

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 8: Akśara-Brahma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/T9gKAFRWCEw>

Culmination of Bhāva into HIS Dhyāna: The Path Towards Mokṣa

॥श्री॥

The **Eighth** chapter of Bhagavad-Gītā is the **Akśara-Brahma-Yoga: The Yoga of the indestructible Brahman.**

It is indeed HIS Divine blessings that we are learning and adopting Gītā in our lives. Fortunate are we, that we have been able to transcend the mundane and have entered the path of Mokṣa.

We begin this session with the lightning of the ceremonial lamp whose radiance can unveil HIS form as we shed ignorance. May HIS blessings forever keep us on this path. We pay our obeisance to Yogeśvara with the following prayers,

श्री कृष्ण गोविन्द हरे मुरारे, हे नाथ नारायण वासुदेव ।
जिह्वे पिबस्वामृतमेतदेव, गोविन्द दामोदर माधवेति ॥

"Oh Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa! Oh Hari! the one who eliminated the Daitya *Mura!* Oh Master who is Nārāyaṇa Himself! the son of Vasudeva! May this tongue (of mine) eternally drink the ambrosia of Your names! as Your foremost pleasure, always articulate the names! "Govinda", the cow herder! "Dāmodara," who had a rope stuck on HIS abdomen, as HE dragged the stone when tied by Yaśodā, like the weapon Pāśa; and "Mādhava." The descendent of Madhu! who could be properly understood by *Manana*, Dhyāna and Yoga! who possesses sweetness of the springtime and honey!"

As seen in the last session, this chapter allows a glimpse into several of the concepts and terms used in the Upanishads. We previously gained an insight on the terms **Brahma, adhyātma, Karma, adhibhūta, adhidaiva and adhiyajña** as explained by Bhagavān to Arjuna. We also saw that Bhāva forms an important element in both the cause of creation and also how it affects our end goal of Mokṣa or liberation from this Saṁsāra.

As we saw in the previous session, whatever one thinks of in their entire life, forms the tendencies of the mind, or Bhāva of that individual. Hence, as they say, "As a man thinketh? so shall he becometh"

These tendencies are responsible for our last thoughts as Bhagavān stated in the 6th verse, "**yañ yañ vāpi smaran bhāvañ tyajatyante..**" where Bhagavān declared that, "Whatever one remembers upon giving up the body at the time of death, O son of Kunti, one attains that state, being always absorbed in such contemplation." Their destination depends on their Bhāva, as they leave this mortal body.

Only HE can help us traverse this tumultuous ocean of Saṃsāra, as also stated in Bhaja Govindam by Śaṅkarācārya,

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं, पुनरपि जननी जठरे शयनम् ।
इह संसारे बहु दुस्तारे, कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे ।।

Birth again, death again, again resting in the mother's womb! It is indeed hard to cross this boundless ocean of saṃsāra (cycle of repeated birth and death). O Murāri! by your causeless mercy please protect me (from this transmigratory process).

This is confirmed by Yogeśvara in the 5th verse, "**anta-kāle cha mām eva smaran muktvā...**" where HE declared that "those who relinquish the body while remembering HIM at the moment of death will come to HIM. There is certainly no doubt about this."

We continue from here in this session where the "know how" to attain HIM, and how to attain the state of Dhyāna for this goal is further explained and elaborated by Bhagavān....

8.7

tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu, māmanusmara yudhya ca, mayyarpitamanobuddhiḥ(r), mām evaiṣyasyasaṃśayaḥ. 8.7

Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus set on Me, you will doubtless come to Me.

This verse disclosed a very important principle, "**tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu māmanusmara**" where Yogeśvara asked Arjuna to "remember HIM at all times" and to fight (**yudhya ca**); here the *Yudhya* was specific to Arjuna; since, they were on a battlefield and as a warrior, his duty was to fight!

However, it reiterates the definition of Karma-Yoga which applies to people from all walks of life, be it professionals, homemakers, students etc. That is "To do their duty" by keeping "**mayyarpita manobuddhir mām..**" "with mind and intellect fixed (or absorbed) in HIM"; In simple words, "whatever tasks one undertakes, one should do them while keeping HIM in mind and intellect."

If one did this, then Parameśvara had given assurance that **eva iṣyasyasaṃśayaḥ...**"One shall doubtless come to HIM alone"

The term **asaṃśayaḥ** means, "beyond any doubt" thereby confirming the surety of the previous assurance that they would reach HIM, if they had HIM in their minds and intellect as they continued to perform actions.

However, this is when one actually surrenders HIS Bhāva towards HIM; not half heartedly, but with

complete faith and devotion. They should have their faith in HIM to reach HIM! The emphasis is again on Bhāva, Intention rather than action..

There is beautiful story that elucidated this further,

Long ago, during the festivities of the Kumbh (organised once in 12 years) there was a huge gathering of people as usually is the case for this occasion, as it is believed that those who bathe in the Ganga during this auspicious time, shall be free of any negative Karmic record, *Paap*. They become faultless.. Thus, such fortunate beings get closer to the path of attaining HIM through this.

It so happened, that this occasion was also graced by Bhagavān Shiva and Devi Parvati that year. However, seeing the hustle and bustle of people, Ma Parvati had a doubt; She asked Shiv ji that it seemed very unfair that these people were going to be rid of their bad actions simply by bathing in the river Ganga, "How is this fair?" she asked "What is the point of struggling during the *sadhana* then? Why should anybody then do any rigorous practices? Why were they even prescribed, when such an easy method was available?"

