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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अष्टमोऽध्यायः - अक्षर ब्रह्म योगः

aṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ - akṣara brahma yogaḥ

Chapter 8

Volume 4

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

ananya cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ, नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

8 - 14

tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya yuktasya yoginaḥ ॥

8 - 14

मां उपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुखालयं अशाश्वतम् ।

mām upetya punarjanma dukhālayam aśāśvatam ।

न आप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥

8 - 15

na apnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ ॥

8 - 15

आब्रह्मभुवनात् लोकाः, पुनरावर्तिनः अर्जुन ।

ābrahma bhuvanāt lokāḥ - punarāvartinah arjuna ।

मां उपेत्य तु कौन्तेय, पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

8 - 16

mām upetya tu kaunteya - punarjanma na vidyate ॥

8 - 16

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तं अहः यत् ब्रह्मणः विदुः ।

sahasra yuga paryantaṁ ahaḥ yat brahmaṇaḥ viduḥ ।

रत्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां ते अहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥

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ratriṁ yuga sahasrāntāṁ te' aho rātra vido janāḥ ॥

8 - 17

Arjuna asks Sri Krishna how one can reach परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. In answer, Sri Krishna has been telling in the earlier verses how one can reach परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with the help of श्रवणं *śravaṇam* – listening and understanding the words of the Upanishads, मननं *mananam* – reflecting on the teachings of the Upanishads, निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* absorbing the content of the Upanishad teachings and also with the help of योगभ्यास *yogabhyāsa* – योग *yoga* exercises such as प्राणायाम *prāṇāyāma*, आसन *āsanas*, समाधि *samādhi* etc., and also वेद संस्कार *veda*



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saṁskārs – 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 भक्तसु *īśvar bhaktas* – devotees of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, who have no knowledge of Upanishadic teachings, or Yoga exercises or Vedic rituals. Still, their devotion to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is nothing less.

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

By so saying, Sri Krishna points out that reaching भगवान् *bhagavān* is not a matter of scholarship in Vedic knowledge. Reaching भगवान् *bhagavān* is a matter of ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvar bhakti* and ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvar bhakti* only, which was pointed out earlier as अनन्य भक्ति *ananya bhakti*, परम प्रेम स्वरूप एक भक्ति *param prem svarūp eka bhakti* – unqualified absolute love for परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only.

Whatever be one’s vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, if only one has unqualified, absolute love for That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only, and one is naturally and spontaneously attracted towards That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and nothing else, and one wants to reach That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* for no reason other than being परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself, then one will certainly reach that परमेश्वर *parameśvar* easily, just by being inseparably conscious of That परमेश्वर *parameśvar* 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 *bhagavān* says:

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

ananya cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्य युक्तस्य योगिनः ॥

8 – 14

tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya yuktsya yoginaḥ ॥

पार्थ *pārtha* – O! Arjuna



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तस्य अहं सुलभः *tasya ahaṁ sulabhaḥ* – For that person, I am सुलभं *sulabham*. I am easily obtained, I am easily reached. That person reaches ME – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, easily, naturally and spontaneously. Who is that person?

यः मां स्मरति *yaḥ mām smarati* – the one who thinks of ME – The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* – whatever be one's vision of That परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

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 *parameśvar*, whatever be his or her vision of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, in the following manner.

अनन्यचेताः *ananya cetāḥ*, सततं *satatam*, नित्यशः *nityaśaḥ*

अनन्यचेताः *ananya cetāḥ* means with a mind not thinking about अन्य *anya*, meaning any other. With a mind thinking about परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only and not any other, if the thinker looks upon परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as one different from oneself, then परमेश्वर *parameśvar* also becomes अन्य *anya* – “another” for that person. Here we are talking about a person who, when he thinks of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, does not think of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as अन्य *anya* – as another, When he thinks of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, he identifies himself totally with that परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself. For such a person, the thinker, the thought and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* are all one and the same. For such a person, the प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* - one's Innermost Self, is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself. Any thought he has at any time, anywhere, under any circumstance, is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only. A person so inseparably conscious of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* is अनन्यचेताः *ananya cetāḥ*.

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

नित्यशः *nityaśaḥ* means दीर्घ कालं *dīrgha kālam* – 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 *parameśvar*



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parameśvar totally identifying yourself with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and what you ultimately want to be is also That परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the question of “how long” you should be thinking of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* does not arise. Therefore, नित्यशः *nityaśaḥ* means a mind thinking of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* throughout one’s life time.

Thus, अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः *ananya cetāḥ satataṁ yo māṁ smarati nityaśaḥ* means the one who thinks of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, totally identifying oneself with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, constantly with no distraction whatsoever, throughout one’s lifetime. Such a person is a नित्ययुक्तः योगी *nitya yuktaḥ yogī*. That is the kind of योगी *yogī* Sri Krishna talked about at the end of Chapter 6 in ध्यान योग *dhyāna yoga*.

