



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 8: Akśara-Brahma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/booDuY6_pQ4

Transcending the Cycles of Time and Rebirth: The Supreme Path of Departure and Liberation

The **Eighth** chapter of Bhagavad-Gītā is the **Akśara-Brahma-Yoga: The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahman**.

The session commenced with deep prajwalan, the customary lighting of the lamp, prayers to the Supreme, and salutations to all the Gurus.

**Vasudeva Sutam Devam, Kansa Chāṇūra Mardanam,
Devakī Parama Ānandam, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum.**

**Yogeśam Saccidānandam, Vāsudeva Rājapriyam,
Dharma Saṁsthāpakam Vīram, Kṛṣṇo Vande Jagadgurum.**

Śrī Guru Caraṇa Kamalabhyo Namaḥ.

By the supremely auspicious grace of Bhagavān, on this sacred day of **Yoginī Ekādaśī**, seekers have gathered to contemplate the divine words of the **Bhagavad Gītā**. What could be more fitting than to reflect upon **Yoga** on the day that itself bears the name of **Yoginī**? It is indeed an outpouring of divine compassion that one is drawn to read, recite, and reflect on the Gītā.

Some have begun to read the verses, others to chant them with correct pronunciation. A few are gradually understanding the meanings, while others are striving to internalize its timeless principles. Some have even begun memorizing the verses, or applying its core teachings to their daily life. All of this is unfolding solely due to the boundless *kṛpā* of Bhagavān.

It remains a mystery—perhaps it is the fruit of some *puṇya* performed in this very life, or maybe blessings from a past birth. It may even be the result of our ancestors' noble deeds (*sukṛta*), or the compassionate glance of a saint in some previous lifetime—that we have been chosen to study the

Bhagavad Gītā.

Currently, the contemplation is on **Adhyāya 8 - Akṣara-Brahma Yoga**—a most profound and distinctive chapter. Here, Bhagavān speaks of His divine form and answers the seven questions raised by Arjuna. Until the previous session, the reflection had reached up to **shloka 8.16**. Let the journey resume from there:

**ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate** (8.16)

Bhagavān declares that from **Bhūloka** to **Brahmaloka**, all realms are subject to return. Even the highest **loka**—**Brahmaloka**, also known as **Satyalo**ka, the abode of Brahmā—falls within the cycle of birth and rebirth (**punar-āvṛtti**).

In the cosmic scheme, there are **14 principal realms (bhuvanas)**:

Seven higher worlds:

- 1. **Bhūloka** (Earth - where we dwell)
- 2. **Bhuvanloka** (realm of space/intermediate beings)
- 3. **Svarga-loka** (realm of Indra and celestial pleasures)
- 4. **Maharloka** (abode of Bhṛgu and other sages)
- 5. **Janaloka**
- 6. **Tapoloka** (home of the great ascetics)
- 7. **Satyalo**ka or **Brahmaloka** (highest realm - Brahmā's abode)

Seven lower worlds:

- 1. **Atala**
- 2. **Vitala**
- 3. **Sutala**
- 4. **Talātala**
- 5. **Mahātala**
- 6. **Rasātala**
- 7. **Pātāla**

And **Bhūloka** stands in the center.

While these realms abound in unparalleled pleasures and vast spans of life, Bhagavān emphatically states that **none of them is eternal**. Even if one rises to **Svarga-loka**, to dwell with celestial beings and enjoy divine pleasures, the journey eventually turns downward. From **Maharloka** to **Janaloka**, **Tapoloka**, and finally **Satyalo**ka, the seeker may ascend, but at the end of the accumulated merit (*puṇya*), the soul must return.

This cycle is unavoidable because none of these *lokas* are beyond the domain of *karma*. One must return to Earth and take up action again.

Each *yoni* (embodied state) is subject to these cosmic laws. Whether it be the *yoni* of a human, an animal, or even that of a *deva* (celestial being) or *Brahmā* himself, all fall within the realm of cause and effect—*karma*.

Yet there is **one exception**—the **human birth** (*manuṣya yoni*). Only in this *yoni* does one possess

the freedom to perform karma and, more importantly, to transcend it through **jñāna**, **bhakti**, and **niṣkāma karma**.

As Goswāmī Tulsīdās writes:

बड़े भाग मानुष तन पावा। सुर दुर्लभ सब ग्रंथन्दि गावा।

With great fortune, the human body is attained—rare even for the celestials, declare all scriptures.

Even celestial beings, after experiencing pleasures for long durations, yearn to return to **bhūloka** in human form—to perform actions that lead to **Bhagavat-prāpti** (attainment of Bhagavān). For in their *yonis*, there is **no earning of merit or demerit**.

If a dog bites someone, it accrues no *pāpa* (sin); if a celestial bestows a boon, there is no *puṇya* earned. These experiences are part of their assigned roles—they belong to the realm of *bhoga* (enjoyment), not *karma*.

But a human being, through conscious choices and actions, can rise above this entire structure. When a human helps someone, merit is earned. When one harms another, demerit follows. And when one acts selflessly, without attachment or desire, seeking only to please Bhagavān, such a soul becomes eligible for ultimate liberation.

