

## Newsletter on Bhagavad Gita by Dr. P.V. Nath

The following text is a compilation of the single issues of a regular newsletter by e-mail, composed by Dr. Pathikonda Viswambara Nath.  
It includes the original slokas of the Gita as well as the transliteration, translation and commentaries by Dr. Nath.

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**OM SAHA NAVAVATU SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU  
SAHA VEERYAM KARAVAVAHAI  
TEJASWI NAVADHEETAMASTU  
MAA VID VISHAVAHAI**

**May He protect us both (the teacher and the pupil)  
May He cause us both to enjoy (the Supreme)  
May we both exert together (to discover the true inner meaning of the scriptures)  
May our studies be thorough and fruitful.  
May we never misunderstand each other.**

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The Gita is in the form of dialogue between Krishna, the preceptor and the disciple Arjuna. Sanjaya, the narrator to King Dhritarashtra, intercepts now and then with a comment of his own. There are a total of 18 chapters with 701 verses (slokas.) Each of the chapters has a title and the title ends with the word "Yoga".

The word "**Yoga**" is derived from the word "Yuj" which means "Unite."  
Study of every chapter assists the seeker to unite with the Lord and hence the use of the word "Yoga."

The seeker is he/she who is looking for attaining the union with the "Parabrahman" and experience the "Eternal Bliss." In Sanskrit the name for the word "seeker" is "Sadhaka". The efforts of the sadhaka is known as "Sadhana".

To undertake the task, the seeker must have "Faith" and "Devotion" in the subject, the teacher and "Parabrahman."

## Chapter 8: AKSHARA PARABRAHMA YOGA

### Introduction

The seeker who has developed the true wisdom and correctly understood the import of the preceding seven chapters and shows the teachings of the sacred text in his/her actions is said to be on the path to unite with the Parabrahman. This chapter is about that union with the Supreme Knowledge. To become one with the goal of life, in the spiritual sense is Akshara Parabrahma Yoga.

Akshara:

That which does not perish is “Akshara” and that which perishes is “Kshara.”

The letters in the alphabets are known as “akshara.”

The letters are learnt from the words of communication with the world around. Technically speaking once learnt the letters remain in the memory of the individual till the physical or mental death. They are said not to perish.

The Vedas declare that apart from the Supreme Primordial Energy that is responsible for the entire creation everything else we know of is perishable. Apart from the Parabrahman who is beyond “time”, everything else is under the control of time. Everything in the world we know of has a “birth, growth, decay and death.” Hence the created world is “Kshara.” The creator, who is beyond time and the controller of time is “Akshara.” That Supreme Primordial Energy is considered to be Divine and the designation for the same is “Parabrahma.”

The masters say that the union of “Vayu and Agni” (air and fire) produces “Sound” and they call it as “Nada.”

The “Sound” is the earliest manifestation of the Parabrahma Tatva of the Almighty. Hence the designation “Nada Brahma” to denote the Parabrahman.

From “Sound” evolved the “Voice” (dhwani)

Out of “Voice” “words” are expressed.

The language is the product of “Words”.

The language is the medium of communication.

Meditation on the sacred Mantra “Om” expressing the Nirakara, Nirguna Brahman would lead the seeker eventually to unite with Parabrahman.

This chapter is all about the details of the Supreme Parabrahman and the ways to unite with Him.

### Sloka 1

**Arjuna Uvacha**

**Arjuna said**

**KIM TAD BRAHMA KIM ADHYATMAM KIM KARMA PURUSHOTTAMA  
ADHIBHUTAM CHA KIM PROKTAM ADHIDAIVAM KIM UCHYATE**

**What is that Brahman? What is adhyatma? What is action? What is declared to be adhibhuta?  
What is adhidaiva said to be? O best amongst men?**

Kim: what

Tad: that

Brahma: Brahman  
Adhyatmam: adhyatma  
Karma: action  
Purushottam: Best among Purushas  
Adhibhootam: adhibhuta  
Cha: and  
Proktam: is said  
Adhidaivam: adhidaiva  
Uchyate: declared/called

## Sloka 2

**ADHI YAJNAHA KATHAM KO'TRA DEHESMIN MADHUSUDHANA  
PRAYANAKALE CHA KATHAM JNEYOSMI NIYATATMABHIHI**

**O Madhusudhana, who and how is adhyatma here in this body? And how at the time of death are you to be known by the self-controlled?**

Adhijajnaha: adhijayna  
Katham: how  
Ko'tra: who here  
Dehesmin: in this body  
Prayanakale: at the time of eath  
Katham: how  
Jneyosmi: to be known  
Niyatatmabhihi: by the self-controlled

Refer to last sloka (30) in the last chapter.

In the last sloka of the last chapter, Sri Krishna told Arjuna,  
“Those who realise Me in the adhibhoota, adhidaiva and adhiyajna, know Me even at the time of death, having self-control.”

It must have perplexed Arjuna greatly. It is true that he had been to gurukula ashrama for the Vedic studies. But, as was the norm in those days, Kshatriyas like Arjuna were initiated only in the karma kanda section of the Vedas that dealt with the conduct of rituals and the benefits accrued from the same. The words adhibhoota, adhidaiva and adhiyana were alien to Arjuna.

Like a perfect student, Arjuna has expressed his ignorance and requested for clarification of the same. After having heard so much about the karma, jnana and jnana Vijnana, he is keen to know about the answer to the doubts like “who is Brahma, what is action” and other questions put forward by him in these two slokas.

One can add that the great sage poet Veda Vyasa had in mind the ordinary men/women of this world who need clarification on these points and Arjuna was the medium of expressing the doubts and requesting clarification from Jagadguru.

## Sloka 3

**Sri Bhagawan Uvacha  
Bhagawan said**

**AKSHARAM BRAHMA PARAMAM SWABHAVO'DHYATMAM UCHYATE**

## BHOOTABHAVODHBHAVAKARO VISARGAM KARMA SAMJNITAHA

**Brahma is Supreme and imperishable. His essential nature is called Self-knowledge. The act of sacrifice that causes beings to be born into manifestation is called “karma.”**

Aksharam: imperishable

Paramam: supreme

Swabhavo: nature

Adyatmam: Self-knowledge

Uchyate: said

Bhoota bhava udbhavakara: that which causes origin of beings

Visargam: offering/act of sacrifice

Karma samjnitaha: is called action

Aksharam Brahma: the imperishable is Brahma.

That which has name and form is subject to the law of time, space and causation and hence is perishable. That which is imperishable is “Primordial Energy” which is the precursor to all known forms of energy seen, experienced by us. That “Primordial Energy is Brahma” is the answer to the first question.

Paramam: the adjective “Paramam” meaning “Supreme” is added to Brahma because of the unique “imperishable” nature.

Swabhavo adhyatmam uchyate: the “nature” is said to be adhyatma.

Swabhava means “nature.” We have to clearly understand what we mean by “nature.” We associate ourselves with our body, associate it with a name and form and that is our nature. But really speaking, this is an error in our understanding. For the purpose of association with the world we live in, we have been given name and designation. But the physical form is subject to death which is inevitable law of nature. The “Energy” that sustained us as “Atman” does not die at the time of the physical death. Hence the true nature/swabhava is “Atman” which when expressed is “Divinity” in action and thoughts. The Atman is the spark of the imperishable Parabrahman and is the same for all.

The dreaded “ego” makes us believe that we are the body and when it is annihilated, what remains is “perfect divinity.”

The Primordial energy is not subject to pains and sorrows of birth/death etc and so there is an element of constant Peace associated with divinity. On the other hand we, who identify with the physical body, experience dualities in life and are subject to experiencing happiness and sorrow.

The “Swabhava” of those who identify with the Atman will be expression of perfect Bliss at all times and in all situations.

The “Self-knowledge” of this reality of one’s own true identity which is expressed as “Swabhava” is “Adhyatma”. (We will get further explanation on the meaning of “Adhyatma” in the next sloka).

Bhootabhaovdbhavakaro: that which causes the origin of beings

Visargo: offering/act of sacrifice

Karma samjnitaha: is called action.

Visarga: act of sacrifice or that which is given away (dedicated act).

We have learnt in chapters 3 and 4 in detail about the correct way of conducting actions. That act which fulfils the criterion of the sloka 47, chapter 2 (karmanyevadhikaraste) is then the true “karma.”

“Sloka 15, chapter 3: From food beings are born. Food is produced from rain. Rain comes from sacrifice. Sacrifice is born of action.” (annad bhavanti bhootani) - Essentially the meaning of the second half of the current sloka is exactly the same as this sloka from chapter 3.

That which causes beings to be born into manifestation is called “karma”.

As a matter of fact each one of us do take birth into this world to fulfil the desires/hatreds of the past which are the vasanas stored in our mind at the time of death.

Another interpretation:

“Sarga” means “primary creation.”

“Visarga” is division of primary creation/sending forth.

Creation, sustenance and dissolution (shrishti, sthithi, pralaya) is the basis of the yugas/eon and is the result of actions of beings on earth.

Actions on the basis of teaching of “Karma Kanda” section of the Vedas leads to visarga.

Those who move on the Upasana and jnana kanda of the Vedas move towards “Liberation” from the cycle of births and deaths.

#### **Sloka 4**

#### **ADHIBHOOTAM KSHARO BHAVAHA PURUSHASCHA ADHIDAIVATAM ADHI YAJNOHAM EVATRA DEHE DEHABHRUTAM VARA**

**O best of embodied beings, the principal behind the perishable nature is Adhibhoota. Creative energy is adhidaiva and is here, in this body. I Myself am adhiyajna.**

Dehabhritam vara: best of embodied beings.

Adhibhoota: the principle behind the perishable element.

Ksharo: perishable.

Bhavaha: nature.

The physical body is perishable.

The subtle body has to perish sometimes or other. This may take several births.

What is behind the perishable?

The divine/primordial energy.

This power which is behind the perishable physical and subtle bodies is “Adhi bhoota.”

This is the factor behind the creation.

Purushaha: the soul

Cha: and

Adhidaivatam: adhi daiva.

Purusha: Pura means a city.

He who resides in the city is “Purusha.”

Literally it refers to the “Atman” within who lives within the nine gated city.

We have studied already that the “Hiranya garbha” is the principal behind the cosmic creation and He is cosmic soul. The rays of this soul are the individual souls.

Another interpretation:

Each of the five senses organs have a presiding deity that makes that organ undertake a specific function.

The deity/deva for the eyes is sun,

The deva for the ears is akasha/space,

For the skin is air,

For the nose is earth,

And for the tongue is water.

The power behind the five devas (the Pancha maha bhootas) is the Purusha we referred to above. Hence the Supreme Parabrahman, the cosmic Soul is the adhidaiva.

Yajna is an act of sacrifice.

Sacrifice to what?

Spiritually it is the sacrifice to the “Power behind creation/sustenance/dissolution”.

The Vedas declare that all acts have to be in the form dedication to this power.

One has to accept that there is divinity wherever there is an act of sacrifice.

Highest form of sacrifice is that of sacrifice of ego in the Atman within.

Jivatma dissolving in Paramatma is Moksha.

Adhiyajna therefore refers to the power we are offering our oblation to in our journey of life to attain Moksha.

Lord Vishnu is the Adhiyajna.

