

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 113 :

Chapter 8, Verses 8 to 12

Shloka # 8:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ८.८ ॥

O Arjuna! Steadily thinking with an unswerving mind, disciplined in the yoga of repeated practice, one proceeds to the supreme, divine Spirit.

Continuing his teaching Swamiji said, Sri Krishna answering the seventh question of Arjuna, from the fifth shloka onwards, is dealing with topic of remembering God at time of death. He is also dealing with Saguna Ishwara Upasanam or meditating on god with attributes. This Upasaka is a nishkama upasaka whose goal in life is spiritual and who has acquired Vairagya.

And this Nishkama upasaka can take to two different courses of life, one is practising Nishkama upasana for sometime, and thereafter switching over the sadhdana to the vedanta vicharah; or nirguna ishvara gyanam in form of sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam. By performing this upasana one obtains Jivan mukti. This topic of nishkama upasana is however further elaborated in chapter # 9.

Another path for an Upasaka is where he or she continues in Saguna Upasana. Here Upasaka feels he is not qualified enough; or an appropriate acharya was not available to him or due to his poor health etc. So, due to some obstacles he is not able to perform Nirguna Upasana. So, he continues in Saguna Upasana. Sri Krishna says, since this upasaka values Ishwara parpithi he too remembers god at time of death. He, however, after his death goes to Brahma Loka where he enters into Nirguna Ishwara Upasana. In Brahma Loka he obtains Gyanam and this gyanam is called Krama Mukti. This Krama Mukti is the

topic of the current Chapter 8.

How can a person remember god at time of death when my control over my fading senses is weak? Sri Krishna says it will become effortless if your devotion enters and permeates your subconscious mind. So, at time of death, even if conscious mind does not think, subconscious mind will certainly think of god. Swamiji repeated his favorite phrase in this context:

Watch your thoughts; they become the words;

Watch your words, they become your actions;

Watch your action, they become your habit;

Watch your habit; they become your character;

Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

So therefore an alert life from now itself is called abhyasa yoga. And with a mind which is strengthened by abhyasa yoga, and therefore with an undistracted mind, when a person remembers the Lord, he will attain krama mukthi.

Shloka # 9:

यदा यदा हि धर्मो विलीनो भवतीत्यर्जुनसुत ॥
तदा कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवा ॥
कृष्णार्जुनसङ्गोऽसौ महामुनिः समावृत्तव्रतः ॥
वाक्यं श्रुत्वा पाण्डुपुत्रो वीर्यवान् ॥८.९॥

Whosoever remembers the wise, ancient Ruler, subtler than subtle, the Upholder of all (things), imponderable of form, resplendent like the sun beyond darkness.

So here Krishna talks about the attributes of the Lord who is remembered by the Nishkama upasaka at the time of death. Each word in the shloka is an attribute describing God. Eight attributes are mentioned. So, here, it looks like the Nishkama Upasaka appears to be in touch with scriptures.

The word **Kapi** means total mind or omniscient.

The word **Puranam** means ancient one; one never created; the creator.

The word **Anusashithanam**: One who gives karma phalam to Jivas according to laws of karma, including moral laws.

The word **Anoh aniyamsam** means the one who is subtler than even the subtlest atom; which means the one who is not available for any sense organs or any sensory perception. So the one who is beyond shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa and gandha. So, from this, it is very clear, that a physical form that we attribute to the Lord is only symbolic, like a national flag; the flag is not India; but the flag represents India. Similarly, the form-full God represents the formless reality; the formless beauty; the formless immortality; the formless peace; the formless security, in fact everything that we seek in life that is symbolized as God. These are the things that we seek, peace, we seek, security we seek, fullness we seek, all these are abstract goals; and these abstract goals are concretely symbolized as the physical God; and therefore anoh aniyamsam, whose real nature is formlessness.

The word **Sarvasya Dhataram** means the one who is the substratum; the support of the entire creation; being the very cause of the creation; just as ocean is the very substratum for all the waves and bubbles, they all rise in the ocean, rest in the ocean, and resolve in the ocean. Similarly, the Lord is vishva-adharam and in vedantic context, we use the word, sadrupam; sattha; the one who is the very existence principle.

In Chandogya Upanishad, the Lord is presented as the very existence principle, which supports all. But to understand the existence principle, we require a subtle intellect and therefore we symbolize the 'sat' in a particular form; but existence has no form at all. Therefore sarvasya dhataram;

The word **Achintya rupam** means one who is incomprehensible, one, who cannot be objectified.

Mind can only study attributes. It cannot study one without attributes; just as a car cannot move in the ocean or a ship on the land; the Mind is not meant for a field without attributes.

God is the subject that objectifies everything; so he can't be objectified. But God is temporarily objectified in the physical formed god. By stepping through every attribute one reaches the attribute-less god.

For those people who cannot conceive of the attribute-less truth, the Upanishad comes down and presents the attributed God. By stepping through every attribute one reaches the attribute-less god; therefore achintyarupam

The word **Adityavarnam** means One who is like the sun. In Katho Upanishad it says one sun illuminates everything. Just as one Sun illumines everything, God is that one consciousness, because of which we are conscious of everything else; therefore adityavarnam is the one who is all-illuminating consciousness.

