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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अष्टमोऽध्यायः - अक्षर ब्रह्म योगः

*aṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ - akṣara brahma yogaḥ*

Chapter 8

Volume 1

अर्जुन उवाच

*arjuna uvāca*

किं तत् ब्रह्म किं अध्यात्मं, किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

*kiṁ tat brahma kiṁ adhyātmaṁ - kiṁ karma puruṣottama ।*

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तं, अधिदैवं किं उच्यते ॥

8 - 1

*adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktaṁ - adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate ॥ 8 - 1*

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र, देहे अस्मिन् मधुसूदन ।

*adhiyajñāḥ kathaṁ ko'tra - dehe' asmin madhusūdana ।*

प्रयाणकाले च कथं, ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥

8 - 2

*prayāṇakāle ca kathaṁ - jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ ॥*

8 - 2

श्री भगवान् उवाच

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं, स्वभावः अध्यात्मं उच्यते ।

*akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ svabhāvaḥ adhyātmaṁ ucyate ।*

भूतभाव उद्भवकरः विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥

8 - 3

*bhūta bhāva udbhavakaraḥ visargaḥ karma saṁjñitaḥ ॥*

8 - 3

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः, पुरुषः च अधिदैवतं ।

*adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaḥ ca adhidaivatam ।*

अधियज्ञः अहं एव, अत्र देहे देहभृतां चर ॥

8 - 4

*adhi yajñāḥ aham eva atra dehe dehabhṛtām vara ॥*

8 - 4

Upanishad words have a dual function: they retain their literary meanings – but that is only their secondary function. Their primary function is to serve as pointers, powerful enough to uplift the मनस् *manas* – the mind, चित्तं *cittaṁ* – the faculty of recollection, and अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* – the ego “I”, and direct and propel the बुद्धि *buddhi* – the faculty of discrimination and decision, towards that indefinable all pervading Supreme Being which cannot be objectified by any means.



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The बुद्धि *buddhi*, ultimately reaching, which means recognizing, That Supreme Being in oneself, as ONESELF Itself, with the aid of such Upanishad words, is called SELF – Realization. Upanishad words make such Self Realization possible by setting the words in unique directions and infinite dimensions, so that all such words sharply converge at that One indefinable, All-pervading Supreme Being, which can be reached – not by words, not by mind, but only by a well prepared बुद्धि *buddhi*.

Therefore, the Upanishad words have to be understood properly to grasp the Upanishad Message of Self-Realization. In the concluding two verses of the last Chapter, Sri Krishna unfolded Himself as ब्रह्म *brahma*, अध्यात्मं *adhyātmaṁ*, कर्म *karma*, अधिभूतं *adhibhūtaṁ*, अधिदैवं *adhidaivaṁ* and अधियज्ञ *adhiyajña*, just to point out that He, as परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, is All and is In All – वासुदेवः सर्वं *vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ* and ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं *īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*. Arjuna naturally wants to know how these different words have to be understood, so that they serve as pointers to the One and the SAME Supreme Being Whom we call परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

Sri Krishna also said “Those people who are युक्तचेतसः *yuktchetasaḥ* – who have अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* and clarity of vision, which means, those who are ज्ञानी *jñānī*, recognize परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in themselves as themselves, even at the time of death. Arjuna naturally wants to know how such recognition of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is possible at the time of death, not only for ज्ञानी *jñānī* but also for all people like himself.

Thus this 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter called अक्षर ब्रह्म योग *akṣara brahma yoga* starts with a series of 7 questions from Arjuna as follows:

अर्जुन उवाच

*arjuna uvāca*

किं तत् ब्रह्म, किं अध्यात्मं, किं कर्म, पुरुषोत्तम ।

*kiṁ tat brahma kiṁ adhyātmaṁ kiṁ karma puruṣottama ।*

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तं, अधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥

8 -1

*adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktaṁ adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate ॥ 8 -1*

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहे अस्मिन् मधुसूदन ।

*adhiyajñaḥ kathaṁ ko'tra dehe' asmin madhusūdana ।*



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प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥

8 – 2

*prayāṇakāle ca katham jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ ॥ 8 - 2*

Addressing Sri Krishna as पुरुषोत्तम *puruṣottama* and मधुसूदन *madhusūdana*, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna:

किं तत् ब्रह्म *kiṁ tat brahma* – What is तत् ब्रह्म *tat brahma* – That ब्रह्म *brahma*?  
What exactly is indicated by ब्रह्म शब्द *brahma śabda* – the Sound ब्रह्म *brahma*?  
When you say that those who are युक्त चेतसः *yukta cetasaḥ* – those who have purity of mind and clarity of vision, recognize themselves as ब्रह्म *brahma* even at the time of their death, what is it exactly they recognize.

