

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 8: Akṣara-Brahma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/orf7GTMsB7o>

Conscious Departure & Union with The Eternal

Chapter 8 of the Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā is **Akṣhar Brahmā Yog - The Yog of Eternal Divine.**

With salutations at the feet of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, today's session commenced with a prayer to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the recitation of the *Hanuman Chalisa*, and the lighting of a lamp, marking an auspicious beginning.

By the immense grace of the Divine, we have been blessed with the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the teachings of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, a scripture that brings meaning and purpose to our lives while guiding us toward the ultimate welfare of human existence. Whether this opportunity has arisen due to the merit of good deeds performed in this life, the virtuous actions of past births, the blessings of our ancestors, or the grace of a saint at some point in our journey, it is undoubtedly a rare moment of spiritual awakening—a chance to engage deeply with the divine teachings of the Gītā.

The eighth chapter, known for its profound depth, presents some of the most intricate concepts in the Gītā. As the speaker shared from personal experience, before fully grasping its essence, this chapter felt challenging and burdensome—much like a child struggling with a difficult subject, eager to move past it without fully understanding. However, after listening to Swamiji and receiving insights from saints, the teachings of this chapter began to unfold, revealing profound meanings and becoming a source of immense joy. What once seemed overwhelming transformed into a treasure of wisdom, making the study of this chapter a deeply fulfilling experience. Indeed, the eighth chapter is known for its subtle complexities, but once understood, it offers unparalleled delight and insight into the nature of life, death, and liberation.

In the seventh chapter, Śrī Bhagavān initiated the discourse on knowledge (*jñāna*) and wisdom (*vijñāna*). Toward the end, in the 30th verse, He introduced unique terms that stirred Arjuna's curiosity and prompted deeper reflection. Bhagavān spoke of concepts such as Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña, introducing new dimensions to His teachings.

Śrī Bhagavān States:

साधिभूताधिदैवं(म्) मां(म्), साधियज्ञं(ञ्) च ये विदुः।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां(न्), ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥३०॥

(Those who know Me as the Supreme Being along with the principles of Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña, and remain devoted to Me with a focused mind, also remember Me at the time of departure and thereby attain Me.)

The use of these unfamiliar terms—**Adhibhūta, Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña**—left Arjuna with questions and doubts. Eager to understand their significance, he paused the discourse and asked Bhagavān for clarification. Thus, the eighth chapter begins with Arjuna's inquiries, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of these profound concepts and their relevance to human existence and spiritual liberation.

8.1

arjuna uvāca

**kiṃ(n) tadbrahma kimadhyātmaṃ(ñ), kiṃ(ñ) karma puruṣottama,
adhibhūtaṃ(ñ) ca kiṃ(m) proktam, adhidaivaṃ(ñ) kimucyate. 8.1**

Arjuna said:

Kṛṣṇā, what is that Brahma (Absolute), what is Adhyātma (Spirit), and what is Karma (Action)? What is called Adhibhūta (Matter) and what is termed as Adhidaiva (Divine Intelligence)?

In the closing verses of the previous chapter, Śrī Bhagavān spoke about the state of enlightened souls, who remain absorbed in divine consciousness even at the moment of death. Intrigued by these profound terms, Arjuna begins Chapter 8 by asking seven critical questions, seeking clarity on key metaphysical ideas. This marks the beginning of a profound dialogue aimed at unraveling the mysteries of life, spirituality, and existence.

- **kiṃ tad brahma:** Arjuna asks, "What is Brahma?" referring to the unchanging, infinite reality that transcends the material world—the Absolute.
- **kim adhyātmaṃ:** He inquires about the essence of the self, the individual consciousness (Adhyātma), which connects the human experience with the eternal spirit.
- **kim karma:** Arjuna seeks clarity on Karma, which governs the consequences of actions and plays a central role in shaping one's destiny.
- **adhibhūtaṃ ca kiṃ proktam:** He wants to understand Adhibhūta, representing the transient, perishable elements that constitute the physical universe.
- **adhidaivaṃ kimucyate:** Finally, Arjuna asks about Adhidaiva, the governing divine intelligence or cosmic force overseeing creation.

Key Insights:

- **Curiosity for Higher Knowledge:** Arjuna's questions demonstrate his earnest desire to understand the principles that govern existence and the path to spiritual liberation.
- **Foundational Inquiry:** These concepts—Brahma, Karma, Adhyātma, Adhibhūta, and Adhidaiva—form the philosophical bedrock for the teachings that follow.
- **Spiritual Alignment:** Arjuna's inquiry sets the stage for Bhagavān's elaboration on how material life, actions, and spiritual realization are interconnected.

8.2

adhiyajñāḥ(kh) kathaṃ(ñ) ko'tra, dehe'sminmadhusūdana, prayāṅakāle ca kathaṃ(ñ), jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ. 8.2

Kṛṣṇa, who is Adhiyajña here and how does he dwell in the body? And how are you to be realized at the time of death by those of steadfast mind?

Arjuna's inquiry here expands further into the metaphysical realm. Along with understanding the divine forces, he seeks practical guidance for achieving spiritual success, especially in life's final moments.

- **adhiyajñāḥ kathaṃ ko'tra, dehe'smin:** Arjuna asks about Adhiyajña, the divine aspect presiding over sacrifices. He is curious about how this divine principle functions within the human body, symbolizing the inner connection between spiritual practices and bodily existence.
- **prayāṅakāle ca kathaṃ, jñeyo'si niyatātmabhiḥ:** Arjuna then seeks to know how seekers with steadfast minds can realize Bhagavān at the moment of death—a crucial point that determines one's liberation or continued journey through the cycles of birth and death.

Key Insights:

1. **Divine Presence within the Body:** Arjuna's question highlights the significance of recognizing the divine presence not only in external rituals but within oneself.
2. **Critical Moment of Death:** The focus on prayāṅakāla emphasizes that the final thoughts at the time of death determine the soul's destination, reflecting the essence of spiritual preparation.
3. **Path to Steadfast Devotion:** Arjuna's inquiry about maintaining focus during life's last moments points to the importance of disciplined practice throughout one's life.

Overview of Arjuna's Seven Questions

In these two opening verses, Arjuna poses seven essential questions, seeking a comprehensive understanding of the nature of existence:

- What is **Brahma** (Absolute Reality)?
- What is **Adhyātma** (the individual soul)?
- What is **Karma** (Action)?
- What is described as **Adhibhūta** (Matter)?
- Who is considered **Adhidaiva** (Divine Intelligence)?
- Who is **Adhiyajña** within the body?
- How can **one remember and remain absorbed in the Divine at the time of death?**

These questions not only seek clarity on key spiritual concepts but also guide the dialogue toward practical methods for attaining liberation. In the subsequent verses, Śrī Bhagavān begins by addressing the first six inquiries and then elaborates on the final and most crucial question—how to remember the Divine at the moment of death.

This chapter, titled **Akṣara-Brahma-Yoga (The Yoga of the Imperishable Absolute)**, dives deep into the nature of the eternal self, the transient world, and the process of liberation, providing seekers with a holistic path to transcendence.

8.3

śrībhagavānurvāca
akṣaraṃ(m) brahma paRāmaṃ(m), svabhāvo'dhyātmamucyate,
bhūtabhāvodbhaVākaro, visargaḥ(kh) karmasaṃjñitaḥ. 8.3

Śrī Bhagavan said:

The supreme Indestructible is Brahma, one's own Self (the individual soul) is called AdhyAtmā; and the Primal resolve of God (Visarga), which brings forth the existence of beings, is called Karma (Action).

