

8

The one whose mind is not wandering after anything, made steadfast by the habitual practice of meditation, and constantly meditating on the supreme puruṣa, the effulgent, O Pārtha (Arjuna), achieves God (puruṣa).

Arjuna's seventh question was, "How can those people of steadfast mind fix their mind on God at the time of death and attain Self-realization?" This question was answered briefly in verse 5 by saying that one who leaves the body with the remembrance of God achieves God. The same question is addressed in verses 6-8.

A person lives as long as the ego is active in life. When the ego ceases to exist, the person ceases to exist for the world. Hence the word "death" means not only death of the physical body, but also means "death of the ego." By the practice of meditation and dispassion, the ego is removed from its worldly pursuits. In the absence of all egocentric desires, a yogi's mind does not look for anything in the world and becomes fixed in constant meditation on the effulgent supreme *puruṣa*. Verse 4 referred to *puruṣa* as *adhiyajña*, the all-pervading supreme God of Creation (Īśvara).

The Lord says, "Arjuna, such a yogi achieves Self-realization and merges in the supreme divine *puruṣa* (God) even while living this very life."

Śloka 9

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।
 सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ९ ॥

kaviṁ purāṇamanuśā-sitāram---aṇoraṇīyāṁsamanu-smaredyaḥ
sarvasya dhātāramacin-tyarūpam---ādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ-parastāt

कविम्	<i>kaviṁ</i>	omnipresent
पुराणम्	<i>purāṇam</i>	ancient
अनुशासितारम्	<i>anuśāsitāram</i>	the ruler
अणोः	<i>aṇoḥ</i>	than an atom
अणीयांसम्	<i>aṇīyāṁsam</i>	minuter
अनुस्मरेत्	<i>anusmaret</i>	remembers
यः	<i>yaḥ</i>	who
सर्वस्य	<i>sarvasya</i>	of all
धातारम्	<i>dhātāram</i>	supporter
अचिन्त्य	<i>acintya</i>	inconceivable (one whose form is)
रूपम्	<i>rūpam</i>	whose form
आदित्यवर्णम्	<i>ādityavarṇam</i>	effulgent like the sun
तमसः	<i>tamasaḥ</i>	from the darkness
परस्तात्	<i>parastāt</i>	beyond

VERSE 9

*What Are the Attributes of the Supreme Puruṣa
to Be Meditated Upon?*

9

One who meditates upon the omniscient, the ancient, the ruler of all, more minute than an atom, the sustainer of all, of form inconceivable, effulgent like the sun and beyond darkness (ignorance),

The previous verse said that by constantly meditating on the Self with a steadfast mind a person will keep a continuous remembrance of God. As a result, that person achieves the supreme divine *puruṣa* at the time of departure (death). This does not mean that one can only attain Self-realization at the time of the body's death.

One can attain Self-realization at any moment that the ego separates from its field of activity (the mind, intellect, senses, and their objects). This separation is also death; it is the death of the ego. When the ego dies, the yogi realizes the Self within. Self-realization is attained by constantly meditating on the Self, which is the supreme, effulgent *puruṣa*.

A meditator cannot fix the mind on the supreme, effulgent *puruṣa* unless the mind is able to conceive of some attributes or form to focus upon. Therefore, in this verse the attributes of the supreme *puruṣa* are given.

1) **omniscient** (*kavi*): The Self is the conscious principle that is the illuminator of everything and serves as the soul in individuals, illuminating the thought waves in the mind. No knowledge of anything or anywhere, is possible without the soul. The Self is one and the same in all different embodiments, and the Self is the supreme knower. Without the supreme knower, no knowledge is possible.

2) **ancient** (*purāṇa*): The Self (conscious principle) existed before the creation. It remains unchanged during the creation and will remain the same even after the annihilation of the creation. It is the eternal truth and the substratum of all.

