

Bhagavad Gita - Chapter Eight

Attaining the Supreme

Taraka-Brahma Yoga

Section-I – Kṛṣṇa's answers to Arjuna's questions (1-4)

|| 8.1-2 ||

arjuna uvāca

kim tad brahma kim adhyātmaṁ kim karma puruṣottama
adhibhūtaṁ ca kim proktaṁ adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate

adhiyajñaḥ kathaṁ ko 'tra dehe 'smin madhusūdana
prayāṇa-kāle ca kathaṁ jñeyo 'si niyatātmabhiḥ

Arjuna said: What is Brahman, what is adhyātma (**kim tad brahma kim adhyātmaṁ**), what is karma (**kim karma**), what is adhibhūta (**adhibhūtaṁ ca kim proktaṁ**) and what is adhidaiva (**adhidaivaṁ kim ucyate**), O Supreme Person (**puruṣottama**)? Who is the adhiyajña (**adhiyajñaḥ kah**), and how is he known in the body (**kathaṁ atra asmin dehe**)? How are You to be known at the point of death (**prayāṇa-kāle ca kathaṁ jñeyo 'si**) by those with concentrated minds (**niyatātmabhiḥ**)?

Baladeva

- In the eighth chapter, being questioned by Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa will explain the different items starting with brahman mentioned at the end of the last chapter.
- He will then explain two paths of bhakti: bhakti mixed with yoga and pure bhakti.
- Arjuna asks questions in order to understand the meaning of the seven items starting with brahman, mentioned as objects of knowledge for the person desiring liberation in the last chapter.
- What is that brahman?
- Is it the conscious paramātmā or the conscious jīva?

Baladeva

- What is adhyātma: what is it that superintends the body (ātmā)? Is it the group of senses or a group of subtle elements?
- What is karma? Does it refer to ordinary day to day actions, or actions prescribed by the Vedas?
- Arjuna addresses Kṛṣṇa as Puruṣottama in order to counteract a possible objection by Kṛṣṇa, “Since we are equals, why do you ask Me?” “Because you are the Supreme Lord, You know everything, whereas I do not.”
- What is adhibhūta? What is it that rules (adhi) the living entity within the body (bhūta)? Is it the products of the elements such as pots or the gross bodies of the jīva?

Baladeva

- What is adhidaivam? Is it meditation on the devatās (concerning the devatās) or the universal form (that which governs the devatās), the personification of everything in the universe?
- Who is adhiyajña? Does Indra or Viṣṇu own the sacrifice? What also is the nature of this ruler of sacrifice?
- Arjuna then addresses Kṛṣṇa as Madhusūdana, killer of the Madhu demon, letting Him understand that it will be easy for the Lord to remove all his doubts.
- At the time of death, because of the impossibility of concentrating the mind due to disturbance of all the senses, how are You to be known?

Srila Prabhupada

- In this chapter Lord Kṛṣṇa answers different questions from Arjuna, beginning with "What is Brahman?"
- The Lord also explains karma (fruitive activities), devotional service and yoga principles, and devotional service in its pure form.
- The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains that the Supreme Absolute Truth is known as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.
- In addition, the living entity, the individual soul, is also called Brahman.
- Arjuna also inquires about ātmā, which refers to body, soul and mind. According to the Vedic dictionary, ātmā refers to the mind, soul, body and senses also.

Srila Prabhupada

- Arjuna has addressed the Supreme Lord as Puruṣottama, Supreme Person, which means that he was putting these questions not simply to a friend but to the Supreme Person, knowing Him to be the supreme authority able to give definitive answers.

Srila Prabhupada

- "Lord of sacrifice" may refer to either Indra or Viṣṇu.
- Viṣṇu is the chief of the primal demigods, including Brahmā and Śiva, and Indra is the chief of the administrative demigods.
- Both Indra and Viṣṇu are worshiped by yajña performances.
- But here Arjuna asks who is actually the Lord of yajña (sacrifice) and how the Lord is residing within the body of the living entity.
- Arjuna addresses the Lord as Madhusūdana because Kṛṣṇa once killed a demon named Madhu.

