्वर *paramesvar* simply vanishes

ते भगवत् स्वरूपाः भवन्ति *te bhagavat svarūpāḥ bhavanti* – they become परमेश्वर *paramesvar* itself, natural to themselves. They regain संयक् दर्शनं *saṁyak daśanam* – clear recognition of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in themselves. Being so, they enjoy ब्रह्मानन्दं *brahmānandaṁ*. They being ज्ञानीs *jñānīs* – self realized जीवs *jīvas*, for them, I am the most beloved, and for Me, they are the most beloved.

Thus Sri Krishna has briefly answered Arjuna's question with respect to both सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* and अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* rejecting any comparison between कर्म योगीs *karma yogīs* and संन्यासीs *sanyāsīs*, the ज्ञान कर्म संन्यासीs *jñāna karma sanyāsīs*, who are ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*.

As सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* is the most appropriate for कर्म योगीs *karma yogīs*, so is अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* the most natural for ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*. But if the कर्म योगी *karma yogī* tries to do अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana*, it is going to be very difficult for him to do – so says भगवान् *bhagavan* in the next verse.

क्लेशोऽधिकरस्तेषाम् अव्यक्तासक्त चेतसाम् ।

kleśo'dhikarasteṣām avyaktāsakta cetasām ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्विरवाप्यते ॥ 12 - 5

avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṁ dehavidbharavāpyate ॥

तेषाम् *teṣām* – for those people - who are they?

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्य युक्ता उपासते

mayyāveśya mano ye mām nitya yukta upāsate

तेषाम् *teṣām* – for those who worship Me the परमेश्वर *paramesvar* with immense devotion and कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga buddhi* as described earlier (11-54, 55)

तेषाम् *teṣām* – for such God conscious कर्म योगीs *karma yogīs* for whom सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* is the most appropriate and the most effective mode of cultivating अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvara bhakti*



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तेषाम् *teṣām* – for those people

अव्यक्तासक्त चेतसाम् *avyaktasakta cetasām* – if they choose to try to do अक्षर ब्रह्म
उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* by committing their minds to the pursuit of The
Unmanifest, Unobjectifiable, Unknown परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, for cultivating अनन्य
ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvara bhakti*

क्लेशः अधिकतरः *kleśaḥ adhikatarah* – the difficulties in such pursuit of परमेश्वर
paramesvar are far greater. Why? The difficulties arise from their देह अभिमानं *deha
abhimānaṁ* – their deep-rooted notion of Self in their bodies, because of their “I”
notion in their bodies.

All people committed to the worldly life of कर्म *karma* and कर्मफलसु *karma phalas*,
including the कर्मयोगीसु *karma yogīsu*, entertain the notion of “I” in their bodies. For
them, to give up that identity with their physical bodies, and seek identity with an unseen
and unknown परमेश्वर *paramesvar* is extremely difficult. Therefore, भगवान्
bhagavan says

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्विः अवाप्यते हि *avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṁ dehavadbhiḥ
aavāpyate hi* – देहवद्विः *dehavadbhiḥ* means देह अभिमानवद्विः *deha abhimāna
vadbhiḥ* – By those who have deep-rooted “I” notion in their physical bodies

अव्यक्ता गतिः दुःखं अवाप्यते हि *avyaktā gatiḥ duḥkhaṁ avāpyate hi* – गति *gati*
here is the path leading to the ultimate destination, namely मोक्ष *mokṣa*

अव्यक्ता गतिः *avyaktā gatiḥ* – That path leading to मोक्ष *mokṣa* – that path leading
ultimately to the recognition of one’s identity with the Unmanifest परमेश्वर *paramesvar*
already in oneself, that path

दुःखं अवाप्यते *duḥkhaṁ avāpyate* is hardly reached, is seldom gained

Those who live a worldly life of कर्मसु *karmasu* and कर्मफलसु *karma phalas*, even if
they have immense ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvar bhakti* and कर्म योग बुद्धि *karma yoga
buddhi*, they still entertain deep-rooted identity of self with their own physical bodies,
and it is extremely difficult for them to uplift themselves from that identity, and identify
themselves with an Unmanifest, Unseen and Unknown परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, without



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going through the discipline of अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvar bhakti* cultivated through सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana*.