By offering of all objects at all the three levels of existence (mano/vak/kaya - mind/speech/body) we are blessed with the Light of Knowledge.

Light of Knowledge is “Chit” which is the “Truth/Sat”.

The bliss on uniting with the Knowledge is “Ananda.”

Hence, Adhiyajna is “Sat, Chit, Ananda.”

## Sloka 5

**ANTAKALE CHA MAM’EVA SMARAN MUKTVA KALEVARAM  
YAH PRAYATI SA MAD BHAVAM YATI NASTYATRA SAMSHAYAHA**

**One who, leaving the body, goes forth remembering Me only at the time of his death also, he attains My being. There is no doubt about this.**

Antakale: at the time of death/last lap in life’s journey.

Mam eva: Me only

Smaran: remembering

Muktva: leaving

Kalevaram: the body

The seeker has to leave the body at the moment of last lap in his/her life’s journey, remembering only the Paramatma says Bhagawan; and this we are told guarantees Moksha.

Honestly speaking, does anyone know when he/she is going to die?

Many a times one sees a relative/friend sitting next to a dying man and repeating the name of the Lord into his ears and requesting him to repeat the sacred mantras after them. It is true that even this act of repeating the Lord's name at the time of death has its merit but it does not guarantee Moksha.

There are two special words used in this sloka that are very pertinent. These are, "cha" which means "also" and "smaran".  
"Remembering at the time of death also" is the meaning.

These two are extremely significant words.  
Using the meaning of two words we should get this picture:  
We should remember the Lord at the time of death but more importantly,  
We should remember the Lord at the time of death also.

What is "remembering"?  
According to the English dictionary, remember means "to retain in the memory or recollect."  
So, if one has to remember the Lord, the Lord's name has to be in his mind.

If we have to remember the Lord at the time of death also, His name/form/leela should be stored in our mind.

Secondly, as we do not know when death approaches us, we should keep on thinking of the Lord at all times.

Being part of the society we live in and to fulfil the obligations to family/society, we cannot sit in a corner and just repeat the name of the Lord constantly. We have to discharge our duties.

Remembering divinity while conducting actions and acting with the sense of dedication to the Supreme will enable us to keep the memory of the Lord always. When the death approaches, it will be possible to remember Him by this practice. This capacity will be enhanced if there is an associated feeling of "Love." If there is "Bhakti" the capacity to remember will be stronger.

Faith will enhance the Bhakti.  
So, faith, Bhakti and conduct of actions in the spirit of dedication (jnana and karma) together will guarantee the end result of "Moksha."

Prayati: goes  
yati: attains  
Saha: he  
Madbhavam: My being.

Such an individual at the end of his spiritual journey attains to My being.

What is Madbhavam really?  
The Lord is "Sat, Chit, Ananda."  
The seeker who fulfils this criterion gets to experience and live in "The knowledge of the Truth and remains in constant Bliss."  
This the Vedas declare as "Moksha." It is Liberation from earthly bondage which results in "sukha/dukha" (happiness/sorrow).

Finally, Bhagawan says,  
Atra: in this  
Nasty: is not  
Samshayaha: doubt.  
There is no doubt in this.

There should be no doubt in this statement.

This can come with Sraddha and Bhakti only. Without these two tools it is impossible to believe in any promises.

Faith in the mother and love towards the mother makes the child believe strongly the promises/statements made by her.

Why are we asked to remember the Lord always?

What makes us forget the Lord?

Maya/delusion is extremely powerful. It pulls us towards the worldly bondage. It drags us into the whirlpool of samsara. The end result is that we become the victims of ignorance and thereby suffer the adversities in life.

To overcome this problem, we are asked by Bhagawan to remember Him.

Let us keep this light of knowledge with us always and let it light the path we trod in life.

### Sloka 6

**YAM YAM VAAPI SMARAN BHAVAM TYAJATI ANTE KALEBARAM  
TAM TAMEVAITI KAUNTEYA SADA TADBHAVA BHAVITAHA**

**O Kaunteya, whosoever leaves the body, thinking of whatever object, form or being at the end, to that only he goes, because of the constant thought of that.**

Yam: which

Vaa: or

Api: even

Smaran: remembering

Bhavam: nature

Tyajati: leaves

Ante': in the end

Kalevaram: the body

Tam: to that

Eva: only

Eti: goes

Sadaa: constantly

Tad bhava bhavitaha: thinking of that object

Let us recollect this statement once again:

Words form into thoughts,

Thoughts form actions,

Actions become habits,

Habits decide our character,

Character dictates our destiny.

Our tendencies (samskaras) are nothing but our thoughts and contemplations. What we think and contemplate constantly/repeatedly becomes our nature. This nature will remain strongly imprinted on our mind at the time of death too. This is the point highlighted in this sloka.

There is a Sanskrit saying:

Yadbhavam tad bhavati.

It means, “as you think; so you become.”

Hence, the statement, “each man is responsible for his/her own destiny.”

To highlight this truth, there is the beautiful story of Jadabharata.

In short, this story goes as follows:

Once there lived a king by name Bharata. He was a very pious king and ruled with righteousness. As per the Vedic teachings, he followed the rule of renunciation, decided to take up sanyasa ashrama towards the later part of his life and went to the forest.

He was living in a cave with no attachments except the thought of the Lord on his mind. One day he observed a pregnant deer playing around near the vicinity of his cave. Suddenly there was the thunderous roar of a lion which frightened the deer and it started running wildly away from the source of the sound. She jumped to cross over a stream. She aborted the baby deer and fell dead in the water. The king took pity on the fawn, rescued it out of the stream and started tenderly caring for it. In course of time he got attached to the fawn and his mind was constantly thinking of the safety of the fawn. He was frightened of leaving the fawn free just in case it would be eaten by the wild animals of the forest.

On the day when death approached him, he was still thinking of the whereabouts of the deer and whether it was safe.

The story goes on to say that because of this thought, he was born as a deer.

If we now can contemplate on the other side of the coin and look at it from a different angle:

In contrast to egoistic nature which becomes a habit for majority of us, if we can cultivate spiritual and moral habits, such tendencies formed can dictate our life and direct it towards the final path of Liberation and unite with the Parabrahman. This is called as “Adhyatma samskara.” This is actually the divine gift from our learned masters to the entire mankind. On our part, let us direct our children towards the path of truth and righteousness (Satya and Dharma).

## **Sloka 7**

**TASMAAT SARVESHU KALESHU MAM ANUSMARA YUDHYA CHA  
MAYYIRPATA MANO BUDDHIR MAAM EVAISHYASI ASAMSHAYAM**

**Therefore, remember Me at all times and fight with mind and intellect surrendered to Me. You shall attain Me alone without doubt.**

Tasmaat: therefore

Sarveshu: in all

Kaleshu: times

Maam: Me

Anusmara: remember

Yudhya: fight

Mayi: in me

Arpita: surrendered

Manaha buddhi: the mind and the buddhi

Maam eva: Me alone

Eshyasi: shall come

Asamshayaha: no doubt

Four sections to explain in this sloka. They are:

Therefore

Remember Me at all times

Fight with the mind and intellect

Surrender to Me.

a) Therefore:

Because of what has been explained in the last sloka which is all about the thoughts at the time of death and where do such thoughts lead the individual to:

It is for those sadhakas who would like to unite with Parabrahman and experience "Peace." How to get the mind thinking of the Parabrahman at the time of death is explained in this sloka.

b) Remember Me at all times:

In general there are three phases in our day to day life. They are: 1) Jagrata, 2) Swapna, 3) Sushupta, which is wakeful, dream and deep sleep states.

There is no way of thinking in deep sleep state and so "at all times" does not apply to this state. Also, in dream state we have no control over our mind. This state also does not come under "at all times".

So, "at all times" applies to wakeful state.

During wakeful state our actions differ at different times of the day. Household duties, professional duties etc are part and parcel of daily activities. "Yuktahara viharasya, yukta chestasya karmasu" of sloka 17, chapter 6 tells us to be moderate during eating, exertion in activities and it is at these times we should be remembering the Lord. Remembering Him specifically during prayers, remembering at work in the form of dedication to work and karma phala tyaga and remembering Him during times of relaxation is what is advocated. This is "remembering Him always."

What is remembering?

It is "retaining in the memory."

To do so one must have the knowledge of who and what is Brahman and this is "Jnana."

One must also have a love of the Lord and this is "Bhakti".

This is augmented by faith and this is "Sraddha."

With "Jnana, Bhakti and Sraddha" one must conduct the "Karma."

Another point of importance is:

Thoughts are the precursor of actions and actions form habits.

The thought of the Lord should be retained in our mind and this way we can remember Him.

Let us take a scenario of filling a pot.

Let us assume that the pot has already got a delicious drink in it.

If we have an opportunity to receive the drink of "Amrita" into the pot, we have first of all to empty the pot of the delicious drink that was already in it. If not the amrita is diluted with the drink and would lose its potency.

Similarly, to receive the drink of "Amrita" we have to fill the mind pot with the name of the Lord and empty it of all other thoughts.

This is the way to constantly remember the Lord.

To keep the light of knowledge called “Brahman” shining constantly, the particles in the form of the names of the Lord should be continuously flowing in our mind.

c) Fight with the mind and the intellect:

All our actions are centred in our mind. The mind is a battlefield of “Kuruksheetra.” This war will be well fought if the mind is under the control of the intellect which is the reasoning capacity. Hence the advice “Fight with the mind and intellect.”

d) Finally, “surrender to Me”.

This is most important. This “Me” is what we are trying to unite with. This is within us in the form of “Atman”.

The intellect is situated with the Atman within and the mind without.

The mind is a sandwich between the intellect within and connected to the world around through the organs of action and knowledge.

The organs of action have to be under the control of the mind,

The mind under the control of the intellect,

And

The intellect surrendered to the Atman within.

The mind has to discharge all its actions in this fashion and the name and thought of the Lord has to be foremost at all times.

We are in the battlefield of life and we have no other option but to fight and hence the Lord is asking us all “to fight”.

The end result is what the Lord promises us:

You shall attain Me alone, and puts an adjective: “without doubt.”

We have already said that “Me” is “Sat, Chit and Ananda” without “Nama and Roopa.”

We will attain “Truth, Knowledge and Bliss” and will lose the identity we carry in this world with us.

This is the Lord’s definitive statement and we have to accept it with total faith.

## **Sloka 8**

**ABHYASA YOGA YUKTENA CHETASA NANYAGAMINAA  
PARAMAM PURUSHAM DIVYAM YAATI PARTHANUCHINTAYAAN**

**O Partha, with the mind not going towards other objects, harmonised in the yoga of practice, meditating constantly one reaches the Supreme Purusha.**

Abhyasa: practice

Yuktana: harmonised/steadfast

Chetasa: by the mind

Na: not

Anyagamina: moving towards other things/objects

Paramam: supreme

Purusham: the Purusha

Divyam: resplendent

Yaati: goes

Anuchintayan: thinking of continuously/meditating.

One can say that “Akshara Parabrahma Yoga” is nothing but a pass in the so called “examination of life”. It is but natural that one should know how to pass the examination.

