



## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 8: Akṣara-Brahma-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/N7RF9mrK3j0>

**When one's sense of self merges with Sri Kṛṣṇa,  
uninterrupted remembrance becomes natural and  
effortless.**

The discourse commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the Dīpam at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, invoking His divine presence and enveloping the assembly in an atmosphere of Bhakti (devotion) and sacred reverence.

**Vāsudevasutaṁ Devaṁ, Kaṁsacāṇūramardanam  
Devakīparamānandaṁ, Kṛṣṇaṁ Vande Jagadgurum**

With folded hands, bowing at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa and revered Swamiji, we now commence our contemplation

We are discussing a wonderful adhyāya, Akṣhara Brahmā Yoga in which we are getting a direct training from Bhagavān Sri Kṛṣṇa as to how we should 'leave' this world and what should be the mental frame of mind during the last moments of our life (**prayāṇa-kāle**). We learn from Bhāgavad Gītā as to how we should conduct ourselves in the everyday life in the remaining seventeen adhyāyas. In the previous discussion ninth shloka was elaborated,

**kaviṁ(m) purāṇamanuśāsītāraṁ,  
aṇoraṇīyaṁ(m) śamanusmaredyaḥ,  
sarvasya dhātāRāmacintyarūpaṁ(m)  
ādiyavarṇaṁ(n) tamasah(ph) parastāt. ||8.9||**

*He who contemplates on the all-knowing, ageless Being, the Ruler of all, subtler than the subtle, the universal sustainer, possessing a form beyond human conception, effulgent like the sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance.*

The discussion will commence from the tenth shloka. It is however important to note that both these shlokas are interconnected, that which is explained subsequently.

## 8.10

**prayānakāle manasācalena,  
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva,  
bhruvormadhye prāṇamāveśya samyak,  
sa taṁ(m) paraṁ(m) puruṣamupaiti divyam. 8.10**

Having by the power of Yoga firmly held the life-breath in the space between the two eyebrows even at the time of death, and then contemplating on God with a steadfast mind, full of devotion, he reaches verily that supreme divine Puruṣa (God).

**prayāṇa-kāle**—at the time of death  
**manasā**—mind  
**achalena**—steadily  
**bhaktyā**—remembering with great devotion  
**yuktaḥ**—united  
**yoga-balena**—through the power of yog  
**bhruvoḥ**—the two eyebrows  
**madhye**—between  
**prāṇam**—life-air  
**āveśhya**—fixing  
**samyak**—completely  
**taṁ**—him  
**paraṁ puruṣam**—the Supreme Divine Lord  
**upaiti**—attains  
**divyam**—divine

Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān says that - “He who at the time of death (**prayāṇa-kāle**), through the power of yoga (**yoga-balena caiva**) establishes his prāṇa between the eyebrows (**bhruvor madhye**) and with a steadfast mind (**manasāchalena**) and devotion (**bhaktyā yukto**) abides in the remembrance of the divine, he attains (**upaiti**) the supreme, glorious, magnificent, dazzling and splendid Paramātmā (**paraṁ puruṣam**).

In the shlokas nine & ten, Sri Bhagavān describes the inner state of the realized yogi and the state of mind at the moment of death thereby revealing that liberation is not accidental but the culmination of lifelong spiritual discipline. Death according to Bhāgavad Gītā is not merely a biological event, it is a decisive spiritual transition where consciousness moves towards its final destination. The phrase ‘**prayāṇa-kāle**’ highlights the critical importance that which dominates the mind at the time of death, the last moments, and that shapes the ātmās future journey. There are two key aspects to Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān’s teaching in this shloka. First, when HE says steady and unwavering mind (**manasā achalena**), it is critical to realise that such steadiness does not arise suddenly. It is cultivated through years of practice in self-control, meditation, and detachment. The second essential aspect is loving devotion (**bhaktyā yukto**). The yogi is not relying solely on the technical control of breath in concentration, it is not a mere mechanical process only, but it should be deeply united with the devotion to the Supreme. This devotion transforms meditation from mechanical exercise into a living relationship with Bhagavān.

The other term referenced by Sri Bhagavān is ‘**yoga-balena**,’ meaning through the power of yoga. This refers to the inner strength acquired through discipline, yogic practice, control of senses, control of breath, regulation and focus awareness. Yoga here is not merely posture or breath but mastery

over the mental fluctuations. When this yogi power is combined with devotion, the seeker, or the devotee gains capacity to direct consciousness deliberately to attain and become one with the Divine. The instruction '**bhruvor madhye prāṇam**' describes the yogic technique of fixing the life force prāṇa at the space between the eyebrows. This is called the **Ajna Chakra**, also referred to as the third eye chakra or the "commanding circle". Symbolically this represents translating bodily identification and anchoring the awareness in the higher consciousness. The eyebrows are the meeting point of our two Nadis, **Ida** and **Pingala**, where duality dissolves. The result of this sacred alignment is profound. If this process followed, the seeker attains the divine supreme (**sa taṁ paraṁ puruṣham upaiti divyam**).

Liberation here is the absorption into emptiness, a union with the conscious, the radiant reality that is the Paramātmā. Thus, this yoga teaches us that Moksha is achieved through the harmony of devotion, bhakti, discipline, yoga, and steady remembrance. Then death becomes 'not an end' but a gateway to divine realization. The Divine is Omniscient, the most ancient One, the Controller, subtler than the subtlest, the Support of all, and the possessor of an inconceivable divine form; HE is brighter than the sun, and beyond all darkness of ignorance. One who at the time of death, with unmoving mind attained by the practice of Yog, fixes the prāṇ (life-air) between the eyebrows, and steadily remembers the Divine Supreme with great devotion, certainly attains HIM. (The Shlokas 9 & 10 are thereby interconnected.)

We can meditate upon Bhagavān in several ways. The Names, Forms, Leelas (Pastimes), Associates, and HIS Abodes. There is no difference among all these aspects of Bhagavān. Therefore, one can meditate on any one or all of them. Such meditation, where we attach our mind to the Supreme Divinity, takes our mind to the divine realm, and as a result, it purifies. In the verses nine & ten, Sri Kṛṣṇa has mentioned eight such divine aspects,

1. **Kavi**: Like a poet who knows the entirety of his creation, Bhagavān is omniscient. He is the seer who knows the past, present, and future, as mentioned in verse,

**vedāham samatītāni vartamānāni chārjuna  
bhaviṣhyāni cha bhūtāni mām tu veda na kaśchana ||7.26||**

"I know of past, present, and future, and I also know all living beings; but Me no one knows."

2. **Purāṇam**: Bhagavān is the most ancient, and nothing predates Him. He is the origin of the entire material and spiritual world, but He has not originated from anything. Bhagavān is without a beginning or an end

3. **Anuśhāsītāram**: Bhagavān is the governor or the ruler. HE administers HIS regime through the celestial gods that HE has appointed or sometimes directly. HE is the creator, and everything in this universe is under HIS control and run by HIS law.

4. **Aṇoraṇiyān**: Here Bhagavān is said to exist in the subtlest or subatomic form. The soul is subtler than matter, but Bhagavān is even subtler than the soul, as HE is seated within every soul.

5. **Sarvasya Dhātā**: Bhagavān is the source of sustenance. Similar to an ocean that sustains the waves and its vast marine ecology. Bhagavān is the support for HIS entire creation.

