

EIGHTH DISCOURSE. ABHYASA-YOGA.

The seven things to be realised by meditation.

In vii 29, 30 such things have been mentioned by the Lord as have given occasion to Arjuna to put a question. Accordingly Arjuna proceeds to ask thus :

अर्जुन उवाच :—

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ १ ॥

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।

प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ २ ॥

Arjuna said:

1—2. What is that Brahman ? What about the Individual Self (Adhyatma) ? What is action (Karma), O Purushottama ? And what is declared to be the physical region (Adhibhuta) ? And what is the divine region (Adhidaiva) said to be ? And how and who is Adhiyajna (the Entity concerned with Sacrifice) here in this body, O Madhusudana, and how at the time of death art Thou to be known by the self-controlled ?

The Lord proceeds to answer these questions in their order :

श्रीभगवानुवाच :—

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

The Blessed Lord said:

3. Brahman is the Imperishable (Akshara), the Supreme. The Ego is said to be the Individual Self (Adhyatma, He who dwells in the body). The offering which causes the origin of physical beings is called action (Karma).

Brahman is the Akshara, the Imperishable, the Supreme Self (Paramatman); the sruti says "O Gargi, it is at the command of this Akshara, the imperishable Paramatman, that heaven and earth remain, held in their places." (Bri. Upanishad, 3-8-9). 'Akshara' does not here mean the syllable "Om"; for, the latter is subsequently specified thus:—"Uttering the syllable 'Om,' the Brahman" (viii. 13). And the epithet 'supreme' applies better to Brahman, the Imperishable, who transcends all, (than to the syllable 'Om').

The same Supreme Brahman existing as the Ego, as the Innermost Self, as the Pratyagatman, in every individual body, is said to be *Adhyatma*: that which first shows itself as the Innermost Self in the body and turns out in the end to be identical with the Supreme Reality, the Brahman, is known by the term 'Adhyatma'.

The sacrificial act which consists in offering cooked rice, cakes and the like to the Gods (Devatas) and which causes the origin of all creatures, is known by the term '*Karma*'; for, it forms the seed as it were of all beings; it is in virtue of this act that all beings, animate and inanimate, come into existence, after passing through rain and other regions of life

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर ॥ ४ ॥

4. The physical region (Adhibhuta) is the perishable existence, and Purusha or the Soul is the divine region (Adhidaivata). The Adhiyajna (Entity concerned with Sacrifice) is Myself, here in the body, O best of the embodied.

The Adhibhuta is that which gathers itself round the whole animated creation and is composed of the whole perishable existence, *i.e.*, of every thing that has birth.

Purusha is, literally, that by which every thing is filled, (*pri*=to fill) or that which lies in the body (*pur*), *i.e.*, the Hiranyagarbha, the Universal Soul abiding in the Sun (Aditya), the Sustainer and the Stimulator of the sense-organs of all living beings.

The *Adhiyajna* is He who identifies himself with all acts of sacrifice, the Deity named Vishnu; the sruti says: "Yajna (Sacrifice) is verily Vishnu" (Taittiriya-Samhita, 1-7-4). He is verily Myself. I am the Deity concerned with all acts of sacrifice in the body.—As an act of sacrifice (*yajna*) has to be performed by the body, it is said to be inherent in it, and as such it may be said to rest *in the body*.

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ ५ ॥

5. And whoso, at the time of death, thinking of Me alone, leaves the body and goes forth, he reaches My being; there is no doubt in this.

Me: Vishnu, the Supreme Lord. *My being*: My real being as Vishnu. *In this*: as to whether he reaches or not.

Constant meditation of the Divine is necessary.

Not to Me alone does this rule apply ; but also :

यं यं वापि स्मरन्मावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेबरम् ।

तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥ ६ ॥

6. Of whatever Being thinking at the end a man leaves the body, Him alone, O son of Kunti, reaches he by whom the thought of that Being has been constantly dwelt upon.