We are familiar with the examinations we undertake during our secular studies. The first phase in the life of all of us is in pursuit of studies to get a qualification that enables us to get financial return and to be able to maintain ourselves and our beloved ones. What do we do to get good marks, pass the exams and to secure a job? We are trained from our childhood to practice studying, practice listening to the teachers (with concentration) and practice how to answer the questions during exams.

The centre of action here is “the mind”.

The mind as we know is subject to bombardment from many sides with impulses received from the sense organs.

To be successful, the student has to be:

Harmonised in his studies - yuktena

By his mind: chetasa

Not getting side tracked to other issues - nanyagamina

Concentrate on the end result - pass the exams - unite with the Supreme Purusha

The pass in exams and getting a degree is like glory of success after several years of hard work - divyam

Only such students who constantly practice studies - anuchintayan can succeed well in getting a good degree.

All the adjectives used in this sloka can be used in spiritual practice to unite with the Supreme Purusha. Three requisites are given:

Chetasa nanyagamina: mind not going towards other objects

Abhyasa yogenā: by the yoga of constant practice

Anuchintayan: thinking of the Lord continuously.

Repetition of the sacred word “Om” is the Upasana for success. This chapter is about “Akshara Parabrahma” and the importance is in remembering the sacred syllable at all times.

As it is difficult to concentrate on “Nirakara, Nirguna Parabrahman” (without qualities or form), the scriptures recommend fixing the mind on an idol of choice/love, may be it Rama, Krishna, Jesus Christ, Allah or any other named deity. This is “Bhakti” (devotion).

Abhyasa: see sloka 35, chapter 6:

“asamshayam mahabaho mano durnigraham chalam; abhyasena to Kounteya, vairagyena cha gruhyate.”

We have discussed the meaning of the word “Abhyasa” in that context.

Abhyasa is nothing but practice. “Practice makes one perfect” is a saying by the teachers.

Practice in the art of thinking of the Lord and/or practice in remembering the Lord during all actions is true Abhyasa. Hence the usage of the word

Anuchintayan:

It has to be a constant practice in thoughts and actions. There should be a constant flow of thoughts on the divine in our mind.

Herein the Lord has elevated the art of practice/Abhyasa to the level of Karma yoga, Jnana yoga, Bhakti yoga and Jnana yoga. He calls it as “Abhyasa yoga”. To be able to succeed in any of the four basic yogas, Abhyasa has to be the main ingredient.

We will come across the word “Abhyasa” once more in chapter 12, slokas 9 and 10.

In the last sloka the Lord has asked the seeker “to think of the Lord at the time of death also.” This is to unite with Him after death.

In this sloka He has given the seeker the three steps to unite with Him even in this birth.

Moksha is not just after the physical death but it is possible to attain the same in this life and it will be after the death from one plane of existence.

### **Sloka 9 and 10**

**KAVIM PURANAM ANUSHASITARAM ANOR ANEEYAMSAM ANUSMAREDYAHA  
SARVASYA DHATARAM ACHINTYA ROOPAM ADITYA VARNAM TAMASAHA  
PARASTAT**

**PRAYANA KALE MANASA'CHALENA BHAKTYA YUKTO YOGABALENA CHAIVA  
BHRUVOR MADHYE PRANAM AVESHYA SAMYAK SA TAM PARAM PURUSHAM  
UPAITI DIVYAM**

**Who, meditating upon the Omniscient, the Ancient, the ruler of the worlds, supporter of all,  
subtler than the atom, of inconceivable form, self-illuminated like the sun and beyond darkness,**

**At the time of death, by the power of yoga, fixing the prana between the eyebrows, he attains the  
Supreme Purusha.**

Kavim: omniscient  
Prayana Kale’: at the time of death  
Manasaa: with mind  
Achalena: unshaken  
Bhaktya: with devotion  
Yuktaha: united  
Yogabalena: by the power of yoga  
Eva: only  
Bhruvor: of the two eyebrows  
Madhye: middle of  
Pranam: prana  
Aveshya: having placed  
Samyak: thoroughly  
Sah: he  
Tam: that  
Upaiti: reaches  
Paramam purusham: supreme purusha  
Divyam: resplendent

In the last sloka we were told:

“With the mind not going towards other objects, harmonised in the yoga of practice, meditating constantly, one reaches the Supreme Purusha.”

The question might arise as to what the seeker has to meditate upon.

The last line in the verse states that the seeker reaches the “Supreme Purusha.”

It means that the meditation is on the “Supreme Purusha”.

Sloka 9 gives a total of eight different attributes of the “Supreme Purusha” and the seeker has to contemplate on these attributes of the Lord. These eight are the nearest one can go to explain all about the “Nirakara, Nirguna Parabrahman.” (He, who is without any form and any qualities.)

15th century Saint poet Purandara Dasa who has composed a number of songs (poems) on the Lord has taken this verse from the Gita in his song: “Jagadoddharana adisidalu yashode”.

Let us now look into the eight attributes:

1) Kavim: “Kavi” means “a poet.”

A poet is he who composes poems and is skilled in making poetry.

A poem is any composition written in an elevated and imaginative language.

Poem is a “metrical composition of elevated tone” (Oxford dictionary).

The Lord who is the author of the Vedas which are metrical compositions is to be considered as the first ever poet.

Another meaning of the word “Kavi” is: omniscient, wise, thinking, thoughtful.

One can see all these in the Lord.

Meditating on the composer of the Vedas which are extremely clever and wise compositions is one way for the seeker to reach the Supreme.

Is there not an extremely intelligent power in the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe? This intelligence is “He”.

The creator of this entire universe is definitely the “omniscient”. (all knowing.)

2) Puranam: The word means “ancient” and also “primeval”.

Primeval: Oxford dictionary: of the first age of the world.

Literally it means that which is the most ancient and has no beginning. The Lord is the most ancient and hence said to be “Puranam.” He is without a beginning. Everything in this universe has a beginning and an end but the Lord has no beginning.

3) Anushasitaram: “He” is the ruler.

The Lord who created the life on this earth is to be considered as the overall ruler of the same. The Vedas declare that nothing on this universe moves without His authority and power. As “He” is the presiding factor in all of life’s existence “He” is considered to be the ruler. Every function of the body depends upon the presence of the energy from within and this energy is “He”. It does not mean that He is actually holding a whip and ruling over all.

There is a beautiful explanation for this aspect of the Lord in the “Prashnopanisad.”

It says that once there was a debate among all the sense organs and the mind as to who was the most powerful and without which the body does not function. Each one started saying that in his absence the body function would stop. They came to the power within and asked to judge as to who amongst them was the most powerful.

The energy then requested permission to be given leave for a second and as soon as it started to move away the power from all the sense organs and the mind began to fade. They all felt like choking to death. They then realised that the energy within which is nothing but the “Supreme” is the ruler over all others.

4) anor aneeyamsam: Subtler than the atom.

Subtler an object is that much more pervasive it is. The Primordial energy is said to pervade the entire universe and beyond too.

The Physicists for a long time considered that an atom was the smallest divisible particle in anything. But now they have with the help of quantum physics found that even the atom is divisible into smaller particles.

We all know how powerful the atom bomb is. It was used in the Second World War and the world dreads the use of nuclear weapons in future. The Supreme Lord, the Primordial energy is so much subtler than the atom and extremely powerful.

5) Sarvasya dhataram: Nourisher and supporter of all.

We have learnt already that the constant factor behind all the bodily modifications is the “Atman.” (sloka 13, chapter 2 - dehinoshmin yatha dehe) “He” is the constant supporter at all stages on one’s life and in His absence it becomes the death of the body.

This is compared to the screen in a cinema theatre. The screen is the constant supporter of all the various films projected on the screen.

The energy that is in the five great elements, the crops we get from the earth, the air we breathe in are all supportive to our existence. Hence it is said that “He is the supporter and nourisher of all.”

6) Achintyaroopam: Of inconceivable form.

As we have discussed before, “He” is beyond the senses, mind and the intellect and hence it is impossible to visualise “His” form. He is truly incomprehensible. He is also said to be without form and qualities. The only way to understand “Him” would be by “uniting with Him and becoming one with Him.” It is like the rivers joining the sea and losing their identity.

It is also important to realise that we may not be able to see God as such but certainly can see divine people on earth. God has to be seen in those who show divinity in their thoughts, actions and speech. The society calls such people as saints, messiahs or prophets.

7) Adityavarnam: Luminous like the sun.

Let us be clear at the outset that the Parabrahman is the light himself and illumines the sun who gives physical light to all of us.

The nearest brilliant brightness we can see is that of the sun and hence for the sake of comprehension “He” is described as being luminous like the sun. Really speaking “His” brightness is thousands of times more than that of the sun. (chapter 11, Divi surya sahasrasya - sloka 12)

The sun is seen by the physical eyes but to see the sun there should be the spark of life within. The light of the Atman has to be present to see the light of the sun. This is to say that “He” is beyond the brilliance of the sun and even the sun needs the light of the Atman to be seen.

It is also a fact that the sun does not truly rise in the morning and set at night. It is the movement of the earth in the sphere of the sun that gives the illusion of sunrise and sunset. The brilliance of the sun is constant and it does not fade at any time.

The Lord is a treasure house of knowledge and shines brilliantly like the sun. There is no modification in the knowledge of the Parabrahman and it is ever constant.

Also it is important to realise that here we are not talking of the physical brilliance of the sun. Brilliance is in relation to the knowledge. In our scriptures knowledge is spoken to as “light of knowledge” and referred to as “brilliance.” The knowledge in a knowledgeable person is said to shine like the sun. This point is highlighted in the next quality.

8) Tamasah parastaat: He is beyond darkness.

“Tamas” is an expression of ignorance.

Truly knowledgeable person is beyond ignorance.

We have learnt before that the “maya” acts as a veil between the soul and the intellect. Ego predominates in relation to the reaction to the world around. This in turn makes the individual ignorant of the Atman within.

The Lord within in the form of the “Soul” is beyond the maya and hence described as beyond tamas.

The sincere seeker is asked to meditate on these attributes of the Parabrahman. The spiritual seeker is on his life’s journey to reach the abode of the Supreme Knowledge. This has been described in the 10th sloka as “Prayana kalena.”

The sincere seeker is asked to meditate on these attributes of the Parabrahman. The spiritual seeker is on his life’s journey to reach the abode of the Supreme Knowledge. This has been described in the 10th sloka as “Prayana kalena.”

“Prayana” means “journey.” The journey is movement from one place to the other. The movement from the sphere of egoistic living to the abode of Parabrahman is “Akshara Parabrahma Yoga.” The death of the ego is a pre requisite for uniting with the Supreme Purusha.

The word “Prayana Kale” therefore has to be read as “at the time of the death” and this has to be the death of the ego.

What should the seeker be doing at the time of death is explained in this sloka.

- a) Manasa’chalena: with immovable mind.
- b) Bhaktya yuktaha: with devotion.
- c) Yoga balena: by the power of yoga.
- d) Pranam: the vital breath
- e) Bhruvor madhye: in the centre of the brows
- f) Samyak: well
- g) Aveshena: established

We should understand clearly about prayana. Normally when we move from one place to another, we prepare ourselves for the journey first. We collect what we need to make our stay comfortable in the new place. The journey to settle in a new place is undertaken with the purpose of getting security and comfort. What we do not have or get in the present abode, we like to get in the new place. We make enquiries from so many sources about the new place before taking up the decision to move.