6. **Achintya rūpa**: Bhagavān exists in inconceivable forms. Our mind and intellect are material in nature, and Bhagavān is divine, thus, beyond our understanding. It is only through HIS grace one can understand HIM. He bestows HIS divine grace and makes our mind divine by HIS Yogmaya power; only

then can we know HIM.

7. **Āditya varṇa:** Āditya is one of the names of the sun god. Here, Bhagavān is said to be dazzling like the sun.

8. **Tamaśaḥ Parastāt:** Similar to the sun that eradicates darkness, Bhagavān with HIS effulgence eliminates ignorance. On a cloudy day, the sun is not visible, but it is an optical illusion for us. The sun is where it is, unaffected by the clouds in the earth's atmosphere. Similarly, during HIS Leelas or pastimes, Bhagavān may seem to be covered by HIS material energy, Maya. However, HE is unaffected by it. HE is beyond darkness and ignorance.

Bhakti involves focusing the mind upon Bhagavān, in HIS various divine Forms, Qualities, Pastimes, etc. In its pure form, bhakti is called śhuddha bhakti. However, when undertaken along with ashtanga yoga, it is termed yog-miśhra bhakti or a fusion of devotion and ashtanga yoga sādhanā. Sri Kṛṣṇa has described yog-miśhra bhakti from verse ten to thirteen. In the practice of ashtanga yoga, the life force or prān shakti is channelized through suśhumṇā nādi of the spinal column and then raised toward the third eye region between the eyebrows. In this verse, He says that at the time of death, one who performs this with great devotion and complete focus on the Divine Lord will definitely achieve HIM. The Bhagavad Gita beautifully embraces varieties of sādhanās to cater to a large populace belonging to diverse backgrounds, upbringing, and natures.

One may ask, why so much variety. Western scholars often get confused by the various philosophies, paths, and instructions given in the Vedic scriptures. Therefore, it is stressed in the Hindu scriptures to study them under the guidance of an able Guru. We all have different choices and natures according to our saṃskāras (tendencies) from endless lifetimes. Consider this example of two people going into a cloth shop. The chances of both of them buying the same type, colour, or style of clothes is rare. Therefore, the shops keep a variety of clothes and cater to the choices and preferences of people. Similarly, the Vedic scriptures also offer various spiritual paths so that based on the level of sadhana that we may have performed in our past lives, we may choose a suitable path. However, they simultaneously stress on bhakti or devotion to Bhagavān that ties together all these paths in one common thread.

The focus at the point between the eyebrows is known as the **Ajna Chakra**. This chakra is located in the centre of the forehead between the eyebrows and is considered the seat of intuition, higher consciousness, and the mind's ability to perceive beyond the physical senses. It is symbolically represented as a two-petaled lotus, associated with the balance of masculine and feminine energies (**Ida** and **Pingala** Nadis). **Ida** and **Pingala** Nadi are two of the three primary energy channels, or Nadis, in the subtle body system of yoga, with **suśhumṇā** being the third and central channel. **Ida** Nadi is situated on the left side of the spine and is associated with lunar energy, representing the feminine, cool, passive, and introspective qualities. It corresponds to the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation, rest, and emotional balance. **Ida** is symbolically linked to the moon (**Chandra tattva**), the river Ganga, and the left nostril, and it governs mental processes, emotions, and receptivity. **Pingala** Nadi runs on the right side of the spine and is associated with solar energy, representing the masculine, hot, active, and dynamic qualities. It corresponds to the sympathetic nervous system, activating the "fight or flight" response and enhancing physical vitality, logical thinking, and analytical functions. **Pingala** is symbolically linked to the sun (**Surya tattva**), the river Yamuna, and the right nostril, and it governs perception, reasoning, and action.

The flow of breath through the nostrils is often used as an indicator of which Nadi is dominant: breath through the left nostril indicates **Ida** is active, while breath through the right nostril indicates **Pingala** is active. This alternation typically occurs every 90 minutes in healthy individuals, though it may become irregular during illness or stress. The balance between **Ida** and **Pingala** is essential for

mental and physical well-being, and practices such as **Nadi Shodana** (alternate nostril breathing) are used to cleanse and harmonize these channels. These two Nadis spiral around the central **suṣhumṇā**

Nadi, resembling a double helix, and cross at various points along the spine, forming the chakras. They converge at the **Ajna Chakra** (the third eye), where they meet with **suṣhumṇā**. When the breath flows equally through both nostrils, it indicates that **suṣhumṇā** is active, which is associated with a state of higher consciousness and inner stillness. The practice of Yoga aims to balance **Ida** and **Pingala** so that energy can flow into

**suṣhumṇā**, leading to spiritual awakening and liberation (Moksha).

When an adept yogi establishes his prana at the time of death at Ajna Chakra, his prana will then exit from the 10th gate of the body. In the fifth adhyāya there was a discussion on the nine gates (navadvāre pure dehī) and these are: the right eye, left eye, right ear, left ear, right nostril, left nostril, mouth, genitals, and anus. Sri Bhagavān is talking about the 10th gate, the Brahmarandra. Brahmarandra is a spiritual aperture located at the crown of the head, symbolizing the connection to higher consciousness and the exit point for the soul at the time of death. It is considered the gateway through which the soul, guided by prana and Kundalini energy, can leave the body to reach Brahmāloka, the realm of Brahmā, particularly for advanced yogis and spiritually evolved individuals. In certain yogis and saints this may manifest as a blob on the top of the head and at the time of death they can easily exit from this Brahmarandra.

In essence, if one wants to follow the practice of attaining moksha, one must realise that the process of perfecting the practice of pranayama cannot be bypassed, next comes the discipline of yoga that deal with the awakening of chakras in the body and establishing the prāṇa at the Ajna Chakra. Sri Kṛṣṇa will make it far simpler for us in the upcoming shlokas.

## 8.11

**yadakṣaram(m) vedavido vadanti  
viśanti yadyatayo vītarāgāḥ,  
yadicchanto brahmacaryaṃ(ñ) caranti  
tatte padaṃ(m) saṅgrahaṇa praVākṣye. 8.11**

I shall tell you briefly about that Supreme goal (viz., God, who is an embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss), which the knowers of the Veda term as the Indestructible, which striving recluses, free from passion, merge into, and desiring which the celibates practise Brahmacharya.

**yat**—which

**akṣharam**—Imperishable

**veda-vidaḥ**—scholars of the Vedas

**vadanti**—describe

**viśhanti**—enter

**yatayaḥ**—great ascetics

**vīta-rāgāḥ**—free from attachment

**ichchhantaḥ**—desiring

**brahmacharyam**—celibacy

**charanti**—practice

**padam**—goal

**saṅgrahaṇa**—briefly

**pravakṣhye**—I shall explain

In this shloka, Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān says - “Scholars of the Vedas describe Him as Imperishable; great ascetics practice the vow of celibacy and renounce worldly pleasures to enter into Him. I shall now explain to you briefly the path to that goal.” Sri Bhagavān introduces the concept of Supreme Brahman (Para-Brahmā), the ‘Imperishable Absolute’ as the ultimate spiritual goal. This shloka is significant because it unifies the Vedic knowledge, aesthetic discipline, yoga discipline, and devotional aspiration into a single spiritual destination. The term ‘Akṣharam’ means that which never decays or never perishes. Unlike the body, unlike the mind or even the heaven, ‘Para-Brahmā’ is eternal and unchanged. Seers of highest wisdom unanimously affirm this as reality and as the supreme goal that one has to attain.

Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān further states the yatis who renunciate material aspects and are free from the worldly attachments (**vīta-rāgāḥ**) enter this state of **Akṣharam**. Renunciation here does not mean rejection of life, but freedom from compulsive desires that which can be achieved only when the attachment fades and consciousness expand beyond ego. The phrase ‘brahmacharyam charanti’ refers to disciplined living in alignment with the Para-Brahmā. Brahmacharyam here is not merely physical celibacy, it is the conservation and sublimation of vital energy (energy gained through yoga practice and **Nithya Sādhanā**) towards spiritual realization. Importantly, Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān promises to explain this state concisely (**saṅgrahaṇa pravakṣhye**) thereby indicating that while the scriptures are vast, truth itself is simple when directly experienced. This sloka teaches us that ‘liberation’ is universally acknowledged irrespective of spiritual approach, knowledge, renunciation, or discipline. All sincere seekers ultimately move towards the same irrefutable reality.

In the Vedas, Bhagavān is referred by many names including **Brahmān, Bhagavān, Deva, Paramātmā, Prāṇa, Puruṣa** and **Sat**. In some places, while referring to HIS formless aspect, Bhagavān is said to be **Akshar**, which means imperishable. Sri Kṛṣṇa mentions in this verse the word '**saṅgrahaṇa**', which means “in brief.” HE says that this path is exceedingly difficult to follow and not suitable for everyone. Therefore, HE will not elaborate much and briefly describe this path of **yog-miśhrā bhakti**; that leads to attaining the formless aspect of Bhagavān. It demands living a life of rigid continence and perform severe austerities. Renouncing worldly desires and practicing brahmacharya, a vow of celibacy. The practice of celibacy conserves a person’s physical energy and this energy, when channelized through sadhana, gets transformed into spiritual energy. It also enhances the intellect and memory power of the sādhas (spiritual aspirants) and helps them comprehend the spiritual subjects better.

The term ‘celibacy’ here does not mean enforced sexual inactivity. The one who has the sexual urges arising in his mind but who forcibly tries to suppress these urges, such a person cannot be termed as a celibate or a Brahmachari. Then who is celibate? He is the one who no longer desires sexual gratification, no longer wants momentary carnal pleasures and who seeks unceasing bliss. There are no sexual urges arising in mind at all, such a person, even when he has to enter into the act of reproduction, it is not an act of sex gratification. Such a person is also termed meditative.

### **A Spiritual Transformation - Story of a Sage and a young man**

To illustrate the concepts discussed, consider the story of a young man who sought guidance from a sage (**ṛṣi**) due to his sadness and feelings of disillusionment. He confided that the women he loved would eventually leave him, leaving him feeling unattractive and hopeless. The sage, upon hearing his concerns, reassured him by suggesting that his physical appearance was not the barrier, and encouraged him to broaden his perspective. When the young man expressed doubt about his own attractiveness, the sage kindly guided him to read a shloka and explained its deeper meaning.

The sage told him, "One who energises his body with prana, his body exudes a great lustre similar to Kamadeva, the God of Love." He went on to explain that the human body, though composed of flesh and bones, contains dormant prana. Once this vital energy is awakened, it radiates a glow so powerful that even celestial beings would find one attractive. Motivated by the sage's words, the young man began practising pranayama and mudras with dedication, his primary aim being to attract women. Over the course of six months, the young man noticed a transformation within himself. His previously restless mind became increasingly calm. He returned to the sage and confessed, "Gurudev, the sloka you asked me to read is indeed authentic. But now, I have a doubt. I started this practice to energise my body to become more attractive, but my mind no longer desires to even look at a girl. Despite practising for a brief period, my attraction towards women has faded. What is the purpose of cultivating pranic energy and bodily lust if the desire itself disappears?" The sage responded calmly, urging him to continue his practice for another six months, promising to discuss further at a later time.

During the next six months, the young man persisted in his practice. The sage observed that he was gradually becoming established in yoga and decided to test him. He instructed some of his female disciples to approach the young man with proposals of love. True to the sage's expectations, the young man rejected all their advances. He returned to the sage and said, "What I desired is happening now—the girls find me attractive, just as you foretold. But interestingly, there is no desire left within me. I began yoga, pranayama, and the mudras you taught me with the intention of becoming attractive and desirable. Now, women do indeed find me so, but I have no desire."

The story aptly summarizes the message conveyed by the Shloka. The subject was also discussed by Bhagavān in another shloka,

**praśhāntātmā vigata-bhīr brahmachāri-vrate sthitaḥ  
manaḥ sanyamya mach-chitto yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ ||6.14||**

*Thus, with a serene, fearless, and unwavering mind, and staunch in the vow of celibacy, the vigilant yogi should meditate on Me, having Me alone as the supreme goal.*

One may also recall an old Hindi movie - "Guide." The protégé (Guide Raju) is forced into fasting ritual to invoke rain. He reluctantly begins the fast, although he does not believe that there is any relation between a man's hunger and rain. With the fast, he undergoes a spiritual transformation. He gets enlightened by the concept that his past sins are washed away by his anguish and the 'Guide Raju' he knew has died. He realises that he has achieved a state where he can get what he wants. He is reconciled with his mother, his love interest Rosie, and the driver during his transformation and now the only thing that remains is the spiritual Raju, a state which is indestructible. Amidst thunderclap and heavy downpour, his soul departs this earth while the crowd rejoices and his beloveds cry. The climax also teaches the Bhāgavad Gītā's principles: "Man does not die it is only body which dies. Soul remains for ever."

What this means to a sādhak is that when one chooses to go on the path of spirituality, the transformations happen naturally. The efforts to cut down on habits and practices is no longer a hard chore but they get cut down automatically.

**8.12**

**sarvadvārāṇi saṁyamya, mano hṛdi nirudhya ca,**

## mūrdhnyādhāyātmanaḥ(ph) prāṇam, āsthito yogadhāraṇām. 8.12

Having controlled all the senses, and firmly holding the mind in the heart, and then drawing the life-breath to the head, and thus remaining steadfast in Yogic concentration on God

**sarva-dvārāṇi**—all gates

**sanyamya**—restraining

**manaḥ**—the mind

**hṛidi**—in the heart region

**nirudhya**—confining

**mūrdhni**—in the head

**ādhāya**—establish

**ātmanaḥ**—of the self

**prāṇam**—the life breath

**āsthitaḥ**—situated (in)

**yoga-dhāraṇām**—the yogic concentration

Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān describes the yogic discipline required to transcend the physical existence without confusion or fear and thereby outlines the precise inner methodology for conscious departure from the body. At the last moments, Sri Bhagavān describes that,

1. Firstly, one should restrain all the gates of the body (**sarva-dvārāṇi**) and there are nine gates (**nava-dvāre pure dehī**) that we know of. Having restrained these gates, fixing the mind in the heart region (**mano hṛidi nirudhya**), and then drawing the life-breath (**prāṇam**) to the head, one should get established in the steadfast yogic concentration (**yoga-dhāraṇām**). '**sarva-dvārāṇi sanyamya**' refers to closing all sensory gateways **Śabdaḥ** (sound), **Roopa** (sight), **Rasa** (taste), **Sparsha** (touch), and **Gandha** (smell). At death, naturally the senses become withdrawn, however the yati withdraws these consciously. This inward withdrawal prevents the mind from clinging to the external material world

2. As a next step, the mind (**manaḥ**) is filled in the heart (**hṛidi nirudhya**). The symbolic seed of consciousness and devotion is our heart. This inward anchoring stabilizes awareness preventing panic or distractions

3. Lastly, the prana is raised to the crown of the head (**mūrdhni ādhāya**). This ascent of life energy through **suṣhumṇā** nādi represents liberation from bodily identification. Yogic text affirms that it is this ascent through the tenth gate (the crown) that leads to the higher world and ultimate freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

The yogi thus becomes '**āsthito yoga-dhāraṇām**,' firmly established in the concentration. Death is now transformed into a meditative act. It is not destruction of body, but the death is considered in this shloka as meditative act. People who go through meditation, for them death is the link in their meditative practice. This shloka teaches us that liberation requires mastery over senses (indriyas), mind and vital energy (prana vayu) achieved through lifelong yoga practice.