योगिनां अपि सर्वेषां मद्वतेन अन्तरात्मना ।

yogināṁ api sarve śāṁ madgatena antarātmanā ।

श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ 6 – 47

śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ sa me yuktatamo mataḥ ॥ 6 - 47

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

अनन्य चेताः *ananya cetāḥ* is with reference to what is not in the mind. The one whose mind has no अन्य *anya* – another, and नित्य युक्तः *nitya yuktaḥ* is with reference to what is in the mind, the one whose mind remains totally absorbed in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. It is such a person, Sri Krishna described earlier as मद्वतेन अन्तरात्मना युक्ततमः योगी *madgatena antarātmanā yukttamaḥ yogī* – such a युक्ततमः योगी *yukttamaḥ yogī* is a नित्ययुक्तः योगी *nitya yuktaḥ yogī*

तस्य नित्य युक्तस्य योगिनः *tasya nitya yuktsya yoginah*, अहं सुलभः *aham sulabhaḥ* – For such a योगी *yogī* whose mind is ever absorbed in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, I am easily reached. Such a भक्त *bhakta* reaches me easily. Easily in the sense, for such a person, ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvar jñānam* and recognition of परमेश्वर



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parameśvar in oneself as Oneself Itself comes naturally and spontaneously. Talking about people who reach परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in the above manner, भगवान् *bhagavān* says,

मां उपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयं अशाश्वतम् ।

mām upetya punarjanma dukhālayam aśāśvatam ।

न आप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥

8 – 15

na apnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ ॥

8 - 15

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

पुनर्जन्म न आप्नुवन्ति *punarjanma na āpnuvanti* – they do not get any rebirth. They become जीवन् मुक्त *jīvan mukta*. They are released from birth and death forever while still living, because they are now

महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः *mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gataḥ* – they are महात्मानः *mahātmānaḥ* – they are महात्माs *mahātmās*, which means they are नित्य युक्ताः *nitya yuktaḥ* – being ever absorbed in परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, they are one with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already. They are those for each of whom “I” is limitless and infinite. Further, they are

संसिद्धिं परमां गताः *saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gataḥ* – which means they are संसिद्धाः *saṁsiddhah* – they are totally fulfilled people in life, and also, they are परमां गताः *paramām gataḥ*. They have already accomplished the परम पुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha* – the highest purpose of life. They have already reached the highest goal of life. They have gained मोक्ष *mokṣa* – absolute freedom. Living, they are free. When they depart from their bodies, then also they are free. They are ब्रह्मवित् *brahmavit*. They have gained, they have realized identity with ब्रह्मन् *brahman* naturally. They have gained Self-realization.

Thus, through परमेश्वर स्मरणं *parameśvar smaraṇam* – thinking of परमेश्वर



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parameśvar, totally identifying themselves with परमेश्वर *parameśvar* at all times throughout their lives, they have become महात्माs *mahātmās*, they have gained मोक्ष *mokṣa* in their own lifetimes, and there is no rebirth for them when their प्रारब्ध कर्मs *prārabdha karmas* are exhausted and their bodies fall naturally.

For those ईश्वर भक्तs *īśvar bhaktas* 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 *bhagavān* says that every rebirth in this संसार *saṁsār* – this transient world is दुःखालयं *duḥkhālayam* and अशाश्वतं *aśāśvatam*.

दुःखालयम् *duḥkhālayam* – Every rebirth is only an abode of दुःख *duḥkha* – 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 *aśāśvatam* – not permanent. They are अनवस्थित स्वरूपं *anavasthita svarūpaṁ* – they are of transient nature. Hence it only makes sense to seek मोक्ष *mokṣa* in life which yields ब्रह्मानन्दं *brahmānandam* – perennial joy and happiness.

Just like मनुष्य लोक *manuṣya loka* – the world of human beings, several different worlds are said to exist in this हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇya garbha* – this manifest creation. In the तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् *taittirīya upaniṣat*, we have seen the mention of other worlds such as गन्धर्व लोक *gandharva lok*, देव लोक *deva lok*, इन्द्र लोक *indra lok*, ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok*, etc. of which the ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok* is mentioned as the most exalted one. These लोकs *lokas*, 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 *lokas* themselves have only a transient existence, functioning under the over lordship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* 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 *parameśvar*, by recognizing परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in oneself as Oneself Itself, here and now, one enjoys all pleasures of all लोकs *lokas* (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.