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān begins to answer Arjuna's questions by elucidating profound spiritual concepts: *Brahma*, *Adhyātmā*, and *Karma*. These terms form the foundation for understanding the nature of existence, the self, and the significance of action in the universe.

- **akṣaraṃ brahma parāmaṃ:** The word *Akṣara* refers to that which is imperishable and eternal—Brahma, the unchanging Absolute. It symbolizes the ultimate reality, beyond the influence of time and decay. This essence pervades all creation, transcending the cycles of birth and death.

In Chapter 15, Śrī Bhagavān describes this as:

नान्तो न चादिर्न

(*nānto na cādirna*) - "It has neither beginning nor end."

The transient world (*Kṣara*) undergoes three phases—creation, sustenance, and destruction—but all these changes occur only at its surface level. Even in physical transformations, such as burning or shredding a piece of paper, the material persists in another form. This illustrates the law of conservation: nothing in *Samsāra* (the material world) truly vanishes; it merely changes form. Similarly, the earth's mass remains constant, despite transformations. The essence of all existence is rooted in Brahma, the *Akṣara*—the eternal reality.

Illustrative Analogies:

- **Wave and Ocean:** The wave exists only as a manifestation of the ocean. When the ocean withdraws, the wave disappears, demonstrating that all existence depends on Brahma.
- **Gold and Ornament:** Just as an ornament's beauty depends on gold, the body has meaning only because of the spirit (Brahma).
- **Life and Body:** No amount of wealth can restore a lifeless body, underscoring that Brahma, not the material body, is the true essence of life.

Brahma exists beyond space and time, remaining unaffected by change. Tulsidas Ji eloquently expresses this in the *Bāla Kāṇḍa* of the *Rāmcharit Mānas*:

बिनु पग चलइ सुनहि बिनु काना।
कर बिनु कर्म करहि विधि नाना।।
आनन रहित सकल रस भोगी।
बिनु वानी वक्ता वड जोगी।।
तन विनु परसु नयन विनु देखा।
गृहइ घ्राण बिनु वास असेषा।।
असि सब भाँति अलौकिक करनी।
महिमा जासु जाइ नहिं बरनी।।

These lines convey that Brahma acts without physical senses, performing deeds that transcend human comprehension. The actions occur effortlessly, without a perceivable reason, and this profound reality eludes the grasp of ordinary intellect.

The concept of the infinite (Ananta) further exemplifies Brahma's transcendence. Though scientists acknowledge the universe's infinity, no one can quantify it. Similarly, the word *Sanātana* (eternal) suggests existence without a beginning or end—an idea difficult for the human mind to grasp, which tends to frame everything within a temporal beginning.

Śrī Bhagavān further explains this in Chapter 15:

**ममैवांशो जीवलोके, जीवभूतः(स) सनातनः।
मनः(ष) षष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि, प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति॥ (15.7)**

(*mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke, jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ, manaḥ ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi, prakṛtisthāni karṣati.*)

The eternal *Jīvātmā* (soul) is a fragment of Śrī Bhagavān's essence, functioning through the mind and senses within *Prakṛti* (nature).

- **svabhāvo'dhyātmam ucyate:**

Adhyātma refers to one's inner nature, or *Svabhāva*. It is the consciousness residing within, representing the individual soul (*Ātman*). Understanding the self is a crucial step toward spiritual realization. The journey of self-inquiry—"Who am I?"—is an essential part of the path to liberation.

Prakṛti's higher state is called *Adhyātma*. When Brahma manifests in an individual form, it becomes the *Jīvātmā*. The quest to discover one's true self is known as *Adhyātma*.

- **bhūtabhāvodbhavakaro visargaḥ karmasaṃjñitaḥ:**

Here, *Karma* is presented as the divine force responsible for the manifestation of beings. *Visarga* signifies the creative act that initiates existence, driven by divine will. *Karma* governs not only individual actions but also cosmic creation.

When Brahma's will is directed toward creation, the material world comes into being. Likewise, when an individual's desires translate into actions, it becomes *Karma*. For example, the desire to eat *jalebi* becomes *Karma* only when one takes the necessary steps to obtain it. Similarly, Brahma's creative impulse manifests the universe, and an embodied soul's desires shape personal actions.

An analogy can be drawn from a military operation:

The Prime Minister may express a desire to wage war, which is conveyed through the chain of command until the soldiers carry out the action. While the soldier on the front line performs the act, the responsibility for initiating the war lies with the leaders who conceived the desire.

This verse reveals that the path to liberation involves a deep understanding of the eternal essence (Brahma), one's inner self (*Adhyātma*), and the significance of aligning actions (*Karma*) with divine will.

Key Insights:

- **Brahma as the Eternal Foundation:** Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes Brahma's indestructible nature as the underlying reality of all existence, transcending the material world and serving as the ultimate truth.

- **Understanding the Inner Self (Adhyātma):** Recognizing one's essential nature is vital for spiritual progress. The self (*Ātman*) reflects the supreme Brahma, and realizing this connection brings one closer to liberation.
- **Karma as a Creative Force:** Karma encompasses not only human actions but also the cosmic unfolding of life. Aligning personal actions with the divine will ensures harmony with the universe and aids in spiritual advancement.

This verse serves as a profound teaching, preparing Arjuna to grasp the deeper aspects of existence, self-realization, and the role of action in achieving liberation.

8.4

adhibhūtaṃ(ñ) kṣaro bhāvaḥ(ph), puruṣaścādhidaivatam, adhiyajño'hamevātra, dehe dehabhṛtām vara. 8.4

All perishable objects are Adhibhūta, the shining Puruṣa (Brahma) is Adhidaiva and in this body I Myself, dwelling as the inner witness, am Adhiyajña, O Arjuna !

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān deepens His response to Arjuna's inquiry by explaining the interconnected concepts of *Adhibhūta*, *Adhidaiva*, and *Adhiyajña*. These metaphysical ideas illuminate the relationship between the transient material world, divine intelligence, and the inner spiritual witness, forming a complete understanding of existence that guides spiritual seekers toward deeper self-awareness.

- **adhibhūtaṃ kṣaro bhāvaḥ:** The term *Adhibhūta* refers to the ever-changing, perishable material world—the realm where all physical objects and forms undergo birth, decay, and destruction. Anything subject to time and change falls under this category.

Tulsidas Ji captures this impermanence in the following verse from the *Rāmcharit Mānas*:

गो गोचर जहँ लागि मन जाई ।
सो सब माया जानेहु भाई ॥

(Wherever the mind can reach—through sensory perception or thoughts and imagination—know, O brother, that all of it is Māyā, the illusion of the material world.)

The earlier teachings explain that *Prakṛti* (nature) has two aspects:

- **Para Prakṛti:** The higher, spiritual nature—pure consciousness or the eternal soul (*Ātman*/Brahman), which is unchanging and beyond time.
- **Apara Prakṛti:** The lower, material nature, including the mind, ego, and physical universe, which is transient and subject to change.

Adhibhūta belongs to *Apara Prakṛti*, the realm accessible to sensory experience. Although we can perceive the material world, we cannot grasp *Para Prakṛti* directly through our senses—it represents the unchanging essence beyond sensory experience.

- **puruṣaś cādhidaivatam:** *Adhidaiva* refers to the divine intelligence governing the cosmos, represented by *Puruṣa*, the cosmic spirit. This principle bridges the transcendental and material

realms, orchestrating the functioning of nature and cosmic order.

