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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता

अष्टमोऽध्यायः - अक्षर ब्रह्म योगः

aṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ - akṣara brahma yogaḥ

Chapter 8

Volume 5

अव्यक्तात् व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्ति अहरागमे ।

avyaktat vyaktyaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanti aharāgame ।

रात्रि आगमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैव अव्यक्त संज्ञके ॥

8 - 18

rātri āgame praliyante tatraiva avyakta sañjñake ॥

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

bhūta grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate ।

रात्रि आगमे अवशः पार्थ प्रभवति अहरागमे ॥

8 - 19

rātri āgame avaśaḥ pārtha prabhavati aharāgame ॥

परः तस्मात् तु भावः अन्यः अव्यक्तः अव्यक्तात् सनातनः ।

paraḥ tasmāt tu bhāvaḥ anyaḥ avyaktah avyaktat sanātanaḥ ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥

8 - 20

yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati ॥

अव्यक्तः अक्षरः इति उक्तः, तं आहुः परमां गतिम् ।

avyaktah akṣarah iti uktaḥ taṁ āhuḥ paramām gatim ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तत् धाम परमं मम ॥

8 - 21

yaṁ prāpya na nivartante tat dhām paramaṁ mama ॥

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यः तु अनन्यया ।

puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyaḥ tu ananyayā ।

यस्य अन्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वम् इदं ततम् ॥

8 - 22

yasya antahsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam idaṁ tatam ॥

Last time we talked briefly about Brahma ji's – प्रजापति's *prajāpati's* time scale, his day time, night time, life time, प्रलय *pralaya*, महाप्रलय *mahā pralaya* and the cycle of creation. The purpose of talking about time is only to show that



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- Anything born in time also ends in time
- However long it may be, time is always limited, there is no eternity in time
- There is eternity only in that which is not bound by time
- There is only ONE which is not bound by time, and That is ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – the प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā*, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

The purpose of talking about प्रलय *pralaya*, महाप्रलय *mahā pralaya* and the cycle of creation is only to show that प्रलय *pralaya* does not mean मोक्ष *mokṣa* – liberation for everybody. महाप्रलय *mahā pralaya* does not mean the end of creation, or the cycle of creation, and the cycle of creation is a never-ending one.

प्रलय *pralaya* is commonly described as “destruction and dissolution”. It is important to understand

- what is destroyed and
- what is dissolved in what?

जीव *jīva* is never destroyed. Only its gross manifestation – the स्थूल शरीर *sthūla śarīra* is destroyed. The सूक्ष्म शरीर *sūkṣma śarīra* – the subtle manifestation of जीव *jīva* is not destroyed. The सूक्ष्म शरीर *sūkṣma śarīra* – as long as it exists, remains dissolved in माया *māyā* during प्रलय *pralaya* periods, and it goes through successive births and deaths – manifestation and de-manifestation, again and again, throughout the other periods in each cycle of creation.

सूक्ष्म शरीर *sūkṣma śarīra* disappears only when अज्ञानं *ajñānaṁ* – self-ignorance, ignorance of the nature of one’s own self disappears. Such अज्ञानं *ajñānaṁ* disappears and आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* takes place only when one recognizes that

ब्रह्मैवाहं अस्मि *brahmaivāhaṁ asmi* – I am indeed ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

आयं आत्मा ब्रह्म *āyaṁ ātmā brahma* – this SELF is ब्रह्मन् *brahman*

In order to reach that truth about oneself, in order to realize the truth of one’s own identity with ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, one need not have to go through the cycle of birth and death again and again. One can gain that realization now, in this very birth itself, in one’s current manifestation itself, through ईश्वर भक्ति *īśvar bhakti*, which is identical with ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvar jñānaṁ*. That is essentially Sri Krishna’s message in today’s verses. भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

अव्यक्तात् व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्ति अहरागमे ।



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avyaktat vyaktayah sarvāḥ prabhavanti aharāgame ।

रात्रि आगमे प्रलीयन्ते, तत्रैव अव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥

8-18

rātri āgame praliyante tatraiva avyakta saṁjñake ॥

अहरागमे *aharāgame*, अहः आगमे *ahaḥ āgame* - With the arrival of day time, when the day breaks, for ब्रह्माजी *brahmājī*, He wakes up from his sleep state - अव्यक्तात् *avyaktat* - from his state of unmanifestation and inactivity, and at the same time व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्ति *vyaktyaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavanti* - all स्थावर *sthāvara*, जंगम *jaṅgama*, लक्षण सर्वाः प्रजाः *lakṣaṇa sarvāḥ prajāḥ* all जीवस *jīvas*, all immovable and movable living beings wake up to re-manifest themselves again in their स्थूल *sthūla*, सूक्ष्म *sūkṣma*, कारण शरीरस *kāraṇa śarīras* - gross subtle ignorance states of existence. Similarly,

रात्रि आगमे *rātri āgame* - with the arrival of night time for Brahmaji

युक्तयः सर्वाः *yuktyaḥ sarvāḥ* - all the जीवस *jīvas* in their manifest states of existence प्रलीयन्ते *praliyante* - get dissolved, where?

तत्र एव *tatra eva*- withdrawing themselves into the same state of unmanifestation they were in before.

अव्यक्त संज्ञके *avyakta saṁjñake* - such return to the state of unmanifestation is called the state of अव्यक्त *avyakta* for the जीवस *jīvas*.

भगवान् *bhagavān* is going to talk about another kind of अव्यक्त *avyakta* - unmanifest state of existence. But before doing so, भगवान् *bhagavān* wants to make clear what is said in this verse. Therefore, let us think about what is said in this verse, again.

Thus, every morning, all the जीवस *jīvas* wake up from the state of अव्यक्त *avyakta* - state of unmanifested existence and gain the state of manifested existence, and remain so throughout the day. At the end of the day, प्रलय *pralaya* sets in, and all the जीवस *jīvas* lose their state of व्यक्त *vyakta* - manifested existence, and they return to their prior state of अव्यक्त *avyakta* - state of unmanifested existence. This process of अव्यक्त *avyakta*, followed by व्यक्त *vyakta*, followed by अव्यक्त *avyakta* - unmanifestation, remanifestation, and de manifestation repeats itself every day in Brahmaji's life, in His own time scale, throughout the cycle of creation. Every such अव्यक्त *avyakta* - state of demanifestation, is प्रलय *pralaya* or dissolution for all the जीवस *jīvas*. That is what the verse says.



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Now two questions may arise. First, does अव्यक्त *avyakta* or प्रलय *pralaya* for the जीवs *jīvas* mean मोक्ष *mokṣa* for the जीवs *jīvas*? If so, where from do the new जीवs *jīvas* come, every time the प्रलय *pralaya* is over? If dissolution for the जीवs *jīvas* means मोक्ष *mokṣa* for the जीवs *jīvas*, then all जीवs *jīvas*, irrespective of their पुण्य *puṇya*, पाप कर्म *pāpa karma* history can gain मोक्ष *mokṣa*, just by waiting long enough for the प्रलय *pralaya* to take place. That would mean all जीवs *jīvas* can gain liberation without experiencing their कर्म फलs *karma phalas*, and new जीवs *jīvas* can come into existence without any prior कर्म *karma* on their part, both of which are impossible, because they are against the very law of nature.

Therefore, dissolution for the जीवs *jīvas* does not mean मोक्ष *mokṣa* for the जीवs *jīvas*. All जीवs *jīvas* will have to experience their कर्म फलs *karma phalas* and gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* – Self-knowledge, is the only means for a जीव *jīva* to gain मोक्ष *mokṣa*. Consequently, the meaning of the above verse is simply this. What was manifest before, becomes unmanifest during प्रलय *pralaya*, and what was unmanifest during प्रलय *pralaya* becomes manifest when प्रलय *pralaya* ends. This meaning is made clear in the next verse.