As always, Bhagavān Shiva was amused with HIS consort's musings; HE proposed a Divine play, a *leela* that could decipher her queries and alleviate Her doubts on these matters. Now, Bhagavān transformed into a diseased husband, and Ma Parvati became HIS stunning wife. HE created a hole in the ground on middle of the street, where HE settled inside. Outside, His wife was crying profusely asking for help! Many people surrounded them and wanted to help. Just then, She put forth a condition. "Only those without *Paap* can help Him; those who have any *paap* on their name would be cursed with His disease !"

Most people would backtrack by then, for who would be without any fault!..

The entire day was thus spent. Shiv ji then asked Parvati to leave everything and continue towards their home, "Umm, let's wait a little, perhaps a devotee would be here?" requested Ma Parvati. Shiv ji then laughed and asked Her if she now understood the difference..?

Just then a boy came; he went towards the hole to help Bhagavān; Ma Parvati tried to stop him but he replied, "Oh don't worry! I just took a dip in Ma Ganga, so currently I am faultless!" Saying this, He took that diseased man out!

Again Shiv ji asked Ma if she understood? "There are many who bathe in the Ganga! Yet, not many who truly believe that She gets rid of their faults; that they are cleansed internally! Those that have no faith, how can the river work for them?"

Indeed there are so many animals that live inside, what about them? Hence, it is important to note that anything works not because of following the mechanical process, but the Bhāva towards HIM. The sentiment behind these processes are extremely important, when trying to attain HIM. One should have the feeling of a devotee, as only a Bhakta can reach Bhagavān through Bhakti; How can Bhakti even work without the Bhāva of a devotee? Only with devotion and faith can we continue this arduous journey to transcend this Saṃsāra..

In Uttarkanda of Ramcharitmanas, there is a conversation between Kakabhushundi ji and Garuda ji, where Kakabhushundi ji explained,

**नर तन सम नहिं कवनिउ देही। जीव चराचर जाचत तेही ॥
नरक स्वर्ग अपबर्ग निसेनी। ग्यान बिराग भगति सुभ देनी ॥5 ॥**

"There is no body like the Human body, all the the mobile and immobile beings desire it! For, this body is the ladder for both the Svarga-loka and Mokṣa as it is the pedestal that can be utilised to gain the beneficial Knowledge (Jñāna), Devotion (Bhakti) and Dispassion or Renunciation (Vairāgya)!"

Hence, one should cherish it and utilise its full potential to cultivate Bhakti, gain Jñāna and develop a feeling of Vairāgya through it as they are blessed with this human body. This body is not to experience sense-objects and sense pleasures but to use it as an instrument to attain HIM; Yet, this journey filled with distractions could only be accomplished through being steadfast in HIM, having trust in HIM as the fruits could only be obtained through trust and belief.

Thus, "One should continue to do their actions while keeping HIM forever in their mind and intellect; thereby, cleansing themselves as they also relinquish their actions towards HIM; thus, they don't get bound to these actions; reaching HIM."

This seemed extremely difficult, then how could one achieve this state?

8.8

abhyāsayogayuktena, cetasā nānyagāminā, paRāmaṃ(m) puruṣaṃ(n) divyaṃ, yāti pārthānucintayan. 8.8

Arjuna, he who with his mind disciplined through Yoga in the form of practice of meditation and thinking of nothing else, is constantly engaged in contemplation of God attains the supremely effulgent Divine Puruṣa (God).

To resolve Arjuna's dilemma Parameśvara explained to Parth, the son of Prutha that with the mind not deviating towards any other thing (**nānyagāminā**), made steadfast by the method of habitual meditation (**yuktena**) through practice (**abhyāsayoga**), of mind and intellect (**cetasā**) and constantly contemplating (**anucintayan**) on the Supreme Puruṣa, the Resplendent (**divyaṃ**), one reaches HIM.

Here, it is important to note that the practice of contemplation on HIM should be without any deviation, **nānyagāminā**; without any thought of others. Just like the horse has blinders put in so as to reduce their field of vision and focus on the task in the front and not getting distracted from other things in their peripheral vision; similarly one should have blinders of **Satsang** (Sāttvika or good company), **Jñāna**, **Bhakti**, **Vairāgya** and **Abhyāsa** so that as we contemplate on HIM, we aren't distracted with other thoughts.

Abhyāsa means 'to practice continuous remembrance of Me', and **Yoga** means 'to fix the mind in such practice, not hankering for different sense objects'. Yogeśvara assured that "when one constantly remembered HIM with such undeviating attention, he would be able to conquer the nature of his mind."

Abhyāsa is a prerequisite to be free from any other thoughts apart from HIM. But this practice is more beneficial when it has the grace of our Guru, where the object of meditation is made viable by the blessings of our Gurus making them more beneficial for us.

A small incident illustrated more on this,

Once a woman visited a Siddha and requested him for a mantra, as she had been practicing the

chanting of HIS name, *Japa* since 10 years. He asked her what was it that she chanted? The woman replied, "Oh sage! I chant Ram Krishna Hari!" This is a commonly used chant that is a name sequence of HIS forms. The Sadhu then asked her to keep repeating the same *Japa*. Now the woman was perplexed! She had assumed that once the Guru accepts her as a disciple, he would grant her a special mantra. Now, he had asked her to keep doing the same, then what was the use of coming to him? Had she gained his discipleship?

So many questions puzzled her. She couldn't help asking further, "Oh sage! I have come from afar. I have been practicing since last 10 years; yet, you have given me the same mantra! Have I offended in some way? Or is there something that I am unable to understand? Oh Mahatma, kindly enlighten me of this?" To this the Sage replied, "You are a country woman I see! Have you seen a *Peepal* tree arising from a seed buried in the ground to cultivate it?" The woman replied no. The sage continued, "Just as the *peepal* tree can only grow after being digested by a bird, similarly any mantra becomes more effective when the Guru imparts it during initiation for it is absorbed in his extreme devoted *tapa* and becomes powerful!"