Each sense organ is linked to a specific celestial deity (*devatā*). For instance, Surya Dev (the Sun) provides the power of sight, Prithvi (Earth) governs the sense of smell, and Bhagavān Vishnu provides strength to the legs. Bowing down and touching someone's feet symbolizes offering salutations to Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa, as these limbs are connected to divine forces.

As Swami Ji explains: If the Bhagavad Gītā represents theoretical knowledge, the *Rāmcharit Mānas* is the practical application of these teachings. The following verse from the *Rāmcharit Mānas* (verse 117) illustrates how desires influence human behavior:

इंद्रीं द्वार झरोखा नाना।
तहँ तहँ सुर बैठे करि थाना।।
आवत देखहिं बिषय बयारी।
ते हठि देही कपाट उघारी।।

This verse compares the senses to windows and doors of a house through which external experiences (objects of desire) enter. The celestial deities guard these openings, but when the breeze of worldly desires blows, the senses—driven by attachment—stubbornly open the doors, allowing desires to enter unchecked. This illustrates how the power of the senses arises from celestial deities, and the divine intelligence regulates them.

- **adhiyajño 'ham evātra, dehe:** Śrī Bhagavān identifies Himself as *Adhiyajña*, the inner witness residing in every being's body. As the recipient of all sacrificial offerings—whether through thoughts, actions, or worship—He connects individual beings to the cosmic purpose.

Hiranyagarbha represents Brahmā, the creator of the universe and the one who assigns roles to the celestial deities. However, the supreme master of all these deities is Bhagavān Himself, the *Adhiyajña*. While the Gītā Press identifies Vasudev Kṛṣṇa as *Adhiyajña*, the term can also refer to one's personal deity (*Ishtadev*)—the chosen form in which one envisions the Divine.

Key Insights:

- **Material Realm as Temporary:** The concept of *Adhibhūta* emphasizes the impermanence of the physical world. All objects subject to creation and decay belong to this transient realm, highlighting the need to transcend material attachments.
- **Divine Intelligence Behind Creation:** *Adhidaiva* signifies the divine intelligence that governs the universe. This principle reminds us that beyond the visible material world lies a cosmic order directed by a higher intelligence.
- **The Divine Within as the Witness:** Śrī Bhagavān's identification as *Adhiyajña* reflects the presence of the Divine within every being as the inner witness. Recognizing this presence allows individuals to align their actions with the higher spiritual purpose.

This verse adds depth to the teachings in Chapter 8 by explaining the relationship between the material world, divine intelligence, and the inner spiritual presence. Śrī Bhagavān highlights the importance of understanding these interconnected realms for spiritual seekers. Recognizing the transience of the material, the intelligence guiding creation, and the Divine presence within prepares one for the ultimate

goal of self-realization and liberation.

8.5

antakāle ca māmeva, smaranmuktvā kalevaram, yaḥ(ph) prayāti sa madbhāvaṃ(m), yāti nāstyatra saṃśayaḥ. 8.5

He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone even at the time of death, attains My state; there is no doubt about it.

In this shloka, Śrī Bhagavān addresses Arjuna's seventh question, emphasizing the transformative power of one's final thoughts. He assures that those who leave their physical body while remembering Him at the moment of death will certainly attain His divine essence. This verse highlights the importance of maintaining mindfulness and devotion to the Divine throughout life, especially during one's final moments.

- **antakāle ca māmeva smaran:** Śrī Bhagavān advises that remembering Him alone at the time of death ensures the soul's elevation. The state of one's mind in those final moments plays a decisive role in shaping the journey of the soul beyond death. This reflects the principle that the thoughts one harbors at the end of life are the culmination of lifelong tendencies and can determine the soul's future course. A mind centered on the Divine at the moment of passing ensures unity with the Supreme.
- **muktvā kalevaram:** *Kalevara* refers to the physical body. When a person discards the body at the time of death, the state of their mind, along with their attachments and thoughts, influences their subsequent destination. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that focusing on Him while leaving the body leads to a higher spiritual realm, ensuring liberation from the material cycle.
- **yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṃ yāti:** The phrase *madbhāvaṃ yāti* signifies attaining the state of Śrī Bhagavān, implying unity with His divine essence. This state is not merely about physical liberation from the material world; it refers to spiritual oneness with the Divine. Such unity, known as Moksha, Nirvāṇa, or Kaivalya, is the ultimate goal of spiritual life, transcending the limitations of material existence.
- **nāstyatra saṃśayaḥ:** Śrī Bhagavān offers assurance by declaring that there is no doubt about this truth. This certainty serves as a source of comfort for devotees, affirming that their spiritual efforts will yield fruit. It inspires unwavering faith in the power of devotion and mindfulness, knowing that the soul will attain the divine state if the mind remains focused on the Supreme at the final moment.

Key Insights:

1. **Power of the Last Thought:** The state of the mind at the time of death plays a critical role in determining one's future. A mind fixed on the Divine during this crucial moment guarantees liberation, leading the soul toward unity with the Supreme.
2. **Importance of Consistent Devotion:** To think of Śrī Bhagavān at the moment of death requires a lifetime of consistent devotion and mindfulness. The final thought is often a reflection of one's habitual tendencies cultivated throughout life, underscoring the need for persistent spiritual

practice.

3. **Assurance of Liberation:** Śrī Bhagavān's declaration that there is no doubt about this truth provides reassurance and hope to devotees. It motivates them to live consciously, striving to maintain a relationship with the Divine that endures even in their final moments.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān underscores the significance of one's last thought and the impact it has on the soul's journey. He assures that those who depart from the body with their mind fixed solely on Him will certainly attain His divine state. The fate of those who do not remember Him at the time of death is addressed in the following verse, continuing the discourse on the importance of spiritual awareness and preparedness.

8.6

yaṃ(m) yaṃ(m) vāpi smaranbhāvaṃ(n), tyajatyante kalevaram, taṃ(n) tamevaiti kaunteya, sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ. 8.6

Arjuna, thinking of whatever entity one leaves the body at the time of death, that and that alone one attains, being ever absorbed in its thought.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the power of one's final thoughts and their profound influence on the soul's journey beyond death. He teaches that the mind's focus at the last moment reflects a lifetime of mental conditioning and attachments. Just as our habits shape our lives, the thoughts we cultivate consistently will emerge naturally during our final moments, determining the soul's future path.

Explanation

- **yaṃ yaṃ vāpi smaran bhāvaṃ:** Śrī Bhagavān explains that the thoughts, emotions, or attachments dominating the mind at the time of death become the guiding force for the soul's next birth. This reflects how one's mental patterns shape their destiny, leading the soul in the direction of its final thoughts.
- **tyajatyante kalevaram:** *Kalevaram* refers to the body. When one leaves the body at the time of death, accumulated tendencies (*saṃskāras*) emerge strongly, influencing the mind's final focus. These habitual patterns, built over a lifetime, determine the path the soul will follow after death.
- **taṃ tam evaiti kaunteya:** Śrī Bhagavān assures Arjuna that the soul attains the state or form it is absorbed in at the final moment. Whether the mind clings to material desires or contemplates the Divine, this last thought shapes the soul's onward journey. Hence, it is crucial to align one's focus toward higher spiritual ideals throughout life.
- **sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ:** The dominant thoughts at death are not accidental; they reflect the focus cultivated throughout life. Whether one's mind is filled with desires or devotion, these patterns become the natural thoughts at the final moment, directing the soul's journey. Therefore, consistent remembrance of the Divine throughout life ensures the mind is tuned to Him during the final transition, leading to liberation.