Srila Prabhupada

- Actually these questions, which are of the nature of doubts, should not have arisen in the mind of Arjuna, because Arjuna is a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee.
- Therefore these doubts are like demons. Since Kṛṣṇa is so expert in killing demons, Arjuna here addresses Him as Madhusūdana so that Kṛṣṇa might kill the demonic doubts that arise in Arjuna's mind.
- Now the word prayāṇa-kāle in this verse is very significant because whatever we do in life will be tested at the time of death.
- Arjuna is very anxious to know of those who are constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What should be their position at that final moment?

Srila Prabhupada

- At the time of death all the bodily functions are disrupted, and the mind is not in a proper condition.
- Thus disturbed by the bodily situation, one may not be able to remember the Supreme Lord.
- Mahārāja Kulaśekhara, a great devotee, prays, "My dear Lord, just now I am quite healthy, and it is better that I die immediately so that the swan of my mind can seek entrance at the stem of Your lotus feet."
- The metaphor is used because the swan, a bird of the water, takes pleasure in digging into the lotus flowers; its sporting proclivity is to enter the lotus flower.

Srila Prabhupada

- Mahārāja Kulaśekhara says to the Lord, "Now my mind is undisturbed, and I am quite healthy.
- If I die immediately, thinking of Your lotus feet, then I am sure that my performance of Your devotional service will become perfect.
- But if I have to wait for my natural death, then I do not know what will happen, because at that time the bodily functions will be disrupted, my throat will be choked up, and I do not know whether I shall be able to chant Your name.
- Better let me die immediately."
- Arjuna questions how a person can fix his mind on Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet at such a time.

Section-I – Krsna’s answers to Arjuna’s questions (1-4)

|| 8.3 ||

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
akṣaram brahma paramam
svabhāvo 'dhyātmam ucyate
bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo
visargaḥ karma-samjñitaḥ

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The Brahman is the supreme indestructible entity (**akṣaram brahma paramam**). Adhyātma is the jīva (**svabhāvo adhyātmam ucyate**). Karma refers to transmigration arising from the creation of bodies made of material elements (**bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-samjñitaḥ**).

Brahman is the indestructible jīvātma separate from the body (**akṣaram brahma paramam**). Adhyātma refers to impressions which accompany the jīva (**svabhāvo adhyātmam ucyate**). Karma refers to the creative force which gives rise to bodies through the combination of subtle and gross elements (**bhūta-bhāvodbhava-karo visargaḥ karma-samjñitaḥ**).

SVCT

- The Lord answers.
- Brahman refers to the akṣara—that which does not get destroyed, that which is eternal and supreme.
- The śruti says etad vai tad akṣaram gārgi brāhmaṇā abhivadanti: the knowers of Brahman call the Supreme Lord (tad) the indestructible (akṣaram). [Note: In verse 21 Viśvanatha says that the akṣara is Nārāyaṇa.] (Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.8.8)
- Svabhāva means “that which produces one’s self (svam bhāvayati), from imposition of a body.” In other words, it means the jīva, since it creates the body. The jīva is called adhyātma.

SVCT

- Or the meaning of svabhāva can be “that which causes one to attain the Paramātmā (sva meaning the Lord in this case). In this case adhyātma refers to the purified jīva, since only the pure jīva is qualified to attain Paramātmā.
- The word karma refers to transmigration (visarga) of the jīva, the creation of bodies (bhāva) through the material elements (bhūta). It is called karma because it is produced from actions.

Baladeva

- Being asked, the Lord replies to these seven questions one by one. Akṣaram means that which does not perish. I call the jīvātmā, which does not perish, distinct from the body (paramam), brahma.
- The śruti states that jīva is called brahma and akṣaram:
**avyaktam akṣare līyate'kṣaram tamasi līyate tama ekībhavati
parasminn**

Avyakta (subtle state of prakṛti) merges into aksara (aggregate of the jīvas). Aksara merges into tamas (subtle state of prakṛti with jīva). Tamas becomes one with the Supreme Lord. [Note: Akṣara cannot refer to the Supreme Lord in this verse, since akṣaram merges into tamas and tamas merges into the Lord.] Subāla Upaniṣad 1

Baladeva

vijñānaṁ brahma ced veda

If one knows the ātmā, called brahman, as vijñāna, one does not become bewildered. [Note: See Baladeva's commentary on Vedānta Sūtra 1.1.12 for further explanation. When food, prāṇa, mind, and vijñāna are called brahman, brahman means jīva. When bliss is called brahman it refers to the Supreme Lord.]
Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.5

- I refer to the svabhāva as adhyātma.
- Svabhāva is that substance (bhāva means padārtha) intimately connected to the jīva (sva)—the impressions held in the subtle elements which accompany the jīva birth after birth.