The woman understood. The *peepal* tree as one knows is a tree that is seen everywhere yet is never properly raised. One can easily see them on building walls, but rarely will find them as systematically planted. This is because the seeds are covered by a tough shell that does not make it conducive to grow as easily as one grows other plants. Only when it is ingested by birds, where the shell gets digested and they drop them through their excreta they become viable. Similarly, the mantras are abound around us, but only when a Guru makes them viable and gives them to their disciple, they become more potent and beneficial for the student.

Thus, for **Dhyāna** one needs the **Gurus grace** as well as **Abhyāsa** to withdraw all their attention from other sense-objects and focus only on HIM. For, the mind is difficult to tame and we can only focus on one thing at a time.

Kabir das ji says,

कबीर मन तो एक है, भावै तहां लगाव।
भावै गुरु की भक्ति करूं, भावै विषय कमाव।।

We only have one mind, either we can think of HIM and do Bhakti, or one could think of the sense-objects to pursue them. Either one has the Bhāva of Bhakta towards Bhagavān to attain HIM, or the Bhāva towards material pleasures and obtain them.

We think we are more prudent than this, and believe ourselves to be smart enough that we want to work for both of them and pursue both. We think while working ourselves on the weekdays, we would focus on earning and then on the weekends, we could pursue HIM by giving our time towards the Gītā.

We would like to attain both *Bhoga* and Yoga (sensory enjoyments yet a balanced state). But this isn't possible, as Yogeśvara had explained that only when our mind gets fully attuned towards HIM, is fixated on HIM, can we attain HIM.

Usually there is a continuous flow of thoughts in our minds related to different sense-objects, incidents and even people. If one thought represents one particular object, the subsequent one would be related to some other object or person. This is like a stream of water, where it never flows downstream in a continuous manner, but splashes everywhere. This is explained as **Jal Dharawat** in our Upanishads and other scriptures representing the mind without the discipline of Yoga; through which, control over one's senses is achieved.

Adi Shankaracharya ji explained that for Dhyāna, one had to contemplate on the object of their meditation by making it their own thought, thinking of it constantly and uninterruptedly for long, by continuing the same line of thought just like a stream of oil poured from one vessel to another. This analogy of stream of oil is called as **Taila Dharawat**.

When we pour oil from one vessel to another, there will be a stream of oil without any sound or splash; which is different from water that splashes everywhere. This is the mind of a Yogi, where their thoughts are a constant stream on HIM.

Here, Bhagavān hasn't emphasized on the object of Dhyāna but the Guṇas or the qualities that are required for HIS contemplation.

When one tries to meditate, the mind constantly goes away from the point of meditation, drawn by the objects of senses. We withdraw the mind from these and fix it on the object of meditation. But the mind refuses to remain steady and starts wandering in the world of the senses. This is a repeated cycle; we withdraw the mind from our senses, and again it strikes back. This struggle goes on for a long time after which the mind becomes more steady and finally, one is able to fix it on the object of meditation. Eventually, this becomes a permanent state; this is the mind of a Yogi...

Similar to how a woman is multitasking her various duties towards her family and others while still thinking of her husband, even if he is out for work; we too must go about doing our daily tasks, yet remain in contemplation of HIM. This is **Dhyāna**...

Next Bhagavān gives us an insight in to the object of this Dhyāna, HIM; His qualities, form etc.

8.9

**kaviṃ(m) purāṇamanuśāsītāraṃ,
aṇoraṇīyaṃ(m) śamanusmaredyaḥ,
sarvasya dhātāRāmacintyarūpaṃ(m)
ādityavarṇaṃ(n) tamasaḥ(ph) parastāt. 8.9**

He who contemplates on the all-knowing, ageless Being, the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle, the universal sustainer, possessing a form beyond human conception, effulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance.

It is impossible to withdraw the mind from sense objects without the constant practice of Yoga. Without Abhyāsa, it is impossible to remember Śrī Bhagavān. But to meditate on HIM, one should know HIM.

Here, Parameśvara described HIS attributes. Understand that the importance is given for HIS Guṇas and not any form or name. Who is then this **mām** (me) described throughout Gītā?

Śrī Bhagavān explained this beginning here with **Kaviṃ**.

Kaviṃ means 'omniscient'. Who knows all and there is nothing beyond HIS knowledge. Saintly persons can be knowing, but their omniscient nature is not unlimited at all times. This is why Śrī Bhagavān is using the word **purāṇam**, ancient eternal. Although the indwelling witness, **Antaryāmī**, is omniscient and without beginning, HE is also the controller of all, **anuśāsītāram**.

Śrī Bhagavān described Himself to be subtler than the most subtle (**aṅor aṅīyā**); HE is **sarvasya dhātāram**, who sustains everything, from the smallest of microbes to the largest of beings, from the ants to the humans, HE sustains them all.

One shouldn't confine the Parameśvara to a specific form, for HE contains everything, sustains everything; HE is omnipresent and inconceivable, one uses his manifestations for Dhyāna but HE is not limited by these. Whether one sees HIM as Bhagavān Rām or Bhagavān Krishna, Bhagavān Shiva or Ma Durga, they are the embodiment of the same Divine....

HE is **acintya-rūpam**: whose form is beyond material conception and **Āditya-varṇam**: who is self-illuminating like the sun and just like the sun, HE illuminates both Himself and others.

He is transcendental (**parastāt**) to the material nature of illusion and ignorance (**tamasah**).

The one who meditates on HIS form, free from false knowledge (**avidya**), knowing that HE is the Supreme Puruṣa, who is all-knowing and eternal, who is the Supreme Controller, whose existence is more subtle than the most subtle, who is the creator of everyone, whose form is inconceivable, who is self-effulgent like the sun, and who is transcendental to this material nature constantly; attains the state of *Samadhi*.

