

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĠĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 8: Akṣara-Brahma-Yoga

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The path to liberation by walking on the path of Yog and pure devotion with constant practice

Chapter 8 of Śrīmad BhagavadĠĀ is - **Akṣhar Brahmā Yog - The Yog of Eternal Divine**

The session begins with the prayer.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

In this Chapter, Arjuna is curious to understand few terms used by Bhagavān in the previous Chapter and he enquires further by asking the below seven questions across the first two shlokas:

अर्जुन उवाच ।
किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।
अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ 1॥

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।
प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ 2॥

- 1. What is **Brahmān** (Absolute Reality)?
- 2. What is **Adhyātma** (the individual soul)?
- 3. What is **karma** (Actions)?
- 4. What is said to be **ādhibhūta** (field of matter)?
- 5. Who is said to be **Adhidaiva** (the celestial gods)?
- 6. Who is **Adhiyajña** (the master of all sacrificial performances) in the body and how is HE the Adhiyajña?
- 7. How can one remember the Supreme Divine at the time of death by those of steadfast mind?

Bhagavān elaborately explains on these terms in this Chapter. Bhagavān then continues to explain that if one remembers HIM at the time of death, one can definitely attain HIM. Hence, if one practices remembering HIM constantly at all times while performing the daily works, one will be able to remember HIM at the time of death.

8.14, 8.15, 8.16

**ananyacetāḥ(s) satataṃ(m), yo māṃ(m) smarati nityaśaḥ,
tasyāhaṃ(m) sulabhaḥ(ph) pārtha, nityayuktasya yoginaḥ. 8.14
māmupetya punarjanma, duḥkhālayamaśāsvatam,
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ(s), saṃsiddhiṃ(m) paramāṃ(ñ) gatāḥ. 8.15
ābrahmabhuvanālokāḥ(ph), punarāvartino'rjuna,
māmupetya tu kaunteya, punarjanma na vidyate. 8.16**

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

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.

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

In the 14th Shloka, Bhagavān explains that for those seekers who always think of HIM with exclusive devotion would be able to attain HIM due to their constant absorption in HIM. The mind is deluded when it is attached to the material realm and the mind gets purified when it contemplates on the Divine. Hence, Bhagavān mentions that for those whose mind is absorbed exclusively in HIM at all times, with exclusive devotion would be able to attain HIM.

In the 15th and 16th shloka, Bhagavān explains the fate of those souls who have achieved the perfection of being exclusively absorbed HIM and have attained HIM. These great and perfected souls are no more subject to rebirth in this world, which is transient and full of misery. Those worthy souls who keep themselves absorbed in exclusive devotion attain HIM, reach HIS Divine Abode and eventually free from the cycle of death and re-birth i.e., attain liberation. However, those souls who remain engrossed in material affluence and fail to remember HIM continue to rotate in the cycle of birth and death. Bhagavān mentions that even higher celestial abodes until Brahmā Lok is under the cycle of death and rebirth. However, for those who reach HIS supreme Divine abode attain liberation from the cycle of rebirth and death.

Bhagavān has mentioned in the shloka below from Chapter 15: that the embodied Souls in this material world are HIS eternal fragmental parts.

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

The embodied souls in this material world are HIS eternal fragmental parts.

HIS Supreme Soul is the whole and all the embodied souls are a fragment of HIS Supreme Soul. When one realizes and elevates further practicing this concept, the Atma or the soul becomes Mahatma. When one attains the state of oneness with the Divine, one experiences Aham Brahmāsmi which indicates a state of absolute oneness of Atman with Brahmān. One is in a state of unity with the Divine. One needs to cut through the delusions of material realm and overcome pride or Ego to elevate to higher state of consciousness. One needs to develop and practice the quality of equanimity to elevate to higher states. The below shloka from Chapter 12 explains the trait of an elevated

devotee who practices equanimity:

**अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 13॥**

In the above shloka from Chapter 12, Bhagavān explains the traits of an elevated devotee who is dear to HIM. These elevated devotees realize that all living beings are tiny parts of HIS Supreme self. If they harbor envy toward others, it is similar to harboring envy towards the almighty HIMSELF. Hence, the devotees are free from ill will even towards those who are unfriendly or harbor hatred towards them. Such elevated devotees are compassionate, free from attachments towards possessions, free from pride and ego, forgiving and remain equipoised in happiness or misery.