Hence, Bhagavān urges Arjuna to listen carefully—**ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartinaḥ**—every realm, even up to **Brahmaloka**, is temporary and subject to return. One may go there, live there, enjoy—but eventually, one must come back.

māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate

But, O Kaunteya, having reached Me, there is no rebirth.

This is the only **permanent state**—to attain Bhagavān Himself. When a drop merges into the ocean, it loses all individual identity. So too, when the **jīvātmā** attains Bhagavān's **parama-dhāma**, it merges into the infinite, with no remaining trace of separate identity, action, or karma.

Thus, the wise do not strive for celestial pleasures, nor for **pitṛ-loka**, nor even **Brahmaloka**. The spiritually awakened aspire only for that supreme destination from where there is **no return**.

Ordinary beings may consider **Brahmaloka** as the highest goal. But those graced by **Bhagavad-anugraha**, touched by the vision of the Gītā, and blessed by saints and sages, begin to develop the discrimination (*viveka*) to aim higher—to that realm where **punar janma na vidyate**.

Let the seeker strive for this destination.

8.17

**sahasrayugaparyantam, aharyadbrahmaṇo viduḥ,
rātriṃ(m) yugasahasrāntāṃ(n), te'horātravido janāḥ. 8.17**

Those Yogis, who know from realization Brahma's day as covering a thousand Mahayugas, and so his night as extending to another thousand Mahayugas, know the reality about Time.

Bhagavān now reveals the unimaginable vastness of time, describing the cosmic scale through which creation and dissolution unfold. Those who are truly wise and spiritually mature – the *yoginaḥ* –

understand the deeper essence of time (*kāla-tattva*).

According to this verse, **one day of Brahmā** is equivalent to **one thousand catur-yugas**, and so is his night. Those who grasp this reality are called **ahorātra-vidah** – the knowers of cosmic day and night.

The measure of time in the Indic tradition is astoundingly subtle and sophisticated, far beyond what modern science has yet achieved. The ancient sages had already conceived of time units so refined that they remain beyond the reach of modern instruments.

The smallest unit begins with the **paramāṇu** – the atomic unit. Three **aṇus** make one **triśreṇu**. These are not only material particles, but also embodiments of energy and time. One can measure **paramāṇu** in terms of time, too. It is matter, energy, and time all at once.

Beyond this comes a unit called "**tṛṛuti**", which is the time taken by a sunray to cross a **triśreṇu**. Ten **tṛṛutis** make a **prāṇa**, ten **prāṇas** make a **bheda**, and so on. Further up the scale:

- **10 prāṇas = 1 veda**
- **3 vedas = 1 lava**
- **3 lavas = 1 nimeṣa (blink of an eye)**
- **3 nimeṣas = 1 kṣaṇa**
- **5 kṣaṇas = 1 kāṣṭhā**
- **15 kāṣṭhās = 1 daṇḍa**
- **2 daṇḍas = 1 muhūrta (48 minutes)**

Thus, a full day is made up of **30 muhūrtas**, accounting for **24 hours**.

15 days make up one **pakṣa** – the waxing or waning phase of the moon. Two **pakṣas** form one **māsa** (month). Now comes a striking insight: **one day of the pitṛ-s (ancestral beings)** is equal to **one month of humans**. While mortals pass through 30 days, the *pitṛ-s* experience a single day. Time flows at different speeds for different beings.

Two months form a **ṛtu** (season), and three *ṛtus* make one **ayana**. The year is divided into **uttarāyaṇa** (northern solstice) and **dakṣiṇāyaṇa** (southern solstice).

Thus, **one human year** equals **one day and night of the devas**. Their one day is our six months; their night is our next six. Hence, traditions speak of "*devatā-so gaye*" or "*devatā-jāg gaye*" – they are not literally asleep but experiencing night in cosmic terms.

A full life span of **100 human years** is but one day for the *devas*. Extending further, **Brahmā** too has a life span of **100 divine years**. But his time scale is on an entirely different magnitude:

Each *catur-yuga* (*mahāyuga*) consists of:

- **Satya Yuga: 1,728,000 years**
- **Tretā Yuga: 1,296,000 years**
- **Dvāpara Yuga: 864,000 years**
- **Kali Yuga: 432,000 years**

Totaling **4,320,000 human years = 1 mahāyuga**

One day of Brahmā = 1000 such mahāyugas = 4.32 billion human years

Now consider: 14 *manvantaras* make one day of Brahmā. Each *manvantara* spans 71 *mahāyugas*. Currently, the cosmos is in the **Vaivasvata Manvantara**, the seventh of the fourteen. Even this *manvantara* is only partially completed.

When 100 such divine years (i.e., 36,000 Brahmā days) pass, **Brahmā's lifespan ends**. His age equals approximately:

31 trillion 10 billion 40 crore human years

(That is 1 followed by 15 zeroes.)

And yet, even **Brahmā is not eternal**. After the completion of his lifespan, he too must dissolve along with his worlds.