ब्रह्म शब्द *brahma śabda* – The Sound ब्रह्म *brahma* has been used before several times in different contexts; how should I understand ब्रह्म शब्द *brahma śabda* now in the context of भक्ति योग *bhakti yoga*. That is Arjuna's question. Similarly,

किं अध्यात्मं *kiṁ adhyātman* – What is अध्यात्मं *adhyātman*?

किं कर्म *kiṁ karma* – What is कर्म *karma* (in singular)?

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तं *adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktaṁ* – What is said to be अधिभूतं

अधिदैवं किं उच्यते *adhibhūtaṁ adhidaivaṁ kiṁ ucyate* – What is called अधिदैवं *adhidaivaṁ*

अत्र *atra*, अस्मिन् देहे अधियज्ञः कः *asmin dehe adhiyajñaḥ kaḥ*, कथं *katham* – Here, in this physical body, who is अधियज्ञः *adhiyajñaḥ* and how come that अधियज्ञ *adhiyajña* is there? Further,

नियतात्मभिः *niyatātmabhi* – By those whose अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, are नियतं *niyatam* – well controlled, by those whose mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* remain clear, steady and well-disciplined,

प्रयाण काले च कथं ज्ञेयः असि *prayāṇa kāle ca katham jñeyaḥ asi* – how are you, as परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, recognizable to them, even at the time of death? At the time of death, it is common to find people struggling to survive, or worried about many matters relating to their life just ending; when that is the case, how do they come to think of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*?

These are the 7 questions of Arjuna. The first Six questions are concerned with the Upanishad meaning of the six words used, and the seventh question is concerned with something more. This is how भगवान् *bhagavān* responds to these questions.



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श्री भगवान् उवाच

*śrī bhagavān uvāca*

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं, स्वभावः अध्यात्मं उच्यते ।

*akṣaram brahma paramam svabhāvah adhyātmaṁ ucyate ।*

भूतभाव उद्भवकरः विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥

8 - 3

*bhūta bhāva udbhavakaraḥ visargaḥ karma saṁjñitaḥ ॥ 8 - 3*

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषः च अधिदैवतं ।

*adhibhūtam kṣaro bhāvaḥ puruṣaḥ ca adhidaivataṁ ।*

अधियज्ञः अहं एव अत्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥

8 - 4

*adhi yajñah aham eva atra dehe deha bhṛtām vara ॥ 8 - 4*

These two verses answer the first six questions. The first question is:

किं तत् ब्रह्म *kiṁ tat brahma* – What is That **ब्रह्म** *brahma*; the answer is

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं *akṣaram brahma paramam* – That **ब्रह्म** *brahma* is अक्षरं *akṣaram*,  
**ब्रह्म** *brahma* and परमं *paramam* all in ONE.

अक्षरं *akṣaram*, **ब्रह्म** *brahma* and परमं *paramam* are words which serve as pointers – all converging to That ONE SAME तत् ब्रह्म *tat brahma* – That ONE SAME Supreme Being Whom we call **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman*, Who cannot be defined by words or reached by the mind, but Who can be recognized only by a well-prepared, well-directed, and well-pointed बुद्धि *buddhi*, with the aid of Upanishad pointers, such as अक्षरं *akṣaram*, **ब्रह्म** *brahma*, परमं *paramam* etc.

The content of such words, which make them as pointers for That **ब्रह्मन्** *brahman* is indeed the subject matter of all our Upanishads. For example, अक्षरं *akṣaram*, simply means That which is not subject to change, decay or destruction; That which is ever as It is.

Unfolding briefly the content of the pointer word अक्षरं *akṣaram*, the Mundaka

Upanishad says:

यत् तत्, अद्रेश्यम्, अग्राह्यं, अगोत्रं, अवर्णम्,

*yat tat, adreśyam, agrāhyam, agotraṁ, avarṇam,*

अचक्षुः श्रोत्रं, तत् अपाणिपादम् ।



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*acakṣuḥ śrotram, tat apāṇipādam |*

नित्यं, विभुं, सर्वगतं, सुसूक्ष्मं,

*nityam, vibhum, sarvagatam, susūkṣmam,*

तत् अव्ययं, यत् भूतयोनिं, परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥

(MU 1-1-6)

*tat avyayam, yat bhūtayonim, paripaśyanti dhīrah ||*

यत् धीराः परिपश्यन्ति *yat dhīrāḥ paripaśyanti*, तत् ब्रह्म *tat brahma*, अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* - That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* which is always recognized very clearly, directly and immediately by all धीर-पुरुष *dhira-puruṣas* - by ज्ञानी *jñānīs* - people of wisdom, people who have विवेक वैराग्य बुद्धि *viveka vairāgya buddhi* - आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - SELF Knowledge.