In Chapter 11, Bhagavān reveals his cosmic form or HIS Vishwaroop to Arjuna on the battlefield. Arjuna is bestowed with a divine vision to see HIS magnificent cosmic form where he witnesses the great Bhīṣma, Dronacharya and Karna being engulfed in flames which is arising from the mouth of the gigantic and fierce cosmic form and the enemy army being churned by the fierce teeth of the cosmic form.

**द्रोणं च भीष्मं च जयद्रथं च
कर्णं तथान्यानपि योधवीरान् ।
मया हतांस्त्वं जहि मा व्यथिष्ठा
युध्यस्व जेतासि रणे सपत्नान् ॥ 34॥**

In the above shloka from Chapter 11, Bhagavān mentions that the great warriors like Dronacharya, Bhīṣma, Jayadratha, Karna, and other brave warriors have already been killed by HIM. Hence, Bhagavān wants Arjuna to slay them without being disturbed. HE does not want the credit of winning the war and HE wants Arjuna to reap the credit of being victorious over the enemies in battle and securing victory to the side of the Pāṇḍavas.

Bhagavān declares that the enemy camp has been slayed by HIM already and asks Arjuna to continue fighting the war. In current times, even upon completing a small task, one swells with pride and Ego. However, one needs to realize that the actions are to be performed by giving up the states of pride or ego, by remaining absorbed in the Divine to elevate to higher levels of consciousness.

The below shloka is from Chapter 2:

**गुरून् हत्वा हि महानुभावान्
श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव
भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ 5॥**

In the above shloka, Arjuna mentions that he would rather prefer to live by begging alms, than to enjoy life by killing his noble elders, who are his teachers. He mentions that he does not want to slay his Guru and enjoy the glory of winning the war as the wealth and pleasures that he would receive by slaying his Guru will be tainted with blood.

Arjuna expresses that he does not wish to commit this sin of slaying his Guru. He believes that if he proceeds fighting the war and slays his Guru and kinsman, his conscience will not allow him to enjoy the kingdom, glory and pleasures that he would receive by winning the war. Bhagavān clarifies that HE has already slayed them and Arjuna would not be committing a sin by fighting the war. He would be free from sin by aligning to his true Dharma of being a warrior and by being absorbed in the Divine. Guru has a supreme significance in our tradition. The term Guru refers to the one who dispels darkness and ignorance. The Guru is responsible to dispel ignorance and light the path of the disciple

with pure knowledge. However, in current times, there is a Guru residing in the consciousness of one and all. One often tends to advice the other. One is gripped by pride when one feels knowledge and when the advice, knowledge or Gyaan is being imparted to the other. Even for those who impart Divine knowledge to the seekers, they need to function from a state that is free from pride and egotism while imparting knowledge or advice to the other. The feeling of pride of being a Guru here leads to egotism.

Guru can also be seen as a vast entity, hence the planet Jupiter (which is also referred to Guru) is the biggest planet in the solar system. If the distance between the planet Earth and the moon varies even by 10%, it could cause a series of catastrophic events. The significance of Guru could also be compared to the same. When one moves towards of pride or ego of being knowledgeable and tends to impart advice from this state, one needs to bring focus on this state of pride or ego and give up on the same. One needs can reach the higher state of consciousness by first giving up on pride and ego. This is the first step to transit from Atma to Mahatma. This would help one give up traits such as stinginess, anger or obsessed with material possessions and walk on the path of positive traits of being generous, free from anger or hatred and acquire pure knowledge.