In the spiritual journey the same principle applies. We have to be ready to accept that the earth we live is a place of happiness and sorrow. The sense organs bring in impulses from the vast world around and the mind is not settled comfortably for any length of time. The mind becoming fickle looks for

pleasures that are only transient. Travel in search of permanent everlasting happiness (shanti) is the purpose of the spiritual journey.

The seeker has to collect divine qualities and let go of asuric qualities. (chapter 16)

He should have total devotion to the Lord. (chapter 12)

He should control the wandering mind by the practice of dhyana. (chapter 6)

In this sloka we are asked to develop “Bhakti” and practice “yoga”.

The mind has to stop wandering towards sense objects.

By total understanding of the Parabrahman with the eight attributes given in sloka 9 he should develop Bhakti in the Parabrahman. Bhakti is needed to destroy the ego and this automatically makes us eligible to receive “His” grace.

To restrain the wandering mind, practice of “Yoga” is essential.

Love for the new land to move to and practice to get there as quickly as possible without getting distracted secure a quick entry to that place.

Love for the Lord and practice to reach the land of bliss through Dhyana yoga (chapter 6) will help in the journey.

Finally the Lord says:

Bhruvor madhye pranam aveshya:

Bhruvor madhye: middle of the eye brows.

Pranam: life’s breath

Aveshya: having placed.

Samyak: thoroughly

Sa: he

Tam: that

Param: supreme

Purusham: Purusha

Upaiti: reaches

Divyam: resplendent.

The teachers of “Pranayama” say that normally for majority the life energy leaves the body through the bodily apertures. But it does go out in a different direction for a true yogi, they say. This point is highlighted in this section of the sloka. They teach the method of lifting the life energy from Mooladhara (in the lumbar spine region) to Sahasrara (top of the head.)

The true yogi develops the power to concentrate the life’s energy between the two eye brows at the time of his/her physical death.

By the strength of yogic practice he/she is capable of lifting the energy at the time of death.

(This involves a greater understanding of the Pranayama and is beyond the scope of coverage in in this section.)

## Sloka 11

**YAD AKSHARAM VEDA VIDO VADANTI  
VISHANTI YAD YATAYO VEETARAGAHA  
YAD ICCHANTO BRAHMACHARYAM CHARANTI  
TAT TE PADAM SAMGRAHENA PRAVAKSHYE**

**That which the knowers of Vedas declare Imperishable,  
That into which the self-controlled and free from attachments enter,  
Desiring which men practice the vow of celibacy,  
That goal will I declare to you in brief.**

Yad: which  
Aksharam: Imperishable  
Veda vido: knowers of the Vedas  
Vadanti: declare  
Vishanti: enter  
Yatayo: self-controlled (ascetics)  
Veetaragaha: free from attachment  
Yad ichanti: desiring which  
Brahmacharya: celibacy  
Charanti: practice  
Tat: that  
Te': to you  
Padam: goal  
Samgrahena: in brief  
Pravakshya: will declare

Yad: that / which.

This is “The Pranava” which is “Om.”. It is beyond the capacity of us, the mortals to describe the Supreme Parabrahman. Why, even the spiritual masters cannot do so. It is because of this difficulty, the ancient masters have come with the mantra “Om”. It indicates the “Supreme” in totality.

This is better understood if we can analyse the mantra “Hari Om Tat Sat.”

“Sat” is the “Eternal reality” which is Parabrahman who is described as “Sat, Chit, Ananda.” It has no name and form.

“Tat” refers to that “Sat.”

“Om” is the Parabrahman without a quality but described through the form of the syllable.

“Hari” is the same “Parabrahman” with a form and qualities attributed to the same.

The mantra means that “Hari” with a name, form and qualities, “Om” with a name but with no qualities is that eternal truth.

It is that “Om” the Lord is going to declare in brief to Arjuna.

Veda vido: knowers of the Vedas  
Vadanti: declare.  
Aksharam: imperishable.

Vedas are our spiritual texts handed over to us by the spiritual masters of the past who attributed its origin to the Parabrahman. The enlightened masters gave us the four Vedas. (rig, yajur, sama and atharva Vedas) They declared that the substratum of the universe which is perishable is the “Imperishable Primordial Energy” and this they called as “Parabrahman” and designated the same with the syllable “Om.”

As a matter of fact we can describe this Parabrahman as “Timeless Zone.” Everything in the universe we know of has a past, present and a future. The “Supreme” who is the timeless zone has no past, present and future. “He” is the eternal factor that undergoes no changes.

We show a lot of respect to the scientists who give us the knowledge of the physical world.  
Let us show respect to the spiritual scientists who have given us the knowledge of the Parabrahman.

But then, who can enter into this “timeless zone?”

Yad: which

Yatayo: the self-controlled ascetics

Vita ragaha: free from attachments

Vishanti: enter.

The self-controlled ascetics, free from attachments enter into this timeless zone.

Truly speaking each one of us has a birth right to enter into this timeless zone.

The droplets of water absorbed from the ocean by the rays of sun form the clouds and the rain from the clouds goes back to the ocean in the end. Each one of us is the drop/a spark of energy from the Parabrahman and has to re-enter “Him” at the end. It is a pity that the majority are not aware of this timeless zone or do not have knowledge of the same or do not have the equipment to enter. It is not a physical equipment that we need to keep on us but is a frame of mind. This frame of mind is described as “self-control.” Those who have developed a total self-control of the mind are termed as “yatis.” This aspect has been discussed several times already. Through the medium of the sense organs the mind is drawn to the outer physical world so easily. This is in search of pleasures which are comparatively easy to get. These pleasures have a definite span of life and fade away or turn into painful experiences.

On entering into the Parabrahman there is no more pleasures and pains and it is nothing but “Eternal Bliss”. This is “Imperishable.” Yatis can enter into this timeless zone and experience the eternal bliss. The learned masters teach us the means to enter the imperishable Brahman. This is achieved by developing freedom from “kama and krodha” (desire, anger) which is a way of purifying the mind. This in turn gives the freedom from “lobha, moha, mada and matsarya.” (greed, delusion, pride and enmity - the Arishadwargas or the six dreaded enemies in the path to Moksha.) This is developed through a sense of detachment, by growing out of attachment to the objective world and getting attachment to the Parabrahman.

We can understand this by the following example:

The child soon after birth gets attached to her mother. In the earlier days she would like to be with her mother always.

Gradually she gets attracted to the people/objects around. She goes out to play but frequently comes back and gets the comfort by coming back.

Later on she would spend more time outside and less time with her mother.

After marriage she would spend with her husband and the family that will come in course of time. She would come back to her mother occasionally.

In course of time she has gradually detached from attachment to her mother.

In the spiritual context it does not end with this scenario.

We come out of our original home of the Lord and get quickly attached to the physical world. It takes a long time to realise that the only permanent happiness is by going back to “Him”. The Vedas teach us the ways to go back and the Yatis show us the way to go back. It is all in search of the “Eternal Bliss.”

Yad icchanto: which desiring

Brahmacharyam: the vow of celibacy

Charanti: practice.

Desiring which they practice the vow of celibacy.

Desiring the “Eternal Bliss” the seeker practices the vow of celibacy.

Brahmacharya is not just control of carnal pleasures but a control of all sensual pleasures that can be accrued by the sense organs and the stored memories of the past in the brain.

Just like the students who have to practice celibacy during the course of their studies to get the degree and secure a means of survival in this world,  
The spiritual seekers have to practice the art of self-control to get the qualification to enter the Parabrahman.

Desires are the ones that toss the mind. Greater the desires, greater are the waves of agitations in the mind. The practice of self-control and purity of the mind, speech and actions can be achieved by learning to have as few desires as possible. The practice of this is celibacy or Brahmacharya.

“Brahmachari” is he who walks in the path of the Brahman. (Brahmam Charati iti Brahmachari.)  
Freedom from sensuality at all the three levels of thought/word/actions is true Brahmacharya.

One can say that the practice of Brahmacharya is nothing but the practice of continence of the physical energy in man that gets converted into spiritual energy. Sri Ramakrishna says that the true Brahmachari develops a faculty known as “Medhas” which promotes the spiritual knowledge. Spiritual wisdom is “Medhas.” “Medha Shakti” is the power of spiritual wisdom.

“Pravakshye”: I will declare says the Lord.

### **Sloka 12 - 13**

**SARVA DWARANI SAMYAMYA MANO HRIDI NIRUDHYA CHA  
MURDHNY ADHAY ATMANAHA PRANAM ASTHITO YOGA DHARANAM**

**OM ITYEKAKSHARAM BRAHMA VYAHARAN MAM ANUSMARAN  
YAH PRAYATI TYAJAN DEHAM SA YATI PARAMAAM GATIM**

**With having restrained all the gates (of the senses), fixing the mind in the heart, holding the vital breath in the head, concentrating on atma by yogic practice,**

**Repeating the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahman, remembering Me at the time of death, he attains the Supreme Goal.**

Sarwa dwarani: all gates  
Samyamya: having controlled  
Mano: mind  
Hridi: in the heart  
Nirudhya: having controlled  
Murdhni: in the head  
Adhaya: having placed  
Atmanaha: of the self  
Pranam: breath  
Asthitaha: established  
Yoga dharanam: practice of concentration

Ity: thus  
Ekaksharam: one syllabled  
Brahma: Brahman  
Vyaharan: uttering  
Maam: me

Anusmaran: remembering  
Yah: who  
Prayati: departs  
Tyajan: leaving  
Deham: the body  
Sah: he  
Yati: attains  
Paramam gatim: supreme goal

Sloka 12 is about the practice of fixing the mind on Brahman and sloka 13 is about the result achieved by the practice.

One should note that the word “OM” is brought out for the first time in the Gita.

These two slokas highlight the way of a yogi reaching the final goal of his life at the time of departure from the physical world.

What is important to remember is that the yogi would have been practicing this technique all through his tenure of sadhana and remembers to continue the same sadhana at the time of death.

As a matter of fact, if we refer to slokas 5 and 7 of this chapter we will understand something very important.

Sloka 5:  
antakale cha mam eva smaran muktva kalebaram  
yah prayati sa mad bhavam yati nastyatra samshayaha

Sloka 7:  
tasmata sarveshu kaleshu mam anusmara yudhya cha  
mayyarpita mano buddhirmam'evaishyasi Asamshayam

In sloka 5, Bhagawan Sri Krishna says “remembering Me at the time of death also, he attains Me.”

In sloka 7, He says: “remember Me at all times and fight. You shall attain Me alone.”

In sloka 13 He says: “repeating the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahman -remembering Me at the time of death - he attains the Supreme abode.”

All these point to the common factor that “Me” referred to in all the three slokas is the “Supreme Brahman” and that Brahman is addressed and worshipped as “OM”.

Let us look at sloka 12:  
Sarva dwarani: all gates  
Samyamyah: restrained

All the gates:

The physical body is looked upon as a city of nine gates. The nine gates are:

Two eyes, 2 ears, 2 nostrils, mouth, urinary and excretory orifices. In the olden days when kings ruled the regions, the capital of the king had gates to control/check those who enter into the city. The visitors could be simple visitors, friends or could be enemies of the ruler of the town in disguise. It is like the present immigration control at the port of entry into any country.

