

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 71: Chapter 8, Verses 14-18

(September 11 –September 17, 2019)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।

*ananya-chetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśhaḥ
tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ*

तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ ८-१४ ॥

*mām upetya punar janma duḥkhālayam
aśhāśhvataṁ*

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

*nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ sansiddhiṁ paramām
gatāḥ*

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ ८-१५ ॥

*ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate*

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।

मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ ८-१६ ॥

*sahasra-yuga-paryantam ahar yad brahmaṇo
viduḥ*

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद् ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।

रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ ८-१७ ॥

rātriṁ yuga-sahasrāntām te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ

अव्यक्ताद् व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।

*avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavantyahar-
āgame*

रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ ८-१८ ॥

rātryāgame praliyante tatraivāvyakta-sanjñake

TRANSLATION

- (14) O Parth, for those yogis who always think of Me with exclusive devotion, I am easily attainable because of their constant absorption in Me.**
- (15) Having attained Me, the great souls are no more subject to rebirth in this world, which is transient and full of misery, because they have attained the highest perfection.**
- (16) In all the worlds of this material creation, up to the highest abode of Brahma, you will be subject to rebirth, O Arjun. But on attaining My Abode, O son of Kunti, there is no further rebirth.**
- (17) One day of Brahma (*kalpa*) lasts a thousand cycles of the four ages (*mahā yuga*) and his night also extends for the same span of time. The wise who know this understand the reality about day and night.**
- (18) At the advent of Brahma's day, all living beings emanate from the unmanifest source. And at the fall of his night, all embodied beings again merge into their unmanifest source.**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1HYJTtfAUTRae6nfKgmaYo1ebJYqvOENJ>

Chapter 8

Verse 14:

In this verse, Lord Krishna talks about how easily He is attained by those **Yogis who always think of Him with exclusive devotion**. In order to stress this point, the Lord uses four words: (1) *Ananya Chetah*, meaning “with no other mind”, (2) *Satatam*, meaning “at all times” or “continuously”, (3) *Smarati*, meaning “remembering”, and (4) *Nityashah*, meaning “always”. This undivided attention can be to the *rupa* or form, *guna* or qualities, *lilas* or divine pastimes etc. of the Lord, but these attributes are nonetheless beyond the reach and scope of non-devotees. The Supreme Lord is *sulabhah* or easy to achieve. This means Lord Krishna is happily available and accessible to all those who are devoted to Him in love. This verse also infers that He is not easily accessible to those who are not His devotee even if they have dedicated their lives to performing different *yoga* practices. The reason for this being is that Lord Krishna's transcendental nature is such that He can only be accessed by exclusive devotion and by no other way. Various Vedic scriptures confirm that only by *bhakti* or loving devotion can the Supreme Lord be revealed. **The *Katha Upanisad* I.II.VII states: The Supreme Lord is He, who is not known without loving devotion.** The *Katha Upanisad* I.II.XXIII states: The Supreme Lord can neither be attained by instruction nor by intellect. He is attained only by one whom He has chosen and only to such a person does He reveal Himself. So, it is an absolute truth that only *bhakti* can attract Him and only *bhakti* can reveal Him.

Verse 15:

In this verse, Lord Krishna implies the distinction of worshiping Him over demigods. Just as Lord Krishna is easily attainable by His exclusive devotees, other gods must be easily attainable to their votaries as well and grant them all their desired objects. If this is the case, what is the difference between Lord Krishna's devotees and the votaries of any other god? Lord Krishna answers this with the words *mam upetya* meaning having attained Him. Having attained the Supreme Lord what comes of it? Those who attain Lord Krishna do not return to the impermanent material existence and temporary condition of *samsara* the perpetual cycle of birth and death the abode of misery and suffering. The *mahatmas* or great souls are not subjected to rebirth ever again in the material existence for they have attained *paramam samsiddhim*, the highest perfection. Because of their extraordinary discriminating powers, such great, noble souls have correctly come to the ultimate conclusion that Lord Krishna is the ultimate goal for all living entities. Always thinking of Him, consciously performing all actions in propitiation to Him, having Him exclusively as their nearest and dearest, one will be qualified to join Him in His *lilas* or divine pastimes in loving devotion. Attaining this, one automatically achieves *moksha* or liberation and will be released from the excruciating pangs of material existence that is subject to disease, old age and endless cycles of birth and death. No other gods or demigods can bequeath liberation from material existence except Lord Krishna and no other gods or demigods can sanction promotion to the eternal spiritual worlds except the Supreme Lord Krishna.

