

**Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 72: Chapter 8, Verses 19-22**

(September 18 –September 24, 2019)

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**ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT**

**TRANSLITERATION**

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।

*bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā  
pralīyate*

रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ ८-१९ ॥

*rātryāgame 'vaśhaḥ pārtha  
prabhavatyahar-āgame*

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्यक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।

*paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktāt  
sanātanaḥ*

यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ ८-२० ॥

*yaḥ sa sarveṣhu bhūteṣhu naśhyatsu na  
vinaśhyati*

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।

*avyakto 'kṣhara ityuktas tam āhuḥ  
paramāṁ gatim*

यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ ८-२१ ॥

*yaṁ prāpya na nivartante tad dhāma  
paramaṁ mama*

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।

*puruṣhaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas  
tvananyayā*

यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ ८-२२ ॥

*yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni yena sarvam  
idaṁ tatam*

## TRANSLATION

- (19) The multitudes of beings repeatedly take birth with the advent of Brahma's day, and are reabsorbed on the arrival of the cosmic night, to manifest again automatically on the advent of the next cosmic day.
- (20) Transcendental to this manifest and unmanifest creation, there is yet another unmanifest eternal dimension. That realm does not cease even when all others do.
- (21) That unmanifest dimension is the supreme goal, and upon reaching it, one never returns to this mortal world. That is My supreme Abode.
- (22) The Supreme Divine Personality is greater than all that exists. Although He is all-pervading and all living beings are situated in Him, yet He can be known only through devotion.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=13z0AHVYd2a1Ie7bWaSgFG2z4ykpJdL05>

## Chapter 8

### Verse 19:

We have earlier discussed (see commentary on Verse 17 above) that the duration of Brahma's day equals 4.32 billion solar years, and his night is of equal length. One year of Brahma equals 26 trillion, 438 billion and 400 million years on Earth. Since Brahma lives 100 of these years, his total life span is 311 trillion 40 billion years. In this verse, Lord Krishna further clarifies on the daily and nightly activities of Brahma. He says that all movable and immovable living entities that existed on the previous day of Brahma, but were dissolved and unmanifested (*Avyakta*) during Brahma's night (called *Naimittik Pralaya*), are all re-manifested (*Vyakta*) as variegated and diverse species such as demigod, human, animal, bird, fish etc., all in precise accordance with the inviolable laws of *Karma*.

Assuming that the life span of a human being is one hundred years, he will be undergoing re-incarnation for 43 million 200 thousand times during one Brahma's day. The Vedic scriptures proclaim: The creation of the sun, the moon, the Earth, and the sky will all be exactly as they were before. Then after 36,000 cycles of such creation and dissolution, Brahma's life span is ended. At this time all beings movable and immovable all planetary systems and universes, even Brahma himself as well as his planet of Maharloka are all dissolved into the ultimate unmanifest. All the worlds are dissolved and absorbed into the Supreme Being (This is called *Maha Pralay*). The *Subala Upanisad* states: Earth devolves into water, water devolves into fire, fire devolves into air, air devolves into ether and so forth up to the cosmos which devolves into the *avyakta* or unmanifest, the *avyakta* into

the *akshara* or the indestructible, the *akshara* into *tamas* or darkness and the *tamas* into the Supreme Lord (*The Paramaatman*). Thus, it is confirmed that except for the eternal spiritual worlds of the Supreme Lord, all beings and the entire material creation consisting of trillions of universes are subject to incessant creation and dissolution periodically. All things without exception owe their existence to the Supreme Lord, deriving their inception from Him and concluding their absorption in Him.

### **Verse 20:**

After elaborating on the impermanence of all material worlds, Lord Krishna elucidates in this verse and the next on the eternal nature of the spiritual worlds which exist beyond *avyakta* the unmanifest and which is never destroyed when all the material worlds perish. Lord Krishna uses the words *paras tasmāt*, meaning superior to that, to describe this state. His state is superior because He is totally separate from *avyakta* the unmanifest that emanates from Brahma and is invariably connected to *prakriti* or the material substratum pervading physical existence and the cause of the myriad of multitudes of variegated created beings alluded to in the previous verse. This superior unmanifest is beyond the perception of the senses and without a beginning and it never ceases to exist even when all the worlds and all created beings, which are merely causes and effects, inevitably perish.

### **Verse 21:**

The *avyakta* or the unmanifest state, described in the previous verse, is beyond the perception of the mind and senses and is *akshara* or indestructible and contains the *Brahman* or the spiritual substratum pervading all existence. In the second chapter of Bhagavadgita, it was revealed that the *atman* or soul is indestructible as well. But *akshara* is known by those knowledgeable of the Vedic scriptures to be paramount, higher than the *atman*. The *akshara* is the goal of the *atman* as verified in the Katha Upanishad I.II.XXIII. This fact is further corroborated in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* in III.III.VII, which states: “The *Paramatman*, the supreme soul which resides in the heart of all living entities, is different from the individual *atman* or soul.” After attaining Him, the individual *atman* is permanently divested of *prakriti* and never returns to the worlds of mortals as the cycle of birth and death is terminated. The purport is that *atma tattva* or the self-realization of the soul is a highly exalted state, but the *paramam gatim* or supreme goal of the *atman* is to attain the Supreme Lord in His *dhama* or abode and associate eternally with Him.

### **Verse 22:**

As stated in the commentary of the previous verse, *akshara* or the indestructible is the supreme goal of the *jiva* or embodied soul. Lord Krishna clarifies here that the Supreme Lord is *Purusha* with form and personality and is distinct from the *jiva*, although He resides within each and every one. The *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* VI.IX states: “He is higher than the highest and imperishable”. The *Katha Upanishad* II.II.XIII states: “He is eternal among eternal and supra-conscious among the conscious”. The *Katha Upanishad* I.II.XXIII states: “He is only attainable to one whom He, Himself selects”. He is the ultimate reality and His form of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (*Sachhidananda*) or Truth, Conscience and Bliss is the ultimate goal of all existence. It has been repeatedly declared all throughout the Bhagavadgita that the most direct and best possible means to attain the Supreme Lord is verily by *Bhakti* or loving devotion and this point is again being reiterated here by Lord Krishna. He is only attained by exclusive *bhaktya labhyas tvananyaya*, meaning no other

way but with unalloyed loving devotion that is exclusively offered to Him free from any self-motivated interests. His paramount supremacy is being revealed by His being the cause of all beings in whom He is all pervasive and who are contained within Him.