Tamasaha Parastat means one who is unaffected by darkness. The difference between sunlight and atma jyoti is that sunlight can't illuminate darkness. Swami Chinmayananda used to tell a story: somebody told Sun God: There is a beautiful girl, Miss Darkness; so you can get married to her. Therefore the Sun God decided he should meet Miss Darkness; so he asked, where is Miss Darkness; they told him it is on the other side of the earth; so the Sun started running after Miss Darkness. The Sun is still going round and round; that is why we have sunrise and sunset;

Sun can illumine everything, but he can never illumine darkness; that is the limitation of the Sun. Consciousness is, however, a superior light, which can illumine the Darkness as

well. Thus, think, how do you know if it is dark? Because you know it is dark. It is not affected by darkness.

Such a nishkama upasaka meditates upon god including at time of death. Swamiji said this shloka is grammatically incomplete as such we have to add that: he obtains god or krama mukti.

Shloka # 10:

॥ अथ योऽप्युपसकः प्रमत्तमनोऽपि ॥
॥ मृत्योर्दिवसोऽपि योगोऽस्मिन् ॥
॥ अथ योऽप्युपसकः प्रमत्तमनोऽपि ॥
॥ मृत्योर्दिवसोऽपि योगोऽस्मिन् ॥ 8.10 ॥

At the hour of departure whoso with steady mind, and with devotion and the power of Yoga, sustains aright the life force between the brows (and remembers), reaches the Spirit supreme, divine.

Here Sri Krishna talks of how the Nishkama Upasaka remembers god at time of death. This process is detailed in Katho Upanishad.

At time of death the pancha prana's are withdrawn to Hridayam; then they are directed to Sushumna Nadi that opens at the top of the head; then Brahmarandram launches prana through shukla gathi to take it to Brahma Loka.

For all these things, he has to prepare. Therefore, he has to bring the prana to a place between the eyebrows; which represents sushumna nadi, because it is supposed to travel through the middle of the head and directly behind the bru deshaha.

How can I withdraw prana, at time of death? Sri Krishna says if a person wants karma mukti, he must not only be a great upasaka but a great yogi as well. A yogi well versed in ashtanga yoga so that he can control prana. There are yogis who can control involuntary muscles. So Sri Krishna says,

upasaka must be a yogi to obtain karma mukti.

To obtain jivan mukti one need not be a great yogi. By strength of yoga one can withdraw prana and direct it. He also enjoys a mind, which is very steady and undistracted at time of death. This is possible through the discipline of yoga.

He must be totally devoted to Me. This devotion is powered by yoga by which he can direct the mind towards the Lord.

By such upasana he obtains lord himself. What type of Lord? One who is param purusham divyam or the highest, limitless and is of the nature of consciousness. This leads him to karma mukti.

Shloka # 11:

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That Imperishable which the Veda-knowers set forth, which ascetics, devoid of attachments, enter, and seeking which, they live a life of continence-that goal, briefly, I shall declare to you.

Here, Sri Krishna talks of glories of god.

All Vedic learners learn that the aksharam or ultimate reality is the only source of fullness, happiness etc. Committed seekers reach this ultimate reality.

The word Yataha means Sanyasi, who single-mindedly pursue spiritual goal. Sanyasi need not be an external sanyasi; it is anyone who has turned away from finite goals of life. They understand that everything is Apra Prakriti; that they are not permanent, that they cannot give emotional security. So, they have turned to the infinite. They lead a life of Brahmacharya or committed to study of scriptures.

Word Brahmacharya is Brahma, meaning scriptures and Charya meaning dwelling in them.

Sri Krishna says I shall briefly define the nature of this Ishwara. However, he does so, only in shlokas 20, 21 and 22.

Shloka # 12:

सर्वेन्द्रियनिग्रहं हृदि स्थितं मनसि च
सर्वभूतहितं कृत्वा शिरसि स्थितं वायुं
सर्वभूतहितं कृत्वा शिरसि स्थितं वायुं 8.12

Controlling all gateways of the senses, confining the mind in the heart, fixing the life breath in the crown and intent on the maintenance of Yoga.

God's nature is formless. It is difficult to conceive this formless god, hence scriptures created alambanam, a concrete symbol. And this alambanam or symbol is of two types; one is called prathima alambanam, and the other is called pratheeka alambanam; prathima alambanam is a symbol, which has got all the limbs or organs like a head, hands, legs etc. where the Lord is personified.

Thus, Sri Rama's picture is a prathima alambanam. Pratika alambanam, like a shiva linga does not have limbs. Even a flame can be a pratika alambanam even as turmeric powder too is one used to denote Ganesha.

One can choose whichever alambanam suits him or her.

Omkaara is also an alambanam. Katho Upanishad says when you visualize god in Omkaara it is Omkaara upasana. It is a well-known upasana. It is discussed in several Upanishads. So, Sri Krishna also borrows it here in shloka's # 12 and 13 respectively.

When Sri Krishna talks of Omkaara upasana, it is just one of the choices, among several upasanas. The goal here is that one should have a concrete symbol for the abstract god to meditate upon. Then, one should withdraw from one's sense organs at

time of death and bring mind to one's heart where god is visualized. Shankaracharya says: "at time of death all yama dutha's are coming and threatening me and criticizing me for wasting my life. At that time when I am frightened, I am booking you now itself; you should come into my heart and dance in my heart so that Yama duthas run away." This poem is known as Shivashankara ashtakam.

So, having withdrawn mind and having placed it in the heart, prana should be withdrawn and brought to top of head. At that time mind should be focused. This comes from long practice. This is Omkara Upasana.

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