Practice of Lifelong Devotion

Śrī Bhagavān advises that spiritual focus at the time of death requires lifelong devotion. The mind will naturally gravitate toward what it has been conditioned to think about throughout life. Just as a wall that leans in one direction will collapse that way, so too will the mind follow the habits it has formed. Therefore, consistent contemplation of the Divine is essential to ensure spiritual alignment at the moment of death.

Hymn from Guru Granth Sahib

Bhagat Trilochan Ji's hymn from the *Guru Granth Sahib* (Page 526) beautifully illustrates this teaching:

अरी बाई गोबिंद नाम मत बिसरै
अरी बाई गोबिंद नामु मति बीसरै ॥
अंति कालि जो लछमी सिमरै ऐसी चिंता महि जे मरै ॥
सरप जोनि वलि वलि अउतरै ॥१॥
बेसवा जोनि वलि वलि अउतरै ॥२॥
सूकर जोनि वलि वलि अउतरै ॥३॥
प्रेत जोनि वलि वलि अउतरै ॥४॥
अंति कालि नाराइणु सिमरै ऐसी चिंता महि जे मरै ॥
बदति तिलोचनु ते नर मुकता पीत्मबरु वा के रिदै बसै ॥५॥

This hymn teaches that if one's thoughts remain attached to wealth or material pleasures at death, they are destined for lower forms like snakes, pigs, or ghosts. On the other hand, those who remember Narayan (God) at death are liberated from the cycle of birth and death, with God residing eternally in their hearts. This shows that guiding a person toward divine remembrance at death is far more valuable than worldly distractions.

Illustrative Examples

A wealthy woman, on her deathbed, was more concerned about her 10,000 sarees than her spiritual journey, fearing that her envious sister-in-law might inherit them. Similarly, a businessman tried to convey something to his sons during his last moments. Believing he wanted to reveal hidden wealth, his sons gave him an expensive injection to enable him to speak, but his final words were, "A cow is eating the plant," before he passed away. These examples highlight how lifelong attachments naturally surface at the time of death, showing the need for consistent devotion throughout life to align the mind with the Divine.

Bali's Liberation in the Ramayana

In the *Ramayana*, Bali's encounter with Śrī Bhagavān illustrates the importance of divine remembrance. After being wounded by Rama, Bali questions why he was killed and why Sugriva was favored:

धर्म हेतु अवतरेहु गोसाईं। मारेहु मोहि ब्याध की नाई ॥
मैं बैरी सुग्रीव पिआरा। अवगुन कवन नाथ मोहि मारा ॥३॥

(Though YOU descended to uphold Dharma, YOU killed me like a hunter slays a wild beast. What fault of mine caused this?)

Rama explains that Bali's actions warranted his death. Bali, recognizing the immense grace of having Bhagavān's hand on his head, refuses the offer to restore his life:

सुनहु राम स्वामी सन चल न चातुरी मोरि।
प्रभु अजहूँ मैं पापी अंतकाल गति तोरि ॥९॥

(O Rama, my cleverness is useless before You. Yet, I have found shelter in You at the hour of my death.)

Moved by Bali's humility, Bhagavān gently touches his head:

सुनत राम अति कोमल बानी। बालि सीस परसेउ निज पानी॥
अचल करौ तनु राखहु प्राना। बालि कहा सुनु कृपानिधाना॥१॥

(With great tenderness, Rama touched Bali's head and offered to make his body immortal, but Bali refused.)

Bali reflects that even sages struggle for lifetimes to receive the grace he attained:

जन्म जन्म मुनि जतनु कराहीं। अंत राम कहि आवत नाहीं॥
जासु नाम बल संकर कासी। देत सबहि सम गति अबिनासी॥२॥

(Sages strive for lifetimes but fail to utter Rama's name at the end. Yet, I have received Him in my final moments—can such grace ever return?)

This episode shows that remembering the Divine at death ensures liberation, but such focus must be cultivated through consistent spiritual practice.

Key Insights

- **Power of Thoughts and Attachments:** The thoughts at death reflect lifelong conditioning, as the mind naturally contemplates what it has focused on throughout life.
- **Preparation through Devotion:** Lifelong spiritual practice ensures that one's mind is aligned with the Divine during the final moments.
- **Shaping the Soul's Journey:** The mind's focus at death determines the soul's journey beyond the body, making it essential to cultivate spiritually uplifting thoughts.
- **Consistency in Practice:** Spiritual focus requires lifelong devotion, as the mind follows the habits and patterns it has nurtured throughout life.

This verse serves as a profound reminder that the thoughts and actions cultivated throughout life shape the soul's final destination. The mind's focus at death is not a coincidence but the culmination of a lifetime's mental habits. Just as a leaning wall will inevitably collapse in the same direction, the soul will follow the direction of its habitual thoughts. Liberation is not achieved by a fleeting remembrance of the Divine but through a life immersed in devotion. Only by consistently aligning the mind with the Divine can one meet the final moment with clarity and grace, ensuring the soul's journey toward liberation, free from the cycle of birth and death.

8.7

**tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu, māmanusmara yudhya ca,
mayyarpitamanobuddhiḥ(r), māmevaiṣyasyasaṁśayaḥ. 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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the seamless integration of action and devotion, guiding Arjuna to perform his duties without losing sight of the Divine. This teaching clarifies that spirituality is not achieved by escaping responsibilities but by aligning one's inner being with the Divine while actively engaging in the world.

- **"tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu māmanusmara":** Bhagavān advises Arjuna to maintain constant

remembrance (*smaraṇa*) of Him, regardless of the situation. This instruction conveys that spiritual connection is not limited to moments of meditation but must become a continuous thread running through all activities. Bhagavān teaches that true spirituality lies in sustaining awareness of the Divine even amidst worldly challenges.

- **"yudhya ca":** Bhagavān urges Arjuna to fight, underscoring that worldly duties should not be abandoned. He emphasizes that action performed with detachment, when accompanied by devotion, becomes a pathway to liberation. This highlights the need to transform work into worship, where every duty, big or small, becomes a means of spiritual growth.
- **"mayy arpitamano-buddhiḥ":** Bhagavān advises surrendering both the mind (*manas*) and intellect (*buddhi*) to Him. This alignment ensures that thoughts and decisions flow from Divine guidance, bringing clarity, stability, and peace to life's actions. When both the heart and mind are dedicated to the Divine, every action reflects deeper purpose, and challenges are met with serenity.
- **"māmevaiṣyasi asaṃśayaḥ":** Bhagavān offers an unwavering promise: complete dedication in thought and action will lead the seeker to Him, beyond all doubt. This assurance dispels uncertainty, affirming that the path of integrated devotion and duty leads directly to spiritual fulfillment. The seeker who cultivates unwavering dedication transcends hesitation and doubt, progressing steadily toward union with the Divine.

The Power of Faith in Spiritual Growth

Faith plays a pivotal role in balancing action with devotion. A story from the Kumbh Mela illustrates this beautifully. Devi Parvati once asked Bhagavān Shiv if the sins of all the devotees participating in the Mela would be washed away by their holy dip. Shiv Ji explained that purification depends not merely on external rituals but on the depth of faith.

To demonstrate this, they descended to the Mela disguised as a couple. Shiv Ji entered a manhole and instructed Parvati Ji to seek help from the devotees, asking only those who believed their sins had been cleansed to pull him out. She warned that anyone still burdened by sin would inherit her husband's flaws by touching him. Despite the large crowd, no one stepped forward, afraid they were not free from sin. Finally, one devotee, firmly convinced of his purification, pulled Shiv Ji out.