Restraining all the gates means having a control over the impulses received from outside.

The steps needed to meditate on “Om” will be:

- Control the input of sensory impulses from the nine gates;
- Check on the mind and not let it dwell on the stored memory bank;

c) Divert the mind towards the Atman within.

It is about controlling the mind and senses and giving a new channel of thought.

The light of knowledge in a yogi shines like a brilliant flame of light. This is in danger of being blown out by the wind in the form of impulses of desires/hatreds gushing in from the world around or from activating the memory bank of past impulses. The yogi therefore constantly keeps a control of entry of impulses from outside, does not let the mind dwell on the stored impulses and concentrates all the time on the Atman within.

This he achieves by “sarva dvarani samyamya”: restraining all the gates and by:

Mano: the mind

Hridi: in heart

Nirudhya cha: and held

Letting his mind be held in the heart.

The heart in this context is “The Atman.”

Literally speaking we use the word “heart” to describe “love.” The common sentence used is “I love you with all my heart.”

The heart as we know supplies the blood with all the nutrients and gases to all parts of the body from birth to death in a selfless act of dedication. It considers every part of the body as one unit and takes care of the needs of all organs.

The soul/atman is an ocean of love.

It therefore means that when the mind is fixed on the heart it should be read as “mind fixing on the Atman within.”

The next step is:

pranam: the vital breath

Asthito: fixing/holding

Murdhya: with head (brahma randhra)

Adhaya: having placed

Atmanaha: of the Self

Yogadharanam: practiced

Asthitaha: established.

Holding the vital breath in the head, concentrating on the Atman by yogic practice.

The masters describe that the life’s energy is expressed through outer actions by all our bodily organs. They advocate that the seekers of Parabrahman should learn the art of concentrating this energy in the head which is the seat of mind and the intellect. The practice of Pranayama involves learning the art of concentrating on the life’s energy in the Mooladhara (lumbar spine region) and gradually lifting it up the spine and bringing it to the top of head (Ajna chakra).

This is brought out in the second half of the sloka 12. By spiritual yogic practice the sadhaka is advocated not to dissipate the bodily energy but concentrate it on the top of the head so that at the time of death this can depart through the “Brahma randra.” This method of practice is “Yogadharana.”

Sloka 13 then goes on to describe how to let go of this energy through the Brahma randra and unite with the Parabrahman.

Towards this achievement the yogi has to repeat the one imperishable mantra, the sacred syllable “OM”. The repetition is possible only when there is memory of the Parabrahman. This is possible with sradhha and Bhakti.

Om: the Supreme  
Iti: thus  
Ekaksharam: one syllabled  
Brahma: Brahman  
Vyaharan: uttering  
Maam: Me  
Anusmaran: remembering constantly  
Deham: body  
Tyajan: leaving  
Prayati: departs

Repeating the one syllable OM which is Brahman, remembering Me at the time of leaving the body.

It is no use just by repeating “OM” but remembering the significance of the meaning of the word “Om” brings the highest reward.

What does the yogi achieve by this practice?

Sa: he  
Paramam gatim: highest goal  
Yaati: attains

He attains the highest goal.

The highest goal is uniting with the Supreme which is like entering the timeless zone and living a life of eternal bliss.

When one reads the life history of great souls we learn that they left their mortal body in the state described in this sloka. It is very difficult to achieve and as we studied in chapter 7, one in a million may achieve this unity. The effort of the seeker is to be on the track of progress to unite with the Supreme and it does not matter when this is achieved. It may be possible even now, in this life also.

## **Sloka 14**

**ANANYA CHETAHA SATATAM YO MAAM SMARATI NITYASHAHA  
TASYAHAM SULABHAM PARTHA NITYA YUKTASYA YOGINAHA**

**I am easily attainable by one, O Arjuna, who thinks of Me with single minded devotion  
continuously and ever, by him who is ever united with Me.**

Ananya chetaha: with single minded devotion  
Satatam: continuously  
Yo: who  
Maam: Me  
Smarati: remembers  
Nityashaha: ever/continuously  
Tasmaham: Tasya aham: of him, I  
Sulabhaha: easily  
Nityayuktasya: ever united with Me  
Yoginaha: of yogi

It is the mental framework that finally decides our destiny. The mind is the instrument that can take us to the God or keeps us entangled to this world.

The life history of successful businessmen show that they arrived at the helm of their profession by sheer dedication to what they wanted to achieve in life and not let anything else come in the way. The same rule applies in the path of spirituality to attain "Salvation."

Ananya: not anything else

Chetasa: the mind/intellect equipment

The mind/intellect equipment should be thinking of the Lord and not anything else.

Here, the word "Maam" should be clearly understood.

The word "Maam" should be read as "Satya, Dharma". "He", the Parabrahman, we have discussed several times is the personification of these two.

One should continue to be part of the society, fulfil all professional/social/family obligations following the principle of "Truth and Righteousness".

The "Truth and Dharma" should be according to the doctrine of the Vedas/Upanisads.

Just like one has to follow the law of the land he/she resides in, the seeker should follow the universal law of Satya and Dharma as dictated by the scriptures.

This has to be constant and at all times (ever) "Nityashaha".

It should be like the involuntary bodily actions like breathing, circulation etc.

Do we ever remind ourselves that we have to breathe in and breathe out?

If we do not breathe in or breathe out, it chokes us and eventually we die.

Similarly, if we do not continuously follow Satya and Dharma we would choke in the path of spiritually and perish.

There is one difference.

Our breathing has become a mechanical act even though it is involuntary.

What we need in spiritual practice is "Devotion."

We are asked to practice single minded devotion at all times towards the Parabrahman. To make the task easier for the average person, through the medium of Mythology and Puranas a pantheon of Gods has been created and devotion to any one of these is the tool to achieve success. While following that particular God of choice, we should not let go of our final destination "Moksha." The various Gods in the pantheon are the medium to unite with "Parabrahman."

The Lord says: satatam:

Smarati: remembers and

Nityashah: ever.

"Ever" means, till the death of that experience. The present experience is birth into this world and it ends with the physical death.

Remembering the God with devotion continuously till our physical death is essential for success.

As we said before,

Practice makes one perfect and the act becomes an easy task.

So the Lord says:

Sulabhaha: easily attainable

Aham: I

“I am easily attainable” by such seekers.

The word “Yoginaha” is brought into this sloka.

Yogi is he who follows this principle of continuous thought on the Lord.

## Sloka 15

**MAM UPETYA PUNARJANMA DUKHALAYAM ASHASHVATAM  
NAPNUVANTI MAHATMANAHA SAMSIDDHIM PARAMAM GATAHA**

**Having attained Me, these great souls do not again take birth on earth which is the place of pain and is non-eternal. They have reached the highest perfection.**

Mam: to Me

Upetya: attained

Punarjanma: birth again

Dukhalayam: the place of pain

Ashashwatam: non-eternal

Na: not

Apnuvanti: attain

Mahatmanaha: great souls

Samsiddhim: to perfection

Paramaam gataha: having reached the Supreme

Having attained to Me:

This is the “Salvation” which is the birth right of every individual born on this earth. This is entering into the “Timeless Zone.” There is no more “Past, present and future” of this zone we are in. Those who attain this state are given the title “Mahatma” which means “great souls.”

The title “Mahatma” is like “Post Doctorate” degree one can get in the University education. Post-Doctorate qualification is the highest degree the Universities can bestow on the most deserving graduates. They have no more need to get into the university education again.

The world we live in is to be looked upon as a college/university where we are given practical education on the subject called “Life.” The life as we have studied so far is nothing but a wheel of births and deaths of experiences. We undergo numerous experiences through our contact with the world around and the result of our actions. The results either bring in sorrow or happiness. The education is all about the wisdom to be acquired that both these are non-eternal. There is no such thing as permanent happiness or permanent sorrow as far as the life in the world is about.

Only on entering into the “Timeless-Zone” one can be freed from these transient experiences. The main cause for this state of affairs is the attachment to what is transient and not realising what is eternal. The study of the text “Aparoksha Anubhooti” by Sri Shanakaracharya teaches us “Nitya Anitya Viveka Vicharana” for those who have the eagerness to achieve Salvation. Those who are eager to attain salvation are said to possess the quality known as “Mumukshatva.” A burning desire to attain this will get entry into the university of higher education where the first lesson to learn is “Nitya Anitya Viveka Vicharana”.

The seeker is asked to analyse what is “Eternal” and what is “Non-eternal”. He is taken to higher education that involves developing awareness of the presence of the dreaded enemy “The Ego” and the ways of destroying the ego and identifying with the “Atman” within. The ego is termed as “Anatma” which makes the individual to be caught in the whirlpool called “samsara”.

“Mahatmas” are those who have understood the difference between “Eternal and non-eternal”, developed the “Mumukshatva”, strived hard at perfection and think of “Him” even at the time of death. They have mastered control over the life’s energy and lifted the same from Mooladhara chakra to “Sahasrara”. At the time of death from the physical world they are ready to direct the departure of this energy from the “Sahasrara” which unites them with “Parabrahman.” They do not return to be born any more in the form of rebirth into this world.

Punarjanma: re-birth  
Dukha: sorrow  
Alayam: place  
Ashashvatam: non-eternal.

The world we live in is the place of sorrow and non-eternal and into this world the Mahatmas do not enter again.

They attain:  
Samsiddhih: perfection  
Paramam: highest  
Gataha: reached.

Contrary to these are “Alpatmas” (little souls) who are victims of misunderstanding about what is real and unreal. They are attached so strongly to the ego which is non real.

## Sloka 16

**ABRAHMA BHUVANAL LOKAHA PUNARAVARTINO`RJUNA  
MAM UPETYA TU KAUNTEYA PUNARJANMA NA VIDYATE**

**O Kaunteya, all worlds including that of Brahma are subject to re-birth. But he who reaches Me has no re-birth.**

Abrahma bhuvanaat: up to the world of Brahma  
Lokaha: the worlds  
Punaravartino: subject to return  
Maam: Me  
Upetya: having attained  
Punarjanma: rebirth  
Na: not  
Vidyate: is

The highest philosophy of “Advaita” is brought about in this sloka.

The Hindus have a pantheon of various Gods and each individual has a choice to select the God of his choice and offer prayers.

The Gods/devas are said to reside in spheres which are above the plane of earth.

There is no pain/suffering in these lokas.

Depending upon the meritorious points achieved in this world of ours in this life, each one of us is entitled to reach a higher sphere after our death.

The scriptures say that those who reach these abodes will stay for a length of time in proportion to the meritorious points achieved and return back to the earth at the end of such period.

Majority of us look for rewards for the good work we undertake.

Applying the same principle, we also look for rewards to take us to the higher spheres after the physical death. Because we crave for such happiness, we exhaust our meritorious points and have to come back to earth.

The life cycle revolves round on this principle and we take birth after birth. One fine day/during one fine birth we are expected to realise the folly of such foolish desires and work not to return to this loka again. Such way of living implies total selfless work and on the principle of karma phala tyaga. In course of time when we exhaust the accumulated vasanas and do not bring in any new vasanas we will have a chance to be true yogis and attain union with Parabrahman.