Bhagavān declares: those who understand these cosmic time cycles, who reflect on the profound reality of *kāla-tattva*, are indeed the *yoginah*. They are the seers of truth, the wise who no longer chase temporary gains but aim only for the eternal *parama-dhāma*.

8.18

**avyaktādvyaḥ(s) sarvāḥ(ph), prabhavantyāharāgame,
rātryāgame pralīyante, tatraivāvyaktasañjñake. 8.18**

All embodied beings emanate from the Unmanifest (i.e., Brahma's subtle body) at the coming of the cosmic day; at the cosmic nightfall they merge into the same subtle body of Brahma, known as the Unmanifest.

All beings arise from the unmanifest (*avyakta*) at the dawn of Brahmā's day (*āhar-āgame*), and dissolve back into the same unmanifest reality at the onset of his night (*rātryāgame*). This *avyakta* is the subtle, unmanifest form of Brahmā himself – the cosmic causal body.

When Brahmā's day begins, the entire universe manifests from the latent potential. And when his night falls, the creation retracts, merging again into the imperceptible, subtle substratum. This cycle is timeless and perpetual.

8.19

**bhūtagrāmaḥ(s) sa evāyaṃ(m), bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate,
rātryāgame'vaśaḥ(ph) pārtha, prabhavatyāharāgame. 8.19**

Arjuna, this multitude of beings, being born again and again, is dissolved under compulsion of its nature at the coming of the cosmic night and rises again at the commencement of cosmic day.

This same *bhūtagrāma* – the collective of living beings – keeps manifesting and dissolving again and again. Bound by *prakṛti*, they appear at the dawn of the day, and at night, dissolve powerlessly.

O Pārtha, this entire cycle continues – day after day, night after night – under the influence of time and nature. No being has control over this process. This grand rhythm of cosmic emergence and dissolution is but a divine unfolding of *kāla* and *māyā*.

Bhagavān subtly conveys here: while the ordinary mind sees only the surface of creation, the discerning *yogī* perceives the profound dance of unmanifest and manifest, and yearns not for the

fleeting, but for the eternal essence.

8.20

parastasmāttu bhāvo'nyo-'vyakto'vyaktātsanātanah, yaḥ(s) sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu, naśyatsu na vinaśyati. 8.20

Far beyond even this unmanifest, there is yet another unmanifest Existence, that Supreme Divine Person, who does not perish even though all beings perish.

There exists yet another dimension — beyond the unmanifest, subtler than the subtlest. This eternal, imperishable reality is known as the **sanātana avyakt bhāva**. It transcends all that is manifest and unmanifest, and even when all beings perish, it alone remains unaffected and undestroyed.

Bhagavān reveals that this **avyakt bhāva** is not simply the dormant, unseen state from which the manifest arises. Rather, beyond even this unmanifest lies a higher, eternal, and imperishable state — the supreme, **sanātana avyakt**. This is the divine essence that remains intact even when all creation dissolves. Those who attain this state never return. That, declares Bhagavān, is **His** supreme abode — **parama dhāma**.

To understand this, one must grasp the cyclic nature of creation. All beings and worlds emerge from the **avyakt** into the **vyakta** (manifest) at the dawn of **Brahmāji's** day. As night falls, all merge back into the unmanifest. Every cycle of creation and dissolution follows this rhythm.

During **Brahmāji's** night, all lokas, beings, and deities become unmanifest; they dissolve into a state of nothingness. And with dawn, as Brahmāji awakens, creation arises again from that very unmanifest state. This continual cycle of manifestation and dissolution is known as **pralaya** and **sṛṣṭi**.

There are several kinds of **pralaya**:

- **Nitya pralaya**: At every moment, the universe undergoes change. What existed a moment ago is no longer the same. This moment-to-moment dissolution and recreation is perpetual.
- **Naimittika pralaya**: At the end of Brahmāji's day, when he sleeps, the entire creation becomes unmanifest.
- **Ātyantika pralaya**: When a yogī attains the supreme state and becomes free from the cycle of birth and death.
- **Prākritika pralaya**: When Brahmāji completes his lifespan of 100 divine years, even he and his entire creation dissolve. This marks the dissolution of the totality of nature.

But how does this transition from **vyakta** to **avyakta**, and back, actually take place?

To explain, one may visualise a mobile or laptop screen. On that screen, a virtual meeting is ongoing, with people visible and voices audible. The moment the 'Leave' button is pressed, the screen goes blank. Everyone disappears. The visuals and sounds vanish. Press 'Join' again, and all returns — the people, the voices, the visuals. Was any of it truly gone? No. It only became unmanifest temporarily.

Similarly, think of a tribal person who has never seen a television. When shown an LED screen with elephants running across, he may wonder where those elephants are hidden inside such a thin screen. When the channel is changed and a mountain appears, his amazement increases. The screen remains one inch thick, yet shows enormous beings and landscapes.

Or imagine someone downloading thousands of bhajans, discourses, and photos into a mobile device.

Even when 256 GB of content is added, the weight of the device remains unchanged. And when formatted, everything is deleted, yet again, there is no change in weight. Whether content is added or erased, the medium remains the same.