तत् ब्रह्म *tat brahma* - That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*

अद्रेश्यं *adreśyam* - is not an object which can be perceived by any of the sense organs, ज्ञानेन्द्रिया *jñānendriyās*

अग्राह्यं *agrāhyam* - is not an object which can be grasped by any of the organs of action, कर्मेन्द्रिया *karmendriyās*

अगोत्रं *agotram* - is not anything that has any connection, any root, any source, in any object in this creation

अवर्णम् *avarṇam* - is not anything comparable to any object in this creation in terms of color, quality, features, attributes etc.

अचक्षुः श्रोत्रं *acakṣuḥ śrotram*, अपाणिपादं *apāṇipādam* - is not itself the eye, the ear, the hand or the leg - which means, It is not itself any organ of perception and/or action.

We must note here that the words अद्रेश्यं *adreśyam*, अग्राह्यं *agrāhyam*, अगोत्रं *agotram*, अवर्णम् *avarṇam*, अचक्षुः श्रोत्रं, *acakṣuḥ śrotram*, अपाणिपादं *apāṇipādam* - all these words are negative indicators. That is how The Upanishad creates the context - the mental environment, for revealing the Nature of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Through the above words, The Upanishad points out that what is indicated by the pointer-word अक्षरं *akṣaram* is not any object in this creation. Then, what is It? The Upanishad continues:

That अक्षतं ब्रह्म *akṣatam brahma* is नित्यं *nityam* - Unborn, Eternal, Ever-existent. विभुं *vibhum* means विविधं भवन शीलं *vividham bhavana śīlam* - सर्वव्यापी *sarvavyāpī* - That which is capable of existing in all different forms and names, and



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That which is all pervasive, existing in every form and name in this creation

सर्वगतं *sarvagatam* – That which in-dwells in everything in this creation. That which is non-separate from anything in this creation, Itself being independent of everything while nothing in this creation is independent of It

सुसूक्ष्मं *susūkṣmam* – That which is the most subtle, there is nothing more subtle than That

अच्ययं *avyayam* – Unchangeable, Imperishable, Immutable

भूतयोनिं *bhūtayonim* – That which is the ultimate cause, the ultimate source of everything in this creation, including the creation itself. Such is the Nature of अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*. Such अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*, does It really exist? Has any body seen such अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*? The Upanishad says – “Yes, That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* does exist.

तत् धीराः परिपश्यन्ति *tat dhīrah paripaśyanti* – The धीर पुरुष *dhīra puruṣas* – the ज्ञानी *jñānīs* – see That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* – recognizes That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* through direct experience at all times – so declares the Upanishad.

If I do not recognize That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* it only means that I have not yet grown up to the State of a धीर पुरुष *dhīra puruṣa*. How can one grow up to become a धीर पुरुष *dhīra puruṣa*? As Sri Krishna said earlier (7 – 1)

मय्यासक्त मनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन् मदाश्रयः *mayyāsakt manāḥ pārtha yogam yuñjan madāśrayaḥ* – anyone can become a धीर पुरुष *dhīra puruṣa* – through ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga*, कर्म योग *karma yoga* and बुद्धि योग *buddhi yoga* together, which means भक्ति योग. Through such भक्ति योग *bhakti yoga*, any one can recognize That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* anywhere at any time, and more importantly, in oneself as ONESELF Itself at all times. That is the Message of The Mundaka Upanishad on अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*. Further, the Upanishad says:

तत् विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीराः

*tat vijñānena paripaśyanti dhīrah*

आनन्दरूपं अमृतं यत् विभाति

MU 2-2-7

*ānandarūpaṁ amṛtaṁ yat vibhāti*



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We will talk about this Message in the M.U. sometime later. Now, about ब्रह्म शब्द *br*  
*ahma śabda* – the Sound ब्रह्म *brahma*