There are a total of six spheres above the plane of earth; they are:

Bhuvaha  
Suvaha  
Mahaha  
Janaha  
Tapaha  
Satya

“Suvaha” is the “Indra Loka” (Heaven) ruled over by Lord Indra.

“Satya Loka” is the abode of Lord Brahma.

Sri Krishna states that the entry to these lokas is on merit and on exhaustion of points of merit the individual has to come back to earth.

Puranas and mythological stories talk about the various abodes of gods. To name a few:

Vaikunta - abode of Lord Vishnu  
Kailasa - abode of Lord Shiva  
Svarga loka - abode of Indra  
Brahma loka - abode of Brahma  
So on and so forth.

The devotees of Vishnu would pray to enter into Vaikunta,  
The devotees of Shiva would pray to enter Kailasa.  
And so on and so forth.

There is a purpose behind this approach also. By naming the reward men/women are made to conduct their actions on earth that would please the Lord of their choice. The common factor behind all the gods is that they are approachable by good deeds. In the name of advising to conduct good deeds indirectly the society is benefitted.

The welfare of the society is the ultimate aim worked out by our spiritual masters that led them directing the mankind in the path of divinity.

Somewhere in the process sectarian differences have cropped up and plagued the true spirit of Godhood. The Gita is to root out such differences and bring about “Peace on earth.”

## **Sloka 17**

**SAHASRA YUGA PARYANTAM AHAR YAD BRAHMANO VIDUHU  
RATRI YUGA SAHASRANTAAM TE HORATRIVIDHO JANAHA**

**Those people who know the length of a day of Brahma which lasts a thousand yugas and the night which lasts a thousand yugas, they know day and night.**

Sahasra: one thousand

Yuga: yuga  
Paryantam: ending in  
Ahar: day  
Yad: which  
Brahmanaha: of Brahma  
Viduhu: know  
Rati: night  
Yuga sahsrantam: ending in a thousand yugas  
Te': they  
Ahoratram vidaha: knowers of day and night  
Janaha: people

Abrahma bhuvannal lokaha punaravartinorjuna (from sloka 16):  
All worlds including that of Brahma are subject to rebirth.

Sloka 15 said:  
Mam upetya punarjanma dukhalayam ashashvatam  
Napnuvanti mahatmanaha samsiddhim Paramam gataha

Having attained Me, these great souls do not again take birth on earth which is the place of pain and is non-eternal. They have reached the highest perfection.

We learnt from these two slokas that the Parabrahman (the state of highest perfection reached by the mahatmas) is the "Timeless Zone" and all other abodes of gods with a name and form are subject to the wheel of "birth and death."

In this sloka, the Jagadguru is giving the example of Brahma, the creator of life on earth and is saying that even He has a span of time.

Even though the figures appear staggering, for the sake of understanding it would be worth recollecting the length of the life of Brahma as worked out by our masters. They say that the life span of Brahma is 100 years but which is vastly different to the human year.

His life cycle goes on like this:  
Kaliyuga: 432000 human years  
Dwaparayuga: 864000 human years (twice that of Kaliyuga)  
Tretayuga: 1296000 human years (thrice of kaliyuga)  
Krutayuga: 1728000 human years (four times of kaliyuga)

-----  
4320000 human years: this is one Mahayuga

Similarly for His night 4320000 human years form one Mahayuga.

1000 Mahayugas is the day and 1000 Mahayugas is the night which amounts to 2000 Mahayugas as a full day of Brahma.

365 such days form one year.  
His life span is also 100 years based on this calculation.

The masters also say that Brahma the creator is also a "Jivatman" who has a cosmic function of creating life and He is also on His way to attain "Moksha". Another Jivatma who reaches that state of perfection through his past births takes over the role of creation and gets the name of "Brahma." Through the process known as "Krama Mukti" Brahma unites with Parabrahman and ends His cycle of births and deaths.

As we discussed before time is that which has a “past, present and future.” When we use the word “now” it implies the existence of both “past and future.”

Brahma, the four headed god who was born from the naval of Vishnu is the title for the creator of life on earth. Mythology tells us that Parabrahman taking up the role of Vishnu created Brahma by His yogic power and commanded Him to create life on earth. The life on this universe has been going for a number of years which is beyond our imagination and we are told that even the life span of Brahma is limited. “Brahma” is only the title for He who creates and there have been many such Brahmas in the past and there will be many in future.

What we have to learn is that he who understands this limited life span of even the gods including that of Brahma the creator is the real wise individual. Only such individuals aspire for “Mukti”. He knows what time is and that the time creates, sustains and causes dissolution of what is created. Knowing this he strives for transcending time and this is possible by taking refuge in “Parabrahman.”

The word worth making note of in this sloka is:

“Sahasra yuga paryantam.”

It means “that which ends in thousand yugas.”

“Antam” is “end.” Brahma, the creator also has an “end.”

“Time” is only an interval between two experiences. To transcend the experiences, only means is to enter the “Timeless Zone” and this is possible by destroying the “ego” and uniting with the “Parabrahman.”

### Sloka 18

**AVYAKTAD VYAKTAYAHA SARVAHA PRABHAVANTY AHARAGAME  
RATYAGAME PRALEEYANTE TATRAIVA VYAKTA SAMNJAKE**

### Sloka 19

**BHOOTAGRAMAHA SA EVAYAM BHOOTVA BHOOTVA PRALEEYATE  
RATRYAGAME AVASHAN PARTHA PRABHAVATY AHARAGAME**

**From the un-manifested all manifest beings proceed at the coming of the day. At the coming of the night, they dissolve in that only which is called un-manifested.**

**O Partha, that multitude of beings keep coming forth again and again, and are dissolved helplessly at the coming forth of “night” and they come forth again at the coming of the “day.”**

Avyaktaat: from the unmanifested

Vyaktayaha: the manifested

Sarvaha: all

Prabhavanti: proceed

Aharagame: at the coming of the day

Ratri agame: at the coming of night

Praleeyate: dissolve

Tatra: there

Eva: verily

Avyaktam samjnake: in that which is called unmanifested

Bhoota gramaha: multitude of beings  
Saha: that  
Eva: verily  
Ayam: this  
Bhootvaa bhootvaa: being born again and again  
Praleeyate: dissolves  
Ratri agame: at the coming of the night  
Avashaha: helplessly  
Prabhavanti: comes forth  
Aharagame: coming of the day

We have now a description of the cosmic play of Brahma the creator who himself is the product of cosmic play of Parabrahman.

As we have studied already, we, the individuals represent the microcosm of cosmic play with five gross elements brought to life by the power of the Atman within. Whereas the universe is the macrocosm in the form of the five gross elements brought to life by the power of Parabrahman.

Let us take the analysis of the individual beings first.

Each of us has a manifest and un-manifest state of existence. In the manifest state we are awake and in the un-manifest state we are fast asleep. The manifest state is “day” and un-manifest state is “night”.

We have to understand that the “day” is considered as “creation” (srishti) and the “night” is “dissolution” (pralaya).

The centre of all action is the “Mind”. The mind is a store house of a number of thought imprints (vasanas). The sense organs bring in impulses to the mind and the mind either not take notice of what is brought in or acts by taking notice of what is brought in.

Of the impulses that it takes notice of there are some that are very strong and some weak impulses. Strong impulses form strong imprints and weak impulses form weak imprints on the brain. The strong imprints do manifest as actions earlier than the weak imprints.

Let us take the starting point as the night. At night, all the sense organs stop working and the mind goes to sleep. It is described as the sense organs are withdrawn into the mind, the mind is withdrawn into the intellect and the intellect into the Atman within. The Atman is constantly awake and hence the individual is alive but the Jivatman is technically speaking dead for the night. Hence the common usage of the word “Dead sleepy and dead to the world” when someone is fast asleep and cannot be wakened. All the impulses stored in the mind are in a dormant state. This is the un-manifest state of the mind.

At the start of the day the sense organs, the intellect, the mind wake up and get connected to the world around. The stored impulses come into action and this is the manifest state of existence of the mind.

Those impulses stored that are strong start developing into actions first. Our today is what we thought of and acted yesterday. Our actions both good and bad depend upon the existing imprints on the mind. We automatically proceed to act in that channel of thoughts stored.

Sloka 18 reiterates this fact and states that at the coming of the day the un-manifested dissolved mind (sleep state of the previous day) manifests itself (wakes up) and proceeds to conduct the actions. The actions depend on the vasanas that get manifest.

At the coming of the night, the opposite happens. The manifest mind goes into a state of un-manifest and becomes dead to the world.

There is no difference between any individual in the un-manifest deep sleep state but the differences between individuals is expressed and manifest in the day.

This can be understood by the following example.

In deep sleep state there is no difference between a king and a beggar. But at the coming of the day, the king expresses his lordly state and the beggar expresses his state of begging for alms.

Avyaktaha: from the un-manifested

Vyaktayaha: the manifested

Sarvaha: all

Prabhavanti: proceed

Aharagame: at the coming of the day

Ratri agame: at the coming of the night

Praleeyante: dissolve

Tatra: there

Avyakta samjnake: in that which is called un-manifested, but truly not un-manifest. (the Parabrahman is the only un-manifest)

In contrast (to the individuals discussed before), in the eternal cosmic play of Brahma,

When He wakes up, the macrocosmos wakes up and comes into play. This is “Srishti” creation from the un-manifested state of the macrocosmos.

The same macrocosmos helplessly is withdrawn into Brahma at the coming of the night of Brahma. This is “Pralaya” or dissolution.

For an individual it is said that every day is “Srishti” and every night is “pralaya.” As far as our relationship to the world around, we are dead to the world every night and are awake to the world every morning.

This is known philosophically as “Nitya pralaya”.

Creation, preservation and dissolution (srishti, sthiti and pralaya) are the states of the mind of Brahma.

Let us look at sloka 19 which is an elaboration of the same theme as sloka 18.

The multitude of beings keep coming forth again and again, and are dissolved helplessly at the coming of the night and they come forth again and again at the coming of the day.

The word to note is “avashaha” - helplessly.

This is the cosmic play of Brahma and we have no control over the same.

Really speaking we have no free will as such to do what we want.

We humans have a limited freedom in the world we are brought into by the Lord and we are actually under His control.

The freedom we have is “The intellectual power of discrimination.”

Even though we have the vasanas in the mind that get manifest and un-manifest every day and night we have the inherent capacity to modify the vasanas. Using our intellect we can analyse our thoughts. If we can give a gap between the rise of a thought in the mind and the actions that proceed from such thoughts, and analyse what we are going to do, we can modify the actions. Modified actions give rise to modified new thoughts and so on and so forth. Eventually, by making use of the intellect which in turn makes use of the “Antaratma and antarvani” (the voice of inner consciousness) we can transform

ourselves, transcend from the plane of human living to divine living. This we will learn in the next few slokas.

It is also the duty of all parents to develop the spiritual knowledge and to start guiding the child before he/she gets too old in the path of truth and righteousness and faith in the Supreme. Sowing the seeds of virtue early in life has a beneficial effect of overpowering the seeds of vice which may have been carried forwards from the past births.

It is not wrong to say that one need to be competent to take up the role of the parent before bringing the innocent children into this world. Having children and bringing them up in this world is not a play but a total dedicated responsibility on the parents and on the society too.