In the same way, Brahmājī doesn't physically assemble creation every morning like a potter moulding clay. He does not mix ingredients to build donkeys, trees, men and women. It happens automatically — through divine mechanism.

This universe is like a massive data program embedded in a divine pen drive. When Brahmājī wakes, the data becomes active; when he sleeps, it gets archived. This is one **brahmāṇḍa** — one universe. There are innumerable such universes, each with its own Brahmājī. Hence, the phrase: **koṭi-koṭi brahmāṇḍoḃ ke svāmī Bhagavān** — Bhagavān is the master of countless universes and creators.

But a question arises: when Brahmājī himself ceases to exist after completing his lifespan, where does creation go? Who maintains it then? What remains when even the pen drive is gone?

At that point, Bhagavān introduces a profound term from the Gītā — **avyakta sañjñaka**. This is a rare concept, found solely in these verses.

When Brahmājī vanishes, the universe doesn't vanish into nonexistence. It reverts to a primordial, formless, dormant state — **avyakta sañjñaka**, the raw, pre-creation state. It is from this **avyakta sañjñaka** that a new Brahmājī emerges, and through him, a new cycle of creation begins.

Even at this deep level of unmanifest existence, **karma-phala** remains intact. The cosmic account doesn't vanish. Each being's actions, merits, and demerits are stored, awaiting the right conditions to unfold again.

Bhagavān explains that beyond all that is manifest and unmanifest, beyond Brahmājī and even his pre-form state, there exists the **parastasmāt bhāva** — the supreme, eternal, unchanging truth. That **sanātana avyakt** never ceases, even when everything else does.

yaḥ (s) sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu, naśyatsu na vinaśyati — when all beings perish, that reality does not perish.

Bhagavān is that eternal, supreme existence. He declares: "*I remain forever. Even when countless Brahmājīs arise and fall, I alone remain. I never come or go. I just am.*"

Thus, through subtle metaphors and simple analogies, the concept of **sanātana avyakt bhāva** is made accessible. In the age of pen drives and mobile data, one can now comprehend how the unmanifest and manifest seamlessly shift, without change in substance. And yet, beyond all this fluctuation, beyond even the unmanifest, exists that supreme, unchanging, eternal essence — **Bhagavān Himself**.

8.21

**avyakto'kṣara ityuktaḥ(s), tamāhuḥ(ph) paramāṃ(ñ) gatim,
yaṃ(m) prāpya na nivartante, taddhāma paRāmaṃ(m) mama. 8.21**

The same unmanifest which has been spoken of as the Indestructible, is also called the supreme goal; that again is My supreme Abode, attaining which they return not to this mortal world.

This **avyakta**, the unmanifest, is referred to as **akṣara** — imperishable. It is the supreme destination, **paramām gatim**, that once attained, one never returns. Bhagavān proclaims: this **taddhāma paramaṃ mama** — this is My supreme abode.

What, then, is the state called **mokṣa**, **bhagavat-prāpti**, **ātma-sākṣātkāra**, or **kaivalya**? All these terms point to this very state: reaching that eternal, imperishable unmanifest.

Bhagavān declares that even the realm of **Brahmaloka** must be transcended. Beyond Brahmājī and his loka lies this timeless, immutable **avyakta**. Once one attains it, there is no return — **yaṃ prāpya na nivartante**. As long as one remains within the sphere of Brahmājī, the cycle of birth and death continues: **punarapi jananaṃ punarapi maraṇaṃ, punarapi janani jāthare śayanam**. Again and again, one is born, dies, and takes shelter in a mother's womb.

This has been happening for countless lives — becoming gods, dogs, donkeys, horses, humans, men, women, saints, criminals — constantly shifting as per the fruits of karma. This unending cycle does not halt on its own.

The only way to transcend this is described in the next verse:

8.22

**puruṣaḥ(s) sa paraḥ(ph) pārtha, bhaktyā labhyastvananyayā,
yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni, yena sarvamidam(n) tatam. 8.22**

Arjuna, that eternal unmanifest supreme Puruṣa in whom all beings reside and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable only through exclusive Devotion.

Bhagavān explains that the supreme **puruṣa**, in whom all beings reside and who pervades the entire cosmos, can be attained **only** through **ananyā bhakti** — undivided devotion.

This marks a profound shift in the discourse. Until now, the teachings leaned toward **jñāna-yoga**, the path of knowledge. Often, *jñāna-mārgīs* see bhaktas as inferior, thinking that those who worship a form are yet immature and must eventually come to the unmanifest. But here, Bhagavān shatters this myth. Even while speaking of the subtlest concepts of the unmanifest, He suddenly shifts the gear and brings the seeker to **bhakti**.

He proclaims that even the unmanifest, supreme **avyakta**, can be attained through **ananyā bhakti** alone, not through any other means.

This raises an important clarification: **ananyatva** doesn't mean choosing one deity and rejecting others. Many get confused: "*I worship Kṛṣṇa, so how can I go to Rāma's temple?*" or "*If I serve Śiva, can I worship Durgā?*" This is a misunderstanding. **Ananyatva** means: "*I desire nothing but Bhagavān.*"

One sees all forms of divinity as manifestations of the same truth. Whether one prays to Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā — the form may differ, but the essence is one. Bhagavān is the one responding to every call.