The next verse beautifully elaborated more on this.

8.10

**prayāṅakāle manasācalena,
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva,
bhruvormadhye prāṅamāveśya samyak,
sa taṁ(m) paraṁ(m) puruṣamupaiti divyam. 8.10**

Having by the power of Yoga firmly held the life-breath in the space between the two eyebrows even at the time of death, and then contemplating on God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion, he reaches verily that supreme divine Puruṣa (God).

At the time of death, Yogīs remember HIM with undeviating minds. These Yogīs are blessed with the potency of continuously remembering Him, having practised this throughout their lives. How does one attain this stability of mind? It is through **Abhyāsa**. They attain it on the strength of continuous practice of yoga.

What type of yoga? It is where in Dhyāna, the prāṅa is fixed between the eyebrows.

Thus, Yogeśvara affirmed that those Yogīs who, at the time of death (**prayāṅa-kāle**), fully fix (**āveśya**) their life-energy (**prāṅam**) between their eyebrows, on the strength of yoga and concentrate upon HIM with undeviating attention and full devotion, certainly attain HIM.

All the great devotees, be it Shabri, Parikshit and many other greats, they reached this state at the time of death attaining HIM.

A beautiful bhajan describes what an end state should be like,

इतना तो करना स्वामी, जब प्राण तन से निकले।

गोविन्द नाम लेकर, फिर प्राण तन से निकले ॥

श्री गंगाजी का तट हो, यमुना का बंसी बट हो,
मेरा साँवरा निकट हो, जब प्राण तन से निकले ॥१ ॥

नेत्रों में प्रेमजल हो, मेरे मुख में तुलसी – दल हो
अन्तिम समय सफल हो, जब प्राण तन से निकले ॥२ ॥

उस समय शीघ्र आना, नहीं श्याम भूल जाना
बंसी की धुन सुनाना, जब प्राण तन से निकले ॥३ ॥

मेरा प्राण निकले सुख से, तेरा नाम निकले मुख से
बच जाऊँ घोर दुःख से, जब प्राण तन से निकले ॥४ ॥

इतना तो करना स्वामी, जब प्राण तन से निकले।

"Please fulfill my wishes oh Swami, My Bhagavān; May I leave this mortal realm by taking your name of Govind, as I detach myself from this body. I leave at a place near the banks of Ganga ji, under the Banyan tree under which Shri Krishna plays his flute near Yamuna; May the dusky Krishna be near me, as I fill my eyes with HIS devotion, with the auspicious Tulsi leaf on my palate, making my departure a success..

Oh Prabho! Don't leave me hanging then, as I listen to Your melodious flute, come instantly as I leave this body in comfort, Your name gets uttered through me, as I leave this mortal body, save me from any sorrow, I request thee oh Master, Oh Bhagavān!"

https://drive.google.com/file/d/185Ca0zju3vOJH5H-w36vbEZE1box_pSi/view?

One should practice such that all the stream of thoughts eventually lead to HIM. Whatever one does, our mind should still be fixated on HIM. One can understand this by the analogy of a car, where as a person learns to drive, in the initial stages, they are filled with anxiety over the actual driving and cannot focus on anything else. However, once they become adept at it, they can do multiple things; even hold interesting conversations and other leisure activities, while still driving.

Likewise, initially one cannot focus on other tasks when they are meditating or contemplating on HIM. But through practice, it becomes their second nature, and just as one doesn't have to think to breathe, they don't need to specifically focus to think of HIM. They can go about their daily activities while still having HIM in their mind. The more one does Abhyāsa, the easier it gets to wade through this Saṃsāra.

It is never too late to begin but once begun, one should strive to be on this path, have HIM in their Dhyāna at all times.

There is a beautiful incident narrated in the **Aranyakand** of **Ramcharitmanas** which described this **state of Dhyāna** of **Sutikshna ji**,

Bhagavān Rām had taken a vow then that HE would eliminate all the Rakshasas. HE then travelled to various hermitage of the Rishis and sages to visit them and seek and give blessings; have conversation and take their guidance,

मुनि अगस्ति कर सिष्य सुजाना। नाम सुतीछन रति भगवाना ॥
मन क्रम बचन राम पद सेवक। सपनेहुँ आन भरोस न देवक ॥1 ॥

Of these, there was an enlightened disciple of Agastya Muni who had staunch adoration of Bhagavān. He had surrendered himself with his mind, words and action in the service of Shri Rām. He didn't trust any other deity other than HIM, even in his dreams, so enamoured was he of Bhagavān.

प्रभु आगवनु श्रवन सुनि पावा। करत मनोरथ आतुर धावा ॥

As soon as the news of the Prabhu's approach reached his ears he rushed out hurriedly, indulging in his own fancy:

हे बिधि दीनबंधु रघुराया। मो से सठ पर करिहहिं दाया ॥2 ॥
सहित अनुज मोहि राम गोसाईं। मिलिहहिं निज सेवक की नाई ॥
मोरे जियँ भरोस दृढ़ नाहीं। भगति बिरति न ग्यान मन माहीं ॥3 ॥
नहिं सतसंग जोग जप जागा। नहिं दृढ़ चरन कमल अनुरागा ॥
एक बानि करुनानिधान की। सो प्रिय जाकें गति न आन की ॥4 ॥

Sutikshna ji exclaimed: "Will the Scion of Raghus, the befriender of the meek, O good heavens, ever show His grace to a wretch like me? Will Bhagavān Sri Rama and His younger brother receive my service? I have no unswerving faith in my heart nor is my mind illumined by the light of devotion, dispassion or wisdom."