Key to understanding the teachings to realize how the material world creeps into our day-to-day life through the senses. We first see, we hear, touch, taste and we smell the objects of perception (**śabdaḥ sparśaśca rūpaṃ ca raso gandhaśca**) and then the mind dwells upon these objects. Repetition of contemplation creates attachment which automatically creates further repetition of thoughts in our mind. Restraining senses is thus an essential part of locking the mind inside and not allowing it to stray. A practitioner of meditation who neglects this point has to keep grappling with the continuous stream of worldly thoughts that the unrestrained senses create. Hence, Sri Bhagavān delivers a series of instructions as preparations for the last stages, starting with guarding the gates of body (**sarva-dvārāṇi sanyamya**). The term '**hṛidi nirudhya**' means locking the mind in the heart and implies directing devotional feelings from the mind to **Akṣharam**, the imperishable Supreme

Divine enthroned in the heart. The term ‘**yoga-dhāraṇām**’ means uniting the consciousness with Bhagavān and refers to meditation upon HIM with complete concentration. The instructions and thereby the preparatory steps are then complete.

### 8.13

## **omityekākṣaram(m) brahma, vyāharanmāmanusmaran, yaḥ(ph) prayāti tyajandeham(m), sa yāti paramām(ñ) gatim. 8.13**

he who leaves body and departs uttering the one Indestructible Brahma, OM, and dwelling on Me in My absolute aspect, reaches the supreme goal.

**Om**—sacred syllable representing the formless aspect of Bhagavān

**iti**—thus

**eka-akṣharam**—one-syllabled

**brahmā**—the Absolute Truth

**vyāharan**—chanting

**mām**—Me (Sri Kṛṣṇa)

**anusmaran**—remembering

**yaḥ**—who

**prayāti**—departs

**tyajan**—quitting

**deham**—the body

**saḥ**—he

**yāti**—attains

**paramām**—the supreme

**gatim**—goal

Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān imparts a profound teaching about the path to liberation (**mokṣa**) at the moment of death. He explains that one who leaves the body while remembering Him (**mām anusmaran**), the Supreme Personality, and chanting the sacred syllable **Om** (**om ityekākṣharam brahmā**), is assured of attaining the Supreme goal—liberation. This shloka reveals the most sacred secret of mokṣa: it is achieved through constant remembrance of Bhagavān by invoking the primal sound, **Om**, which is the absolute, single syllable (eka-akṣharam) containing the entirety of the cosmos, time, and consciousness.

The act of chanting **Om** at the time of death serves to align the individual soul with the cosmic reality. However, Sri Kṛṣṇa emphasises a crucial condition: the recitation of **Om** must be accompanied by sincere remembrance of the Divine (**mām anusmaran**). Mere utterance of sound, without devotion, is incomplete. When **Om** is recited with loving awareness of the Supreme, it becomes a bridge to ultimate liberation.

A seeker who departs in this state—merged in remembrance and devotion—attains the highest goal (**paramām gatim**), transcending the cycle of rebirth. This achievement is not merely about enjoying heavenly pleasures, but about eternal union with the Divine. The shloka teaches that the purest and most direct path to liberation is to remember Bhagavān at the time of death, where sound, devotion, and consciousness unite in one liberating act.

### **Practical Steps Prescribed by Sri Kṛṣṇa**

Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān clearly outlines the steps to be followed. The first step involves closing all nine exit doors of the senses (**sarva-dvārāṇi sanyamya**). This can be accomplished through specific practices such as **Yoni Mudrā**, which includes:

- Closing the anal exit by pressing with the right heel. For females, the left heel is used to close the vaginal outlet; for males, the left heel presses on the perineum (the area between the anus and external genitalia).
- Using the thumb, middle, ring, and little fingers to close the ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, respectively. The question arises about breathing when both nose and mouth are closed, which is addressed by the practice of **prāṇāyāma**. In **Brahmārī**, the eyes, ears, and nose are closed while breathing remains possible.

Following this, the balance of the **Ida** and **Pingala** Nadis is established, and breath retention (**antaḥ kumbhakā**) is performed after inhalation. This practice involves holding the breath with lungs full, creating a state of fullness and stillness that cultivates awareness, concentration, and regulation of internal energy. **Bāhya kumbhakā**, on the other hand, involves retention after complete exhalation. Once concentration is entirely focused on the point between the eyebrows, the dormant energy in the

## suṣhumṇā

Nadi is awakened. At this state, the practitioner mentally recites Om̐, as all the nine gates are closed (**sarva-dvārāṇi sanyamya**). Recitation is done mentally to maintain this internal focus.

### The Role of Prāṇāyāma in Preparation

Attaining the described state requires gradual preparation. One should begin with prāṇāyāma practice and progress to **Nāḍī Śodhanā Prāṇāyāma**, which helps calm the nervous system, enhance mental clarity, and prepare for meditation.

#### Step-by-Step Instructions for Nāḍī Śodhanā Prāṇāyāma

1. Sit comfortably with a straight spine, relaxed shoulders, and eyes closed.
2. Form Vishnu Mudra with the right hand: fold the index and middle fingers inward, leaving thumb, ring, and little fingers extended.
3. Close the right nostril with the thumb, inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril (count of 4).
4. Close both nostrils and hold the breath (count of 16).
5. Close the left nostril with ring and little fingers, release the right nostril, exhale fully through the right (count of 8).
6. Inhale through the right nostril (count of 4), close both nostrils and hold (count of 16).
7. Close right nostril, release left, exhale through the left nostril (count of 8).

One complete cycle is thus finished. Repeat for 5–15 minutes, keeping the breath slow, smooth, and silent. With continuous practice, both breathing and overall health improve, and the mind becomes more internalised and observant of the breath, leading to natural awareness.

### Importance of Practice and the Sacred Sound Om̐

Shlokas 11 to 13 are vital for understanding the path to mokṣa as instructed by Sri Kṛṣṇa. Mere chanting of the Divine Name is insufficient; diligent practice is essential. Vedic scriptures assert that Bhagavān first created sound, then space, and continued the process of creation. The first and original sound was **Om̐**, which holds immense significance in Vedic philosophy. **Om̐** is referred to as the ‘sacred sound’ (**Mahāvākya**) and the ‘seed-syllable’ (**Bijamantra**); other **Bijamantras** include **hrīm̐**, **śrīm̐**, and **klīm̐**.

Proper chanting of **Om̐** emphasises the vibrations of its three letters: A... U... M... It begins with an “A” sound from the belly, transitions to “U” in the middle of the mouth and concludes with “M” using a closed mouth.

### Om̐ as the Impersonal Form and Paths of Meditation

Devotees sometimes regard **Om̐** as the impersonal form of Bhagavān. In ashtanga yoga, the Praṇav sound is the object of meditation. In this verse, Sri Kṛṣṇa describes meditation in the context of ashtanga yoga sadhana, recommending chanting Om̐ while practising austerities and celibacy.