Vridhhi implies growth and Samvridhi implies prosperity. The western world walked on the path of growth. As a result, the western countries are now opulent, but devoid of happiness. Whereas in countries like India, the ancient sages and scholars focused on prosperity, focused more on Adhibhautika (pertaining to the living entities) more than the Bhautikta (happenings of the material world), focused more on transcendental states (Alokik) instead of worldly matters (Lokik), emphasized more on pure knowledge (Gyaan) instead of Vigyan (science) which puts one on the path of liberation.

The ultimate aim of an embodied soul is liberation and to attain the Divine. One might perceive the life span of 70, 80 or 90 years as a huge span. However, in the cycle of the entire universe, it is a concept of relativity. If one sees the journey of a soul across lifetimes, the lifespan of 70 or 80 years is negligible. If one compares the size of planet Earth with moon, it appears to be very huge. However, if the size of planet Earth is compared with that of Saturn, Jupiter or the Sun, the size of Earth is very small. The concept of time is also relative when compared with the lifespan of Brahmā Dev which is described in the forthcoming shlokas. The states of happiness and misery is also transient, and the body is constantly undergoing change every moment. Everything is repetitive and subjected to cycles and changes in this universe. It is only the Divine or HIS supreme soul which is eternal and unaffected by the changes in the universe. In all the worlds of this material creation, up to the highest abode of Brahmā, one will be subject to rebirth. Only upon attaining liberation and attain the Divine, one would reach HIS Divine abode and there is no further rebirth. Only those who are realized attain liberation.

8.17, 8.18

**sahasrayugaparyantam, aharyadbrahmaṇo viduḥ,
rātriṃ(m) yugasahasrāntāṃ(n), te'horātravido janāḥ. 8.17
avyaktādvyaḥ(s) sarvāḥ(ph), prabhavantyahaṅgame,
rātryāgame praliyante, tatraivāvyaktasañjñake. 8.18**

Those Yogis, who know from realization Brahma's day as covering a thousand Mahayugas, and so his night as extending to another thousand Mahayugas, know the reality about Time.

All embodied beings emanate from the Unmanifest (i.e., Brahma's subtle body) at the coming of the cosmic day; at the cosmic nightfall they merge into the same subtle body of Brahma, known as the Unmanifest.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the relativity of time as per vedic cosmology. One day of Brahmā

Dev (1 kalp) lasts a thousand cycles of the four ages (mahā yug) and his night also extends for the same span of time. Those who understand this knowledge truly realize the reality about day and night. Let's understand the Vedic cosmology in detail. There are four Yugas as stated below:

- **Kali Yug:** 432,000 years
- **Dwāpar Yug:** 864,000 years
- **Tretā Yug:** 1,296,000 years
- **Satya Yug:** 1,728,000 years
- **Mahā Yug:** 4,320,000 years (Adding the four yugas)
- **Kalp:** 4,320,000,000 years (1000 Mahā Yug = 1 day of Brahmā Dev)

Each kalp is divided into 14 manvantara periods, each lasting 71 Yuga Cycles (306,720,000 years). One thousand mahā yug make one day of Brahmā Dev, called a kalp. Hence, a kalp (i.e., 1 day in the life of Brahmā Dev) is approximately 4,320,000,000 earth years or 4.32 billion years and Brahmā Dev's night is of the same duration (i.e., 4.32 billion years). Brahmā Dev lives for 100 such years which is equal to 311 trillion 40 billion Earth years.

Now, let's consider a night fly which is seen near the streetlights. Its life span lasts about 8-9 hrs only when compared to the Human life span (average of 70 years). It performs all the activities from birth, growth, reproduction and ageing in a span of 8-9hrs, which is equal to an evening or night in the lifespan of a human. Consider the example where one is waiting for a train or in a premises of a hot furnace. Every minute in this case appears like hours. On the contrary, if one is in the company of a loved one, even when hours pass by, it appears to be a window of few minutes. When one is in a state of dream while asleep, one would have even passed through many years in the dream, although in reality, one would have been in the state of dream for few minutes only. Hence, time is relative.