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

bhūta grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate ।

रात्रि आगमे अचशः पार्थ प्रभवति अहरागमे ॥ 8 -19

rātri āgame avaśaḥ pārtha prabhavati aharāgame ॥ 8 -19

भूतग्रामः *bhūta grāmaḥ* – means भूत समुदायः *bhūta samudāyaḥ*. The entirety of all जीवs *jīvas* in this creation

सः एव अयं *sah eva ayam*, सः भूतग्रामः एव अयं *sah bhūta grāmaḥ eva ayam* –

We are now talking about the same भूतग्राम *bhūta grāma* – the entirety of जीवs *jīvas* in this creation. What about them?

भूत्वा भूत्वा *bhūtvā bhūtvā* – coming into being repeatedly in each cycle of creation

प्रलीयते *praliyate* – the जीवs *jīvas* dissolve, they go into प्रलय *pralaya*, they go into a state of अव्यक्त *avyakta* – unmanifestation

रात्रि आगमे अचशः प्रलीयते *rātri āgame avaśaḥ praliyate* – when the night time comes for Brahmaji, the entirety of जीवs *jīvas* in this creation goes into a state of



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अव्यक्त *avyakta* – demanifestation, naturally and spontaneously

अवशः *avaśaḥ* means in this process of demanifestation, the जीवs *jīvas* have no control. It is natural and spontaneous, just as one has no control in falling asleep.

प्रभवति अहरागमे *prabhavati aharāgame* – similarly, the same entirety of जीवs *jīvas* arise again in manifestation when the day breaks for Brahmaji. This process is also spontaneous over which the जीवs *jīvas* have no control.

This means प्रलय *pralaya* is not destruction of जीवs *jīvas*. It is only a state of unmanifested existence for the जीवs *jīvas*. The same जीवs *jīvas* which existed in the previous cycle, return in the next cycle of creation. The repetition of the word भूत्वा *bhūtvā* (as भूत्वा भूत्वा *bhūtvā bhūtvā*) indicates the cyclic nature of the कल्पाs *kalpās* – each part of the cycle of creation where the same जीवs *jīvas* assume the states of अव्यक्त *avyakta* and व्यक्त *vyakta* – unmanifestation and manifestation, alternately and repeatedly.

Since the same जीवs *jīvas* who became unmanifest return to manifest and experience their कर्मs *karmas* and कर्मफलs *karma phalas*, no destruction of कर्मs *karmas* and कर्मफलs *karma phalas* is involved. There is no creation of new जीवs *jīvas* also. Only the same old जीवs *jīvas* are coming back again and again. The exception is only with respect to जीवs *jīvas* who have gained knowledge, but do not exist at all as जीवs *jīvas*. Only those who go into प्रलय *pralaya* return.

Since जीवs *jīvas* are infinite in number, and their कर्मs *karmas* are countless, they can appear in any form anywhere in the creation. भगवान् *bhagavān* tells this explicitly to help one develop dispassion for संसार *saṁsāra* – this transient world. Repeatedly coming back to assume birth is संसार *saṁsāra*. संसार *saṁsāra* is endless. One's problems in संसार *saṁsāra* are not going to be solved by being in it again and again.

Therefore, भगवान् *bhagavān* says, there is no escape from संसार *saṁsāra* unless you come to know Me, recognize Me – the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

मां उपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ।

8 – 16

mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate ।

Reaching me, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, there is no rebirth for you. You can gain आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* now and you can gain मोक्ष *mokṣa* now forever. There is no



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need to return to संसार *saṁsār* again and again. That is the message here.

In the previous verse, the अव्यक्त *avyakta* of the जीव *jīva* – the unmanifest state of existence of जीव *jīva* was pointed out. We may recall that आत्मा *ātmā* also was pointed out as अव्यक्त *avyakta* in chapter 2:

अव्यक्तोऽयं अचिन्तयोऽयं अविकार्योऽयं उच्यते 2 – 25
avyakto'yaṁ acintayo'yaṁ avikāryo'yaṁ ucyate

Sri Krishna wants to point out now that the अव्यक्त *avyakta* of आत्मा *ātmā* is quite distinct and different from the अव्यक्त *avyakta* of जीव. Understanding the distinction and difference leads to a better appreciation of स्वरूप *svarūp* of अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* – the true nature of अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* – which is also the स्वरूप *svarūp* of ॐ कार मन्त्र *omkār mantra*– the true nature of sound OM – pointed out earlier. भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