ब्रह्म *brahma* itself is a pointer-word for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*; ब्रह्म *brahma* simply means “Great or Big”, with no qualification whatsoever, which means-unqualified Greatness or unqualified Bigness with reference to anything that exists in this creation. Such unqualified Greatness includes Greatness in all dimensions, from the most subtle to the most gross, which means such ब्रह्म *brahma* is all-inclusive and all-pervasive. Such all-inclusive and all-pervasive ब्रह्म *brahma* is the स्वरूप *svarūp* of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – The Nature of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

The Taittiriya Upanishad unfolds the Upanishadic content of ब्रह्म शब्द *brahma śabda* – The Sound ब्रह्म *brahma* as:

सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma* – Which is one of the famous declarations of Vedanta, revealing the स्वरूप *svarūp* of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. The three words सत्यं *satyam*, ज्ञानं *jñānam* and अनन्तं *anantaṁ* are themselves pointer-words for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, each individually, as well as in association with the other two words.

सत्यं *satyam* means That which is Absolute Truth – That which is Ever-existent and never subject to negation. ज्ञानं *jñānam* means That which is Pure, undifferentiated Knowledge, Pure consciousness, Pure Awareness, and अनन्तं *anantaṁ* means That which is Endless, Limitless, and All-inclusive

Consequently, That which is सत्यं *satyam* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, therefore ब्रह्म स्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ* is सत्यं *satyam* – Ever Existent Absolute Truth. Similarly, That which is ज्ञानं *jñānam* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Therefore ब्रह्मस्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ* is ज्ञानं *jñānam* – Pure Knowledge – Pure Consciousness – Pure Awareness – and That which is अनन्तं *anantaṁ* is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Therefore ब्रह्मस्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ* is अनन्तं *anantaṁ* – Endlessness, Limitlessness, All-Inclusiveness itself – पूर्णम् *pūrṇam* Itself.

Again, even though सत्यं *satyam*, ज्ञानं *jñānam* and अनन्तं *anantaṁ* are different words with different meanings, as pointers for ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – as ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma*



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*lakṣaṇam*, they enjoy total identity in meaning with respect to तत् ब्रह्म *tat brahman* – The ONE to which they converge. That means, when we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ* is सत्यं *satyaṁ*, we must also understand That सत्यं *satyaṁ* as ज्ञानं सत्यं *jñānam satyaṁ* as well as अनन्तं सत्यं *anantaṁ satyaṁ*. Similarly, when we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ* is ज्ञानं *jñānam*, we must also understand That ज्ञानं *jñānam* is सत्यं ज्ञानं *satyaṁ jñānam* as well as अनन्तं ज्ञानं *anantaṁ jñānam*, and, when we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ* is अनन्तं *anantaṁ*, we must also understand That अनन्तं *anantaṁ* is सत्यं अनन्तं *satyaṁ anantaṁ* as well as ज्ञानं अनन्तं *jñānam anantaṁ*.

Thus we have to set our vision along the pointers सत्यं *satyaṁ*, ज्ञानं *jñānam* and अनन्तं *anantaṁ*, each in terms of Itself together with the sense of the other two pointers, in order to get a hold on the pointers for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. We will talk more about these pointers for ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in Taittiriya Upanishad which we will take up a little later. Now, about the Upanishad word परमं *paramaṁ* as ब्रह्मलक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam* – as Pointer for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

परमं *paramaṁ* means That which is The Supreme – The Highest – The Most Exalted being there is. The कठोपनिषत् *kāthopaniṣat* unfolds परमं *paramaṁ* as अध्वनः पारं *adhvanaḥ pāraṁ* – तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं *tat viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam* – सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः – *sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gati* (कठ *kāṭha* 3-9/3-11).

As we may recall, the 4-step process of Self-Realization has been described in कठोपनिषत् *kāthopaniṣat* (कठ *kāṭha* 3-13) as, resolving one's "I" notion successively

- (1) from one's names, forms, attributes, actions, possessions, accomplishments etc. into one's Mind, and then
- (2) resolving that "I" notion from one's Mind into one's अहंकार बुद्धि *ahaṁkāra buddhi* (ego "I" of the intellect), and then
- (3) resolving that "I" notion from one's अहंकार बुद्धि *ahaṁkāra buddhi* into the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* – free हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇyagarbha* – the जीव *jīva* of the entire creation devoid of all notions of individuality, and finally
- (4) resolving one's "I" notion from one's हिरण्यगर्भ बुद्धि *hiraṇyagarbha buddhi* into The सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप पूर्ण पुरुष *sat cit ānand svarūp pūrṇa puruṣa* –





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The आत्मा ātmā – The Innermost SELF already in oneself as ONESELF Itself.