However, those who follow the path of bhakti yoga meditate upon the personal Names and Forms of Bhagavān, such as **Sri Rāma**, **Sri Kṛṣṇa**, and **Mahādevaḥ Śiva**, finding greater sweetness and bliss in this approach. Meditating on the formless (**nirguṇa nirākāra**) can lack clarity, whereas meditating on a form, such as Sri Kṛṣṇa, provides assurance and focus. The comparison is made between the joy of an expectant mother and that of a new mother holding her child—the latter’s experience is sweeter and more immediate. The moment of death is the ultimate test of one’s meditation. Death is described as intensely painful, and despite this, those who can focus on Bhagavān in their last moments attain Him and, upon leaving the body, reach His divine abode. However, achieving such a state is extremely difficult and requires lifelong, continuous practice.

### **Practicality and Compassion in Sri Kṛṣṇa ’s Teaching**

A common doubt arises: how can one remember Bhagavān and practice these methods if, at the end of life, one is physically incapacitated or in a state of unconsciousness? Sri Kṛṣṇa acknowledges this difficulty, understanding that it is challenging for most people to practise the methods described in the shlokas and to remember Bhagavān with attributes and poetic qualities (**Saguṇa Sākāra**). In the subsequent shlokas, Sri Kṛṣṇa offers an easier way to attain mastery in remembering Bhagavān at the time of death, making the path accessible to everyone.

### **8.14**

**ananyacetāḥ(s) satataṃ(m), yo mām(m) smarati nityaśaḥ,  
tasyāhaṃ(m) sulabhaḥ(ph) pārtha, nityayuktasya yoginaḥ. 8.14**

Arjuna, whosoever always and constantly thinks of Me with undivided mind, to that Yogi ever absorbed in Me I am easily attainable.

**ananya-chetāḥ**—without deviation of the mind

**satatam**—always

**yaḥ**—who

**mām**—Me

**smarati**—remembers

**nityaśhaḥ**—regularly

**tasya**—to him

**ahaṃ**—I

**su-labhaḥ**—easily attainable

**nitya**—constantly

**yuktasya**—engaged

**yoginaḥ**—of the yogis

Bhagavān Sri Kṛṣṇa imparts a profound teaching to Arjuna: “O Parth, for those yogis who always think of Me with exclusive devotion, I am easily attainable because of their constant absorption in Me.” This statement summarises the essence of devotion, emphasising that unwavering remembrance brings the Supreme Divine within reach. In earlier shlokas, Sri Kṛṣṇa described rigorous yogic disciplines, but here He reveals that steadfast remembrance alone is sufficient. The term ‘**ananya-chetāḥ**’ signifies a mind that is unswerving, focused solely on the Divine, without distractions. Importantly, this does not call for abandoning one’s worldly responsibilities. Instead, it encourages seeking refuge in the Divine amidst one’s duties. Actions may be performed in the world, but the heart remains anchored in Bhagavān.

Two key words—‘**Satatam**’ and ‘**Nityaśhaḥ**’—are highlighted by Sri Kṛṣṇa to stress unbroken continuity. Remembrance of Bhagavān is not to be reserved for special occasions or moments of

crisis. Rather, He says, ‘**satataṁ yo māṁ smarati nityaśhaḥ,**’ meaning that the living awareness of Bhagavān should flow through everyday activities such as eating, walking, or resting. The revolutionary assertion here is ‘I am easily attainable’ (**tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ**). Unlike other spiritual paths that require severe austerities or complex mastery, bhakti is accessible to all. Bhagavān does not demand perfection; He seeks sincerity and steadiness in one’s efforts. Through this teaching, Sri Kṛṣṇa assures Arjuna that even someone engaged in worldly conflict—such as a warrior on the battlefield—can attain Bhagavān through constant remembrance. Arjuna is instructed to perform his duties while keeping his mind fixed on the Divine.

### **The Role of Bhakti Yoga and Constant Union**

Spiritual realisation is not exclusive to sages or ascetics; even householders can attain it. The phrase ‘**nitya-yuktasya yoginah**’ describes the highest yogi—not one who withdraws from life, but one who remains united with the Divine through constant awareness. This is bhakti yoga in its purest form. The shloka teaches that “Bhagavān is drawn into loving remembrance just as iron is drawn to a magnet.” For such a devotee, liberation is nearby: Bhagavān Himself becomes the devotee’s companion, guide, and ultimate refuge.

This idea resonates with the teaching in the thirteenth adhyāya:

**padraṣṭānumantā cha bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ  
paramātmēti chāpy ukto dehe’smin puruṣhaḥ paraḥ ||13.23||**

*Within the body resides the Supreme Divine, who is the Witness, Permitter, Supporter, Transcendental Enjoyer, Supreme Controller, and Paramātmā (Supreme Soul).*

To this Supreme, one must remain devoted without mental deviation—‘**ananya-chetāḥ.**’ Notably, in the entire Bhagavad Gītā, this is the only shloka where Sri Kṛṣṇa explicitly declares Himself “easily attainable.” Elsewhere, the attainment of Paramātmā is described as difficult, but here, the sole condition is single-minded devotion—‘**ananya-chetāḥ.**’

### **Exclusive Devotion and Its Reiteration**

This exclusivity is repeated in several shlokas throughout the Bhāgavad Gītā:

**ananyāśh chintayanto māṁ ye janāḥ paryupāsate  
teṣhāṁ nityābhilyuktānāṁ yoga-kṣhemāṁ vahāmyaham ||9.22||**

*Those who think of Me exclusively and are always absorbed in Me—I provide for them and protect what they have.*

**tam eva śharaṇaṁ gachchha sarva-bhāvena bhārata  
tat-prasādāt parāṁ śhāntiṁ sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śhāśhvataṁ ||18.62||**

*Surrender to Me alone with all your being. By My grace, you will attain peace and the eternal abode.*

**sarva-dharmān parityajya māṁ ekaṁ śharaṇaṁ vraja  
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣhayiṣhyāmi mā śhuchaḥ ||18.66||**

*Abandon all forms of dharma and surrender unto Me alone; I shall liberate you from all sin—do not fear.*

A sādhak whose mind is undivided by worldly desires, absorbed solely in Bhagavān, and dependent on none but Him, is truly ‘**ananya-chetāḥ.**’ Such a devotee worships Bhagavān in chosen forms—**Sri Rāma, Sri Kṛṣṇa, or Mahādevaḥ Śiva**—without perceiving differences between them and does so with unwavering conviction and exclusive devotion.

## The Significance of 'Satatam' and 'Nityaśhaḥ'

'**Satatam**' means continuously, from awakening until sleep, and '**Nityaśhaḥ**' means always, from the first day of awareness of Bhagavān until the last breath. Many devotees claim to love Bhagavān but remain attached to worldly things, diluting the fruits of their spiritual efforts. Such attachments are binding and imperfect, causing impurity of mind. It is like washing a cloth only to put it again in dirty water. Therefore, '**Ananya-chetāḥ**,' '**Satatam**,' and '**Nityaśhaḥ**' must be diligently practiced to attain the Supreme Divine, as promised by Sri Kṛṣṇa. Being absorbed in Bhagavān does not mean obsessively thinking of Him but rather maintaining a natural, deep-rooted identity with Him. Just as one does not need to remember one's gender—because it is innate—so too, for a true devotee, remembrance of Bhagavān becomes second nature. If a sādhak identifies with the body and mind as his own, he cannot attain Bhagavān. True attainability lies in maintaining affinity and absorption in the Divine.