Call Him by any name, view Him in any form — the One who responds is the same. One may call someone with spectacles, or wearing a jacket, or by their profession or personal name — yet it is the same person responding. Just so, all names and forms lead to the One, the **eka**.

Thus, the true bhakta may visit any temple of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, or Durgā — but seeks only their **iṣṭa-devatā** through every form. One may go to Vaishno Devī to ask for the grace of Rāma, or to Rām Lallā to grow in Kṛṣṇa-bhakti. That is **ananya bhakti**: "I seek none but You."

"Mero to Giridhar Gopāla, dūsaro na koī" — "Only Giridhar Gopāla is mine, none else."

Ananya bhakti begins when the seeker desires nothing from Bhagavān but Bhagavān Himself. Most often, people pray for worldly comforts: health, success, wealth, ease. Even on sacred days like **ekādaśī**, their focus remains on gaining material benefit. But until one lets go of worldly desires and says, "I seek You alone," true **ananyatva** cannot begin.

When one reaches this state, Bhagavān says that the devotee attains the **sanātana avyakta** — the eternal, unmanifest truth. And such a soul never returns to the cycle of birth and death.

The verses from 8.23 to 8.26, Bhagavān says, are subtle and complex. They can be confusing. Many readers struggle with them for years. The real meaning is not grasped until one listens to the wisdom of an enlightened master. Without that guidance, these verses may seem like errors in print or speech.

Bhagavān Himself encourages seekers to pay close attention. A subtle, deeper mystery awaits in these verses, revealed only through lived wisdom and true inquiry.

8.23

**yatra kāle tvanāvṛttim, āvṛttim(ñ) caiva yoginaḥ,
prayātā yānti taṃ(ñ) kālaṃ(m), Vākṣyāmi bharatarṣabha. 8.23**

Arjuna, I shall now tell you the time (path) departing when Yogis do not return, and also the time (path) departing when they do return.

Bhagavān now introduces a subtle distinction: the times at which a yogī departs the body can influence whether they return to this world or attain the state of no-return. The verse appears to suggest that the time of death determines whether the yogī attains **anāvṛtti** (non-return) or **āvṛtti** (return). He addresses Arjuna as **bharatarṣabha**, the best among the Bhāratas, and promises to reveal these two paths in detail.

8.24

**agnirjyotirahaḥ(ś) śuklaḥ(ṣ), ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam,
tatra prayātā gacchanti, brahma brahmavido janāḥ. 8.24**

(Of the two paths) the one is that in which, are stationed the all-effulgent fire-god and the deities presiding over daylight, the bright fortnight, and the six months of the northward course of the sun respectively; proceeding along it after death, Yogīs who have known Brahma, being successively by the above gods, finally reach Brahma.

Among the two celestial paths, the first is associated with **Agni** (fire), **jyotiḥ** (light), **ahaḥ** (day), **śukla-pakṣa** (bright fortnight of the lunar month), and the **uttarāyaṇa** (six months of the sun's northern course). Those who depart during this bright, auspicious phase are taken, step by step, by presiding deities of these luminous forces to attain **Brahman**. These are the **brahmavid** yogīs — the knowers of the Supreme.

8.25

dhūmo rātristatā kṛṣṇaḥ(ṣ), ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyanam, tatra cāndRāmasaṃ(ñ) jyotir, yogī prāpya nivartate. 8.25

The other path is that wherein are stationed the gods presiding over smoke, night, the dark fortnight, and the six months of the southward course of the sun; the Yogi (devoted to action with an interested motive) taking to this path after death is led by the above gods, one after another, and attaining the lustre of the moon (and enjoying the fruit of his meritorious deeds in heaven) returns to this mortal world.

The second path is governed by **dhūma** (smoke), **rātri** (night), **kṛṣṇa-pakṣa** (dark fortnight), and the **dakṣiṇāyana** (southern solstice). The yogī who departs during this path, typically engaged in **sakāma karma** (action with desire), is led by deities of these dark forces to attain the lunar radiance, the **cāndra jyotiḥ**. After enjoying the fruits of **punya** (merit) in higher realms, such as **svarga**, such a soul eventually returns to **saṃsāra**, the world of birth and death.

8.26

śuklakṛṣṇe gatī hyete, jagataḥ(ś) śāśvate mate, ekayā yātyanāvṛttim, anyayāvartate punaḥ. 8.26

For these two paths of the world, the bright and the dark, are considered to be eternal. Proceeding by one of them, one reaches the supreme state from which there is no return; and proceeding by the other, one returns to the mortal world, i.e., becomes subject to birth and death once more.

These two paths — **śukla-gati** (bright path) and **kṛṣṇa-gati** (dark path) — are **śāśvata** (eternal) truths known to the wise. One leads to **anāvṛtti** (no return), and the other to **āvṛtti** (return). The former is the path of liberation; the latter, the path of return to worldly existence.