"I have no association with saints and practise neither Yoga (balance of mind) nor *Japa* (chanting of HIS name or mantra), nor the ritual. Nor do I claim any steadfast devotion to the Bhagavān's lotus feet. I bank on one characteristic of the all-merciful Parameśvara; HE holds the devotee dear who depends exclusively on HIM. This inspires me with the hope that my eyes will be rewarded today by the sight of the Bhagavān's lotus face, that delivers one from the bondage of worldly existence."

होइहैं सुफल आजु मम लोचन। देखि बदन पंकज भव मोचन ॥

Filled with blissfulness as HIS divine form appeared in his mind, the sage then declared, "This inspires me with the hope that my eyes will be rewarded today by the sight of the Bhagavān's lotus face, that delivers one from the bondage of worldly existence."

Then, Bhagavān Shiva said to Ma Parvati,

निर्भर प्रेम मगन मुनि ग्यानी। कहि न जाइ सो दसा भवानी ॥5 ॥
दिसि अरु बिदिसि पंथ नहिं सूझा। को मैं चलेउँ कहाँ नहिं बूझा ॥
कबहुँक फिरि पाछें पुनि जाई। कबहुँक नृत्य करइ गुन गाई ॥6 ॥

This wise Sage, this Muni was drowned in a flood of love; his condition; O Parvati, cannot be described in words. He had no idea of the four quarters, much less of the intermediate points of the compass; nor could he make out the track. He did not know who he was or whither bound. He would now turn back and then resume his journey in the same direction; and now he would dance and sing songs of HIS praise.

Now, Bhagavān Rām had arrived on this spot, and as HE saw this astonishing sight, HE hid behind a tree..

अबिरल प्रेम भगति मुनि पाई। प्रभु देखैं तरु ओट लुकाई ॥
अतिसय प्रीति देखि रघुबीरा। प्रगटे हृदयँ हरन भव भीरा ॥7 ॥

The sage had been now filled with intense devotion through his constant adoration of HIM. All this was being watched by the Valorous scion of the lineage of Raghus. HE who dispelled the fear of coming

and going from this Saṃsāra, seeing HIS devotee's intense devotion, appeared in his heart.

**मुनि मग माझ अचल होइ बैसा। पुलक सरीर पनस फल जैसा ॥
तब रघुनाथ निकट चलि आए। देखि दसा निज जन मन भाए ॥८ ॥**

The sage sat motionless in the middle of the road, his body bristling like a jack-fruit with its hair standing on end. The Scion of Raghus thereupon drew near and was delighted at heart to see the state of HIS devotee....

**मुनिहि राम बहु भाँति जगावा। जाग न ध्यान जनित सुख पावा ॥
भूप रूप तब राम दुरावा। हृदयँ चतुर्भुज रूप देखावा ॥९ ॥**

Bhagavān Rām tried various ways to rouse the sage; but he would not wake from his Dhyāna, lost as he was in the ecstasy of his vision. Finally, Prabhu Rām withdrew HIS guise of a Monarch from his mind and manifested HIS fourarmed form in the sage's heart.

There was a sudden disturbance!

**मुनि अकुलाइ उठा तब कैसें। बिकल हीन मनि फनिबर जैसें ॥
आगें देखि राम तन स्यामा। सीता अनुज सहित सुख धामा ॥१० ॥**

For, the sage there upon being startled, sat up in great agony; growing as restless as a noble serpent that has lost the gem on its head. But seeing before him the blissful Bhagavān Rām in HIS beatific form along with HIS consort Ma Sita and His younger brother (Lakshmana), he again became blissful .

**परेउ लकुट इव चरनन्हि लागी। प्रेम मगन मुनिबर बड़भागी ॥
भुज बिसाल गहि लिए उठाई। परम प्रीति राखे उर लाई ॥११ ॥**

This great and blessed sage was overwhelmed with affection and dropped like a log of a tree, holding HIS feet. Taking him in His long arms, Bhagavān then lifted him and with utmost affection pressed him to HIS bosom.

**मुनिहि मिलत अस सोह कृपाला। कनक तरुहि जनु भेंट तमाला ॥
राम बदनु बिलोक मुनि ठाढ़ा। मानहुँ चित्र माझ लिखि काढ़ा ॥१२ ॥**

Thus, the gracious Bhagavān Rām embraced the Muni where HIS radiance shone forth vividly depicting a radiant Gold tree meeting a *Tamala* tree. Stunned! the Sage kept on looking HIS face, standing motionless and the whole scene looked like that of a painted picture.

Said the sage, "Listen, O Prabho, to my prayer: how am I to sing Your praises? For immeasurable is Your glory and scant my wit, which is as insignificant as the flash of a fire-fly before the sun".. he then sang hymns that praised Bhagavān..

He then asked Bhagavān to forever remain in his thoughts...

**जदपि बिरज ब्यापक अबिनासी। सब के हृदयँ निरंतर बासी ॥
तदपि अनुज श्री सहित खरारी। बसतु मनसि मम काननचारी ॥९ ॥**

Even though HE is passionless, all-pervading, imperishable and ever dwelling in the heart of all, let HIM abide in my thoughts as the Slayer of Khara roaming about in the woods with HIS younger brother (Laksmana) and Ma Sita.

Sri Rām was delighted at heart to hear the sage's words, and in HIS delight HE pressed the great sage to His bosom again.

परम प्रसन्न जानु मुनि मोही। जो बर मागहु देउँ सो तोही ॥

Bhagavān said: "Know Me to be supremely pleased, O sage; I am prepared to grant you any boon you may choose to ask."

मुनि कह मैं बर कबहुँ न जाचा। समुझि न परइ झूठ का साचा ॥12 ॥

म्हहि नीक लागै रघुराई। सो मोहि देहु दास सुखदाई ॥

अबिरल भगति बिरति बिग्याना। होहु सकल गुन ग्यान निधाना ॥13 ॥

The sage replied, "I have never asked any boon and know not what is real and what unreal (what to choose and what to reject). Therefore, O Delighter of Your devotees, grant me that which pleases You, O Scion of Raghus."