Our true identity is with Bhagavān, not with the material world. We are parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa (**mamaivamso jiva-loke jiva-bhutaḥ sanatanah**). Mistaken identification with the body leads to repeated births and deaths. Realisation dawns when we accept our intrinsic connection with the Divine and live accordingly. The teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā remind sādhakas to internalise this reality—our bond is with Bhagavān, not with worldly matters. Param Pujya Swamiji's mantra encapsulates this approach: "Learn Gītā, teach Gītā, Live Gītā."

## The Nature of True Remembrance

When a devotee believes there is nothing apart from Bhagavān, the mind naturally ceases to wander. '**Ananya-chetāḥ**' is thus easily realised, bringing in its wake '**Satatam**' and '**Nityaśhaḥ**.' To illustrate the depth of these terms, consider worldly relationships—a mother and child, or a husband and wife. Even in the closest worldly bonds, constant, exclusive remembrance is not achieved. The mother forgets her child during various activities; the child remembers the mother when in need. Relationships shift as life progresses, and none satisfy the conditions of '**Ananya**,' '**Nityaśhaḥ**,' and '**Satatam**.'

The only relationship that fits is the one with 'self.' No one forgets the self; even in sleep, the call of one's name awakens a response. From childhood onwards, the self is always remembered. Therefore, to achieve the same unity with Sri Kṛṣṇa, one must eliminate the perceived distinction between self and the Divine. When one's sense of self merges with Sri Kṛṣṇa, uninterrupted remembrance becomes natural and effortless. Without this sense of oneness, unceasing remembrance of Bhagavān is impossible.

Sri Kṛṣṇa's declaration that He is easily attainable does not mean He is rare; rather, it is the devotees who truly know Him that are rare. Thus, unwavering remembrance and exclusive devotion alone lead to the attainment of Bhagavān.

## The Story of Meera

Consider the story of Meera, a nurse working in a busy hospital. Despite demanding shifts, emotional challenges, and family responsibilities, she maintained a simple practice: every morning, she offered her day's work to the Divine. While tending to patients or dealing with crises, she inwardly repeated God's name, not as ritual, but with love. Even in tense moments, she reassured herself, "you are with me." Over the years, this practice became her anchor. Her colleagues often noticed her calm during emergencies. One fateful day, Meera suffered a sudden brain haemorrhage at work. As her consciousness faded, her lips moved in silent prayer. A junior nurse overheard her softly uttering the Divine name. Meera passed away peacefully, remembered not only as a skilled nurse but as someone who radiated serenity even in chaos.

This shloka states: "For one who constantly remembers Me without deviation, I am easily attainable." Meera did not renounce the world; she lived her duties with an unbroken inner remembrance. Her last moments were not manufactured, but a natural culmination of a lifetime of devotion. When death

arrived unexpectedly, her mind instinctively turned to Bhagavān.

### Key Learnings

- Remembrance at the time of death is spontaneous, shaped by daily practice.
- Bhagavān is attained not through withdrawal, but through constancy in loving remembrance.
- Life's ease is not an obstacle—forgetfulness is the true hindrance.
- What fills the heart in life emerges effortlessly at the final moment.

The essence of this teaching is clear: “When Bhagavān is remembered in ordinary moments, He is naturally remembered at life's end.”

## 8.15

### **māmupetya punarjanma, duḥkhālayamaśāśvatam, nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ(s), saṁsiddhiṁ(m) paramām(ñ) gatāḥ. 8.15**

Great souls, who have attained the highest perfection, having come to Me, are no more subject to transitory rebirth, which is the abode of sorrow, and transient by nature.

**mām**—Me

**upetya**—having attained

**punaḥ**—again

**janma**—birth

**duḥkha-ālayam**—place full of miseries

**aśhāśvatam**—temporary

**āpnuvanti**—attain

**mahā-ātmānaḥ**—the great souls

**sansiddhim**—perfection

**paramām**—highest

**gatāḥ**—having achieved

After explaining how to realize HIM, Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān in this sloka and the next one explains the merits of his realization. Bhagavān says that - ‘After having attained me, the great souls (**mahā-ātmānaḥ**) are no longer subject to rebirth in this world.’ This world is transient and full of misery (**duḥkha-ālayam aśhāśvatam**). The great souls are liberated because they have attained the highest perfection (**paramam gatāḥ**).

Sri Kṛṣṇa explains why attaining him is the highest goal one should seek for. This world however pleasant it may seem is described as ‘**duḥkha-ālayam**’ and ‘**aśhāśvatam**,’ the place of sorrow and impermanence. Even joy here carries the seeds of loss, decay, and separation. By saying ‘**mām upetya**,’ Sri Kṛṣṇa declares that the union with the divine ends the cycle of birth. Liberation is not temporary relief, but permanent freedom from suffering. ‘**Mahā-ātmānaḥ**,’ the great souls, Bhagavān says, are those who clearly understand this truth. They do not see repeated births and they have no desire for heavens (Svargaḥ) because all conditioned existence remains impermanent (**aśhāśvatam**). When Sri Kṛṣṇa says ‘**sansiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ**,’ it means that the great souls have reached their ultimate perfection, a complete fulfilment of human life. Such souls do not return to samsara because their ignorance has been destroyed. This firmly establishes mokṣa as freedom from rebirth and not merely moral improvement or heavenly reward but freedom from rebirth.

In the thirteenth adhyāya, we have discussed the following shloka,

**indriyārtheṣhu vairāgyam anahankāra eva cha  
janma-mṛityu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣhānudarśhanam ||13.9||**

*Detachment from sense-objects, absence of egoism, awareness of the distress inherent in birth, death, old age, and sickness.*

What happens when one attains the Supreme Divine? The realized soul is liberated from the cycle of life and death and reaches the divine abode of Bhagavān and remains there forever. It does not take birth in the material world again and suffer its miseries. Life in the material world from birth till death is full of suffering. The struggle starts inside the mother's womb itself, where we hang upside down for nine months. Then we go through a painful process of taking birth and delivered into an unknown world, where we have to cry for our every need. As we grow, we need to learn to speak, eat, walk, etc. Then comes the turmoil of adolescence, which is a mentally challenging phase. As adults, marriage and relationships test our endurance and patience to accept and accommodate individualities. We struggle to maintain social responsibilities. Then comes old age with its gifts of sickness and disease. All through our life, we suffer from pain and miseries; induced by our own body, mind, people, or circumstances around us. Then finally, we die, which is again an extremely painful experience.

It is important to realize that all the pain and misery is not meaningless. In Bhagavān's grand design, the purpose of these miseries is to realize that the material realm is not the permanent abode for the soul. It serves as a correction home for the souls who have forgotten Bhagavān and are trapped in the material world. These sufferings and miseries help the souls develop the desire for Bhagavān.

Consider an example of a person who accidentally puts his hand on burning coal. Immediately, due to the burning sensation and pain he experiences, he withdraws his hand. What really happened here? When the man touched hot coal, his skin started burning, and the neurons on his skin sent a message to the brain of the pain he experienced. The brain immediately sends commands to his hand muscles that remove his hand to avoid further burning and pain. Therefore, pain is a signal that something is not right and needs correction. Similarly, the pain and miseries that we experience in the material world; are stimulation for us to shun our defective consciousness. These inspire and motivate the lost souls to tread toward their ultimate goal of union with Bhagavān.