Being : a particular Devata or Diety, *At the end* : at the time of life's departure. *Him alone* : Only the Being thought of, and no other. *Dwelt upon* : constantly meditated.

Because thus the final thought determines the character of the body to be attained next,

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मामेवैष्यस्यसंशयम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. Therefore at all times do thou meditate on Me and fight : with mind and reason fixed on Me thou shalt doubtless come to Me alone.

Meditate : According to the Teaching (sastra). *Fight* : do thou perform thy proper duty of fighting. *Me* : Vasudeva. *Come to Me* : as meditated upon by thee.

The Divine Being to be meditated upon.

Moreover,

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Meditating with the mind engaged in the Yoga of constant practice, not passing over to any

thing else, one goes to the Supreme Purusha, the Resplendent, O son of Pritha.

Practice consists in the repetition of one and the same idea, uninterrupted by any other thought, with reference to Me, the sole object of your thought. Such a practice is itself said to be Yoga. With the mind thus solely engaged in Yoga, not passing over to any other object, the Yogin who meditates according to the teaching of the scripture and of the teacher—of the sastra and acharya—reaches the Purusha, the Transcendental Being in the Solar Orb.

What sort of Purusha does he reach?—Listen :

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।

सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥

प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥

9—10. Whoso meditates on the Sage, the Ancient, the Ruler, smaller than an atom, the Dispenser of all, of unthinkable nature, glorious like the Sun, beyond the darkness, (whoso meditates on such a Being) at the time of death, with a steady mind endued with devotion and strength of Yoga, well fixing the life-breath betwixt the eye-brows, he reaches that Supreme Purusha Resplendent.

Sage: the Omniscient. *The Ruler*: of the whole world. *Dispenser*: who allots to all living beings actions and their results in all their variety. It is very difficult for anybody to conceive of His form though it exists. Like the Sun, He is

glorious with the splendour of His Eternal Intelligence (Nitya-Chaitanya) which is *beyond the darkness* of delusion or nescience (Ajnana). The *strength of Yoga* consists in the steadiness of mind which results from the after-effects of the (constant practice of) samadhi. At first the mind (chitta) is subdued in the lotus of the heart (hridayapundarika); then, by means of the up-going nadi (sushumna), after gradually obtaining control over the several stages of matter (earth and the other four rudimental elements), the life-breath of the heart is drawn up and carefully fixed betwixt the eye-brows. By this means the wise man, the Yogin, reaches the Supreme Purusha, who is resplendent.

Meditation of the Divine in the Pranava.

The Lord now assigns a name to that Brahman whom the Yogin wishes to reach by means to be pointed out again in the sequel, and who will be now described in such terms as being declared by the knowers of the Veda, &c. :

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं सङ्गृहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥

11. That Imperishable Goal which the knowers of the Veda declare, which the self-controlled and the passion-free enter, which desiring they lead the godly life,—That Goal will I declare to thee with brevity.

Those who understand the teaching of the Veda declare the Imperishable as devoid of any attribute whatsoever. The sruti says: "This verily is that (which you wished to know of), the Imperishable, O Gargi, as the brahmanas (the knowers of the Brahman) declare, not gross, not subtle," &c. (Bri-Upa. 3-8-8.) The samnyasins, ever controlling themselves, free from passion, enter the Imperishable, on attaining

to right knowledge. And desiring to know the Imperishable they enter on godly life (Brahmacharya) with a Guru. Of That Goal which is called Akshara, the Imperishable, I shall tell thee with brevity.

Having started with the words "He who verily among men meditates on the syllable 'Om' till death, what region will he thereby attain to?" he (Pippalada) said to him (Satyakama): "O Satyakama, this, the Brahman, the Higher and the Lower, is the syllable 'Om'." (Prasna-Upanishad, 5—1, 2); and it was subsequently said: "He who will meditate on the Supreme Purusha by the three-lettered syllable 'Om'—he is borne up by the Sama-hymns to the Brahma-loka, to the region of Brahman." (*Ibid*, 5-5).