The past always follows us till the light of knowledge is lit and dispels the ignorance and kills the ego. The shadow that follows us at the dawn of the light of the day disappears when the sun is directly above us - mid day sun - which is nothing but the pinnacle of light of knowledge.

Srishti, sthithi and pralaya is the fate of all except the Parabrahman. The only option we the humans have to be free from this cycle of births and deaths is “Union with the Supreme” and this chapter is about uniting with the same who is “Akshara”.

## Sloka 20

**PARATASMASTU BHAVO ANYO AVYAKTO VYAKTAT SANATANAHA  
YAHA SA SARVESHU BHOOTESHU NASHYATSU NA VINASHYATI**

**But there exists higher than that un-manifested, another un-manifested, eternal existence, which is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.**

Parah: higher

Tasmaat: than that

Tu: but

Bhavo: existence

Avyakto: unmanifested

Avyaktaat: than the unmanifested

Sanatanaha: eternal

Yaha: who

Saha: that

Sarveshu: in all

Bhooteshu: in beings

Nashyastu: in being destroyed

Na: not

Vinashyati: is destroyed

Having explaining to us the manifest and un-manifest states of the created, we are now told that there exists something higher than the un-manifested state of the manifested, created world. This higher un-manifested is never destroyed.

This brings into the teaching the truth about the “Absolute and Relative existence.” Absolute existence exists at all times and not limited by “time, space and causation”. Relative existence is limited by time, space and causation. We can understand this principle by taking the example of a cinema.

The cinema is projected in a theatre and spectators go to the theatre to watch the film.

There are the following involved in this:

A projector that projects the film and takes it back in its spool at the end of the show.

The spectators who go to watch the film.

A screen to project the film.

The spectator goes to watch the film.

The films shown change from time to time.

The constant factor all the time was the screen where the film was projected and the spectators rarely take notice of the screen.

We, the public are in the world called the theatre,

We are immersed in the play of life projected on the screen.

The film shown is relative existence: it is manifest when projected on the screen and un-manifest when it is reeled back on to the spool of the projector.

It has a manifest period and un-manifest period of existence.

The screen on the other hand is “absolute existence” and without it, the play was not possible. It is not noticed of by the spectators. As far as the spectators are concerned it is “Absolute Existence” which is always un-manifest. Even though it has always been there, from the point of view of us, the spectators who have come into the world of theatre, it was un-manifest all the time.

Similarly, even though the Parabrahman is always present, we the created do not see Him because we are immersed in the play of life on this earth. Hence “He” is considered as “Absolute existence and always un-manifest.” When we study the 13th chapter we will know “He” is “Akshara” (imperishable) and the “Prakriti” is “Kshara.”(perishable)

With the intellectual eye of wisdom we can realise the truth that the “Un-manifest Brahman has always been manifest and the so called manifest world has always been un-manifest.” This is the “Maya” (Leela) of Parabrahman and the moment we realise this truth, we are on the road to walk towards this “Akshara” and be united with it. This higher un-manifest is “Eternal, Supreme” and exists even when all beings perish (Pralaya).

## **Sloka 21**

**AVYAKTO KSHARA ITI UKTAS TAM AHUHU PARAMAAM GATIM  
YAM PRAPYA NA NIVARTANTE TAD DHAMA PARAMAM MAMA.**

**That, which is called un-manifested and imperishable, that, they say, is the higher goal. They who reach it return not, that is My highest abode.**

Avyakto: un-manifested

Aksharaha: imperishable

Iti: thus

Uktas: said

Tam: that

“Thus, that, which is said to be un-manifested and imperishable” - this is the first quarter of the sloka.

In continuation of what we learnt in the last sloka: what we understood to be un-manifest:

We are blessed with the sensory system which consists of the senses, the mind and the intellect. With the help of these three we associate and study the world around us. Unfortunately, they also trap us to the world because they make us believe the world is real and we look for what gives us happiness. As a result of this we also experience sorrow. That which is beyond the senses is not recognised by us and hence it is Un-manifest.

The world around as we have studied is subject of the law of time, space and causation. It is limited by time and is perishable. On the other hand that which is un-manifest is not perishable. It is not subject to the law of time, space and causation.

This section of the sloka refers to “that” which is un-manifest and imperishable.

Who said that?

Ahuh: (they) say.

The Lord says: “They say”.

This refers to the learned who have given us the Vedas and Upanisads and imparted the spiritual knowledge. We should note that Sri Krishna never says “I say so, I said so” but says “They said so.” These are the “real seers” who “Know the Truth”.

What else they say?

Paramam: the Highest

Gatim: the goal.

The seers declare that what was said in the first quarter of this sloka is the ultimate goal.

We are familiar with the word “goal”. Let us analyse it with reference to the football game which we are familiar with.

The game is played for experiencing the happiness. Let us say we are one of the team that is playing for scoring goals and achieving victory and thereby experience happiness.

The opposite team is bringing us sorrow by scoring goals against us.

When we score a goal, the ball comes back to play again and the opponents get a chance to score against us and make us feel sad.

The game goes on for a certain length of time.

Each goal we score is our happiness against the sorrow. In life, we not only score goals and experience happiness but goals are scored against us and we also experience sorrow. It is a mixture of both happiness and sorrow.

In the spiritual journey, the aim is to see that the ball does not come back into play. It is the highest goal in the game of life and the second half of the sloka refers to this aspect.

This will happen when we aim to get the happiness by reaching the abode of the imperishable and un-manifest.

This, the pundits say is the abode of “Parabrahman”.

Yam prapya: which having reached

Na nivartante: not return

The learned say that the individual does not return back to this world (of happiness and sorrow) when they reach the abode of Parabrahman who is “Paramananda”.

Sri Krishna then says:

Tat: that  
Dhama: abode  
Paramam: the Supreme  
Mama: My

The supreme abode is My abode.

In the last quarter of the sloka “He”, Sri Krishna asserts that He is the Supreme Parabrahman.

Arjuna with his physical senses was seeing Krishna in a human form. Arjuna is asked to transcend beyond the senses and see Krishna as the seat of “Sat, Chit and Ananda.”

Let us try to look at this world as a child’s playground and understand that the child of today is going to be an old man of tomorrow and pleasures turn into pains and finally life leads to death. Let us not show interest in this child’s play but aim to reach the Highest abode and unite with “Him” who is unmanifest and akshara.

## Sloka 22

**PURUSHAHA SA PARAHA PARTHA BHAKTYA LABHYASTVANANYAYA  
YASYANTASHSTHANI BHOOTANI ENA SARVAMIDAM TATAM**

**O Partha, that highest Purusha is attainable by unswerving devotion to Him alone, within whom all beings dwell and by whom all this is pervaded.**

Herein we have got some more details of “His abode” and the way to reach it.

The abode of the Highest Purusha we discussed in the last sloka is the abode Sri Krishna is referring to.

a)  
Yasya: of whom  
antahsthani: dwelling within  
bhootani: beings

“within whom all beings dwell”

b)  
Ena: by which  
Sarvam idam: all this  
Tatam: pervaded.

By whom all this is pervaded.

c)  
Sah paraha purushaha: that highest Purusha.

The entire universe known to the man and that which is not known is pervaded by Him. There is no place which is known and unknown in the cosmos where He is not present.

Saint Kanakadasa, a great devotee of Lord Krishna and a well known composer from the state of Karnataka was once given a fruit by his guru who gave fruits also to all the other students. The students were asked to eat the fruit at a private place where no one would be able to see them.

After the lunch interval when all the students assembled for the studies, except Kanakadasa all the rest had eaten the fruit. Each one went into a great detail and described how they found a private spot to eat the fruit. Kanakadasa informed his guru that as per what was taught to him there was no spot where the Lord was not there and hence the fruit could not be consumed.

This confirms the fact that the entire universe is the abode of the Lord.

We are also told “within whom all beings dwell” and this means that all of us and all forms of life are residents of this abode.

As residents in a household share the contents therein, we should be sharing the wealth of this universe with all others and not be selfish.

How to enter into this abode?

The big notice board in front of this abode is:  
“Entry by Ananya Bhakti only.”

Ananyaya: unswerving  
Bhaktyatu: with devotion  
Labhyaha: attainable.

Only by unswerving devotion one can enter the abode of the Highest Purusha.

Karma, Jnana, Dhyana (action, knowledge and meditation) which are the means to achieve union with Him should have the ingredient of “Total unswerving devotion”. It should be one-pointed concentration and nothing else from this material world should distract the seeker from his devotional act. This comes only from total faith in Him and the teachings on Him.

Of course the objects of the world do give “Ananda” but as they are of fleeting nature, the seeker is asked to go for that which is not fleeting in nature and “Eternal.”

Let us end this discussion with an example.

Suppose we want to emigrate to another place we follow certain rules.

- a) We will find out in detail about the new place from reliable sources.
- b) We will make sure it has got what we have been looking for.
- c) We want to be sure that we will be safe and secure in that place.
- d) We need to know how much money we have in the balance that will help us to go and settle in the new place.

Once we have got affirmative answers to all the above points, we will develop the love to that move and try hard to go there.

It is then up to us to make efforts that will give us the entitlement to go that place. We will then do all our acts to achieve the entitlement to go to that place. The decision to accept our entry is up to the Govt of the new place.

Similarly to reach the abode of Paramatma, we need to acquire merit points by Satvic actions, learn more about the Lord and His abode by study of the sastras, the learned elders and the Guru. With total

unswerving devotion one day we will achieve entry into the abode of “Akshara Parabrahma.” The main ingredient we should have is “Devotion” which is total selfless identification with the object of love and dropping the “ego.”

“Prema Mudita Man’sse Kaho Ram Ram Ram” sings a sadhu. The mind should be singing the name of the Lord with devotion, he means.

### **Sloka 23**

**YATRA KALE’ TVANAVRITIM AVRITTIM CAIVA YOGINAH  
PRAYATA YANTI TAM KALAM VAKSHYAMI BHARATARSHABHA**

**O best of Bharatas, departing at what time yogis never return, and at what time yogis return after their departure, those times I will tell you.**

Yatra kale: at what time

Tu: verily

Anavruttim: non return

Prayata: departing

Avruttim cha eva: and also return

Yanti: go to

Tat kalam: that time

Vakshyami: I will tell

“Yogi” in the context of this sloka has to be understood as “sincere sadhaka” who is trying his best to unite with the “Supreme.”

A number of sadhakas have attempted, are attempting and will attempt to unite with the “Imperishable.” Amongst those some have progressed well and have developed perfect self-control. They are able to meditate on the Lord all the time. But, they are still “sadhakas” only.

Even amongst these yogis, there will be some who will come back to this earth and some who will not return. Sri Krishna is going to tell us in the next few slokas which type of yogis will not return and which type will return.

When we finish analysing these slokas that are going to follow we will realise why the Lord has made this statement. It is enough to note at this juncture that there is a deep rooted idea in the mind of many Hindus that leaving the mortal body at a particular time in the year bestows “Moksha” and no more re-births into this world. To root out this blind belief and let the seeker go in search of “Real knowledge” this section has been included.

- a) There are those who strive sincerely but die before achieving the end-result.
- b) There are rare few who achieve the end-result in this birth itself. (Jivanmuktas)
- c) There are bound to be some who get distracted from their path and lose track of the goal.