At first glance, this may seem to indicate that those who die during **uttarāyaṇa** (January to June) are liberated, while those who pass during **dakṣiṇāyana** (July to December) are reborn. But such an interpretation is superficial and not supported by a deeper understanding.

If taken literally, it would imply that all who pass away in the bright half of the year are liberated, regardless of their karma or consciousness. Conversely, even an accomplished yogī passing during **dakṣiṇāyana** would be reborn. This cannot be the message of the Gītā.

The deeper meaning unfolds with a refined perspective. These references to light and dark, bright and obscure, *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyana*, should not be reduced to mere astronomical periods or lunar phases. They symbolise the internal disposition, clarity, and purity of the departing consciousness.

If the consciousness is absorbed in the luminous knowledge of **Brahman**, with unwavering awareness of **Bhagavān**, that is the true **śukla-gati**, regardless of the calendar date. And if the consciousness is obscured by attachment, desire, or ignorance, it follows the **kṛṣṇa-gati** and returns to **saṃsāra**, regardless of the external season.

Thus, the Gītā points not just to cosmic timings but to the **inner light** one carries at the time of death. One's **bhāva** (inner disposition) at that final moment determines whether they ascend into liberation or return to the cycle.



उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन





उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



A general thought



उत्तरायण-मृत्यु



दक्षिणायन-मृत्यु



उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



शुक्ल पक्ष



3 गतियाँ



स्वर्ग



नरक



अपवर्ग

कृष्ण पक्ष



2 गतियाँ



स्वर्ग



नरक





उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



मृत्युदूत



उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



Reality



मृत्युदूत





उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



UP TRAIN -उत्तरायण- शुभ, स्वर्ग, मोक्ष



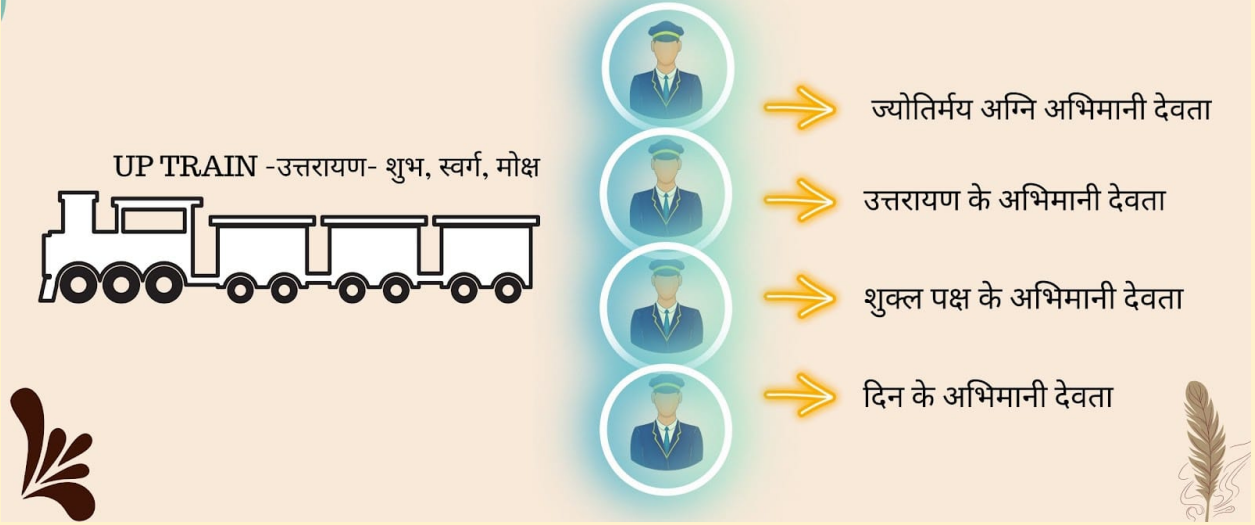
अन्य-अन्य देवता

DOWN TRAIN -दक्षिणायन, अशुभ, नरक





उत्तरायण - दक्षिणायन



The concept of **uttarāyaṇa** and **dakṣiṇāyana**—though not central to liberation—is nevertheless referenced in the Bhagavad Gītā, and therefore warrants some reflection to dispel confusion.

These two paths are associated with specific cosmic deities: **uttarāyaṇa** is presided over by one **devatā** and **dakṣiṇāyana** by another. While countless **devatās** governing various natural functions, only a few select ones are mentioned in this context.

A general misconception prevails that one who dies during **uttarāyaṇa** is assured of **svarga-loka**, whereas death during **dakṣiṇāyana** implies a descent toward **naraka-loka**. But the reality is subtler and demands clarity.

To understand this, a relatable analogy from the era of postal systems helps. Consider an old red postbox installed at a city square. Each box displayed the time it would be emptied—for example, 2:00 PM. If one deposited a letter at 1:00 PM, it would be collected the same day. If at 3:00 PM, it would remain until the next day's pickup. Thus, **when** the letter was posted didn't determine when it reached its destination; **when** it was collected did.