Again, having started with the words "Elsewhere than in dharma and elsewhere than in a-dharma, tell me that thou seest;" (Katha-Upanished, 2-13), the sruti says, "that goal which all the Vedas speak of (*i.e.*, are intended for), which all the austerities speak of, desiring which they lead the life of Brahmacharya (celibacy), that goal I tell thee in brevity: It is this, the syllable 'Om.'" (*Ibid* 2-14).

In such passages as these, the syllable 'Om', regarded either as an expression of the Para-Brahman or as a symbol of Him like an idol, is intended for persons of dull and middling intellects as a means of knowing the Para-Brahman; and the contemplation of the 'Om' is said to produce moksha at a subsequent period. Now, the same contemplation (conjoined with firmness in Yoga) of the syllable 'Om,' productive of mukti at a subsequent period—the 'Om' forming, as shown above, a means of knowing the Para-Brahman described here (viii. 9, 11)—has to be taught here as well as some minor matters connected with the main subject. With this view, the Lord proceeds with the sequel;

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।

मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३ ॥

12-13. Having closed all the gates, having confined mind in the heart, having fixed his life-breath in the head, engaged in firm Yoga, uttering Brahman, the one-syllabled 'Om,' thinking of Me, whoso departs, leaving the body, he reaches the Supreme Goal.

Having closed all the avenues of knowledge and having concentrated thought in the lotus of the heart, and with thought thus controlled, he ascends by the Nadi which passes upwards from the heart, and then fixing life-breath in the head, he utters the syllable 'Om', the appellation of the Brahman, and meditates on Me.—'Leaving the body,' shows the mode of departure. The departure takes place by the Self leaving the body, not by the Self being destroyed.

No re-birth on attaining to the Divine Being.

Moreover,

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

14. Whoso constantly thinks of me and long, to him I am easily accessible, O son of Pritha, to the ever-devout Yogin.

He who thinks of Me, the Supreme Lord, long—i.e., not for six months or a year, but uninterruptedly throughout life,—to that Yogin who is ever steadfast in thought, I am easily

accessible. This being so, therefore, without thinking of another, one should ever dwell steadfast in Me.

It may be asked, "What if Thou art easily accessible?"—
Listen : I shall tell you of what use is My being thus easily accessible :

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५ ॥

15. Having attained to Me, they do not again attain birth, which is the seat of pain and is not eternal, they having reached highest perfection.

Having attained to Me, the Isvara, 'having reached My being, they are not again subject to birth. Birth here is the seat of all pain arising from the body, etc., and is of an ever-changing nature. Having reached the highest stage called moksha, they do not attain birth again. Those, on the other hand, who do not attain to Me, return again (to the earth).

Do those again return who have reached any other being than Thyself?—Listen :

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

16. (All) worlds including the world of Brahma are subject to returning again, O Arjuna ; but, on reaching Me, O son of Kunti, there is no rebirth.

The Day and the Night of Brahma.

Why are all the worlds including the world of Brahma subject to returning?—Because they are limited by time.—How?

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद्ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

17. They—those people who know day and night—know that the day of Brahma is a thousand yugas long and the night is a thousand yugas long.

Brahma is the Prajapati, the Viraj. Those persons who know how to compute Time know that Brahma's day is a thousand yugas long, and that His night is of the same duration as His day. Because the worlds are thus limited by time, therefore they return again.

What takes place during the Prajapati's day and what takes place during His night will now be described :

अव्यक्ताद्व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

18. From the Unmanifested all the manifestations proceed at the coming on of day ; at the coming on of night they dissolve there only, in what is called the Unmanifested.