Therefore, for such people, the ultimate Goal of reaching परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, recognizing परमेश्वर *paramesvar* in themselves through अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* is seldom accomplished.

By so saying, भगवान् *bhagavan* makes it absolutely clear to Arjuna that he being what he is, अक्षर ब्रह्म उपासन *akṣara brahma upāsana* is not for him, and सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* is both the best and the most effective mode of ईश्वर उपासन *īśvarīna upāsana* – worship of परमेश्वर *paramesvar*, appropriate to his needs at this time.

Having said that, भगवान् *bhagavan* then talks about सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन *saguṇa brahma upāsana* in detail in the next seven extraordinary verses, which we will see next time.



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Appendix

अक्षर ब्रह्मन् ब्रह्म लक्षणं *akṣara brahman brahma lakṣaṇam*

Word pointers indicating Unmanifest ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

ईश्वर भक्तसु *īśvar bhaktas* of all kinds may find the following three sets of word pointers for अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* – words of ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam* taken from our Upanishads, particularly enlightening in their daily worship of परमेश्वर *paramesvar* through contemplation.

1. सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyaṁ jñānaṁ anantaṁ brahma* – This is from तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् *taittirīya upaniṣat* (2 – 1). We will be talking about this ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam* in detail a little later
2. श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यत् *śrotrasya śrotraṁ manaso mano yat*
वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः *vāco ha vācaṁ sa u prāṇasya prāṇaḥ*
चक्षुषश्चक्षुः अतिमुच्य धीराः *caḥṣuṣa śracakṣuḥ atimucya dhīrāḥ*
प्रेत्य अस्माल्लोकात् अमृता भवन्ति *pretya asmāllokāt amṛtā bhavānti*

This is from केनोपनिषत् *kenopaniṣat* (1 - 2). We have talked about this verse already in detail.

3. एतत् अक्षरं अदृष्टं अश्रुतं श्रोतृ
etat akṣaraṁ adṛṣṭaṁ aśṛtaṁ śrotr
अमृतं मन्तृ अविज्ञातं विज्ञातृ
amṛtaṁ manṭṛ avijñātaṁ vijñāṭṛ
न अन्यत् अतः अस्ति द्रष्टृ न अन्यत् अतः
na anyat ataḥ asti draṣṭṛ na anyat ataḥ
अस्ति श्रोतृ, न अन्यत् अतः अस्ति मन्तृ,
asti śroṭṛ, na anyat ataḥ asti manṭṛ,
न अन्यत् अतः अस्ति विज्ञातृ,



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na anyat ataḥ asti vijñāṭṛ,

एतस्मिन् उ खलु अक्षरे आकाशः ओतः प्रोतः च ॥

etasmin u khalu akṣare ākāśaḥ otaḥ protaḥ ca ॥

This is from बृहदारण्यक उपनिषत् *bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣat* (93-8-11). What is pointed out here is the following.

The अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* – the immutable, is never seen by anyone, not being a sense object, but is Itself the witness, being vision itself.

It is never heard, not being an object of hearing, but is Itself the hearer, being hearing itself.

It is never thought, not being an object of the mind, but is Itself the thinker, being thought itself.

It is never known, not being an object of the intellect, but it is Itself the knower, being intelligence itself.

There is no other witness but this. अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* Itself is everywhere the witness, the subject of vision.

There is no other hearer but this. अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* Itself is everywhere the hearer.

There is no other thinker but this. अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* Itself is everywhere the thinker, thinking through all minds.

There is no other knower but this. अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* Itself is the knower, knowing through all the intellects.

This अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* is immediately and directly The Self within every being, transcending all attributes, and inseparably pervading all existence in all directions and in all dimensions.

Such is the glory of अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman*.