3) **ruler of all** (*anuśāsītāram*): The supreme *puruṣa* is the indweller of all and is the conscious principle. Without the indweller (*puruṣa*), the mind, intellect, and senses cannot function; for that reason the Self is said to be the ruler of all. The whole universe functions by the power of *puruṣa*.

4) **more minute than an atom** (*aṅoranīyāṅsam*): The smallest part of an element that does not lose the element's properties

is called an atom of that element. Here it is said that the Self is the subtlest of the subtle. The subtler a thing becomes, the more pervasive it becomes. Since nothing is subtler than the Self, it is all pervasive and nothing can pervade the Self.

5) **the sustainer of all** (*sarvasya dhātāram*): The Self nourishes and sustains all. It is the conscious principle that permeates all. In every moment the entire creation is going through the cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death. However, by permeating everything, the Self is the one conscious principle that is constantly illuminating the entire creation. Without this conscious principle, the whole creation would not be sustained or nourished.

6) **of form inconceivable** (*acintya rūpam*): The Self is omniscient, the ancient, the ruler of all, the subtlest of the subtle, the sustainer of all. However, here it is said that its form is inconceivable. If the Self cannot be conceived of in any form, then how can one meditate on the Self?

The Self is inconceivable because it is infinite, while the mind, intellect and senses, which are the instruments of perception, are finite. The finite instruments of perception cannot conceive of the infinite Self. Yet while the Self remains inconceivable, it is not inexperiencable. The Self is experienced as one's own essential nature only when the mind and intellect are transcended.

7) **effulgent like the sun** (*āditya varṇam*): The self-luminous sun illumines the world by its light. Similarly, the supreme *puruṣa* is self-luminous and the divine light of knowledge that emanates from the supreme *puruṣa* continuously illumines the entire universe. This is why the supreme *puruṣa* is described here as effulgent like the sun.

8) **beyond darkness** (*tamaśaḥ parastāt*): Just as there can be no darkness at any time in the luminous sun, neither can there be any ignorance in the supreme Self, which is the embodiment of eternal and infinite knowledge.

One who always meditates upon the Self as omniscient, ancient, the ruler of all, the subtlest of the subtle, sustainer of all, of inconceivable form, self-illuminating as the sun, and beyond darkness (all traces of ignorance), achieves the supreme effulgent *puruṣa*.

Śloka 10

प्रयाणकाले मनसाचलेन भक्त्या युक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
 भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् स तं परं
 पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥ १० ॥

*prayāṅakāle manasā-calena --- bhaktyā yukto yogabale-na caiva
 bhruvormadhye prāṅamāveśya samyak---
 sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣam-upaiti divyam*

प्रयाणकाले	<i>prayāṅakāle</i>	at the time of death
मनसा	<i>manasā</i>	with the mind
अचलेन	<i>acalena</i>	unshaken
भक्त्या	<i>bhaktyā</i>	with devotion
युक्तः	<i>yuktaḥ</i>	joined
योगबलेन	<i>yogabalena</i>	by the power of yoga
च	<i>ca</i>	and
एव	<i>eva</i>	only
भ्रुवोः	<i>bhruvoḥ</i>	of the two eyebrows
मध्ये	<i>madhye</i>	in the middle
प्राणम्	<i>prāṅam</i>	prāṅa
आवेश्य	<i>āveśya</i>	having placed
सम्यक्	<i>samyak</i>	thoroughly
सः	<i>saḥ</i>	he
तम्	<i>taṁ</i>	that
परम्	<i>paraṁ</i>	supreme
पुरुषम्	<i>puruṣam</i>	puruṣa
उपैति	<i>upaiti</i>	reaches
दिव्यम्	<i>divyam</i>	resplendent

VERSE 10

*How One Achieves Self-Realization at the Time of Death by
Meditating on the Supreme Puruṣa With Attributes*

10

at the time of death, with an unshaken mind full of devotion, by the power of yoga, fixing the life breath in the space between the two eyebrows, he reaches that supreme divine puruṣa.