Reaching That पूर्ण पुरुष *pūrṇa puruṣa* by one's बुद्धि *buddhi*, through आत्मज्ञानं – Self-Knowledge, is reaching अध्वनः पारं *adhvanaḥ pāraṁ* – transcending संसार गति *saṁsāra gati*, which means, being totally released from all अविद्या काम-कर्म बन्धनः *avidyā kāma-karma bandhanas* – the bondages caused by अविद्या *avidyā* – Self-ignorance, काम *kāma* desires and cravings for worldly objects of transient existence and such desire prompted कर्म *karma* and कर्म फल *karma phala*.

Reaching that अध्वनः पारं *adhvanaḥ pāraṁ*, one finds oneself in, one discovers oneself as, विष्णोः परमं पदं *viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ* – The Abode of the All-pervading महा विष्णु *mahā viṣṇu*, The पर ब्रह्मन् *para brahman* – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in oneself as ONESELF Itself. That State of Self-Realization is सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः *sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ* – It is the Innermost Reach, The Supreme Destination, The Ultimate Destination there is for one to reach, and indeed, for all beings to reach in this creation.

That ultimate Destination, reached by oneself, in oneself, and discovered as ONESELF Itself – is परमं *pāraṁ*, The पर ब्रह्मन् *para brahman* – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – The Supreme Being indicated by the ब्रह्म शब्द *brahma śabda* – The Sound ब्रह्म *brahma*. Thus परमं *pāraṁ* is ब्रह्म लक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇaṁ* – ब्रह्मस्वरूपं *brahma svarūpaṁ*. Such is the Upanishadic content of the pointer words अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं *akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ* for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

Therefore, the moment one hears the word ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, or thinks about ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, one's बुद्धि *buddhi* should spontaneously uplift itself, orient itself, and propel itself towards That which is अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं *akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ* – which is everywhere including ONESELF. So much about अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं *akṣaraṁ brahma paramaṁ*.

Regarding the second question किं अध्यात्मं *kiṁ adhyātmaṁ* – What is अध्यात्मं *adhyātmaṁ*, Sri Krishna says:

स्वभावः अध्यात्मं उच्यते *svabhāvaḥ adhyātmaṁ ucyate* – The स्वभाव *svabhāv* of



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That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – the innate Nature, the inherent Nature of That ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* in all Its essential Nature, abiding in every physical body as प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* – as one’s Innermost Self, is called अध्यात्मं *adhyātmaṁ*. अधि means “overlordship”. The अन्तर्यामी अमृत आत्मा *antaryāmi amṛta ātmā* – The Immortal SELF in oneself, has overlordship over everything that is transient in this physical body. अध्यात्मं *adhyātmaṁ* is the ultimate sense of the word अहं *ahaṁ* – “I”, the आत्मा *ātmā* of अहं *ahaṁ* – the True Nature of the SELF in oneself is अध्यात्मं *adhyātmaṁ*. Thus ब्रह्मन् *brahman* and आत्मा *ātmā* are identical.

With reference to the entire creation, the SELF is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, and, with reference to an individual person in the creation, the SELF is आत्मा *ātmā*. What is That आत्मा *ātmā* doing in one’s body? That आत्मा *ātmā* remains as अवस्थान्नय साक्षी *avasthaa traya sāksī* – as a Witness to all that happens in oneself in all the 3 states of existence – the waking, the dreaming and the deep-sleep states of existence.

By unfolding अध्यात्मं *adhyātmaṁ* – one’s Innermost Self as ब्रह्म-स्वभाव *brahma - svabhāva* – as ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself, भगवान् *bhagvān* makes clear what He said earlier, namely those who have purity of mind and clarity of vision, recognize ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – not as an object, but as themselves, even at the time of death.

Now, regarding the third question, किं कर्म *kiṁ karma* – what is कर्म *karma*, भगवान् *bhagvān* says:

भूतभाव उद्भवकरः विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः *bhūta bhāva udbhavakaraḥ viṣargaḥ karma saṁjñitaḥ* – In our scriptures the word कर्म *karma* generally refers to यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* – Vedic rituals of various kinds. What is said of यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma* is also true for all कर्म *karma*. In a यज्ञ कर्म *yajña karma*, such as a Havan कर्म *karma*, one offers an oblation to some particular Devata. For example, one offers an oblation to अग्नि देवता *agni devatā* by saying अग्नेः स्वाहा *agneḥ svāhā*. That is a कर्म *karma* – an action, but that is not the कर्म *karma* we are talking about here.