Pleased Bhagavān Rām blessed Sutikshna saying,

अबिरल भगति बिरति बिग्याना। होहु सकल गुन ग्यान निधाना ॥13 ॥

Bhagavān said: "May you become a repository of worldly wisdom and goodness as well as of intense devotion, dispassion and spiritual wisdom."

Then, Sutikshna ji said,

प्रभु जो दीन्ह सो बरु मैं पावा। अब सो देहु मोहि जो भावा ॥14 ॥

"I have received the boon that my Prabhu has been pleased to grant. Now vouchsafe to me that which is cherished by me."

He then asked,

अनुज जानकी सहित प्रभु चाप बान धर राम।

मन हिय गगन इंद्रु इव बसहु सदा निहकाम ॥11 ॥

Oh Prabho! May You with Ma Sita and Your Younger brother Laksmana in Your Divine form holding the bow and arrow, in your dispassionate state, stay within the abode of my heart as the moon is situated in the sky, eternally..

Bhagavān then joyously declared **ēvamastu**....."So be it,"

Such was the devotion of Sutikshna ji, who only desired HIM, who only knew HIM, who had no expectations but only knew of HIS Dhyāna. Such clarity and focus, such adoration and devotion is what one needs to attain HIM.

The founder of Gītā press, Seth ji had mentioned that there are various acts of service that one could do, however, there is one that is Supreme of them, reminding the people of HIS name in their last moments. This led to the formation of **Param Seva Dal** that works towards it.

We can learn from this; instead of disturbing those who are passing on with endless stream of relatives, one can remind them of Paramātmā, put the auspicious Tulsi leaf on their palate, giving them the pious water from the sacred Ganges, so that they get a beneficial afterlife journey and a better beginning for the next one, with chances of attaining the highest abode of HIM. The capacity of hearing is held on until the last, so try and help them hear Parameśvara's name.

When the mind becomes situated in HIM as they leave this mortal realm, that is the most beneficial for any Jīvā..

8.11

**yadakṣaram(m) vedavido vadanti
viśanti yadyatayo vītarāgāḥ,
yadicchanto brahmacaryaṃ(ñ) caranti
tatte padaṃ(m) saṃgraheṇa praVākṣye. 8.11**

I shall tell you briefly about that Supreme goal (viz., God, who is an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss), which the knowers of the Veda term as the Indestructible, which striving recluses, free from passion, merge into, and desiring which the celibates practise Brahmacharya.

Bhagavān now expands on HIS formless aspect, for those who are on the path of meditating on the **Nirguna Brahman**..

The next few verses deal with the questions of the Paramātmā, in its formless aspect, as one may have questions, like the type of yoga needed to attain this state? What is the *japa* that one has to perform? What is the object of the meditation here? What is the ultimate goal that one attains?

Bhagavān summarised the knowledge of the ultimate goal; which, those who were learned in the Vedas, described as imperishable. Those Ascetics (Renunciates), who are free from all material desires enter there, as well as those desirous of attaining that state; who thus, observe *brahmacharya* (the seekers of Brahman, who bring whatever needed to achieve it, into practice); that Supreme destination is described in brief by Parameśvara..

Simply, the essence of Parameśvara as described in the Vedānta is further elaborated on by Bhagavān in the next few verses...

8.12, 8.13

**sarvadvārāṇi saṃyamya, mano hṛdi nirudhya ca,
mūrdhnyādhāyātmanaḥ(ph) prāṇam, āsthito yogadhāraṇām. 8.12
omityekākṣaram(m) brahma, vyāharanmāmanusmaran,
yaḥ(ph) prayāti tyajandehaṃ(m), sa yāti paramāṃ(ñ) gatim. 8.13**

Having controlled all the senses, and firmly holding the mind in the heart, and then drawing the life-breath to the head, and thus remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration on God he who leaves body and departs uttering the one Indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal.

Oṃkāra (oṃ), the sound manifestation of Brahman, is **akṣara**, imperishable, and it is identical with Brahman. Those who know the Vedas proclaim this. The ascetics enter the syllable oṃ, that imperishable reality.

Closing all the outlets of the senses from their sense objects (**sarva-dvārāṇi**), confining the mind within the heart, fixing the life-energy (**prāṇam**) between the eyebrows, being deeply absorbed in **samādhi** upon the Ātma-tattva which is also the Paramātmā; through the constant practice of yoga, and repeating the syllable oṃ, which is a sound manifestation of the Puruṣottama; Through this, the Yogī attains the Supreme destination, giving up his body while meditating on HIM.

HE explained that a person attains the supreme destination of achieving residence in HIS own abode by restraining all his senses, such as the eyes, from their external sense objects; confining the mind

to their heart, not desiring any sense object; fixing the life-air between the eyebrows; thinking of HIS formless aspect, chanting omkāra (om), which is identical with Brahman; and giving up their body while continuously meditating on the meaning of Om, which is Paramātmā. This is the state of *Kaivalya* or *Mokṣa*.

8.14

ananyacetāḥ(s) satataṃ(m), yo māṃ(m) smarati nityaśaḥ, tasyāhaṃ(m) sulabhaḥ(ph) pārtha, nityayuktasya yoginaḥ. 8.14

Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogi ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable.

Here, Bhagavān declared that those steadfast Yogīs who constantly and daily remember HIM, without any deviation of mind, **ananya-chetāḥ**; HE is easily attainable to them.

Ananya-chetāḥ, who wants nothing other than HIM, who has a steady devotion towards HIM...