This story emphasizes that genuine faith, combined with action, holds the power to transform and purify. It teaches that rituals alone are insufficient unless supported by inner conviction.

Bali's Unwavering Conviction

The story of Bali further exemplifies the importance of firm conviction. When Śrī Bhagavān offered Bali the chance to reclaim his life, he refused, choosing instead to die in the lap of the Divine. Bali recognized that the touch of Bhagavān at the time of death was the highest grace. His unwavering faith allowed him to surrender completely, knowing that this moment of Divine connection would lead him to liberation. Bali's story demonstrates that such unwavering conviction is essential for spiritual success.

This verse teaches the harmony between action and devotion, guiding seekers to embrace their worldly responsibilities while keeping the Divine at the center of their thoughts. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that true spirituality does not require the abandonment of duties but the transformation of every action into an offering. When the mind and intellect are fully aligned with the Divine, every task—whether ordinary or extraordinary—becomes a step toward liberation. Faith, combined with focused action, dissolves doubt and leads the seeker steadily toward union with the Divine. This teaching reveals that life's journey becomes meaningful and complete when action and devotion are merged, ensuring that the ultimate

destination—liberation—is reached with clarity, peace, and unwavering grace.

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).

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the transformative power of continuous and focused practice, offering it as the path toward the highest realization. The essence of the teaching lies in the concept of *Abhyāsa Yoga*—the disciplined, persistent contemplation of the Divine.

- **"abhyāsayogayuktena"**: The term *Abhyāsa Yoga* refers to the discipline of consistent and focused practice. Whether through meditation, chanting, or devotion, spiritual mastery comes from repeated effort until the mind becomes naturally aligned with the Divine. *Abhyāsa* means "practicing continuous remembrance of Me," and *Yoga* refers to fixing the mind in such practice without being swayed by sensory distractions.

As Yogeśvara Śrī Bhagavān assures, "When one constantly remembers Me with unwavering focus, the nature of the restless mind is conquered." However, this practice becomes even more effective when supported by the **grace of the Guru**, who makes the object of meditation more accessible through his blessings.

"Just as a peepal tree's seed can easily grow after passing through the digestion of a bird, similarly, any mantra becomes potent when imparted by a Guru during initiation, as it carries the power of the Guru's tapas (austerity)."

Therefore, true meditation (*Dhyāna*) requires both **Guru's grace and consistent Abhyāsa**—taming the mind to withdraw from distractions and focus solely on the Divine. Since the mind is inherently restless, it can only focus on one thing at a time, making disciplined practice essential.

- **"cetasā nānyagāminā"**: Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that unwavering focus is necessary. The mind should not wander toward worldly distractions but remain fully absorbed in the Divine. A seeker's success lies in developing a one-pointed mind, similar to a horse wearing **blinders**, which prevent it from being distracted by peripheral movements and allow it to stay focused on the path ahead.

As Kabir Das Ji teaches:

कबीरा मन तो एक है, भावे कहाँ लगाए।
भावे गुरु की भक्ति करु, भावे विषय कमाए।।

(Kabir says: The mind is one—either engage it in devotion to the Guru or pursue worldly pleasures. It cannot do both.)

Our mind tends to spread like flowing water, easily getting distracted in multiple directions. However, Śrī Bhagavān encourages us to cultivate focus like **a stream of oil**. The Upanishads use

the analogy of water and oil to explain the nature of concentration. If you pour water from one vessel to another, it splashes and spills, unable to flow in a continuous thread. Similarly, our restless mind jumps from one thought to another, making it difficult to maintain focus.

In contrast, **the mind of a yogi** is like the steady flow of oil. When oil is poured from one bottle to another, it flows in a smooth, uninterrupted stream, without a single drop spilling. Similarly, until the mind becomes as steady as a stream of oil—completely absorbed in the Divine—it cannot achieve spiritual success. Śrī Bhagavān does not emphasize any particular name here but focuses on the quality of unwavering attention and absorption.

- **"parāmaṃ puruṣaṃ divyaṃ":** The phrase "supremely radiant Divine Puruṣa" refers to the highest reality—Bhagavān Himself, the ultimate truth and supreme consciousness. Through continuous and focused contemplation, a seeker transcends worldly limitations and experiences the essence of the Divine. This supreme state is not simply intellectual understanding but a direct realization of the highest spiritual truth.
- **"yāti pārthānucintayan":** Śrī Bhagavān assures that one who persistently contemplates Him with unwavering devotion will ultimately attain the supreme truth. The use of *anucintayan* (continuous reflection) highlights the importance of sustained inner focus. Liberation is achieved not through fleeting moments of remembrance but by cultivating a deep, enduring connection with the Divine.

Key Insights

1. **Power of Consistent Practice:** Spiritual mastery requires sustained effort. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that regular and disciplined practice is essential for controlling the restless mind and aligning it with the Divine. Success in any endeavor, including spirituality, comes through persistence and patience.
2. **Unwavering Focus:** Just as a horse's blinders help it stay focused on the road, the seeker must impose self-discipline to keep the mind from wandering toward sensory distractions. The mind must remain firmly fixed on the Divine, for only single-pointed focus can lead to spiritual progress.
3. **Attainment of the Supreme:** This verse assures that those who dedicate themselves to continuous contemplation of the Divine will reach the highest goal—unity with Bhagavān, the supreme consciousness. This promise reflects the transformative power of devotion and practice.
4. **The Role of Grace and Abhyāsa:** While Abhyāsa is essential, the blessings of the Guru magnify the power of one's efforts. Just as a seed becomes potent when digested by a bird, the Guru's grace makes spiritual practices more fruitful. Thus, both self-effort and divine blessings are needed on the spiritual path.

This verse serves as a reminder that the path to liberation is not achieved in a single moment but requires continuous, disciplined effort. The mind is inherently restless, but through **Abhyāsa Yoga**, it can be trained to remain steady and focused. Like a steady stream of oil flowing without interruption, the seeker's mind must be entirely absorbed in the Divine to attain success. Śrī Bhagavān assures that those who maintain unwavering focus and dedication will ultimately realize the supreme truth. This teaching encourages us to practice persistently and cultivate unwavering devotion, knowing that each step on this path brings us closer to unity with the Divine.

**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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān offers a powerful description of the supreme object of meditation—an eternal Being who transcends ordinary perception. The verse urges seekers to reflect on the divine qualities, guiding them toward spiritual realization. Rather than emphasizing a particular name, Śrī Bhagavān highlights key attributes of the Divine, helping seekers focus their contemplation on the ultimate reality that governs, sustains, and transcends all existence.

- **"kaviṃ purāṇam"**: The term *kavi* signifies **omniscience**, referring to the Divine as the all-knowing source of wisdom. The word *purāṇam* indicates the **ageless and eternal nature** of the Divine, showing that Bhagavān is beyond the limitations of time, embodying eternal wisdom. In Chapter 10, Śrī Bhagavān declares,

"कवीनामुशना कविः"

—"I am Shukracharya, the foremost thinker among great seers," emphasizing His role as the ultimate source of intelligence and insight.

