

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 8: Akṣara-Brahma-Yoga

2/3 (Ślōka 9-16), Saturday, 04 May 2024

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/otW-0tIHbig>

## Keep ME in your thoughts throughout your life to avoid rebirth

The 8th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is called **Akṣhar Brahma Yoga** or **The Yoga of the Eternal God**

The session began with the lighting of the lamp, creating a pious atmosphere.

In the previous session, some beautiful shlokas explained very important concepts of our scriptures.

In the Bhagavad, Sukhdev Maharaj told Raja Parikshit that in the end, everything boils down to **ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ** - we should remember HIM at the end.

The same principle was elaborated in the last session. Bhagavān has said:

**tasmat sarvesu kalesu mamanusmara yudhya ca  
mayyarpitamanobuddhir mamevaisyasyasamsayam //7//**

*surrender your intellect and your mind to ME.*

How do we do it? We think with our intellect (*buddhi*), and express love and emotions with our mind (*manah*). So, we can surrender to HIM by thinking of HIM always and expressing our love for HIM. But the question is, if we are focusing on HIM all the time, when do we work and express our responsibilities? Not all of us are sannyasis. Our scriptures have an alternative path for us - It is believed that when we do something, we should start and end the task with a prayer. i.e. we should offer everything we do, to the feet of Bhagavān. Even in these classes, we offer everything to Sri Krishna, by starting and ending the classes with prarthanas.

Some people might feel that thinking of HIM at all times is not feasible. Swamiji has a simple golden rule - we could express a prayer at the start of the day and then offer a prayer at the end of the day. This will ensure that the entire day's work is offered to Bhagavān. Going to bed with a prayer will cause our subconscious mind to dwell on the thoughts of the Paramātmā, even when we are asleep. This will undoubtedly lead us to HIM. This is possible only through continuous practice (*abhyas*).

## 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.

The Ultimate Power is described by various adjectives:

**kavi:** The one who has immense knowledge of the scriptures.

**purāṇa:** HE is so ancient, it is impossible to even comprehend it. He has come before the existence of the Universe.

**manuśāsītāraṃ:** HE is the master of the entire Universe.

**aṇoraṇīyaṃ:** His size is incomprehensibly small, smaller than an atom. Its power is to hold everything (in this *brahma tattva*). And yet, it cannot be thought upon or meditated upon. Likewise, we cannot estimate His vastness.

Jnaneshwar Maharaj has said that the sparks of fire cannot understand the larger fire. Likewise, our minds are incapable of understanding HIS vastness. Our scriptures explain HIS vastness and other concepts in helpful ways. For example, the sun and the sky are used as metaphors of to help us understand the larger concept. The limitation to our understanding is because of our limited intellect. So we must study the scriptures to enhance the size of our intellect. A frog in a well can only see the well and does not have the capacity to look beyond. Comparing ourselves to frogs in the well helps us grasp the vastness of the problem.

## 8.10

**prayānakāle manasācalena,  
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva,  
bhruvormadhye prāṇamāveśya samyak,  
sa taṃ(m) paraṃ(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).

The ideal process of remembering the Almighty at the time of the death is explained here. The mind should be unshaken. It should be full of devotion towards Bhagavān and with the strength of Yoga (Prāṇayama in particular, which controls our Prāṇa shakti). We bring our Prāṇa shakti between our eyebrows, and meditate on Brahma Tattva.

## 8.11

**yadakṣaraṃ(m) vedavido vadanti  
viśanti yadyatayo vītarāgāḥ,  
yadicchanto brahmacaryaṃ(ñ) caranti  
tatte padaṃ(m) saṃgrahaṇa 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 says that the scholars of the Vedas know HIM as the imperishable that does not have a definite form. HE does not change with time. Those who practice sincere self-control become free from all worldly attachments, and enter into the imperishable. Those desiring this must practice brahmacharya - being constantly connected to Brahma Tattva.

HE reveals the goal and the process of attaining it, in the coming shlokas.

**8.12**

**sarvadvārāṇi saṃyamya, mano hr̥di nirudhya ca,  
mūrdhnyādhāyātmanaḥ(ph) prāṇam, āsthito yogadhāraṇām. 8.12**

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

Our physical body has nine gates (organs). Closing all the gates, one should concentrate so that the mind which is normally confined to the *ajna chakra* moves to the *sahasra chakra* in the head. All this is done by the practice of *dhyana*.