Of course there will be a large number who do not have the spiritual inclination and live to enjoy the life. (refer to slokas 38-46, chapter 6)

Bharatarshabha: best amongst Bharatas.

If we take the meaning of the word “Bharata” as he who is in search of “The light of knowledge” this word would then mean “Best amongst those who are in search of knowledge”. The highest knowledge being “The Spiritual Knowledge.”

## Sloka 24

### AGNIR JYOTHIR AHAH SHUKLA SHANMASA UTTARAYANAM TATRA PRAYATA GACHANTI BRAHMA BRAHMAVIDO JANAHA

**Fire, light, day, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice - following this path, the knowers of Brahman go to Brahman.**

Agni: fire  
Jyothi: light  
Ahah: day  
Shukla: the bright fortnight  
Shanmasa: six months  
Uttarayanam: the northern path/solstice of the sun  
Brahmavido: knowers of Brahman  
Janaha: people  
Gachanti: go

Fire:  
The fire shines brightly. The light that comes from lighting a match dispels the darkness.

Light:  
That shines and guides one forward.

The bright fortnight:  
The lunar calendar of the Hindus has two periods in a month. The first period starts following the last day of the new moon. The moon gradually is said to ascend (waxing) and reach its full brightness in 14 days which is the full-moon day. This is known as “Shukla paksha” and the Lord is referring to this bright fortnight in a lunar month. This period is comparatively the bright period in a month.

Uttarayana:  
Again, in the Hindu calendar, following the solar calendar, there are two periods of six months each. The first period starts on 14th January and ends on 13th of July. This period is “Uttarayana.”

It is said that grandsire Bheeshma who abandoned his weapons when faced by Shikandi asked Arjuna to prepare a bed of arrows so that he can lie on it till the beginning of Uttarayana. (14th January of the present day)

When asked why he desired to do so, Bheeshma tells Arjuna that he would like to wait for the beginning of Uttarayana to depart from this world.

We should assume that the belief of reaching the abode of Brahman when departing from the world during the period of Uttarayana was in existence even in those days.

The five examples given in this sloka refer to the comparative period of brightness in an open space (fire and light), the day time (as opposed to night), the bright fortnight in a month, “Shukla paksha” and Uttarayana.

We are told that those who know Brahman, following this path of “light” go to Brahman. This is a generalised broad statement covering “Bright periods”.

To understand this we must realise that “Knowledge” is compared to “Brightness.”

There is a popular saying “He shines brilliantly” to those who have acquired knowledge and express it in their actions.

In the spiritual context, “Knowledge” is referred to “The Knowledge of Brahman” which is realisation of what is permanent and what is impermanent.

The real understanding of this sloka will then be, “Those who follow the path of “Light of Knowledge” go to Brahman” and not literally to the periods as many blindly tend to believe in.

In Prashnopanisad while describing the origin of life, it is said that Prajapati, the creator got the desire to create. He then manifested Himself as energy (sun) and matter (moon). The yogis who worship the sun are said to be those who attain the final Liberation. This sloka refers to this aspect of Upanisad teaching.

Worship knowledge, put it into practice and this will give you the entitlement to attain Brahman says the sacred text.

In a nutshell we can say, “Jnani attains Brahmajnana”.

## **Sloka 25**

### **DHOOMO RATRIS TATHA KRISHNAHA SHANMASO DAKSHINAYANAM TATRA CHANDRAMASAM JYOTIR YOGI PRAPYA NIVARTATE**

**Smoke, night-time, the dark fortnight, also six months of the southern solstice, attaining by these to the lunar light, the yogi returns.**

The examples given in this sloka are in sharp contrast to those from the last sloka.

Dhooma: smoke.

As opposed to the fire, the smoke that envelops the fire makes the place dark.

Ratri: night time.

Krishnaha: the period from the day after the full moon to the day of new-moon.

This is comparatively darker period as the moon gradually wanes off. (waxing - growing larger; waning - getting smaller).

Shanmasa: the period from 14th July to 13th January following the solar calendar.

Autumn and winter, which are darker in contrast to the spring and summer seasons.

Remembering that light represents knowledge and darkness represents ignorance, we should interpret this sloka as:

Those who follow the path of ignorance (satisfy the ego) will have to return back to earth after their stay in this world in the present birth.

Even though the seeker has practiced sadhana he was dragged towards the world by his sense organs. Hence the word: “Yogi returns.”

The seeker will have to return back to earth and learn ways of carrying out the task of “mano nasha and vasana kshaya.” (clear the mind of all the thought imprints). For having been a sadhaka and tried, he would have accumulated merit points in this life and he would enjoy proportionately to the number

of merit points accrued. He would go to the world of manes which is known as “Pitruloka”. This is the abode of the departed elders. In the Upanisads this path of return is called as “Pitrayana.”

In our life we have a day when we are awake and night when we are asleep. If we remain awake and strive to move towards the path of knowledge, study the sacred text (Srimad Bhagawadgita) and conduct actions as per its doctrine we will be moving towards the path of the sun and attain Moksha. If we choose to remain in darkness, get immersed in worldly desires we will be moving away from the path of Moksha and have to return back to earth in the next birth.

Tatra: there  
Chandramasam: lunar  
Jyothi: light  
Yogi: the seeker  
Prapya: having attained  
Nivartate: returns.

Following the path of solar light (sun - knowledge) the seeker is said to be on the path known as “Dravyayana.”

Following the path of lunar path (moon - darkness) the seeker returns back to this world is the meaning of the second half of the sloka. In the latter path, the ego is being satisfied with fulfilment of desires as the aim of life. He is said to be trapped in the “Time Zone.”

When one learns this secret and changes his mode of living, conducts actions in the spirit of nishkama karma and karma-phala tyaga he would then walk on the path of solar light and attains Moksha. He is said to be entering the “Timeless Zone”.

## Sloka 26

**SHUKLA KRISHNE GATI HYETE JAGATAHA SHASHVATE MATE`  
EKAYA YATI ANAAVRITTIM ANYAYAVARTATE PUNAHA**

**The paths of light and darkness are both thought to be eternal. By the one, man does not return, by the other, he returns again.**

We should understand that the concept of Moksha for those who departed from the earth during Uttarayana period and re-birth for those who departed during Dakshinayana period was in vogue not just during the Dwapara Yuga but even before the Dwapara Yuga. Sri Krishna is not approving the concept but saying that the concept had been there from time immemorial.

Taking the summary of the previous three slokas, we must understand that the path of light is the path of spiritualism and the path of darkness is the path of materialism. Materialistic path leads to re-birth into this world and spiritual path confers freedom from re-birth. By saying it is “Eternal”, the lord is telling us that this was so in the past, is so at present and will be so in future. Leading the life of spirituality as per the Vedic teachings is the means for Liberation from bondage. The two paths are open for mankind and it is up to each individual to choose the path he/she wants to take.

Gati: path  
Hyete: verily these  
Shashvate: eternal  
Mate’: thought  
Ekaya: by one  
Yati: goes  
Anavrittim: to non-return

Anyathaha: by the other  
Avartate: returns  
Punaha: again

### Sloka 27

**NAITE SRUTI PARTHA JANAN YOGEE MUHYATI KASCHANA  
TASMAT SARVESHU KALESHU YOGA YUKTO BHAVA ARJUNA**

**O Partha, knowing these two paths, no yogin is deluded. Therefore at all times, be steadfast in yoga.**

Na: not  
Ete' sruti: these two paths  
Janan: knowing  
Yogee kaschana: any yogi  
Na muhyati: is not deluded  
Tasmaat: therefore  
Sarveshu kaleshu: at all times  
Yoga yukto Bhava: be steadfast in yoga.

Herein we have a categorical statement from the Lord that there is no such thing as two paths as the Uttarayana and Dakhinayana deciding the fate of the individual after the death from this existence. Do not get deluded, He tells Arjuna and through the medium of Arjuna He is telling us all that everyone who wants to unite with the Parabrahman should be steadfast in his efforts.

“Implement the teachings of the scriptures/Gita every day of the life” is the advice to all sadhakas. This is because, death is certain for everyone that is born but nobody can know the time of death.

Arjuna is told: “While engaged in the activities of the world 24/7, keep the awareness of the divine in you and act accordingly. Keep “Jnana” as your goal and not let the ignorance distract you even for a second. Be on constant vigil in preventing the entry of enemy (ahamkara) inside you.”

As Sri Ramakrishna quotes often, “let your mind be always concentrated on the Atman like the needle in the navigator’s compass that is always pointing to the north.”

If we know what is poison and what is nectar it is foolish to go after poison. So, let us try to follow the path of Light at all times. (Jnana)

### Sloka 28

**VEDESHU YAJNESHU TAPAHSU CAIVA DANESHU YAT PUNYA PHALAM  
PRADISHTAM  
ATYETI TAT SARVAM IDAM VIDITVA YOGEE PARAM STHANAM UPAITI CHA'DYAM**

**Whatever the fruit of merit is declared to arise from the study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices, practice of austerities, and the offering of gifts, beyond all these goes the yogi who knows the Imperishable Brahman and attains the Supreme Primeval state.**

Yat punya phalam: what fruit of merit  
Idam viditva: having known this  
Yogi: the yogi  
Vedeshu: by the study of the Vedas

Yajneshu: by the practice of sacrifices - the followers of karma yoga who perform the yajnas - sloka 28, chapter 4

Daneshu: by charitable deeds - slokas 20-22, chapter 17

Tapahsu: by the austerities - slokas 14 to 19 chapter 17

Pradishtam: is declared

Tat sarvam: all that

Atyeti: goes beyond

Adyam cha: and primeval

Param sthanam: the Supreme abode

Upaiti: attains

The scriptures highlight the need to study the Vedas, practice austerities and conduct charitable deeds and sacrifices including the Pancha maha yajnas (deva yajna, rishi yajna, pitru yajna, nara yajna and bhoota yajna). They declare that those who follow any one of these paths do get rewards. The reward being a life of freedom from pains and sorrows that crop up in one's life in this material world. The six lokas above the earth (bhuvā, svā, mahā, Janā, Tapā) are the realms of experiencing happiness.

What one tends to overlook is the fact that all these are points of merit and when used the points of merit accumulated will exhaust. This we have learnt before means that the individual has to be re-born on to this earth.

What the real yogi/seeker of "Eternal Bliss" looks for is not a reward for any of the above acts. He conducts one or all of the above forms (study of Vedas, conduct yajnas, conduct charitable deeds, undertakes tapas) but does it with the spirit of "Sri krishnarpanamastu." (offer the results at the feet of the Lord and does not conduct actions for personal gains.)

Such a person is the "true yogi" and he attains the entry into the "Supreme Abode" which we learnt before as "Timeless Zone of Parabrahman."

Understanding "Akshara Parabrahma Yoga" is complete when the understanding is converted into actions and we act divine through the three instruments of "mind, body and speech" and that too all the time. (24/7)

Certainly let us all undertake good actions but let us not stop at that point. The aim is to attain "Brahma Jnana" and live the life of "Truth and righteousness."

**Thus completes the eighth chapter, "AKSHARA PARABRAHMA YOGA" in the Srimad Bhagawadgita which is a Upanisad, Brahma Vidya and Yoga sastras in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.**