

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 34: Chapter 4, Verses 05-09

(December 26 –January 1, 2019)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

śhrī bhagavān uvācha

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

*bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava chārjuna
tānyaham veda sarvāṇi na tvaṁ vettha parantapa*

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥ ४-५ ॥

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।

*ajo 'pi sannavyayātmā bhūtānām īshvaro 'pi san
prakṛitiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya sambhavāmyātma-
māyayā*

प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ ४-६ ॥

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam
sṛjāmyaham*

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ ४-७ ॥

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśhāya cha duṣhkṛitām
dharma-sansthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge
yuge*

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ ४-८ ॥

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।

*janma karma cha me divyam evaṁ yo vetti
tattvataḥ*

त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ ४-९ ॥ *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

TRANSLATION

- (05)** The Supreme Lord said: Both you and I have had many births, O Arjun. You have forgotten them, while I remember them all, O Parantapa.
- (06)** Although I am unborn, the Lord of all living entities, and have an imperishable nature, yet I appear in this world by virtue of *Yogmaya*, my divine power.
- (07)** Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjun, at that time I manifest myself on earth.
- (08)** To protect the righteous, to annihilate the wicked, and to reestablish the principles of dharma I appear on this earth, age after age.
- (09)** Those who understand the divine nature of my birth and activities, O Arjun, upon leaving the body, do not have to take birth again, but come to my eternal abode.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1T_a7Zhdu8K26BBCzprTNRKUriYkHfOo9

Commentary:

Verse 05:

Lord Krishna's declaration that "many births have past for you and for Me" is a definite affirmation of the reality of reincarnation for Arjuna and confirmation of the *avatars* or incarnations of the Supreme Lord Krishna. What He is confirming is that His present incarnation is as real as Arjuna's present life reincarnation and that the ones from the past are real as well, but that there is a fundamental difference between them. Lord Krishna is aware of them all as well as of other living beings because His knowledge is complete and omniscient, while Arjuna's knowledge is veiled and limited. The individual soul and the Supreme Soul, God, have many similarities—both are *sat-chit-ānand* (eternal, conscious, and blissful). However, there are also many differences. God is all-pervading, while the soul only pervades the body it inhabits; God is all-powerful, while the soul does not even have the power to liberate itself from Maya without God's grace; God is the creator of the laws of nature, while the soul is subject to these laws; God is the upholder of the entire creation, while the soul is upheld by him; God is all-knowing, while the soul does not have complete knowledge even in one subject.

Verse 06:

Since Lord Krishna has confirmed that he remembers all of His previous births, one may wonder how can He, who is without beginning and end, and who is imperishable, have repeated births. How can the Supreme Lord of all, who is transcendent to all dualities, such as virtue and sin, be embodied like an individual *atma* or soul. Lord Krishna responds that he comes into being perfectly with all powers such a omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence by *yogamaya* which is His divine internal potency. It may be further questioned how can Lord Krishna who does not have even

a subtle body composed of the 16 material parts be born at all? To assuage these doubts Lord Krishna reveals that from *prakriti* or material nature which is completely under His control He accepts the nature of *sattva* or pure goodness and incarnates Himself in His original form of *sat-chit-ananda* or truth-conscience-bliss. The all-powerful God has both aspects to his divine personality—the personal form and the formless aspect. This is consistent with the Bṛihadāraṇyak Upaniṣhad, which states:

dve vāva brahmaṇo rūpe mūrtam chaiva amūrtam cha (2.3.1)[v3]

“God appears in both ways—as the formless *Nirguna Brahman* and as the personal God *Saguna Brahman*.” They are both dimensions of His personality.

Verse 07:

No fixed time schedule exists for Lord Krishna to manifest Himself in an *avatar* form. He declares it starting with the phrase *yada yada*, meaning whenever or wherever. This signifies that anytime or anyplace that *dharma* or righteousness becomes degraded and *adharma* or unrighteousness becomes dominant, He becomes manifest as any one of His many forms of incarnations or *avatars*. All descensions of God to earth are replete with divine powers; they are all perfect and complete. However, in each descension, God manifests His powers based on the objectives He wishes to accomplish during that specific descension.

Verse 08:

For what purpose does Lord Krishna manifest Himself? Anticipating such a question Lord Krishna responds that the purpose is for the protection of the righteous and pious individuals and for the annihilation of the sinful and evil, as well as to re-establish and uphold the tenets and precepts of *dharma*. The biggest dharma that the soul can engage in is devotion to God. That is what God strengthens by taking an *Avatār*. When God descends in the world, He reveals his divine forms, names, virtues, pastimes, abodes, and associates. This provides the souls with an easy basis for devotion. Since the mind needs a form to focus upon and to connect with, the formless aspect of God is very difficult to worship. On the other hand, devotion to the personal form of God is easy for people to comprehend, simple to perform, and sweet to engage in.

Verse 09:

Whosoever is able to verily realize that the divine, spiritual and uniquely phenomenal nature of the Supreme Lord Krishna's incarnations or *avatars* as well as His transcendental pastimes are exclusively manifested for the benefit of all those who take refuge in Him, such a person is not subject to rebirth once he leaves his present body, instead attains the eternal spiritual abode with the Supreme Lord. Put more succinctly, such a person possessing accurate discriminative knowledge regarding Lord Krishna's incarnations and divine pastimes becomes free from all sins which stand in the way of coming to Him. Such a person in his present birth will attain Him by placing implicit reliance and full faith in Him by making Him the be all and end all of his life. The word *divyam* in this verse, meaning divine, confirms that Lord Krishna's appearance is not the same as the mandatory births of the conditioned, embodied souls as a consequence to their past life activities from interaction with *prakriti* or material nature.