In the same way, one's **exact time of death** is not what governs their spiritual destination. Instead, the **devatās** responsible for **uttarāyaṇa** and **dakṣiṇāyana** operate on cosmic timing mechanisms, guiding the soul's journey according to its karmic record.

Think of the first messenger of death—**mṛtyudūta**—as the one who collects the soul and delivers it to the celestial post office. From there, the soul is sorted and handed over to the respective presiding **devatās**. One of these pathways leads to what can be compared to an up-train, and the other to a down-train.

The **up-train**, governed by the **uttarāyaṇa devatās**, carries souls toward higher realms—**svarga**, **apavarga** (final liberation), and beyond. The **down-train**, aligned with **dakṣiṇāyana**, leads primarily to experiences in **svarga** or **naraka** based on merits or demerits, but **not** to **apavarga**. The up-train path, particularly via the **śukla-pakṣa** and its associated deities like **agnir**, **jyotiḥ**, and **ahaḥ**, can escort a **yogī** to the realms beyond **brahma-loka** toward the **sanātana avyakta**.

On the contrary, the dakṣiṇāyana path, associated with **dhūma**, **rātri**, **kṛṣṇa-pakṣa**, and **dakṣiṇāyana** months, is presided over by devatās that deliver the soul to temporary realms like **svarga** and **naraka** where karmas are enjoyed or exhausted before returning to mortal birth.

Thus, these routes do not work on a simplistic calendar system. It is **not** that dying in January assures liberation and dying in September assures rebirth. Rather, the devatās on duty at those cosmic timings determine the route based on one's **karmic account**.

A common confusion stems from the well-known incident of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, who postponed his departure from the body to wait for uttarāyaṇa. This leads many to believe that death during uttarāyaṇa guarantees liberation. But nowhere in **Mahābhārata** is it mentioned that Bhīṣma waited to die **only** because of liberation. His wait was born of a desire to behold the solar transition—**sūrya-saṅkrānti**—and possibly, to perform his final departure in the presence of auspicious solar energy.

Thus, it is important not to mistake celestial timings for fixed results. Just as depositing a letter late doesn't delay delivery if it's collected on time, so too the time of death is secondary. It is the divine mechanism—guided by karmas and devatās—that ultimately determines whether one is placed in **svarga**, **naraka**, or taken further toward **mokṣa**. Once this system is understood, the shlokas of the **Gītā** in this section unfold with clarity.

8.27

**naite sṛtī pārtha jānan, yogī muhyati kaścana,
tasmātsarveṣu kāleṣu, yogayukto bhavārjuna. 8.27**

Knowing thus the secret of these two paths, O son of Kunti, no Yogī gets deluded. Therefore, Arjuna, at all times be steadfast in Yoga in the form of equanimity (i.e., strive constantly for My realization).

Understanding the two cosmic paths—those of return and non-return—a yogī never gets deluded. Hence, one must remain united with yoga at all times. The emphasis is not merely on being a good person but on being steadily united with the goal of Bhagavat-prāpti. Whether it is cooking, office work, or family conversations—whatever the activity, the remembrance of Bhagavān must continue.

Bhagavān doesn't seek to make Arjuna a morally upright person alone; He wants him firmly rooted in the path of ultimate union. Thus, He opens up this subtle knowledge to inspire continuous sādhana. Even amidst the battlefield, He instructs: **Remember Me while performing your duties.**

8.28

**vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva,
dāneṣu yatpuṇyaphalaṃ(m) pradiṣṭam,
atyeti tatsarvamidaṃ(m) veditvā,
yogī paraṃ(m) sthānamupaiti cādyam. 8.28**

The Yogī, realizing this profound truth, doubtless transcends all the rewards enumerated for the study of the Vedas as well as for performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities and attains the supreme and primal state.

A yogī who truly understands this sacred knowledge transcends all fruits prescribed in the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities, and charity. Though he performs these acts of merit, he does so without attachment to their fruits. Because of this inner renunciation, he surpasses even the loftiest gains of

karmic actions and attains that eternal supreme abode—**paraṃ sthānam**.

Such a yogī walks the path of **niṣkāma karma**, performing good deeds without desiring rewards. This is what enables him to go beyond the devas of the śukla-mārga and even surpass the brahma-loka, ultimately reaching Bhagavān's eternal dhāma.

As Gosvāmī Tulsīdās poignantly wrote:

**“Yah tana kar phala viṣaya na bhāī,
svarga salpa anta dukhadāī.”**

The pleasures of the body and even heavenly joys are temporary and ultimately painful, as they must one day end. Thus, instead of aspiring for heavenly pleasures, one must aspire for bhakti.

As the **Bhāgavatam** prescribes:

**śravaṇaṃ kīrtanaṃ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṃ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṃ vandanaṃ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam**

And as described in the Rāmāyaṇa, Bhagavān spoke of **navadhā bhakti** to Śabarī. Walking this path of devotion, one's life is elevated. This is the direction in which the Gītā guides the seeker.

Hari Om Tat Sat. Hari Om Tat Sat. Hari Om Tat Sat.