- **"anuśāsītāraṃ"**: The Divine is portrayed as the **supreme ruler and guide**, ensuring the orderly functioning of the universe. Bhagavān's governance extends across every aspect of creation, from cosmic laws to the smallest details of life, guiding all beings on the material and spiritual planes. This attribute reminds seekers that the Divine is the ultimate authority, regulating and sustaining all of existence.
- **"aṇor aṇīyaṃ"**: This phrase refers to the **subtle nature of the Divine**, indicating that Bhagavān is even more minute and elusive than the tiniest particle. The Divine pervades the most delicate aspects of creation, existing within the unseen realms. This subtlety reveals that the Divine presence can be found everywhere, even in the most hidden and intricate dimensions of existence.
- **"sarvasya dhātāraṃ acintyarūpaṃ"**: Bhagavān is the **sustainer of all creation**, but His essence remains **beyond human comprehension** (*acintya*). His form transcends the limits of thought and imagination, urging seekers to move beyond intellectual understanding toward deeper spiritual experience. This aspect of the Divine encourages humility, reminding us that ultimate truth cannot be grasped through reason alone but through direct realization.
- **"ādityavarṇaṃ tamasaḥ parastāt"**: The Divine is described as **radiant like the sun**, symbolizing the light of pure consciousness. Just as sunlight dispels darkness, Bhagavān's presence dissolves ignorance and illuminates the path to truth. The phrase "beyond darkness" (*tamasaḥ parastāt*) emphasizes the transcendence of the Divine over illusion and ignorance, guiding seekers from spiritual darkness to enlightenment.

Key Insights

1. **Contemplation of the Supreme:** This verse encourages meditation on the qualities of the Divine—omniscience, timelessness, and subtlety—making Bhagavān the ultimate focus of spiritual practice. By aligning with these attributes, seekers cultivate a deeper connection with the Divine.
2. **The Unseen Sustainer:** Although Bhagavān's essence cannot be perceived through ordinary senses, His presence sustains all of creation. This teaching inspires seekers to look beyond appearances, recognizing that the Divine operates within and beyond all things.
3. **Light beyond Darkness:** The comparison to sunlight emphasizes that Bhagavān dispels ignorance, just as the sun drives away darkness. His light represents the clarity of truth and knowledge, guiding the soul toward liberation.
4. **Transcendence through Meditation:** The verse serves as an invitation to transcend the limits of the material world through focused meditation on Bhagavān's divine qualities. Such contemplation helps the seeker rise above worldly distractions and align with the ultimate truth.

This verse highlights the essence of spiritual focus, urging seekers to meditate on the Divine, whose qualities transcend time, space, and form. Śrī Bhagavān describes the Divine as omniscient, ageless, subtle, and radiant, existing beyond human comprehension and illuminating the path from ignorance to enlightenment. Through sustained contemplation, the seeker aligns with these qualities, leaving behind the darkness of ignorance to experience the light of wisdom. The journey to spiritual realization requires not just understanding these attributes but deeply immersing the mind in them, allowing the soul to move steadily toward unity with the supreme, radiant Puruṣa.

8.10

**prayāṅakāle 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).

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān reveals the profound path to liberation at life's final moment. It emphasizes the importance of unwavering focus, deep devotion, and mastery over the life-breath (*prāṇa*). Through the strength of Yoga and the power of Bhakti (devotion), the seeker transcends the physical realm and unites with the Divine. This teaching highlights that the culmination of spiritual practice lies in directing the mind, breath, and love entirely toward Bhagavān at the moment of death.

- **"prayāṅakāle manasācalena":** *Prayāṅakāla* refers to the critical moment of death, the transition from life to the afterlife. At this decisive moment, the mind (*manas*) must remain unwavering (*acalena*), free from fear, attachment, or distraction. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that a steady, undisturbed mind is essential for focusing consciousness entirely on the Divine, ensuring the

seeker's journey toward liberation.

- **"bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva"**: Devotion (*bhakti*) infuses the seeker's heart with love for Bhagavān, strengthening focus and anchoring the mind in the Divine. Alongside devotion, the power of Yoga (*yogabala*) enables mastery over the mind and breath, ensuring spiritual stability even in the face of death. The harmony between Bhakti and Yoga empowers the seeker to maintain unwavering concentration during this critical moment of transition.
- **"bhruvormadhye prāṇamāveśya samyak"**: The seeker must direct the life-breath (*prāṇa*) to the space between the eyebrows, known as the *ajna chakra* or third eye. This subtle energy center acts as a gateway to higher consciousness. Concentrating the *prāṇa* at this point elevates the soul beyond the material plane, allowing the seeker to transcend physical limitations and move closer to spiritual liberation.
- **"sa taṃ paraṃ puruṣamupaiti divyam"**: With steadfast devotion, precise breath control, and unwavering focus, the seeker ultimately attains union with the **supreme Puruṣa**—the radiant, eternal Divine. The phrase *paraṃ puruṣam* refers to Bhagavān, the supreme consciousness beyond all material existence. Achieving this union represents the fulfillment of the spiritual journey, granting the seeker liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

The example of **Shabari** illustrates that spiritual attainment is not limited by education or formal knowledge. Her unwavering devotion to her Guru (Gurubhakti) and pure love for Prabhu Śrī Ram empowered her with Yogic strength. At the culmination of her life, she willingly gave up her body, demonstrating that with Bhakti and faith, even a simple heart can achieve spiritual liberation.

Key Insights:

- **Conscious Exit from Life:** This verse describes a Yogic method of consciously aligning the mind and breath at the moment of death, ensuring a peaceful and spiritually elevated departure from the physical realm.
- **Control over Prāṇa:** Mastery over the life-breath, especially by directing it to the *ajna chakra*, allows consciousness to transcend physical limitations and connect with the Divine.
- **Harmony between Devotion and Yoga:** Devotion provides emotional focus, while Yoga strengthens mental and *prāṇic* control. Together, they create the ideal balance needed to maintain spiritual steadiness during life's final moment.
- **Union with the Supreme Puruṣa:** The seeker who achieves unwavering focus and devotion at the moment of death attains unity with the supreme, radiant Puruṣa—Bhagavān—liberating the soul from material limitations.

This verse emphasizes that liberation requires conscious preparation throughout life, culminating in a focused effort at the moment of death. Through unwavering concentration, mastery over *prāṇa*, and deep devotion, the seeker transcends the physical world and merges with the supreme, radiant Puruṣa. Śrī Bhagavān reminds us that a lifetime of spiritual discipline, love, and practice finds its ultimate fulfillment in this final moment. The path to liberation lies not in a sudden effort, but in sustained spiritual focus that culminates in an unwavering connection with the Divine when it matters most.

**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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān introduces the **Supreme goal**—the eternal, unchanging reality that all seekers strive to attain through various disciplines and renunciations. This teaching highlights how different paths—through Vedic knowledge, renunciation, and disciplined practice—converge toward the same ultimate destination: the realization of the Divine essence. Śrī Bhagavān provides a guiding path for all types of seekers, whether they worship Him as the **Saguna Sākāra** (the Divine with attributes and form) or contemplate Him as **Nirguna Nirākāra** (the formless, attribute-less Absolute). This inclusiveness reflects the universality of the spiritual journey, where each individual, according to their disposition, can find a path toward liberation.