Immediately after offering the oblation, one says: अग्नये इदं न मम *agnaye idaṁ na mama* – This is for अग्नि देवता *agni devatā* It is not mine any more. By saying न मम *na mama* – It is not mine, one totally dissociates oneself from what was offered as the



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oblation. Such dissociation, such giving up, is called विसर्गः *visargaḥ*.

भगवान् *bhagavān* says that that विसर्ग *visarga* is the कर्म *karma*, we are talking about; that विसर्ग कर्म *visarga karma* is singular. Once one dissociates oneself totally from the object of oblation, that विसर्ग कर्म *visarga karma* becomes a pointer to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says, विसर्गः कर्म संज्ञितः *visarga karma sañjñitaḥ* – such विसर्ग *visarga* is to be understood and appreciated as कर्म *karma*.

विसर्ग कर्म *visarga karma* is ईश्वर अर्पित कर्म *īśvara arpita karma*, and such ईश्वर अर्पणं *īśvara arpaṇam* has ब्रह्मलक्षणं *brahma lakṣaṇam* – What does that विसर्ग कर्म *visarga karma* do?

भूत भाव उद्भव करः *bhūta bhāva udbhava karaḥ* – It becomes the cause and the means for the birth of दृष्ट फल *dṛṣṭa phala* and अदृष्ट फल *adrṣṭa phala*– results seen and unseen, conducive to gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*.

This concept of कर्म *karma* is applicable to all कर्मसु *karmasu*, whatever कर्म *karma* one does, if it is totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Such कर्म *karma* has the power to uplift oneself and direct one's बुद्धि *buddhi* towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

Now, regarding the fourth question, अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तं *adhibhūtaṁ ca kiṁ proktaṁ* – what is said to be अधिभूतं *adhibhūtaṁ*? भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः *adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ* – All the Five Great Elements – The पञ्चमहाभूताः *pañca mahā bhūtās*, namely आकाश *ākāśa*, वायु *vāyu*, अग्नि *agni*, आपः *āpaḥ* and पृथिवी *pṛthivī* and all beings born of those Five Great Elements, each of them is called अधिभूतं *adhibhūtaṁ*, and all of them are क्षरो भावः *kṣaro bhāvaḥ*, ever subject to change. The entire creation, born of the पञ्चमहाभूताः *pañca mahā bhūtās*, is born and exists in time, and it is ever subject to decay and change.

Sri Krishna says: such ever changing creation, including everything in creation, is also Myself, because, even though something changes, it is not destroyed, it reappears in some other form, in some other name, at some other time. Wherever there is a change,



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such change always depends on something that is relatively changeless. The Ultimate Changeless ONE is Myself. Therefore अधिभूतं *adhibhūtam* is also परमेश्वर *parameśvar*; recognize परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in everything in this ever changing creation.

Regarding the 5<sup>th</sup> question अधिदैवं किं उच्यते *adhidaivam kim ucyate* – What is called अधिदैवं *adhidaivam* – भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

पुरुषः च अधिदैवतं *puruṣaḥ ca adhidaivatam* – What is called अधिदैवतं *adhidaivatam* is only परम पुरुष *param puruṣa* – The Supreme Being, which means सर्वं अनेन पूर्णं *sarvam anena pūrṇam* – The ONE by whom everything is filled. The ONE by whom the अन्नमय *annamaya*, प्राणमय *prāṇamaya*, मनोमय *manomaya*, विज्ञानमय *vijñānamaya* and आनन्दमय *ānandamaya* in every शरीर *śarīra* – in every physical body, is filled. The ONE by whom all our इन्द्रियाः *indriyās* and मनस् *manas*, बुद्धि *buddhi* are blessed to function as they do. The ONE who is the Abode of all the अधिष्ठान देवताः *adhiṣṭhān devatās* – The Presiding Deities like वरुण *varuṇa*, वायु *vāyu*, अग्नि *agni* etc. in this Universe.

The ONE WHO FILLS THIS ENTIRE हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇya garbha* – THIS MANIFEST CREATION. That is परम पुरुष *param puruṣa*, called अधिदैवतं *adhidaivatam*, and That is Myself – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – The आत्मा *ātmā* in one's own self, The SELF of every self. Those who have अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* and चिवेक बुद्धि *viveka buddhi* recognize That परम पुरुष *param puruṣa* in one's own self – as ONESELF Itself, at all times.

We will talk about Sri Krishna's answers to Arjuna's 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> questions next time.