परः तस्मात् तु भावः अन्यः अव्यक्तः अव्यक्तात् सनातनः ।
paraḥ tasmāt tu bhāvaḥ anyaḥ avyaktaḥ avyaktat sanātanaḥ ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ 8 – 20
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati ॥

अव्यक्तः अक्षर इति उक्तः तं आहुः परमां गतिम् ।
avyaktaḥ akṣara iti uktaḥ taṁ āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim ।
यं प्रप्य न निवर्तन्ते तत् धाम परमं मम ॥ 8 – 21
yaṁ prapya na nivartante tat dhāma paramaṁ mama ॥

परः तस्मात् अव्यक्तात् *paraḥ tasmāt avyaktat* – Different from that अव्यक्त *avyakta*, different from the अव्यक्त *avyakta* of जीव *jīvas* described earlier

तु *tu* – quite distinct from That अव्यक्त *avyakta* of जीव *jīvas*

अन्यः अव्यक्तः *anyaḥ avyaktaḥ* – There is another totally dissimilar अव्यक्त *avyakta*. It is distinct in an entirely different way. It is neither non-existence nor transient existence. It exists, and at the same time it is different from everything else that exists. It is भावः *bhāvaḥ*, means सदा सर्वत्र अस्ति *sadā savatra asti*. It exists always everywhere

सनातनः *sanātanaḥ* – It is eternal. It is not bound by time



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यः सः *yaḥ saḥ* - That which is so, That अव्यक्त *avyakta*

न विनश्यति *na vinaśyati* - never changes, never decays, and is never subject to destruction

सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्यु *sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu* (सति *sati*) - while all the लोकs *lokas*, including ब्रह्म लोक *brahma lok*, and also all beings in all the लोकs *lokas* change, decay, and ultimately get destroyed

अव्यक्तः अक्षर इति उक्तः *avyaktaḥ akṣara iti uktaḥ* - That सनातन अव्यक्त *sanātana avyakta* - That Eternal अव्यक्त *avyakta* which is not available for perception as an object - That Eternal, ever-existent, अव्यक्त *avyakta* is called अक्षर *akṣara* - the same अक्षर *akṣara* which was pointed out earlier as

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं *akṣaram brahma paramam* 8 - 3

यत् अक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति *yat akṣaram vedavidō vadanti* 8 - 11

ॐ इति एकाक्षरं ब्रह्म *om iti ekākṣaram brahma* 8 - 13

That अव्यक्त *avyakta* is indeed अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*. That अव्यक्त *avyakta* is the स्वरूप *svarūp* - The true nature of ॐ कार शब्द *omkār śabda* - the sound OM, the word OM.

तं अहुः परमां गतिं *taṁ ahuḥ paramām gatim* - The शास्त्रज्ञः ब्रह्मविदः *śāstrajñāḥ brahma vidāḥ* people who understand and appreciate the real meaning, the content of Upanishad knowledge, people who recognize ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* - the innermost self of all beings, those people call that अव्यक्त *avyakta* - That अक्षरं ब्रह्म *akṣaram brahma*, ॐ कार शब्द रूप *omkār śabda rūp*, वाचक रूप *vācaka rūpa*, प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् *pratyakṣa brahman*, अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* directly and immediately recognized by the sound OM as

परमां गतिम् *paramām gatim*, प्रकृष्टां गतिम् *prakṛṣṭām gatim* - as the ultimate destination of all existence, as well as the most exalted means to reach that destination.

That destination is the ultimate abode of all beings, indeed of all existence. All other means and ends, end at some time. That परमां गतिं *paramām gatim* - That ultimate destination, That ultimate abode never ceases to exist.

That परमां गतिम् *paramām gatim* - That ultimate destination, that ultimate abode of all existence is ब्रह्मानन्द *brahmānand*, Absolute Happiness, which is the abode of all आनन्दs *ānandas*, all forms of happiness.