There was a Guru who had three disciples in his ashram. The Guru enquired from the first disciple on the duration of his stay in the ashram. The disciple responds by saying that the disciple would be able to grasp on a small bit of knowledge. The Guru then enquires from the second disciple on the duration of his stay in the ashram. The disciple then responds by saying six weeks. The Guru responds by saying that he would make a good progress on his learning. The Guru then enquires from the third disciple on the duration of his stay in the ashram. The disciple then responds by saying he is here for a day and asks if he would be able to learn anything at all. The Guru then responds by saying the third disciple would grasp the maximum knowledge.

From this example, it is evident that the tendency of the mind is to postpone things. The more time one gets, the more possibility that one would postpone the tasks. Hence, the Guru said that the third disciple would make the maximum progress of gaining the knowledge.

As Kabir Das Ji states -

काल करे सो आज कर, आज करे सो अब, पल में प्रलय होगा ,बहुरि करेगा कब!!.

One only has the present and the future is uncertain. Hence, one will not be able to complete the work if the present moment is lost and there is no other time to perform the work than now, the present moment.

Those who tend to postpone the work and leave this world with unfinished tasks would be bounded by the cycle of death and re-birth. The mind oscillates towards the past or towards the past. One needs to learn to live in the present. The techniques such as Mala Jap, Dhyaan (meditation) is a technique or a Sādhanā to learn to live in the present and should not be perceived as destination itself.

Coming back to the Vedic cosmology, Bhagavān says that at the advent of Brahmā Dev's one day (1 Kalp), all living beings emanate from the unmanifest source and during his one night (same duration of 1 Kalp), all embodied beings again merge into their unmanifest source. Hence, during Brahmā Dev's Day, he creates the planetary systems and their life forms and dissolves or annihilates them at the start of his night fall.

8.19, 8.20

**bhūtagrāmaḥ(s) sa evāyaṃ(m), bhūtvā bhūtvā praliyate,
rātryāgame'vaśaḥ(ph) pārtha, prabhavatyaharāgame. 8.19
parastasmāttu bhāvo'nyo-'vyakto'vyaktātsanātanaḥ,
yaḥ(s) sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu, naśyatsu na vinaśyati. 8.20**

Arjuna, this multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved under compulsion of its nature at the coming of the cosmic night and rises again at the commencement of cosmic day. Far beyond even this unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest Existence, that Supreme Divine Person, who does not perish even though all beings perish.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that living beings repeatedly take birth with the advent of Brahmā Dev's day and are annihilated on the arrival of the cosmic night, to manifest again automatically on the advent of the next cosmic day. Bhagavān then says is that the spiritual realm is beyond these material worlds and eternal. The spiritual realm does not dissolve along with the material realms in the cycle of creation.

Consider the below shloka from Chapter 2:

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि |
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा
नन्यानि संयाति नवानि देहि || 22||

In the above shloka, Bhagavān explains the nature of the soul and the concept of death and re-birth. One discards the old garments and adorns new ones. In this process of changing from old garments to new ones, the person remains unchanged. In the same manner, the soul remains unchanged when it discards its worn-out body and takes birth in a new body. The soul is eternal as it is a fragment of the Divine, a fragment of HIS supreme soul.

Consider the example where a lady approaches a goldsmith with a request to melt the gold ornaments and make new ones from the same gold with a new design. Upon examining the gold ornaments, the goldsmith suggests that the gold has some impurities (say 90% pure gold and 10% impure) and upon melting the gold, its weight would reduce. The lady agrees and the goldsmith starts the process of melting the gold. The gold which manifested in the form of ornaments now is in an unmanifest state or molten state. The pure gold is now extracted and given a new shape (say a biscuit shape) or form. Similarly, when a soul undergoes re-birth, it needs Prakṛti to manifest in an embodied form. The sattva, Rajo and Tamo Gunas of Prakṛti can be seen as impurities which affect the nature of the embodied soul (similar to the impurity of the gold ornament). However, the three Gunas never affect the almighty as HE is Gunateeta - one who is above and beyond the three Gunas.