In verse 5 the Lord answered Arjuna's last question by saying that the yogi who departs from the body with a constant remembrance of God achieves Self-realization. Then in verse 6 Lord Kṛṣṇa said that the constant remembrance of any object when one leaves the body will cause that person to go to that same object. In verse 7 the Lord said, "For this reason, keeping your mind and intellect fixed on Me, you should remember Me all the time." In verse 8 the Lord said that by the regular practice of meditation on the supreme divine *puruṣa* one is able to keep remembrance of God at the time of leaving the body, and consequently one achieves Self-realization.

The supreme divine *puruṣa* (God) is formless and unmanifest; therefore, how can one meditate on this *puruṣa*? In verse 9 the Lord gave eight attributes of the supreme *puruṣa* on which a yogi can contemplate. Now in this verse the Lord gives the method of concentration through which a yogi achieves Self-realization at the time of death.

This verse gives three qualifications for fixing the mind on contemplation of God: 1) **unshaken mind** (*manasācalena*), 2) **devotion** (*bhakti*), and 3) **power of yoga** (*yoga balam*).

1) unshaken mind (*manasācalena*): The mind by nature is *rajasic* and, due to egocentric desires, moves constantly from one thought to another. The ego, which is the experiencer of desires, identifies with the mind-body complex as "I," "me," and "mine," which keeps the mind in a wavering state. As long as this identification with the mind, body, and intellect is not stopped by conscious effort in meditation, the mind cannot attain an unshaken state.

2) devotion (*bhakti*): This means love for God that shines by itself, free from all selfish desires and attachments.

3) power of yoga (*yoga balam*): By the regular practice of meditation on the Self, when all agitation in the mind ceases, a yogi develops an inner strength that makes it possible to meditate for a long period of time without any interruption.

A yogi with unshaken mind, devotion, and the power of

yoga brings all five life forces (*prāṇas*) together and holds them in the space between the two eyebrows. This stops their respective functions in the body and creates a deep meditative state. In that deep state of meditation the mind becomes perfectly silent and tranquil, and the ego removes itself from its false identification with the mind-body complex. This is called the death of the ego. In that state the ego merges into its real nature, the Self.

at the time of death (*prayānakāle*) - This does not mean the actual moment of death. It means the moment the ego separates from its operation through the mind, intellect, and senses. At that time all restlessness of the mind, and the life force, stops. Then by the “power of yoga,” which is the control of life force (*prāṇāyāma*), a meditator is able to fix all five *prāṇas* between the center of the two eyebrows and the mind is completely absorbed in the object of meditation, which is the supreme divine *puruṣa* (God).

The *prāṇas* are classified under five main life forces according to their manifestations:

- 1) *prāṇa* – the faculty of sense perception
- 2) *apāna* – the excretory system
- 3) *samāna* – the digestive system
- 4) *vyāna* – the circulatory system
- 5) *udāna* – the human capacity to see beyond our present world of limited knowledge and live within the field of greater concepts.

The yogi who meditates according to the method explained above reaches that supreme divine *puruṣa*.

Śloka 11

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागाः
 यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण
 प्रवक्ष्ये ॥ ११ ॥

yadakṣaram vedavidō - vadanti --- viśanti yadyatayo vī-tarāgāḥ
yadicchantō brahmacaryam - caranti ---
tatte padam saṅgrahēṇa - pravakṣye

यत्	<i>yat</i>	which
अक्षरम्	<i>akṣaram</i>	imperishable
वेदविदः	<i>vedavidāḥ</i>	the Veda-knowers
वदन्ति	<i>vadanti</i>	declare
विशन्ति	<i>viśanti</i>	enter
यत्	<i>yat</i>	which
यतयः	<i>yatayaḥ</i>	the self-controlled (sages)
वीतरागाः	<i>vītarāgāḥ</i>	freed from attachment
यत्	<i>yat</i>	which
इच्छन्तः	<i>icchantāḥ</i>	desiring
ब्रह्मचर्यम्	<i>brahmacaryam</i>	celibacy
चरन्ति	<i>caranti</i>	practice
तत्	<i>tat</i>	that
ते	<i>te</i>	to thee
यदम्	<i>yadam</i>	goal
संग्रहेण	<i>saṅgrahēṇa</i>	in brief
प्रवक्ष्ये	<i>pravakṣye</i>	(I) will declare