Hari śaraṇam, Hari śaraṇam... (repeated in saṅkīrtana)

Everyone is invited to participate in the upcoming celebrations marking five years of **Learn Gītā**. From cities across the world, devotees will gather. One may visit the website, register as an organiser, and even host an event in their area. Details can be found on the platform, including venue options, roles, and contact help lines. One can also explore events by entering their PIN code.

Whether joining virtually or in person, all are welcome to partake in this worldwide celebration of the Gītā. Let this festival be a beautiful excuse to spread the message of Gītā far and wide.

Jai Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Questions and Answers

Manju Ji

Q: You explained *Uttarāyaṇa* and *Dakṣiṇāyaṇa* beautifully today. I've heard of these before, but I'd like to know: what is the meaning of the word *ayana* in *Dakṣiṇāyaṇa* and *Uttarāyaṇa*? Also, why is the “na” different in the two?

A: The word is originally *ayana*, meaning “movement” or “path.” There are two *ayanas* – each of six months duration. Due to Sanskrit *sandhi* (phonetic combination rules), the endings change. In *Uttarāyaṇa*, the “na” becomes the *bāṇ* (retroflex nasal), while in *Dakṣiṇāyaṇa*, it remains the *na* (dental nasal). This transformation follows specific rules in Sanskrit grammar. In English, this distinction disappears as both are represented by the same letter “n,” which reflects the limitations of the English script in expressing such nuances.

Rajnish Ji

Q: If humans alone can perform *karma*, and other life forms cannot, how does a being return to human birth after being born in a lower *yonī* (like an animal)?

A: Human birth is the middle platform. After going through various *yonīs*—whether due to good or bad *karma*—one ultimately returns to the human form to again perform fresh *karma*. There's no rule that says one must go through other births before becoming human again. Even after a hundred human births, one can still continue in the human form if the *karma* allows. The cycle involves exhausting good and bad *karma* in different forms, and returning to the human form to begin again.

Mridul Ji

Q: Is it necessary to have a Guru to chant mantras like *Hare Rāma Hare Kṛṣṇa*? What if we chant sincerely on our own?

A: There's no harm in chanting independently, but the impact is limited. Chanting without initiation is like throwing a bullet with your hand—it might hit, but lacks the power to destroy. With a Guru's initiation (*dīkṣā*), that same mantra is empowered, like a bullet fired from a gun—it carries the Guru's *tapobal* (spiritual energy). Though the mantra remains the same, when received through a Guru, it gains immense potency due to their blessings and lineage.

As for finding a true Guru, one must avoid the trap of social media popularity and instead evaluate a Guru based on four tests:

- 1. **Not self-declared** – They must have received *dīkṣā* authority from their own Guru.
- 2. **Traditional lineage** – Their *paramparā* (spiritual lineage) must trace back to an established *sampradāya* or Vedic tradition.
- 3. **Shāstric foundation** – They must be well-versed and engaged in the study and teaching of *śāstras* like *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahmasūtra*.
- 4. **God-centered devotion** – Their focus must be on worshipping and spreading the name of Bhagavān, not promoting their own fame.

A true *sadguru* uplifts the seeker with spiritual authenticity and scriptural grounding.

Mandakini Ji

Q: My in-laws follow a sect called *Māṇḍopanthi* or *Mahānubhāv Panth*, and they say we shouldn't worship or offer service to deities like Gaṇapati or Śiva. What should I do in such a case?

A: As far as known, no *Sanātana* tradition prohibits the worship of other deities. In fact, the worship of *Pañcāyatana devatās* (five principal deities) is prescribed in scriptures and was also advocated by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. If someone follows a very specific sectarian rule, they may choose their path, but there's no harm or spiritual loss in worshipping deities like Gaṇapati or Śiva. Worshipping any form of Bhagavān never causes harm; it only leads to spiritual benefit.

Sheela Ji

Q: Why does Makara Saṅkrānti always fall on January 14th, unlike other festivals which shift dates?

A: Most of our festivals follow the *lunar calendar*, which is based on the *moon's motion*, hence their dates shift in the Roman calendar. However, *Makara Saṅkrānti* follows the *solar calendar*, based on the *sun's movement*. Since the Roman calendar is also solar, *Makara Saṅkrānti* usually falls on January 14th. That said, due to the precession of the equinoxes, the date shifts by one day every 72 years. For instance, during Swami Vivekānanda's birth in 1863, *Saṅkrānti* was on January 12th.

Krishan Lal Ji

Q: You beautifully cleared the misconception that dying in *Dakṣiṇāyana* leads to hell. But I have a doubt: what exactly does the term *abhimānī devatā* mean?

A: In this context, *abhimān* does not mean ego. Rather, it means “appointed” or “in charge.” So, *abhimānī devatā* refers to the devatās appointed to oversee certain cosmic functions or paths—not beings with ego, but designated celestial administrators.

The session concluded with prayers and chanting Hanuman Chalisa.

Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṃ(m) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde akṣarabrahmayogo nāma aṣṭamo'dhyāyaḥ

Thus, in the Upaniṣad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, ends the eighth chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma."



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Thank you-For reading the summary

You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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