As the following couplet states,

कर से कर्म करै विधि नाना।

मन राखो जहां कृपा निधाना" ।।

"One should perform their tasks at hand, while keeping HIM in their mind, so that HE always graces us with HIS blessings"

The nature of this *Saṃsāra* is illusory, as nothing is permanent except for the underlying essence, that is the *Paramātmā*. We all have to leave one day, nothing remains forever..

Kabirdas ji explained this beautifully through the conversation between the leaf and its tree.

As asked by the leaf to its tree, "Yesterday there were 11 leaves, now only 8 are left! where did the others go?"

To this, the tree explained,

तरुवर पात सों यौ कहै, सुनो पात इक बात।

या घर याही रीति है, इक आवत इक जात॥

Kabirdas ji used this example, where the tree explained to its leaf, that it is the nature of leaf to wither away, for this is the nature of this *Saṃsāra*; where, "when one comes, the other goes".. that is, the cycle of birth and death is constant.

He further explained,

रहना नहिं देस बिराना है।

यह संसार कागद की पुडिया, बूँद पडे गलि जाना है।

यह संसार काँटे की बाडी, उलझ पुलझ मरि जाना है॥

यह संसार झाड और झाँखर आग लगे बरि जाना है।

कहत 'कबीर सुनो भाई साधो, सतुगरु नाम ठिकाना है॥

"This earth is deserted; hence, we all have to leave (As all are temporarily here!). This *Saṃsāra* is like a paper bundle, which can dissolve just by a drop of water; it is like the thorned fence, which gets

convoluted on its own wire, it is like log of a tree that burns due to fire. Only HIS name, the Parameśvara who is the Primordial Guru remains a destination, rest all is illusory."

Thus, remember Parikshit, remember Shabri, seek guidance from them; for those who are forever situated in HIM, reach HIM.

8.15

māmupetya punarjanma, duḥkhālayamaśāsvatam, nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ(s), saṃsiddhiṃ(m) paramāṃ(ñ) gatāḥ. 8.15

Great souls, who have attained the highest perfection, having come to Me, are no more subject to transitory rebirth, which is the abode of sorrow, and transient by nature.

Then what happens when one attains HIM? They are free from subjecting themselves to the constant cycle of rebirth and death..

Then one may ask what is so beneficial of removing oneself from this cycle?

The simple answer to this is to remove themselves from the temporary Saṃsāra, removing any unhappiness and be situated in the state of *Sat Chitt Ananda*, the state of eternal blissfulness. This is because this Saṃsāra is described as the abode of sorrow, **Duḥkhālaya**, just like the *Vidyālaya* is the abode of Knowledge..

Thus, this end state where one is free of this Saṃsāra is the gateway towards the blissful state. This state and ultimate destination is explained in different ways; Some call it Mokṣa, others the *Kaivalya*, Some say it is the *Vaikuntha*, others call it *Nirvana*. Whatever be the name or characteristics, one strives towards the ultimate goal to free themselves of the sorrow of Saṃsāra.

Bharat ji too described his ultimate desire in Chitrakoot, as explained in the **Ramcharitmanas** where, on the shore of such a pious and sacred place; where a man could get anything which he or she desires for! **Bharat ji asked,**

अरथ न धरम, न काम रुचि, गति न चहउँ निरबान ।

जनम-जनम रति रामपद, यह बरदानु, न आन ॥

"Neither do I want any religious virtue, nor do I want money or wealth. Neither I wish for any pleasure, nor do I wish for salvation. All, I want is that I should be born again and again, and in every birth I wish for utmost devotion and love towards Rām "

This chaupai displayed the serene character of Bharat ji, his unending love and unmatched affection towards Bhagavān Rām. Every deed of a human being is vested with some sort of selfishness. Traveling to pilgrimage places, donating *dakshina*, going to temples; for, a man does everything with some desire; yet, here was Bharat ji, who understood the rarity of the Human form, and the blessing that makes one become a devotee. Hence, he only sought HIS devotion...for him Bhagavān Rām was Mokṣa..

One forgets all the happiness in favor of a single bad incident. The miniscule moment of sorrow overshadows all our happiness. Just like one forgets the sweetness of an orange, due to the discomfort caused from its fibre; one also remembers all the instances, which were a source of tragedy for them, bypassing all the happy moments. This is the nature of the Saṃsāra that we live in.

Even the developed world with all their material comforts cannot reduce the rates of depression and suicides in their populace.

Material comforts are only tools for happiness, but this happiness is not permanent..

As Nanak ji said,

नानक दुखिया सब संसार,

कोटे चढ़कर देखिए घर-घर लगी आग!

Nanak ji explained that this Saṃsāra is full of sorrow as there is some fire that is the potential for sorrow in every household.

When we meet people, after the pleasant complementary exchange, one starts hearing “but” for every positive incident. Every happy news is accompanied by a bad one. After sometime, the bad ones overshadow the good completely. Result: one feels unhappy!

Buddha called His 8 fold path to be for the cessation of *Dukkha*. This path was represented by an eight spoked wheel; the Dharma Chakra, the wheel of Dharma that helped one escape from the misery of this Saṃsāra. Buddha called the world to be full of misery and *dukkha* and the methods he mentioned were to release us from them. There is no concept of Bhagavān here, only freedom from sorrow. Specifically, the Noble Eightfold Path consisted of the following eight observances; which were grouped into three broad categories,

Prajñā, Wisdom, attained through,

- **samyag-dṛṣṭi**: equinamorous vision
- **samyak-saṃkalpa**: balanced in any intention

Śīla: developing correct character, with ethical conduct

- **samyag-vāc**: Equinamorous in speech
- **samyak-karmānta**: equinamorous actions
- **samyag-ājīva**: Equinamorous towards all beings, so do no harm; and balanced living

Samādhi: The state of Union during Dhyāna through,

- **samyag-vyāyāma**: balanced exercise.
- **samyak-smṛti**: balanced focus on the Self and Self awareness.
- **samyak-samādhi**: equinamorous state in Dhyāna..