- **"yadakṣaraṃ vedavido vadanti"**: The **Indestructible (Akṣara)** is described by the knowers of the Vedas as the highest truth, beyond all change or destruction. It represents the **eternal essence** that transcends material reality and remains the ultimate goal of spiritual pursuit. Those well-versed in Vedic knowledge understand this as the culmination of wisdom and align their lives with this truth.
- **"viśanti yadyatayo vītarāgāḥ"**: Renunciates (*yatis*), who are free from desire (*vītarāga*), strive to merge their consciousness into this eternal state. By detaching from worldly attractions, these seekers rise above the illusions of material existence, immersing themselves in the indestructible reality of the Divine.
- **"yadicchanto brahmacaryaṃ caranti"**: Aspiring to realize this supreme truth, seekers follow the path of **Brahmacarya**—a disciplined lifestyle characterized by celibacy and self-restraint. This practice purifies the mind, allowing the seeker to channel energy toward spiritual growth and contemplation of the Divine. It demonstrates that disciplined living creates a foundation for higher spiritual experiences.
- **"tatte padaṃ saṃgrahaṇa pravākṣye"**: Śrī Bhagavān assures Arjuna that He will now briefly describe this **Supreme goal**—the pinnacle of all spiritual efforts. This goal encapsulates the essence of liberation, where knowledge, detachment, and devotion lead to union with the eternal Divine.

Key Insights:

- **The Indestructible Truth:** The Akṣara, or Indestructible, is the eternal essence that transcends creation, dissolution, and rebirth. This Supreme reality remains the ultimate goal for all seekers.
- **Renunciation and Liberation:** Through detachment from desires, renunciates merge their consciousness with the Divine, freeing themselves from material limitations.
- **The Discipline of Brahmacharya:** The path of celibacy and self-restraint strengthens the seeker's focus, paving the way for deeper spiritual realization and connection with the

Supreme.

- **Universality of the Path:** Śrī Bhagavān reveals paths for different kinds of seekers, whether they worship Him as the **Saguna Sākāra** (with form and attributes) or contemplate Him as the **Nirguna Nirākāra** (formless and without attributes). This inclusive teaching reflects the diversity of spiritual approaches, guiding all seekers toward the same Supreme goal.

This verse serves as a gateway to the deeper teachings on liberation. Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that the highest goal—the Indestructible—is reached through wisdom, detachment, and disciplined practice. By accommodating both those who worship Him in form and those who seek Him beyond form, He provides inclusive guidance to seekers of all paths. Whether through devotion, renunciation, or disciplined living, each seeker is encouraged to transcend distractions and align with the eternal truth of the Divine. Śrī Bhagavān promises that this journey, fueled by sincere effort, culminates in union with the radiant, indestructible essence of the Supreme.

8.12

sarvadvārāṇi saṃyamya, mano hṛdi nirudhya ca, mūrdhnyādhāyātmanaḥ(pr) 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

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān outlines the essential steps for **spiritual mastery** at the moment of death, providing a practical guide for directing the body, mind, and breath toward liberation. The verse emphasizes the importance of disciplining the senses, stabilizing the mind in devotion, and controlling the life-breath (*prāṇa*), ensuring the soul aligns with divine consciousness. This practice helps transcend physical limitations, opening the pathway to liberation.

- **"sarvadvārāṇi saṃyamya"**: The **senses**, seen as gateways to the external world, must be restrained to prevent distractions. This inward withdrawal enables the seeker to focus entirely on spiritual goals, free from material disturbances.
- **"mano hṛdi nirudhya ca"**: The **mind must be anchored in the heart**, where inner consciousness and devotion reside. This stabilizes thoughts and emotions, aligning them with the Divine and creating a state of unwavering concentration.
- **"mūrdhnyādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam"**: The **life-breath (prāṇa)** is drawn to the crown of the head, symbolizing the elevation of consciousness beyond bodily existence. This upward movement of prāṇa marks the soul's transcendence from material limitations, preparing it for spiritual ascent.
- **"āsthito yogadhāraṇām"**: The seeker maintains **steadfast Yogic focus (dhāraṇā)** by harmonizing the senses, mind, and breath. This unwavering concentration ensures the mind remains aligned with divine consciousness, ready for a peaceful and conscious transition at the moment of death.

Key Insights:

- **Mastery of the Senses:** Sensory restraint prevents external distractions, allowing inner

awareness to flourish.

- **Anchoring the Mind in Devotion:** Holding the mind in the heart ensures emotional stability, where devotion deepens concentration on the Divine.
- **Elevation through Prāṇa:** Directing the life-breath upward enables transcendence, releasing the soul from material attachment.
- **Steadfast Yogic Concentration:** Concentration aligns the mind and breath with divine consciousness, ensuring the soul's preparedness for liberation.

This verse emphasizes the importance of **preparing the soul for liberation** through the disciplined alignment of senses, mind, and breath. Śrī Bhagavān shows that when the senses are controlled, the mind stabilized in devotion, and the life-breath elevated, the seeker achieves harmony with divine consciousness. This practice paves the way for a conscious and peaceful exit from the body.

This teaching naturally flows into the next verse, where Śrī Bhagavān reveals the final step—uttering the sacred syllable OM while meditating on Him, ensuring the soul's ultimate union with the Supreme.

8.13

omityekākṣaram(m) brahma, vyāharanmāmanusmaran, yaḥ(ph) prayāti tyajandeham(m), sa yāti paramām(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.

This verse continues from the previous one, showing the **final step for liberation** through conscious departure at the moment of death. Śrī Bhagavān teaches that **chanting OM and meditating on Him in His absolute, formless aspect** ensures the soul's alignment with the eternal essence. This method allows the seeker to transcend the limitations of the physical body and merge with the Divine.

- **"omityekākṣaram brahma"**: OM, the **eternal sound vibration**, encapsulates the essence of Brahman—the Indestructible and Infinite reality. Chanting this sacred syllable aligns the seeker's consciousness with the Absolute, dissolving worldly attachments.
- **"vyāharanmāmanusmaran"**: Alongside chanting OM, the seeker must **meditate on Śrī Bhagavān's absolute aspect**—the formless, attribute-less essence of the Divine. This combination of mantra and focused meditation ensures the soul's spiritual ascent.
- **"yaḥ prayāti tyajandeham"**: A **conscious departure from the body** with unwavering remembrance of the Divine breaks the cycle of birth and death, ensuring freedom from material bondage.
- **"sa yāti paramām gatim"**: Such a soul reaches the **supreme destination**—the eternal state of union with Bhagavān, beyond rebirth and material existence. This liberation marks the fulfillment of the spiritual journey.

Key Insights:

- **The Power of OM:** Chanting OM aligns the soul with the eternal essence of the universe,

guiding it beyond material limitations.

- **Meditation on the Absolute:** Focusing on Bhagavān's formless nature ensures unwavering concentration, enabling spiritual transcendence.
- **Conscious Departure from the Body:** Departing the body with divine focus facilitates liberation from the cycle of birth and death.
- **Attainment of the Supreme Goal:** The seeker who follows this path reaches the **paramāṇ gati**—the highest state of union with the eternal Divine.

Illustration of Conscious Departure:

The importance of **conscious preparation for the moment of death** has been emphasized by saints and spiritual masters. **Param Shraddheya Seth Jayadayal Ji Goyanka**, founder of Geeta Press, offers practical steps to assist those on their deathbed. He advises: If possible, take the individual to the **banks of the Ganga**; if not, place Ganga sand under their body and Tulsi leaves on their palate. Sprinkle **Ganga Jal** (holy water) in their mouth and place a picture of **Bhagavān Vishnu** or their chosen deity in front of them. Perform **kirtan** or recite the **Bhagavad Gītā**, as hearing (the power of **karnendriya**) remains active until the last moment.

A poignant **bhajan** captures the ideal state of departure:

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
अंतिम 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 दुख से, जब प्राण तन से निकले ॥४ ॥

इतना तो करना स्वामी, जब प्राण तन से निकले ।

This **bhajan** expresses the longing for **Bhagavān** at life's final moment. It reflects the desire to leave the mortal world chanting His name, with Tulsi leaves on the lips and the presence of Bhagavān Krishna nearby, ensuring a blissful departure.