The waves and ocean are one and the same. The waves emerge and dissolve in the ocean. Similarly, the embodied soul manifests for a duration or lifespan and the physical body undergoes destruction at the time of death, while the soul remains eternal. When a seed is sown beneath the ground, it is

hidden from the view. It slowly emerges into a plant and then into a tree with the help of soil and water. This later leads to the germination of other seeds and the tree finally undergoes dissolution at the end of its lifecycle. However, the soul remains eternal which later attains the Divine or attains liberation when it elevates and reaches perfection.

8.21

**avyakto'kṣara ityuktaḥ(s), tamāhuḥ(ph) paramāṃ(ñ) gatim,
yaṃ(m) prāpya na nivartante, taddhāma paRāmaṃ(m) mama. 8.21**

The same unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible, is also called the supreme goal; that again is My supreme Abode, attaining which they return not to this mortal world.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that reaching the spiritual realm is the supreme goal. when one reaches HIS supreme abode, one never returns back to the mortal and attains liberation from the cycle of rebirth and death.

Bhagavān has re-iterated this across chapters and in the shlokas of this chapter. In Chapter 15, Bhagavān had mentioned the below shloka:

न तद्द्रासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ 6॥

Bhagavān describes HIS Divine abode in this shloka. HE mentions that neither the sun nor the moon, nor fire can illumine HIS Supreme Abode. One who reaches HIS Divine supreme abode does not return again to this material world.

Bhagavān mentions that the souls who attain HIM, reside eternally with HIM in HIS Supreme Abode and are set free from the cycle of birth and death. He assures the same in Chapter 7, shloka 18 and 20. In this chapter, HE says:

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं

in the third shloka; adhiyajña in the 4th shloka;

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं

in the 8th shloka;

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार

in the 9th shloka; mām in 5th, 6th 13th, 14th and 15th; Avyakta and Sanatana in the 20th shloka which describes HIS true form.

8.22

**puruṣaḥ(s) sa paraḥ(ph) pārtha, bhaktyā labhyastvananyayā,
yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni, yena sarvamidaṃ(n) tatam. 8.22**

Arjuna, that eternal unmanifest supreme Puruṣa in whom all beings reside and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only through exclusive Devotion.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that HE is greater than all that exists. One is well aware that The Divine is all-pervading, and all living beings are situated in HIM. HE exists in every atom of HIS creation. However, HE can be known only through devotion. Although he is responsible for the manifestation of Prakṛti, from which the three Gunas arise - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the supreme Divine is unaffected by the three Gunas as HE is Gunateeta. One needs to progress towards elevating

one's consciousness from Tamo Guna to Rajo Guna and then Sattva Guna, beyond which, one can become a Gunateeta. This is possible only by exclusive devotion or Ananya Bhakti towards the Divine.

One can walk on the path of Bhakti Yog by practicing the quality of equanimity and learn to remain equipoised.

As stated in the shloka below (Chapter 2, shloka 38):

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

When one performs the prescribed duty that is aligned to one's true dharma, treating alike happiness and distress, loss and gain, victory and defeat, one never incurs sin. One needs to remain equipoised during the dualities of life - pain and pleasure, honor and dishonor, or loss and gain.

As the below shloka states from Chapter 12:

**तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ 19॥**

Those, who have an equal vision to friend and foe, equipoised in honor and dishonor, happiness and misery, free from pride, free from attachment, who take praise and reproach alike, who are content with what comes their way, without attachment to the material possessions, whose intellect is firmly absorbed in the Divine, and who are full of devotion to towards HIM are ardent devotees who are dear to HIM.

One needs to learn and practice this art of Bhakti Yog. Yog here does not refer to external yogic postures but the internal state of pure devotion, Dhyan (meditation) and Samādhi. When the internal world and the external world are synchronous, one remains equipoised.

8.23

**yatra kāle tvanāvṛttim, āvṛttim(ñ) caiva yoginaḥ,
prayātā yānti taṃ(ñ) kālaṃ(m), Vākṣyāmi bharatarṣabha. 8.23**

Arjuna, I shall now tell you the time (path) departing when Yogis do not return, and also the time (path) departing when they do return.