This **Samatvaṃ** is also explained by Bhagavān in the Gītā, in the 2nd chapter, where HE asked Arjuna to perform all his duties through an equinamorous mind. This is Yoga.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ 48॥

Bhagavān said: Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, Oh Arjuna, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yoga.

Bhagavān declared “**samatvaṃ yoga uchyate.**” That having the same response towards everything, equanimity in all, towards all is Yoga. This is also the foundation of the path as shown by Buddha. The entire Buddhist worldview rests on this principle “**samatvaṃ**”

Despite knowing that happiness is temporary, we still do several things to gain happiness; but one must first understand the source of unhappiness. Kabir das ji stated,

गरीबी छोटा दुःख है, कर्ज दुःख महान।
शरीर रोग इससे बड़ा, कलह दुःखों की खान।

Poverty is a small source of unhappiness when compared with loan; disease and conflict are even bigger.

However, of these disease and poverty might be caused due to the consequences of their previous karmas (*prarabdha*); hence, difficult to remove but conflict and loan are completely avoidable. The source of both conflict and loans are greed and ego; when one is rid of these they are gone as well, as at the end we only take with us the temporary impressions caused due to our actions and their consequences; the material wealth, the body, all remain behind...

Why to fight for these temporary things then?

There is a legend of the Greek king Alexander; It is said that during his last moments, he wished to see his mother, but no matter what the price, no one could change the moment of his exit. He then asked that "let my hands hang outside, as you carry my body for the final rites!" upon asking why, he said "Let this serve as a reminder to people, that here goes the great Alexander! Who won the world, yet is leaving with empty hands!"

Thus, remain steadfast in HIS devotion, contemplating on HIM with an equinamous mind to remove ourselves from this sorrowful Samsāra..

8.16

ābrahmabhuvanālokāḥ(ph), punarāvartino'rjuna, māmupetya tu kaunteya, punarjanma na vidyate. 8.16

Arjuna, all the worlds from Brahmaloaka (the heavenly realm of the Creator, Brahma) downwards are liable to birth and rebirth. But, O son of Kunti, on attaining Me there is no rebirth (For, while I am beyond Time, regions like Brahmaloaka, being conditioned by time, are transitory).

There are 14 planes of existence; each plane has a presiding deity and different beings live there. All these planes, from Brahma-loka, or Satya-loka, down to the lowest plane, are temporary. The jīvas from those planets may take another birth, but one who takes refuge of HIM as the object of one-pointed devotion, does not take birth again. This is affirmed by Bhagavān. Thus, they become free from the cycle of rebirth and death.

Those that are born, die eventually; This is the eternal Truth. Why to mourn the temporary state of living then?

This could be illustrated **by an incident from the life of Bhagavān Buddha,**

During Buddha's time, there lived a woman named Kisa Gotami. She married young and gave birth to a son. One day, the baby fell sick and died soon after. She loved her son greatly and refused to believe that her son was dead. She carried the body of her son around her village, asking if there was anyone who could bring her son back to life.

In great grief, she fell upon her knees and clutched the child's body close to her. She kept uttering for her son to wake up. The village elder said "Kisa Gotami! We cannot help you. But you should go to the Buddha. Maybe he can bring your son back to life!"

She immediately went to the Buddha's residence and pleaded for him to bring her son back to life.

Seeing her unending grief, Tathagat said, "I have a way to bring your son back to life." She was ready to do anything to bring her son back.

Buddha said "If that is the case, then I need you to find me something. Bring me a mustard seed but it must be taken from a house, where no one residing in the house has ever lost a family member. Bring this seed back to me and your son will come back to life." The frantic woman went from house to house, trying to find the mustard seed.. She kept moving from house to house but the answer was all the same: every house had lost a family member to death.

Finally, she came to realise that there is no one in the world who had never lost a family member to death. She now understood that death is inevitable and a natural part of life. Putting aside her grief, she buried her son in the forest. She then returned to the Buddha and became his follower.

Death is inevitable, why then grieve over it....

In concluding today's discourse, may our thoughts forever rest on HIM and we gain an equanimous mind. In the next session, we shall see the concept of time and the concept of *Uttarayana* and *Dakshinayana*.

We end today's session with Hari Naam Sankirtan.

Let us now take a look at some of the queries in the Q and A section,

Vijaya ji

Question: What is Mokṣa? How does it happen?

Answer: It is the state of *sat-chitt-ananda*, the eternal blissfulness. This is different from the temporary state of happiness. This state of *Ananda* is attained when one is in the state of *Samadhi*. In our Union with HIM, understand, that the Paramātmā and the Ātma-tattva are not separate, we do not gain anything, we simply remove the layer of ignorance that shines the light of truth, Reality. When we realise our Self, we realise HIM.

Question: what is *Ajapa japa*?

Answer: It is not a method but a state, where after doing chanting for several years and when it becomes a habit (it is said, the min requirement at the beginning is 1 lakh *japa*, which takes atleast 8 hrs in a day); so much so, that it becomes our second nature and is as intuitive as breathing, this state is *Ajapa japa*. Those who attain this state, naturally have HIM in their thoughts as they leave this mortal realm.

Jaya ji

Question: Why does Bhagavān have so much sorrow and tribulations in their incarnations when they are beyond the Karmic cycle?

Answer: They transcend Karmas, what they do is the Divine play. Hence, while Bhagavān Rām was suffering and crying for Sita, when SHE was abducted; HE immediately became playful when Parvati ji came to test HIM in the guise of Sita. HE asked HER then, what was SHE doing alone and where was Bhagavān Shiva? This displayed their distance from their actions. That They transcend the mundane and everything that They do is a *leela*.



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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