Verse 16:

All the worlds throughout material creation from the topmost *Brahmaloka* down to the lowest *Paataal loka* are appointed realms where beings may taste, as much as they are able to, material happiness in the form of wealth, power, dominion, etc. But these material realms are impermanent and perishable. In as much as the very realms, where such activities of enjoyment are unstable and transitory, it can be understood that the happiness and pleasures experienced there are fleeting and temporary and eventually must come to an end. This is inevitable. Therefore, those who are not endowed with *bhakti* or loving devotion to the Supreme Lord Krishna, even if they manage to reach the heavenly worlds of the highest material planet of *Brahmaloka*, they are still reborn into the world of mortals, because they have yet to reap the reactions of their various actions (*Karma*) of their previous lives. To the contrary, those who perform *bhakti* or loving devotion to Lord Krishna, who is omniscient and omnipotent and from whom the complete cosmic manifestation of creation and dissolution emanate, there is no rebirth in the material world. Once His devotees attain Lord Krishna, who is the most loving, compassionate and merciful, they directly attain His eternal spiritual worlds by His grace. They are awarded *moksha* or liberation for ever and will never again be subjected to *samsara*.

Verse 17:

Lord Krishna now gives the reason why people who reach the heavenly worlds of Brahma and others are still subject to *samsara* or the perpetual cycle of birth and death. He says that it is because of the periodic time factors these planets are regulated by. The Vedic scriptures reveal that Brahma's day is comprised of 1000 *Maha Yugas*, and Brahma's night is of equal duration of another 1000 *Maha Yugas*. Each *Maha Yuga* is equivalent to the summation of duration of the four *Yugas*, including *Satya Yuga* consisting of 1,728,000 years, *Treta Yuga* consisting of 1,296,000 years, *Dvarapa Yuga* consisting of 864,000 years and *Kali Yuga* consisting of 432,000 years, all totaling 4,320,000 years. When multiplied

by 2000, which is Brahma's day and night together, called one *Kalpa*, it equals 8 billion 640 million human years. One year of Brahma is 360 of these *kalpas*, which equals 26 trillion, 438 billion and 400 million years on Earth. Brahma lives 100 of these years, which makes Brahma's life equal to 311 trillion 40 billion years. Therefore, the ones who base their knowledge of day and night by the mere calculations of solar movements, are limited in their knowledge and consciousness. The ones who understand this cosmic time factor have the true knowledge of day and night. So, all the material worlds are always temporary due to being periodically regulated by the above time factor. The ones who reach these worlds are subject to these periodic regulations and thus take rebirth in the worlds of mortals. This is the case in the highest material world of *Brahma loka* all the way down to the lower worlds such as *Paataal loka*. By contrast, there is no such time factor in the spiritual world of the Supreme Lord nor there is any rebirth.

Verse 18:

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains the creation and dissolution of all the material worlds like Earth, the galaxy, our solar system, and all the universes up through the heavenly planets to the topmost planet of *Maharloka*. He says that they are all created (manifest) and absorbed back into the *avyakta* (unmanifest), as regulated by Brahma's day and night, each comprised of 4 billion 320 million years. The *manifest* happens at the dawning of Brahma's day when he awakes. This subtle body is one of the transformations of *prakriti* or the material substratum pervading physical existence. At the closing of Brahma's day and the beginning of his night, the *unmanifest* occurs, when all beings who emanated from his subtle body are withdrawn again into his subtle body to repose in dormancy until his awakening again after 4 billion 320 million years. This is called *naimittik pralaya* (partial dissolution). At the end of Brahma's life of 100 years, the entire universe is dissolved. At this time, the entire material creation winds up. This is called *prākṛit pralaya*, or *mahāpralaya* (great dissolution).