VERSE 11

Meditation on the Supreme, Imperishable, Absolute, Formless Brahma

11

I shall tell you in brief that goal, which is declared imperishable by the knowers of the Veda; that by which the self-controlled who are free from passion enter; and desiring that, brahmacārya is practiced.

In verses 8-10 the Lord explained meditation on the attributes of *adhiyajña*, or the formless, transcendent, unmanifest aspect of God with attributes. These verses also explained how the yogi should meditate, and what the yogi attains by that meditation.

Verses 11-13 give an introduction to the supreme, imperishable, absolute, formless Brahma. The Lord also describes the final goal of a yogi and explains the means of achieving that goal.

Verse 3 said Brahma is the imperishable and the supreme. Now this verse says that the knowers of the **Vedas**, in their realization, knew of the indestructible, unchanging, and absolute nature of Brahma. The term *veda* means that which imparts divine knowledge.

Who is qualified for realization of that supreme Brahma? Only those who are self-controlled and have a strong dispassion for all egocentric desires are qualified. Such recluses whose only aim is to realize God practice *brahmacārya*.

Brahmacārya means to walk the path leading to Brahma. The path leading to Brahma is practiced by leading a disciplined life in order to control all sensual desires, thus conserving the refined life force energy.

In the **Kaṭha Upaniṣad (I:11-15)** it is said, "I shall briefly tell you about the goal which all the **Vedas** proclaim, which all austerities aim at, and which humans desire when they lead the life of *brahmacārya*. Om is the word for that state."

Śloka 12

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्धन्याधायान्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

sarvadvārāṇi saṁyamya mano hṛdi nirudhya ca
mūrdhnyādhāyātmanah prāṇam---āsthito yogadhāraṇām

सर्व	<i>sarva</i>	all
द्वाराणि	<i>dvārāṇi</i>	gates
संयम्य	<i>saṁyamya</i>	having controlled
मनः	<i>manaḥ</i>	mind
हृदि	<i>hṛdi</i>	in the heart
निरुध्य	<i>nirudhya</i>	having confined
च	<i>ca</i>	and
मूर्धनि	<i>mūrdhni</i>	in the head
आधाय	<i>ādhāya</i>	having placed
आत्मनः	<i>ātmanah</i>	of the self
प्राणम्	<i>prāṇam</i>	breath
आस्थितः	<i>āsthitaḥ</i>	established (in)
योगधारणाम्	<i>yogadhāraṇām</i>	practice of concentration

Śloka 13

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।

यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ १३ ॥

omityekākṣaram brahma vyāharanmāmanusmaran
yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham sa yāti paramām gatim

ओम्	<i>om</i>	Om
इति	<i>iti</i>	thus
एकाक्षरम्	<i>ekākṣaram</i>	one-syllabled
ब्रह्म	<i>brahma</i>	Brahma
व्याहरन्	<i>vyāharan</i>	uttering
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
अनुस्मरन्	<i>anusmaran</i>	remembering
यः	<i>yaḥ</i>	who
प्रयाति	<i>prayāti</i>	departs
त्यजन्	<i>tyajan</i>	leaving
देहम्	<i>deham</i>	the body
सः	<i>saḥ</i>	he
याति	<i>yāti</i>	attains
परमाम्	<i>paramām</i>	supreme
गतिम्	<i>gatim</i>	goal

VERSES 12-13

Means and Result of Meditation on the Supreme Brahma

12

Having closed all gates (of the senses) and firmly holding the mind in the heart, having fixed the life breath in the head, engaged in the practice of concentration,

13

Uttering the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahma, and remembering Me; one who departs, leaving the body, attains the supreme goal.