Those worthy souls who commit themselves in exclusive devotion attain Bhagavān and reach His Divine Abode. However, those souls who remain engrossed in material affluence and forget Bhagavān continue to rotate in the cycle of birth and death. Eventually, we get what we make ourselves worthy of and the endeavours we choose to undertake. Sri Kṛṣṇa is merely showing us the mirror and it is our choice to make.

**8.16**

**ābrahmabhuvanālokāḥ(ph), punarāvartino'rjuna,  
māmupetya tu kaunteya, punarjanma na vidyate. 8.16**

Arjuna, all the worlds from Brahmāloka (the heavenly realm of the Creator, Brahma) downwards are liable to birth and rebirth. But, O son of Kuntī, on attaining Me there is no rebirth (For, while I am beyond Time, regions like Brahmāloka, being conditioned by time, are transitory).

**ā-brahmā-bhuvanāt**—up to the abode of Brahmā  
**lokāḥ**—worlds

**punaḥ āvartinaḥ**—subject to rebirth  
**upetya**—having attained  
**punaḥ janma**—rebirth  
**vidyate**—is

Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān addresses Arjuna and says - “In all the worlds of this material creation, up to the highest abode of Brahmā, you will be subject to rebirth, O Arjun. But on attaining My Abode, O son of Kunti, there is no further rebirth.” This shloka offers a cosmic perspective on Liberation. Even the highest heavenly world, which is **Brahmā-Loka**, is still within the cycle of birth and death. Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān dismantles the illusion that spiritual success is based on ascending to the higher worlds (**Svargaḥ Loka**) and asserts that all such attainments are temporary. The contrast is sharp, attain all worlds and you still have to return but, from Sri Kṛṣṇa ‘s abode there is no return to the rebirth cycle. This shloka implies that true liberation lies beyond cosmic hierarchy, Mokṣa is not only a special elevation but transcendence of time and causation.

According to the Vedic scriptures, there are fourteen worlds in our universe. Seven planes of existence beginning with earth and higher —**bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, swaḥ, mahaḥ, janaḥ, tapaḥ, satyaḥ**. The higher planes are the celestial abodes called the Swarga. The remaining seven planes that are lower than earth are the hellish abodes called **Nāraka**. These are —**tal, atal, vital, sutal, talātal, rasātal, pātāl**. Similar references are made by other religions as well.

These fourteen planes of existence are called the Lokas or various worlds of our universe. The **satyaḥ lok**, also known as **Brahmā Lok**, the abode of Brahmā is the highest among them, and **pātāl lok** is the lowest. However, all these Lokas are under the realm of Maya, the material energy of Bhagavān. Hence, the dwellers of all the fourteen Lokas go through the cycle of birth and death. It is because of their impermanent nature Sri Kṛṣṇa in the previous verse called these worlds to be **aśhāśhvataṁ** (temporary) and **duḥkhālayam** (full of misery). All those who are born in these Lokas of material existence are subject to death someday. Even the king of the celestial gods, Indra, has to die.

### **Indra and his palace**

The Puranas mention an incident where Indra ordered the celestial architect, Vishwakarma, to construct a huge palace for himself in Swarga. However, the extension plan kept on increasing, and the construction was not ending. Vishwakarma got weary and prayed to Bhagavān for help. Bhagavān visited Indra and enquired, “How many Viśvakarmās have you engaged in constructing such a huge palace?” Indra was surprised by Bhagavān’s question because he thought there was only one Vishwakarma. Smiling, Bhagavān said to Indra, “Similar to this universe with its fourteen worlds, there are infinite universes and each such universe has an Indra and a Viśvakarmā.”

At the same time, Indra saw several ants walking toward him in queues. Surprised, he asked - ‘Bhagavān, where all these ants were coming from?’ Bhagavān said, “All these ants were Indras in their past lives; I have called them to meet you.” Indra was speechless.

Soon after, a revered sage, Rishi Lomash, visited Indra. He was carrying a straw mat on his head and had a circle of hair on his chest. However, there were gaps in that circle, made by fallen hair. Indra received the sage respectfully and then asked him politely; why he was carrying a mat on his head? Also, what does the hair on his chest signify?

The Rishi said, “I am blessed with a boon, to be **chirāyu** (endless life). The hair on my chest signifies life on this universe. Whenever the tenure of an Indra ends, one hair falls. And several such falls have caused the gaps in my chest hair.” Indra was astonished. Lomash Rishi then added, “I carry this mat on my head because during the day it protects me from sun and rain. Also, I spread it on the ground at night and sleep. My disciples want to build a permanent residence for me to stay. But I think, when life itself is temporary, why build a house here?” Hearing this from someone who has the lifespan of many Indras, it humbled Indra. His pride shattered, he thought to himself, “What is the point in

building such a huge palace, if someday, I have to leave it all and go?" He asked Vishwakarma to stop the construction immediately and released him.

It is marvelous how these stories from the Puranas and the Bhāgavad Gītā give an insight into the cosmology of the universe. Amazingly, these scriptures were written in ancient times, several thousand years ahead of modern astronomy. It was only in the sixteenth century that a western scientist, Nicholas Copernicus, first proposed a heliocentric theory stating that; the sun was the center of the universe. This theory changed the previous belief that the earth was the center of the universe. Further advancement in astronomy revealed that even the sun was not the center of the universe. It was part of a galaxy called the milky way having countless stars like our sun, each with its own solar system. And all stars, along with their solar systems, are revolving around the epicenter of the galaxy. Further research has revealed; that similar to the Milky Way, several galaxies are gyrating in our universe.

However, the Vedic philosophy states that the earth or the Bhūr Lok is revolving around Swar Lok, and the realm between them is Bhuvar Lok. The Swar Lok is again moving around Jana Lok, and the realm between these two is the Mahar Lok. Jana Lok is also not stationary and is circling the Brahmā Lok (Satya Lok), and Tapa Lok is the realm between them. These are the seven higher planes, and similarly, there are seven lower planes as well. It is incredible; that our Vedic scholars had such insight into the subject over five thousand years ago.

In this verse, Sri Kṛṣṇa states that all the fourteen worlds of this universe are within the realm of HIS material energy Maya. Hence, the occupants are subject to the cycle of birth and death. Only those who attain realization get liberated from the clutches of maya. Upon death, they leave their material bodies and go to HIS divine abode to stay there forever. They receive divine bodies and participate in the divine Pastimes of Bhagavān eternally. They need not take birth in the material world. However, some saints and pious souls come back to the material world. Although liberated, they do so to engage in the divine welfare of humankind. These pious souls are the great Masters and they descend on earth to help others get out of the bondage of maya and guide them on the path toward realization.

## 8.17

### **sahasrayugaparyantam, aharyadbrahmaṇo viduḥ, rātriṃ(m) yugasahasrāntām(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.

**sahasra**—one thousand

**yuga**—age

**paryantam**—until

**ahaḥ**—one day

**yat**—which

**brahmāṇaḥ**—of Brahmā

**viduḥ**—know

**rātrim**—night

**yuga-sahasra-antām**—lasts one thousand yugas

**te**—they

**ahaḥ-rātra-vidaḥ**—those who know this day and night

**janāḥ**—people

In this shloka, Sri Bhagavān says - 'One day of Brahmā (**kalp**) lasts a thousand cycles (**sahasra-antām**) of the four ages (**mahā yug**) and his night also extends for the same span of time. The wise who know this understand the reality about day and night (**ahaḥ-rātra-vidah**).' By revealing this, Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān teaches detachment from even cosmic permanence.