In this shloka, Bhagavān mentions that HE shall now describe the two different paths of passing away from this world, one of which leads to liberation and the other leads to rebirth. HE explains this in detail in the next two shlokas.

8.24

**agnirjyotirahaḥ(ś) śuklaḥ(ṣ), ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam,
tatra prayātā gacchanti, brahma brahmavido janāḥ. 8.24**

(Of the two paths) the one is that in which, are stationed the all-effulgent fire-god and the deities presiding over daylight, the bright fortnight, and the six months of the northward course of the sun respectively; proceeding along it after death, Yogīs who have known Brahma, being successively by the above gods, finally reach Brahma.

Bhagavān explains the two paths of passing away from this world - the path of light and the path of

darkness.

In this shloka, HE explains the path of light.

The bright daylight, the moonlit fortnight of śhuklaḥ or the bright ascending moon, and the Uttarayana, the northern course of the sun, are all considered the time of light. The souls who relinquish the body and depart from this world during Uttarayana phase (Period which approximately starts from Makar Sankranti and lasts until six months) from worldly attachments and depart by the path of light (knowledge and discrimination) attain HIS divine abode. They are liberated from the wheel of samsara, the cycle of life and death, and reach the divine Abode. When Bhīṣma Pitāmaha was on the bed of arrows on the battleground, he waited until Uttarayana to relinquish his body even when he was in immense pain so that he could attain the Divine.

8.25

**dhūmo rātristatā kṛṣṇaḥ(ṣ), ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyanam,
tatra cāndRāmasaṃ(ñ) jyotir, yogī prāpya nivartate. 8.25**

The other path is that wherein are stationed the gods presiding over smoke, night, the dark fortnight, and the six months of the southward course of the sun; the Yogi (devoted to action with an interested motive) taking to this path after death is led by the above gods, one after another, and attaining the lustre of the moon (and enjoying the fruit of his meritorious deeds in heaven) returns to this mortal world.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the path of darkness.

It is also the phase or period of Dakshinayana, referring to the movement of the Sun towards the south of the equator, which begins approximately from the month of July and ends at the time of Makar Sankranti. The souls who relinquish the body and pass away from this world during this phase attain the fruits of meritorious deeds (depending on the Karmas) in higher abodes and will have to return to the mortal world once again.

The launch of Chandrayaan was planned when the proximity of the moon was closest to the Earth. Similarly, the journey of the soul is described in these shlokas. However, one needs to remember that passing away from this world during Uttarayana or Dakshinayana is not the only criteria that decides the date of the soul. It also depends upon the evolution of the soul and the Karmas decide the path or fate of the soul. Even Brahmā Dev himself is under the cycle of birth and re-birth.

8.26

**śuklakṛṣṇe gatī hyete, jagataḥ(ś) śāśvate mate,
ekayā yātyanāvṛttim, anyayāvartate punaḥ. 8.26**

For these two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be eternal. Proceeding by one of them, one reaches the supreme state from which there is no return; and proceeding by the other, one returns to the mortal world, i.e., becomes subject to birth and death once more.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that the path of light (Uttarayana) and the path of darkness (Dakshinayana) are eternal and the soul which takes the path of light attains liberation whereas the soul which takes the path of darkness will have to take re-birth once again.

8.27

**naite sṛtī pārtha jānan, yogī muhyati kaścana,
tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu, yogayukto bhavārjuna. 8.27**

Knowing thus the secret of these two paths, O son of Kunti, no Yogī gets deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, at all times be steadfast in Yoga in the form of equanimity (i.e., strive constantly for My realization).

This is one of the most important shlokas of Srimad Bhagavad Gītā. Bhagavān explains that the Yogis who are aware about the two paths are not confused or deluded with the same as they remain situated in the state of union with the Divine and maintain equanimity. These Yogis are absorbed in the devotion of the Divine with Ashtag Yog - Yama, Niyama, Asana, Prāṇayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samādhi. The Yogis maintain a state of equanimity and remain equipoised which help them reach a state of union with the Divine.