This verse emphasizes that **liberation is achieved through a conscious and focused departure from the body**. By chanting OM and meditating on Bhagavān's formless aspect, the seeker aligns with the eternal reality, ensuring transcendence beyond material existence. **Yogic mastery, devotion, and breath control** culminate in union with the Supreme. Together, **verses 8.12 and 8.13** form a **comprehensive guide to spiritual liberation** at the moment of death. Śrī Bhagavān teaches that success on this path requires **disciplining the senses, stabilizing the mind in the heart, elevating the prāṇa, and chanting OM** while meditating on the Divine. This practice guarantees that the seeker departs the body in full awareness, free from the cycle of rebirth, and reaches the **supreme goal**—eternal union with the Divine.

**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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the simplicity and accessibility of attaining union with the Divine through **unwavering focus and steadfast devotion**. For those who remain perpetually absorbed in Him, the journey toward liberation becomes smooth, joyful, and effortless. This teaching highlights the transformative power of continuous remembrance and encourages seekers to integrate their thoughts, actions, and intentions toward the Divine.

- **"Ananyacetāḥ satataṃ"**: This phrase signifies maintaining a mind focused **exclusively on Bhagavān**, free from distractions and worldly attachments. The word **Ananya** implies "without another," indicating **singular devotion** to the Divine. It is not about excluding other forms of worship but about avoiding distractions from the transient allure of material pleasures and maintaining alignment with the essence of the Divine.
- **"Yo māṃ smarati nityaśaḥ"**: The seeker must engage in **continuous remembrance of Bhagavān**, making it a constant practice throughout day and night. This verse teaches that devotion is not limited to moments of prayer but becomes a way of life where the mind naturally returns to the Divine in every thought and action.
- **"Tasyāhaṃ sulabhaḥ"**: Bhagavān reassures the seeker that **He is easily accessible (sulabhaḥ)** to those who practice unwavering devotion. This simple yet profound assurance highlights that the path to the Divine is not distant or complicated but becomes effortless through consistent focus and love for Him.
- **"Nityayuktasya yoginaḥ"**: This refers to a yogi who is **eternally connected** to the Divine, whose devotion does not waver. Such a yogi embodies both steadiness of mind and constancy of heart, allowing spiritual progress to unfold with grace and ease. Their connection with Bhagavān ensures that liberation is within reach, even amid life's challenges.

Key Insights:

- **The Power of Constant Remembrance:** Devotion deepens when every thought and action are imbued with the awareness of Bhagavān, ensuring a state of perpetual divine connection.
- **Ease of Attaining the Divine:** Contrary to the notion that God is difficult to approach, Śrī Bhagavān assures seekers that **He becomes easily attainable** through continuous focus and devotion.
- **The Secret of Undivided Focus:** Spiritual success lies in maintaining **exclusive focus** on the Divine, without being swayed by the distractions of the material world.
- **Grace through Steady Connection:** The path to liberation unfolds smoothly for those who remain **eternally connected** with the Divine through unwavering devotion.

A meaningful couplet further illustrates this teaching:

कर से कर्म करै विधि नाना।
मन राखो जहां कृपा निधाना।।

“Perform your duties with diligence, while keeping Bhagavān in your thoughts, so that His grace flows upon you.”

The fleeting nature of **Samsāra** (the material world) contrasts with the permanence of **Paramātmā**, the Supreme Self. **Kabirdas Ji** captures this truth beautifully through a conversation between a leaf and a tree:

तरुवर पात सों यौं कहै, सुनो पात इक बात।
या घर याही रीति है, इक आवत इक जात॥

The leaf asks the tree, “Yesterday there were eleven leaves, and today only eight remain. Where did the others go?” The tree replies, “This is the way of life here—one comes, and another departs.” This allegory reminds us that **birth and death are an unending cycle**, and nothing in the material world is permanent.

Through this verse, Śrī Bhagavān urges seekers to cultivate **unwavering faith and constant remembrance** of Him, transcending the fleeting nature of worldly attachments. By maintaining singular devotion, the seeker finds a joyful and effortless path to divine grace and liberation.

The session concluded with a **soulful Hari Sharanam kirtan** and an interactive **Question and Answer session**, deepening the participants' understanding of Bhagavān's teachings.

Question and Answer Session

Jaya Pai Ji

Q: We cannot convert curd back into milk once it has transformed. Similarly, when the Ātman (soul) enters the body, we become living beings. How, then, can the Ātman be separated from the body?

A: Although the Ātman appears intertwined with the body, **it remains Nirlep** (untouched and unaffected). The soul is beyond the limitations of the physical realm. **Śrī Bhagavān** explains this truth in the verse:

"वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात्"

(vāyur gandhān ivāśayāt)—Just as the wind carries fragrance without becoming attached to it, the Ātman moves from one body to another without being tainted. The wind only carries fragrance but does not absorb it. Similarly, **Aparā Prakṛti** (material nature) acts as a medium for the soul's journey, while **Parā Prakṛti** (conscious energy) governs all existence. Parā Prakṛti, or **Chaitanya** (pure consciousness), though unseen, permeates everything. While we can experience the mind, intellect, and chitta (subconscious), the **Ātman-tattva** remains constant and unified across the universe.

Q: During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw doctors collapse unexpectedly while writing prescriptions, without any opportunity to remember God. What happens to such individuals at the moment of death?

A: At the time of death, every individual holds on to a specific **bhāva** (mental state or emotion). The **soul's deliverance or spiritual progress** depends on the bhāva present at that critical moment. **Śrī Bhagavān** teaches that the thoughts and feelings cultivated throughout life resurface at the final moment, determining the soul's path and next journey. Whatever dominates the mind during life becomes the foundation for the transition at the time of death.

Pushpalata Joshi Ji

Q: I am 70 years old and in the final phase of my life. What should my daily routine be so that I can easily remember Śrī Bhagavān at the end?

A: Two essential elements will help you prepare for a peaceful and divine departure:

1. **Time Spent on Sattvic Activities:** Evaluate how much time you devote to **Nām Smaran** (chanting the Divine Name) and **contemplating Śrī Bhagavān's name, form, pastimes, and abode**. The more time you invest in these practices, the stronger your connection with the Divine becomes.
2. **Steadiness of Vrutti (Focus):** It is not only about how much time you dedicate but also how **stable the mind** remains during these practices. If you chant but find yourself wondering whether the maid has arrived, your **vrutti** (mental tendency) is not yet steady. Achieving unwavering focus requires continuous effort and attention.

These two elements—**consistent practice and steady focus**—strengthen **love for Śrī Bhagavān**. Chanting should not become a mechanical exercise. It must involve both **mind and heart** in alignment, ensuring that each repetition deepens the connection with the Divine. The more sincerely one engages in these practices, the closer one draws to Bhagavān.

Śrī Bhagavān offers a clear method for spiritual progress:

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते

(*abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate*)

Constant **practice (abhyāsa)** and **detachment (vairāgya)** are essential to achieving spiritual mastery. Without detachment, sustained practice becomes difficult.

Examples of Detachment in Practice:

- **Mahatma Gandhi Ji** practised **Aswāda Vrat** (renunciation of taste), meaning he would not eat a dish a second time if he liked it, cultivating self-restraint and inner discipline.
- **Param Shraddheya Seth Jayadayal Ji Goyanka**, founder of Geeta Press, vowed to eat only **three items per meal**, limiting indulgence and fostering simplicity as part of his spiritual practice.



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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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