**8.13**

**omityekākṣaraṃ(m) brahma, vyāharanmāmanusmaran,  
yaḥ(ph) prayāti tyajandehaṃ(m), sa yāti paramāṃ(ñ) gatim. 8.13**

he who leaves body and departs uttering the one Indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal.

The one-syllabled Brahma Tattva, **Om**, is explained fully in the Mandukya Upanishad.

Bhagavān says “I am remembering you and you should remember ME too”.

Sri Krishna explains how one can attain HIM. There is a dhyana state on the verge of death. As you chant Om, you will accelerate to that merger. It may sometime be difficult to say “Om”, but one can remember others for who they have an affection towards. This is just fine, because all mantras ultimately merge into Om.

**8.14**

**ananyacetāḥ(s) satataṁ(m), yo māṁ(m) smarati nityaśaḥ,  
tasyāhaṁ(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.

*This shloka is specifically for those who are unable to do yoga.*

At the end time, how is one expected to do this? After all, death may happen at any time. A person may be in an accident, or may be drowning or may be in a coma.

What then?

Bhagavān reassures Arjuna that as long as they have thought of HIM all their lives, they are not required to remember HIM at that last moment. HE will enter the dying person's subconscious mind and awaken it.

Lesson: Every Sadhak should spend time every day thinking exclusively of Bhagavān. You must remember HIM (referred to sometimes as *Smaran bhakti*) at happy times and sad times, like Bhakta Prahalad.

**8.15**

**māmupetya punarjanma, duḥkhālayamaśāśvatam,  
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ(s), saṁsiddhiṁ(m) paramāṁ(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.

What is the benefit of uniting with HIM? The person does not have to come back to the mortal world.

Sri Krishna says that the world is a place where one gets sorrow (duhkha). HE says, you will get freedom from this state when you attain Me.

Nothing is permanent in this world, especially happiness. These moments are transient. Rivers flow in one direction and they do not think about what happened in their path earlier. Their entire goal is to unite with the ocean. Likewise, our entire goal in this lifetime should be to merge with the Absolute.

A person who follows the guidelines mentioned before reaches the highest state. Sri Krishna reassures us: Do not be in the belief that this is only for a few people. All you need to do is think of ME as often as possible.

**8.16**

**ābrahmabhuvanālokaḥ(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).

Everything is destined to experience rebirth. From Brahmā's abode to everything else in the Universe, all entities are subject to generation, dissolution and rebirth. There is only one place where this is not going to happen - and that is when we attain Paramātmā.

In the state of sleep, many things happen in our dreams and nightmares, sometimes frightening us. But when we wake up, those dreams do not affect us. Similarly, when we attain Bhagavān, "normal" things will have no meaning as there is no rebirth. For those who can't attain the Paramātmā, rebirth in this world is ensured, again and again. We have only one lifetime's memory. However, there have been countless lives before, of which we are not aware of. Birth and death is a cycle that every living thing has to endure until the final unison with the Paramātmā.

Thus ended this beautiful vivechan, covering many subtle concepts,. It was followed by a Question-and-Answer session.

### Questions and Answers session:

#### Aryan ji

**Q:** We come to this earth and experience lots of pleasure. So why is it misery?

**A:** Whether we play, eat a chocolate and anything else - this pleasure lasts for only a short while. It is replaced by sorrow. The actual state of bliss is permanent. And that is why we must merge with Sri Krishna. Earthly pleasures are transient and short lived.

#### Poonam ji

**Q:** How can we concentrate between our eyebrows. And if we are the favourite of Sri Krishna, why did he send us to this world?

**A:** We are here because of our past karmas. We do the best we can for our children. Subsequently we cannot manage their lives and much depends on their choices.

We are part of his creation. The issue of concentrating of the *Prāṇa shakti* and moving it from one place to another is a complicated matter.

#### Manjula ji

**Q:** Elaborate on the concept of *sushupti*.

**A:** This is a state of being neither awake or asleep. It is dreamless sleep.

#### Nirmala ji

**Q:** Why has God created us?

**A:** Many reasons have been cited. They can be found in the Brahmasutras. Swamiji says it is part of Leela. It is a part of Sri Krishna's Swabhava. It is our responsibility to understand that we are part of His Leela. He has asked us to live with this world that HE has created.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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**|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||**