Verse 12 gives the three most important disciplines necessary for the practice of concentration. By properly observing these three disciplines one can develop unobstructed concentration.

1) **Having closed all gates** - In the practice of concentration a yogi controls the five gates that are the sense organs in the gross body (ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose). All of these sense functions have apertures (organs) through which external stimuli reach the mind and cause mental agitation. Not only does the mind receive outer stimuli through these five sense organs, it also reaches out to experience outer objects, which disturbs the mind. These five sense organs are blocked by the practice of dispassion and discrimination. In yogic terms this practice is called *pratyāhāra*.

2) **firmly holding the mind in the heart** - Even though a yogi blocks the sense organs so that the mind will not be agitated by external stimuli nor permitted to reach out through the sense organs to the world, still the yogi's mind can get stimulated and agitated by the memory of past experiences, which cause disturbance in concentration. To eliminate this internal disturbance caused by the memory of past experience, a yogi should fix the mind firmly in the heart. The part of the mind that deals with the experience of emotions and feelings is called *hṛdaya* (heart). This means that all worldly emotions, feelings, and thoughts which, when experienced, agitate the mind, should be replaced by the divine: divine feelings, positive thoughts, and divine emotions.

3) **having fixed the life breath in the head** - The life breath ascends to the head in concentration; the mind follows the life breath (*prāṇa*) and also becomes fixed in the head. It was already explained in verse 10 that "A yogi with unshaken mind, devotion,

and the power of yoga brings all five life forces (*prāṇas*) together, holds them in the space between the two eyebrows and stops their respective functions in the body." The stopping of the movement of all life breath stops all the mental and physical activities, and the mind of the yogi flows toward contemplation of the Self. This is the practice of *dhāraṇā* (concentration). When the mind is kept occupied in concentration on the Self, it is called *yoga dhāraṇām*.

Verse 13 continues:

4) Uttering the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahma -

After fulfilling the three disciplines of concentration described in verse 12, the yogi is capable of uttering the one syllable Om, which indicates Brahma, the indestructible supreme reality. Uttering the one syllable Om does not mean chanting mentally or physically. It means the sound of Om revolves in the mind at all times.

one who departs, leaving the body - By uttering Om with remembrance of the supreme when leaving the body, one attains the supreme goal. This means the yogi merges in the supreme.

Leaving the body means death. When the mind, body, intellect, and senses do not function, and the life energy ceases to exist in the body, that is death. However, a person is only alive in the outer world because of the ego. When, as a result of observing the three disciplines, the mind, intellect, and senses all merge in meditation, then the ego severs its connection with them and resides in its own transcendental nature. That is death of the ego, a true death after which one is never reborn. A yogi whose ego is removed is dead to the outer world. Such a yogi has attained the supreme goal.

Yoga Sutra I: 23 says, "*Īśvara praṇidhāna* is one of the methods of attaining *asamprajñāta samādhi* (superconsciousness beyond knowledge)." **Yoga Sutras I: 27-28** say, "Om is the word denoting God. Constant repetition of Om and meditation on its meaning is surrender to God (*Īśvara praṇidhāna*)."

Śloka 14

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

*ananyacetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nityayuktasya yoginaḥ*

अनन्यचेताः	<i>ananyacetāḥ</i>	with the mind not thinking of any other object
सततम्	<i>satatam</i>	constantly
यः	<i>yaḥ</i>	who
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
स्मरति	<i>smarati</i>	remembers
नित्यशः	<i>nityaśaḥ</i>	daily (for a long time)
तस्य	<i>tasya</i>	of him
अहम्	<i>aham</i>	I
सुलभः	<i>sulabhaḥ</i>	easily attainable
पार्थ	<i>pārtha</i>	O Pārtha (Arjuna)
नित्ययुक्तस्य	<i>nityayuktasya</i>	ever steadfast
योगिनः	<i>yoginaḥ</i>	of yogi