The Vedic cosmological system has measurements of time that are vast and astounding. Consider this example of an insect, that is, born at night and within the same night it grows, procreates, lays eggs, and grows old. The next morning, you find it dead under the streetlight. If one tells that insect that its entire lifespan was only equal to one night of a human, that will be unbelievable for the insect. Similarly, the measurements of time given in the Vedas are beyond normal human imagination.

The Vedas state that one year on the earth equals; one day and night of Indra and other celestial gods. Thus, one year of the celestial gods consisting of 12 x 30 days equals 360 years on the earth plane. The calculation goes much further; 12,000 years of the celestial gods makes one mahā yug (cycle of four yugas) on the earth plane, that is, 4.32 million years. Following is the Vedic calculation of time periods or yugas on the earth plane:

Kali Yug: 432,000 years

Dwāpar Yug: 864,000 years

Tretā Yug: 1,296,000 years

Satya Yug: 1,728,000 years

Mahā Yug: 4,320,000 years (Adding the four yugas)

Kalp: 4,320,000,000 years (1000 Mahā Yug = 1 day of Brahmā)

One thousand mahā yug make one day of Brahmā, called a kalp, and then there is Brahmā's night of equal duration. Kalp is the largest unit of time in the world; it equals 4.32 billion years. In this verse, Sri Kṛṣṇa states that only those who understand this knowledge truly know what day and night are.

According to Vedas, the duration of the universe equals Brahmā's lifespan, of 100 years. Brahmā's one day and night put together make 8.64 billion earth years, and 36,000 such days of his lifespan would make 311 trillion 40 billion years. So, that will be one life cycle of our universe. Now the question arises; when Brahmā is a creator, why is he also subject to birth and death?

Brahmā is also a soul, who has reached tremendously elevated consciousness. Thus, Bhagavān has given him the position of Brahmā, to discharge the duties as a creator on HIS behalf. But like all other living creatures, Brahmā is also under the cycle of life and death. However, at the end of his tenure, he is liberated and goes to the Abode of Bhagavān. Sometimes, at the creation of the world, when Bhagavān does not find any eligible souls for the position of Brahmā, HE becomes Brahmā.

**8.18**

**avyaktādvayakṛtāḥ(s) sarvāḥ(ph), prabhavantyaharāgame,  
rātryāgame praliyante, 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.

**avyaktāt**—from the unmanifested

**vyakṛtāḥ**—the manifested

**sarvāḥ**—all

**prabhavanti**—emanate  
**ahaḥ-āgame**—at the advent of Brahmā's day  
**rātri-āgame**—at the fall of Brahmā's night  
**praliyante**—they dissolve  
**tatra**—into that  
**eva**—certainly  
**avyakta-sanjñake**—in that which is called the unmanifest

This sloka explains the cyclical process of cosmic creation and dissolution. Bhagavān reveals that all manifested beings arise from the unmanifest causal state and return to it again and again. 'Avyaktāt' is not non-existence, it is the potential existence like a seed containing the entire tree in the latent form. At the dawn of Brahmā Deva's Day (**ahaḥ-āgame**) all beings emerge into visible existence and when Brahmā Deva's night arrives (**rātri-āgame**) they dissolve back into the unmanifest. This eternal rhythm shows that creation is not a one-time event, nor is the destruction the final inhalation. Everything appears, disappears, and reappears in cycles governed by the cosmic law. For human seekers, this shloka delivers a sobering truth -

Individual existence is a part of a vast impersonal cosmic repetition. We are part of the cycle and no personal achievement, possessions or status escapes this cycle. Civilization rise and fall. Species emerge and vanish. Even words dissolve. Recognizing this impermanence is the first step towards detachment. Bhagavān is guiding Arjuna away from identifying with the transient forms and towards seeking the unchanging reality beyond manifestation.

The cosmic play of the various planes of existence in the universe is astounding. The fourteen worlds and their planetary systems undergo repeated cycles of sṛiṣṭi, sthiti, and pralaya (creation, preservation, and dissolution). All planetary systems, up to the Mahar Lok, are destroyed at the end of a kalp; that is Brahmā's day of 4.32 billion years. This partial dissolution is called **naimittik** pralaya. When **Śuka-deva** narrated the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam to Parīkṣit, he stated that Brahmā creates these worlds similar to a child playing with his toys. A child builds structures with his toys during the day and pulls them apart before going to bed at night. Similarly, when Brahmā wakes up, he creates the planetary systems and their life forms and dissolves them before going to sleep.

The entire universe dissolves at the end of Brahmā's life of 100 years (311.04 trillion earth years). The whole material creation winds up. The pañch-mahābhūta merge into the **pañch-tanmātrās**, the **pañch-tanmātrās** merge into **ahankār**, **ahankār** merges into **mahān**, and **mahān** merges into **prakṛiti**. Prakṛiti is the subtle form of Maya, the material energy of Bhagavān. Maya now takes up her primordial form. She goes back into the body of the Supreme Lord, **Mahāviṣṇu**. This great dissolution is called **prākṛit** pralaya, or **mahāpralaya**. When it is time for the next cycle of creation, **Mahāviṣṇu** glances at prakṛiti, and by HIS mere glance, prakṛiti starts unfolding herself again. From **prakṛiti**, **mahān** is created, from **mahān**, **ahankār**; then from **ahankār**, **pañch-tanmātrās** are created; from **pañch-tanmātrās**, **pañch-mahābhūta** get created. And by this process, unlimited universes are created again.

According to modern science, there are 100 billion stars in the Milky Way. And similar to the Milky Way, there are over a billion galaxies in the universe. Thus, scientists have concluded that in our universe, there are more than  $10^{20}$  stars. However, the Vedas state that, similar to our universe, there are infinite universes of assorted sizes and distinctive features. These universes manifest from the body of **Mahāviṣṇu**. Every time He breathes in infinite universes are created from the pores of His divine body. And when He breathes out, they dissolve again. Thus, one breath of Mahāviṣṇu is equal to 100 years of Brahmā's life. Also, all these universes have their own **Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Shankar (śaṃkara)**. In the innumerable universes, there are innumerable **Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and**

**Shankara (śaṃkara)**. The entire creation originates from **Mahāviṣṇu**, and at dissolution, merges back into Him.

### Questions and Answers

GC Kṛishnamohan Ji

**Q:** Sri Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān has provided numerous instructions and methods for attaining Moksha. However, I have also encountered accounts in the Puranas describing the story of Ajamila, a sinner who attained Moksha by invoking the name of Sri Bhagavān at the end of his life. This appears to be contradictory; could you kindly clarify this matter for me?

**A:** It is unrealistic for us to assume that we will suddenly remember Narayana at the end of our lives. In Ajamila's case, this may have been possible because of his previous samskaras, which we may not possess ourselves. Therefore, expecting a sudden shift from a materialistic lifestyle to a spiritual one at life's end—especially when our consciousness might be impaired—is not practical. Sri Kṛṣṇa has clearly stated that liberation requires fulfilling the conditions of '**Ananya,**' '**Nityaśhaḥ,**' and '**Satatam,**' promising his grace to those who do so. Given this, it is wiser to follow Bhagavān's guidance rather than rely on subjective stories. We should avoid seeking shortcuts on the spiritual path.

The session concluded with the chanting of Hanuman Chalisa

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#### Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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