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यं प्राप्य *yaṁ praapya*, यं परमां गतिम् प्रप्य *yaṁ paramāṁ gatim prapya* - Having reached that ultimate destination, that ultimate abode of all existence

न निवर्तन्ते *na nivartante* - people do not come back, because it is not an end other than oneself. Reaching yourself, you remain yourself. There is no question of coming back.

तत् धाम परमं मम *tat dhām paramaṁ mama*, तत् परमं धाम *tat paramaṁ dhām*, मम धाम *mama dhām* - That exalted abode of all existence, that abode of ब्रह्मानन्द *brahmānand* is My abode, the abode of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. It is तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं *tat viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ* - It is the abode of प्रत्यग आत्मा *pratyaga ātmā* - The innermost Self of oneself.

Thus Sri Krishna tells here:

यः अव्यक्तः अक्षरः इति उक्तः तं आहः

yaḥ avyaktaḥ akṣaraḥ iti uktaḥ taṁ āhaḥ

परमां गतिम्, तत् परमं धाम, मम धाम

paramāṁ gatim, tat paramaṁ dhāma, mama dhāma

That which is called अव्यक्त *avyakta*, अक्षर *akṣara*, or ब्रह्मन् *brahman* is the ultimate end, and that end is My abode, and that abode is your abode, and the abode of every being.

There are three distinct messages here

आत्मा अक्षरः *ātmā akṣaraḥ* - आत्मा *ātmā* is अक्षर *akṣar*

अक्षरः परमा गतिः *akṣaraḥ paramā gatiḥ* - That अक्षर आत्मा *akṣar ātmā* is both the means as well as the ultimate end

परम पुरुषार्थं *parama puruṣārtha* - the ultimate goal of life

अक्षरं परमं धाम *akṣaram paramaṁ dhāma* मम धाम *mama dhāma* - that अक्षर आत्मा *akṣar ātmā* is My abode विष्णोः परमं पदं *viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ* the abode of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. परमेश्वर *parameśvar* itself is अक्षरं *akṣaram* and भगवान् *bhagavān* says: That अक्षर *akṣaram* is My abode. My abode means My स्वरूप *svarūp*, My real nature.

मां उपेत्य पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते *māṁ upetya punarjanma na vidyate* - Reaching Me, there is no question of coming back, because one becomes one with oneself, one with अक्षरं परमेश्वर *akṣaram parameśvara* itself. How does one reach That परं धाम



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

param dhāma – that abode of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in oneself? भगवान् *bhagavān* says:

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ, भक्त्या लभ्यः तु अनन्यया ।

puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha, bhaktyā labhyaḥ tu ananyayā ।

यस्य अन्तस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वं इदं ततम् ॥

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yasya antasthāni bhūtāni yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam ॥

पुरुषः *puruṣaḥ* – That परं धाम *param dhāma*, that abode of the परम पुरुष *param puruṣa*, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar*

यस्य अन्तः स्थानि भूतानि *yasya antasthāni bhūtāni* – within whom all beings in this creation have their ultimate abode

येन सर्वं इदं ततम् *yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam* – by whom this entire creation, this entire universe is pervaded

पार्थ *pārtha* – O! Arjuna

सः परः *saḥ paraḥ* – That परम पुरुष *param puruṣa* indicated above as अक्षरः *akṣaraḥ*, अव्यक्तः *avyaktaḥ*, भावः *bhāvaḥ*, सनातनः *sanātanaḥ* etc.

लभ्यः तु अनन्यया भक्त्या *labhyaḥ tu ananyayā bhaktyā* – can be gained, can be reached naturally, directly and immediately, only by अनन्य भक्ति *ananya bhakti*, which means

परम प्रेम स्वरूप ज्ञान लक्षण एक भक्ति *param prema svarūp jñāna lakṣaṇa eka bhakti* – unqualified love and devotion for परमेश्वर *parameśvar* and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only, imbued with one's total identity with परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, which means परमेश्वर *parameśvar* can be reached in oneself as oneself itself, naturally and spontaneously by everybody, only through unqualified भक्ति योग *bhakti yoga*, love and devotion to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and परमेश्वर *parameśvar* only, at all times.

This is Sri Krishna's message today. We will complete this chapter next time.