Let's understand this with a real time example.

Let's say one needs to reach a town. There might be two routes - one which takes 200Kms of journey and the other which takes 250Kms of journey. Now, the person would contemplate on the best route that would be feasible depending on the available resources. However, if there is a third route by flight where one would reach the town or city directly, one would opt for the same. Similarly, although Bhagavān has described the path of light and the path of darkness, HE also mentions the third route which is the path of a Yogi. He advises that one needs to elevate the level of consciousness with constant practice of devotion (for which one could follow the steps of Ashtang Yog) which would help in purification of the soul and which in turn helps the soul reach HIS divine abode. A Yogi is not deluded by the two paths of light or darkness and moves towards elevated states of consciousness with constant practice of Yog and devotion. Hence, Bhagavad Gītā is called Yog Śāstra which helps one walk on the path of elevation and liberation.

8.28

**vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva,
dāneṣu yatpuṇyaphalaṃ(m) pradiṣṭam,
atyeti tatsarvamidaṃ(m) veditvā,
yogī paraṃ(m) sthānamupaiti cādyam. 8.28**

The Yogi, realizing this profound truth, doubtless transcends all the rewards enumerated for the study of the Vedas as well as for performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities and attains the supreme and primal state.

In the last shloka, Bhagavān explains that those yogis who follow the path of Yog and devotion reap the fruits of their endeavors. HE says that even though one may undertake Vedic sacrifices, perform austerities, charity, or accumulate knowledge of the self, but without devotion towards the Divine, one would not be able to walk on the path of light. The Yogis detach the mind from the worldly pleasures and constantly attach the mind in the Divine alone. Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā teaches that one can attain these elevated states of consciousness with constant practice and puts one on the path of liberation. Hence it is said, 'Gītā Padhe, Padhaye aur Jeevan mein Laaye.' One who walks on this path eventually attains eternal happiness and would eventually attain liberation.

Question and Answer

Kirti Ji

Question: Is it necessary to obtain a Guru Mantra?

Answer: One can obtain a Guru Mantra, however the fundamental question is to how to find a Guru. In current times, when one has the thirst to find a Guru, one would surely find a true Guru. One needs to have patience, faith and devotion to meet the Guru. However, if one has a Guru, the path of attaining the Divine becomes easy. The Guru is aware on the path which leads to elevation and would be able to guide the disciple on the path to be followed. Guru Mantra would aid one in this process. Finding a true Guru is the grace of Divine and the Guru. When Swamy Vivekananda gave his speech in New York, he remembered his Guru and delivered his discourse which is popular even today. This is the grace of a Guru. The Guru helps the disciple reach the destination. Life without a Guru might resemble a journey without destination.

Rajiba Ji

Question: Is the path of Bhakti preferred or the path of Karma Yog to attain the Divine?

Answer: All paths mentioned in the Gītā help one attain the Divine and the path of Bhakti is the easiest path to attain the Divine. The path of Sagun Bhakti is the easiest way to attain the Divine for most common people.

Question: What is Chitta?

Answer: Buddhi is intellect and Mann is the mind. These emerge from the Prakṛti. In patanjali Yog sutra, the mind is later dissected to Chitta, Pragma, so on and so forth.

Manju Ji

Question: How does Brahma Dev manage the cycle of universe creation in his life span. Also, how to identify the true Guru, these concepts appear to be difficult.

Answer: This Chapter is slightly difficult to comprehend and takes time. It is advised to listen and practice constantly and regularly, to read the Gītā regularly to comprehend. It takes time to comprehend the teachings of Gītā.

Question: When one takes re-birth, the soul would again become impure as it manifests from Prakṛti?