The Unmanifested (Avyakta) is the sleeping condition of the Prajapati who is asleep. Out of That, all manifestations (vyaktis), all creatures unmoving and moving (sthavara and jangama), are manifested at the coming on of day, *i.e.*, when Brahma awakes. So, at the coming on of night, *i.e.*, when Brahma goes to sleep, all the manifestations dissolve there only, in what is called Avyakta, the one already spoken of.

With a view to avoid the fallacious implication that a man reaps the fruits of what he has not done, or that he does not reap the fruits of what he has done, with a view to show that the teaching of the scripture concerning bondage (bandha) and liberation (moksha) has a purpose to serve, and with a

view further to teach detachment from *samsara* by showing that, as the effect of karma caused by *avidya* (nescience) and other sources of evil, all creatures involuntarily come into being again and again and dissolve, the Lord says :

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

19. This same multitude of beings having come into being again and again, is dissolved at the coming on of night, not of their will, O son of Pritha, and comes forth at the coming on of day.

This multitude of beings comprising those that move as well as those that do not—the same multitude that existed in the preceding kalpa or age, and no other—involuntarily comes into being at the coming on of day, and is dissolved again at the coming on of night—at the close of the day, Again at the coming on of day, it involuntarily comes into existence.

The Highest Goal—how reached.

In viii. 13, *etc.*, has been shown the way, by which to reach the Imperishable (Akshara) described above. Now, with a view to indicate the nature of the Akshara, with a view thus to specify that so and so is the thing to be reached by this path of Yoga, the Lord proceeds as follows :

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तो ऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

20. But that other eternal Unmanifested Being, distinct from this Unmanifested (Avyakta), —He does not perish when all creatures perish.

'But' indicates that the Akshara who is to be described now is distinct from the Avyakta. *Being* : the Supreme, the Para-Brahman, called the Akshara. Though distinct from

the Avyakta, one may suppose that He is of the same nature as the Avyakta. To remove this impression. the Lord qualifies Him by 'other', meaning thereby that He is of a different nature from the Avyakta. He is unmanifested, imperceptible to the senses. He is distinct from the Avyakta mentioned above, which is Avidya itself, the seed of the whole multitude of created beings; that is to say, He is of quite a different nature from the Avyakta. He does not perish when all beings from Brahma downwards perish.

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

21. What is called the Unmanifested and the Imperishable, That, they say, is the highest goal; which having reached none return. That is My highest place.

That: that Avyakta which is called Akshara, the Imperishable, the Unmanifested Being. Having reached that state, none has returned to *samsara*, the mundane life. That is My (*i.e.*, Vishnu's) Supreme Abode.

The means of attaining to that state will now be pointed out:

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ २२ ॥

22. Now, that Highest Purusha, O son of Pritha, within Whom all beings dwell, by Whom all this is pervaded, is attainable by exclusive devotion

Purusha is so called because He rests in the body, or because He is full. Than Him none is higher. He is attained by exclusive devotion, by *jnana* or knowledge of

the Self. All the created beings abide within the Purusha ; for, every effect rests within its cause ; and by that Purusha the whole world is pervaded.

The Paths of Light and Darkness.

Now it is necessary to speak of the Uttaramarga, ' the Northern Path ', the Path of Light by which the Yogins just spoken of attain to Brahman,—those Yogins who meditate here on Brahman as inhering in the Pranava, in the syllable ' Om ', and who attain to moksha later on.* And this will be taught in the section beginning with viii. 23. The path of return is also described, only with a view to extol the other path.

यत्र काले त्वनावृत्तिमावृत्तिं चैव योगिनः ।

प्रयाता यान्ति तं कालं वक्ष्यामि भरतर्षभ ॥ २३ ॥

23. Now, in what time departing, Yogins go to return not, as also to return, that time will I tell thee, O chief of the Bharatas.