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

आब्रह्मभुवनात् लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनः अर्जुन ।

ābrahma bhuvanāt lokāḥ punarāvartinah arjuna ।

मां उपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

8 – 16

mām upetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate ॥

8 - 16

आब्रह्म भुवनात् लोकाः *ābrahma bhuvanāt lokāḥ*, पुनः आवर्तिनः *punaḥ āvartinah* – All लोकs *lokas*, up to and including ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok*, have the nature of coming back again. All लोकs *lokas*, and consequently all the people in these लोकs *lokas*, 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 *tu* – whereas

मां उपेत्य पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते *mām upetya punarjanma na vidyate* – reaching ME, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, there is no पुनर्जन्म *punarjanma* – rebirth for anyone. For those who recognize one's identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, there is no rebirth for them. The cause for rebirth is अज्ञानं *ajñānam* – ignorance of आत्मज्ञानं *ātmajñānam* – Self-knowledge. On recognizing one's identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, there is no more rebirth for them.

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

Thus the cause for the rebirth of a person is clear, but why should the लोकs *lokas* also have to come and go again and again? The reason is

कालपरिच्छिन्नत्वात् *kāla paricchinnatvāt* – all लोकs *lokas* are created in time, and hence they are limited by time. Any thing limited by time is अनित्यं *anityam* – impermanent, transient. If so, what is the time limitation for लोकs *lokas*? भगवान् *bhagavān* says



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सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तं अहः यत् ब्रह्मणः विदुः ।

sahasra yugaparyantam ahaḥ yat brahmaṇaḥ viduḥ ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां ते अहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥

8 – 17

rātrim yuga sahasrāntām te' aho rātra vido janāḥ ॥ 8 - 17

यत् अहोरात्रविदः जनाः *yat aho rātra vidadḥ janāḥ*

अहोरात्रविदः जनाः *aho rātra vidadḥ janāḥ* are कालसंख्याविदः *kāla saṁkhyā vidadḥ* – people who are knowledgeable in the computations of day time, night time, etc., which means people who are astronomers. Therefore,

यत् अहोरात्रविदः जनाः विदुः *yat aho rātra vidadḥ janāḥ viduḥ* means that which is well known, that which is common knowledge for our ancient astronomers, namely

ब्रह्मणः अहः *brahmaṇaḥ ahaḥ* – the day time of ब्रह्माजि *brahmāji* or प्रजापति *prajāpati* – the presiding deity of ब्रह्मलोक *brahma lok*, which means the day time of ब्रह्म लोक *brahmalok*, which includes all other लोकs *lokas*, is

सहस्र युगपर्यन्तं *sahasra yuga paryantam* – limited to 1000 yugas, and likewise,

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां *rātrim yugasahsrantām* – the night time of ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok* is again limited to 1000 yugas

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

It may be of interest to note here that we are currently in कलि युग *kali yuga* year 5104. According to some commentators, the normal length of कलि युग *kali yuga* is 432000 years on earth, the द्वापर युग *dvāpara yuga* is twice as long as कलि युग *kali yuga*, and त्रेता युग *tretā yuga* is three times as long as कलि युग *kali yuga*, and the कृत युग is four times as long as कलि युग *kali yuga*. Consequently, one complete महायुग *mahā yuga* 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.



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Therefore, in each cycle of creation, the life time of Brahma ji, which is the life time of ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok* - the lifetime of हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇya garbha* - 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 युग *yugas* and महायुग *mahā yugas*. 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 *ātmā* - The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - The ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

Now, what happens in Brahma ji's time? During his daytime, He is awake and active, and so are all His लोक *lokas*. When His night comes, He goes to sleep, and all His लोक *lokas* also go to sleep, except the ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok*, and the पञ्चमहाभूत *pañca mahā bhūtās* - The five great elements, namely आकाश *ākāśa*, वायु *vāyu*, अग्नि *agni*, आप *āpaḥ* and पृथिवी *prthivī* - The space, air, fire, water and earth. That "लोक *lokas* 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

The Brahma ji's day breaks. He wakes up. All his लोक *lokas* 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 *pralaya* followed by पुनर् उत्पत्ति *punar utpatti* - de-manifestation and re-manifestation of लोक *lokas* - 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 लोक *lokas*, including the ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok* - which means the entire हिरण्यगर्भ *hiraṇya garbha*, all that is manifested in the current cycle of creation, disappear into the unlimited ocean of माया *māyā*, devoid of all manifestations. And this is called महाप्रलय *mahā pralaya*, which subsequently yields place to another cycle of creation.

All through such प्रलय *pralayas* and महाप्रलय *mahā pralayas*, ever before and ever after, there remains One being - Eternal, Unchanging, Ever-conscious and All-inclusive, and That is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* - The अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*, and it is that अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma* whom we recognize in the ॐ कार मन्त्र *om kār*



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mantra when we chant ॐ *om* as शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् *śabda rūp pratyakṣa brahman* – direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as sound ॐ *om*, as the word ॐ *om*.

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