Answer: With practice, one can attain a resolute time. As it is mentioned in Chapter 2:

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ।

when one discards all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind, and becomes satisfied in the realization of the self, such a person is said to be transcendently situated. One needs to learn to develop a firm and resolute mind and detach from external worldly situations which is a cause of distress. One needs to learn the art of detachment from mundane pleasures and give up on expectations. The root cause of all the miseries is expectations and hence one should rise above expectations and learn the art of detachment from worldly pleasures. When one is in this state, one would not be tainted by impurities of material realm.

Kamalesh Ji

Question: One would also need the presence of Guru after finding the Guru?

Answer: One would need the grace of the Guru. Even without the physical presence, if one feels the presence of the Guru, the grace follows. There was a foreigner by name Paul Brunton who travelled across India and published a book called Spiritual Search of India. Even without a Guru, he travelled the length and breadth of the country and reached Chennai. A passerby advised him to visit Paramacharya . When Paul visited the Guru, he got the answers to all his questions and the Guru mentioned that there was one more question which Paul was contemplated from within for which he would answer at a later stage. When Paul returned to his hotel, in his dreams, Paramacharya appeared before him and mentioned that the final question which Paul had in his mind if Paramacharya was his Guru, to which the answer was a No and he advised Paul to reach out to

Ramana Maharshi. Paramacharya Ji gives Vibhuti to Paul and showers his blessings.

Narendra Ji

Question: IT is said as Krishnam Vande Jagadguru. If one is on the path of Gītā, then why does one need a Guru?

Answer: It is similar to a child having Mother Parvati and Mother Gītā but devoid of his/her mother. Similarly, Although one has the Gītā, it is necessary to have a Guru.

Bajarang Ji

Question: In the Mahabharat, there are two instances - When Draupadi was being disrobed, she reached out to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna for help and when Uttara was attacked with the Brahmāstra weapon, she reached out to Śrī Krishna as well for help. Should one always reach out to the Divine at all times?

Answer: Bhagavān Śrī Krishna had a very high significance in the lives of Uttara and Draupadi. Draupadi saw HIM as her brother and did not hesitate to stop the bleeding on Śrī Krishna's finger by tearing a piece of cloth from her saree. Draupadi reached out to her husbands who were silent, she then looked towards the elders like Dronacharya, Bhīṣma, Vidur who also remained silent. She then depended on her own strength and when she was not able to hold on to her saree, she then called out to the Divine for help. One needs to develop the devotion constantly and regularly with faith, like Shabari and evolve on the path of devotion. The quality of faith and patience is important on the path of devotion to elevate on the path of Bhakti.

Jaya Ji

Question: With some people, the bond feels so strong. Is it due to the bondage from the previous lifetimes?

Answer: The spiritual father of all livings is the same, the Supreme Divine. Hence, one would feel a state of oneness or have a sense of bondage with the other. However, one should not be deluded by attachment when the sense of bondage or longing towards the other develops within oneself. One should be free from expectations. Arjuna was gripped by Moh or attachment and hence he was hesitant to wage a war against his kinsman when led to the holy and divine conversation of the Divine.

Question: It feels sad to see innocent people dying due to the war in Israel.

Answer: It is due to the feeling of compassion that one would feel compassionate towards the suffering of the other. With compassion, one would be able to reach elevated states of Bhakti. However, one should not be gripped by misery or sadness due to attachment.

As the shloka states:

ॐ सर्वेशां स्वस्तिर्भवतु ।

सर्वेशां शान्तिर्भवतु ।

सर्वेशां पुर्णभवतु ।

सर्वेशां मङ्गलंभवतु ।

May there be Well-Being in All,

May there be Peace in All,

May there be Fulfilment in All,

May there be Auspiciousness in All.

Nidhi Ji

Question: What is the easiest way to attain liberation - Austerities, Daan or anything else?

Answer: Yog is the easiest way which refers to the internal Yog of devotion, Dhyan and Samādhi. One could practice Ashtang Yog to reach this state. **Smita Ji**

Question: Please explain the meaning of ahanta

Answer: It refers to pride and Ego

The session ends with prayer and Hanuman Chalisa.

**Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṃ(m) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde
akṣarabrahmayogo nāma aṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ**

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eighth chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma."



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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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