' In what time ' should be construed with ' departing,' ' To return ' means to be reborn—' Yogins ' stand for those who are engaged in meditation (*i.e.*, those who are properly called Yogins) as well as for Karmins, *i.e.*, those who are engaged in karma or action. The latter are spoken of as Yogins only by courtesy ; and they are so spoken of in iii. 3. I shall tell you, when dying the Yogins are not born again, and when dying they will be born again.

He speaks of that time :

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।

तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥ २४ ॥

* At the end of the kalpa.

24. Fire, light, day-time, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern solstice,—then departing, men who know Brahman reach Brahman.

'Fire' is the deity presiding over time ; so also is 'light' a deity presiding over time.—Or, it may be that 'fire' and 'light' are the deities so called ; the reference, however, to the path as a whole by the expressions 'in what time' and 'that time' being due to the predominance of the deities presiding over 'time.'—The 'day-time' is the deity presiding over the day-time, the 'bright fortnight' is the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. *The six months of the northern solstice* : here also, it is the deity that forms the path, The principle on which this interpretation of the passage is based has been established elsewhere.* Those who die, having been engaged in the contemplation of Brahman, reach Brahman by this path. The expression "in course of time" should be understood after 'reach' ; for, those who are firm in devotion to right knowledge and attain to immediate liberation have no place to go to or to return from.

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।

तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥ २५ ॥

25. Smoke, night-time, and the dark fortnight, the six months of the southern solstice,—attaining by these to the lunar light, the Yogin returns.

'Smoke,' 'night time,' the 'dark fortnight,' and the 'six months of the southern solstice,' are all deities presiding over smoke and periods of time spoken of. By this path, the Yogin—the Karmin who performs sacrifices (to Gods) and other works—attains to the lunar light, and on the exhaustion thereof, returns again to earth.

* Sariraka Mimamsa, iv 3-4.

शुक्लकृष्णे गती ह्येते जगतः शाश्वते मते ।

एकया यात्यनावृत्तिमन्ययाऽऽवर्तते पुनः ॥ २६ ॥

26. These bright and dark Paths of the world are verily deemed eternal ; by the one a man goes to return not, by the other he returns again.

The one is bright* because it illumines knowledge : the other is dark* because it is wanting in that light. The two paths are open to those only in the world who are engaged in action or devoted to knowledge ; they are not open to the whole world. They are eternal, because *samsara* is eternal. *By the one* : by the bright one.

नैते सृती पार्थ जानन्योगी मुह्यति कश्चन ।

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु योगयुक्तो भवार्जुन ॥ २७ ॥

27. Knowing these paths, O son of Pritha, no Yogin is deluded : wherefore at all times be steadfast in Yoga, O Arjuna.

The Yogin who knows that one of the two foregoing paths leads to *samsara* and that the other leads to *moksha* is no longer deluded †

Excellency of Yoga

Now, hear of the greatness of that Yoga :

* The two paths are respectively called *Devayana* and *Pitriyana*, the path to the *Devas* and the path to the *Pitris*. The one is said to be bright because it illumines knowledge and is reached by knowledge, and its course is marked throughout by bright objects ; the other is said to be dark because it does not illumine knowledge, is reached by *avidya* or nescience, and is marked throughout by smoke and other dark things.

† As the Yogin dwells on the Path of Light in his Meditation, he will not regard the other path as the one he should resort to.—(A.)

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपस्सु चैव दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।

अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥

28. Whatever fruit of merit is declared to accrue from the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities and gifts,—beyond all this goes the Yogin on knowing this ; and he attains to the Supreme Primeval Abode.

Whatever fruit of merit is declared by the scriptures to be attainable when the Vedas are properly studied, when the sacrifices are performed in all their parts, when austerities are well practised,—beyond all this multitude of fruits rises the Yogin who rightly understands and follows the teaching imparted (by the Lord) in His answers to the seven questions, and he then attains to the highest abode of Isvara—which existed even in the beginning ;—He attains Brahman, the Cause.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे विज्ञानयोगो नाम
अष्टमोऽध्यायः ।