Baladeva

- Because the impressions are closely related to the ātmā, described as such in the pañcāgni vidyā of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, they are called svabhāva.
- This svabhāva is what I call adhyātma, that which governs the body.
- That creative force (visarga) which gives rise (udbhava kara) to the bodies (bhāva) of men and others by combination of the subtle elements (bhūta) with the gross elements (bhūta) is called karma.
- By performance of jyotistoma sacrifice one goes to svarga and in the body of a devatā one enjoys.
- The remnants coming from pious actions, which are similar to the remnants of ghee gathered in a pot for enjoyment, but which eventually are depleted, appear on this earth for giving the gross body of human or other form to the jīva. This is what I call karma.

Baladeva

- In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, Chapter 5, it is described that five offerings of faith, god of the moon, rain, food and semen are offered into the five fires of heaven, the god of rain, earth, man and woman.
- The meaning is this.
- The jīva following the Vedas in this world offers yogurt and other items with faith. Because they are made of the five elements, those offerings with faith take the form of the five elements, and particularly water.
- Because of offering water with faith, it becomes an oblation of faith.
- This envelops the jīva and goes with him.
- When the person dies, the devas presiding over the senses offer the oblations of faith to the fire called heaven. That means they lead the jīva to heaven.

Baladeva

- Those offerings transform into a heavenly body called Somarāja, King of the Moon.
- In that body, the jīva enjoys the results of his actions.
- At the end of enjoyment, the offerings along with the jīva are offered by the devas into the fire of Parjanya, God of Rain, and become rain.
- That rain along with the jīva is offered by the devas into the fire called earth and become food such as rice.
- The rice offerings along with the jīva are offered into the fire called man, and then become semen.

Baladeva

- The semen along with the jīva is offered into the fire called woman, and becomes an embryo, and transforms into man.
- The cause of such states, the consequence of actions, the residue from actions, is called karma.
- Thus the writer of the Sūtras has said tad-antara-pratipattau: in going to another body, the jīva takes the subtle elements.
- [Note: This description and the quotation from the Vedānta Sūtra is given to show that the jīva assumes a gross body by combination of subtle and gross elements (bhūta), which are mentioned in the verse: bhūta bhāva udbhāva kara, This particular sūtra refers to the description of the five oblations mentioned Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad.] (Vedānta Sūtra 3.1.1)

Srila Prabhupada

- Brahman is indestructible and eternally existing, and its constitution is not changed at any time. But beyond Brahman there is Para-brahman. Brahman refers to the living entity, and Para-brahman refers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- The constitutional position of the living entity is different from the position he takes in the material world.
- In material consciousness his nature is to try to be the lord of matter, but in spiritual consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, his position is to serve the Supreme.
- When the living entity is in material consciousness, he has to take on various bodies in the material world. That is called karma, or varied creation by the force of material consciousness.

Srila Prabhupada

- In Vedic literature the living entity is called jīvātmā and Brahman, but he is never called Para-brahman.
- The living entity (jīvātmā) takes different positions—sometimes he merges into the dark material nature and identifies himself with matter, and sometimes he identifies himself with the superior, spiritual nature. Therefore he is called the Supreme Lord's marginal energy.
- According to his identification with material or spiritual nature, he receives a material or spiritual body.
- In material nature he may take a body from any of the 8,400,000 species of life, but in spiritual nature he has only one body.

Srila Prabhupada

- In material nature he is manifested sometimes as a man, demigod, animal, beast, bird, etc., according to his karma.
- To attain material heavenly planets and enjoy their facilities, he sometimes performs sacrifices (yajña), but when his merit is exhausted he returns to earth again in the form of a man. This process is called karma.
- The Chāndogya Upaniṣad describes the Vedic sacrificial process. On the sacrificial altar, five kinds of offerings are made into five kinds of fire.
- The five kinds of fire are conceived of as the heavenly planets, clouds, the earth, man and woman, and the five kinds of sacrificial offerings are faith, the enjoyer on the moon, rain, grains and semen.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the process of sacrifice, the living entity makes specific sacrifices to attain specific heavenly planets and consequently reaches them.
- When the merit of sacrifice is exhausted, the living entity descends to earth in the form of rain, then takes on the form of grains, and the grains are eaten by man and transformed into semen, which impregnates a woman, and thus the living entity once again attains the human form to perform sacrifice and so repeat the same cycle. In this way, the living entity perpetually comes and goes on the material path.
- The Kṛṣṇa conscious person, however, avoids such sacrifices. He takes directly to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thereby prepares himself to return to Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada

- Impersonalist commentators on the Bhagavad-gītā unreasonably assume that Brahman takes the form of jīva in the material world, and to substantiate this they refer to Chapter Fifteen, verse 7, of the Gītā.
- But in this verse the Lord also speaks of the living entity as "an eternal fragment of Myself."
- The fragment of God, the living entity, may fall down into the material world, but the Supreme Lord (Acyuta) never falls down.
- Therefore this assumption that the Supreme Brahman assumes the form of jīva is not acceptable. It is important to remember that in Vedic literature Brahman (the living entity) is distinguished from Para-brahman (the Supreme Lord).

Section-I – Kṛṣṇa's answers to Arjuna's questions (1-4)

|| 8.4 ||

adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ
puruṣaś cādhidaivatam
adhiyajño 'ham evātra
dehe deha-bhṛtām vara

Adhibhūta refers to all the temporary material objects (**adhibhūtaṁ kṣaro bhāvaḥ**). Adhidaiva refers to the universal body of the Lord (**puruṣaś ca adhidaivatam**). I, on the other hand, am the adhiyajña situated in the body (**adhiyajñaḥ aham eva atra dehe**), O Arjuna, best among souls situated in a body (**deha-bhṛtām vara**).

SVCT

- The word adhibhūta refers to temporary objects (kṣaro bhāvaḥ) such as pots and cloth.
- The word adhidaiva refers to the person representing the totality of the universe, understood from the derivation of the word adhidaiva as “He within whom all the devatās exist as His subjects”.
- In the body (atra), I, the Paramātmā, am the adhiyajña, the person who induces others to perform actions like yajña.
- But why should the word eva (for emphasis) be used with aham, since the Paramātmā, antaryāmī, is only My expansion or amśa?

SVCT

- It is because this antaryāmī, though an amśa, is not different from Me, whereas the other items such as adhyātma (jīva) are different from Me.
- O best person (vara), among those having bodies (deha-bhṛtam), you are the best of all in this body, because you have a direct relationship with Me as friend.

Baladeva

- I call the gross material body (bhāva), which transforms at every moment (kṣara), adhibhūta.
- Adhibhūta literally means that which rules (adhikṛtya) the living entity (bhūta).
- Adhidaiva refers to the bodily form of the aggregate of matter, the universal form (puruṣaḥ).
- Adhidaiva literally means that which rules over the existing devatās such as Āditya.
- Adhiyajña means he who rules over sacrifice.
- In this body, I alone am adhiyajña, since I inspire worship and give results for that worship.

Baladeva

- The word eva rejects anyone else as the adhiyajña.
- The question “How does the adhiyajña exist in the body?” is then answered.
- Residing as the regulator within the body with a form measuring one pradeśa, I inspire performance of sacrifice and other acts.
- Moreover, by service to My form, one attains without difficulty the real meaning of these seven words.
- One understands that brahma (jīva) and adhiyajña (the Lord) are worthy of realizing, and the other items (impressions, karma, gross body, and universal form) as worthy of rejection.

Srila Prabhupada

- The physical nature is constantly changing.
- Material bodies generally pass through six stages: they are born, they grow, they remain for some duration, they produce some by-products, they dwindle, and then they vanish.
- This physical nature is called adhibhūta. It is created at a certain point and will be annihilated at a certain point.
- The conception of the universal form of the Supreme Lord, which includes all the demigods and their different planets, is called adhidaivata.
- And present in the body along with the individual soul is the Supersoul, a plenary representation of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Srila Prabhupada

- The Supersoul is called the Paramātmā or adhiyajña and is situated in the heart.
- The word eva is particularly important in the context of this verse because by this word the Lord stresses that the Paramātmā is not different from Him.
- The Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, seated beside the individual soul, is the witness of the individual soul's activities and is the source of the soul's various types of consciousness.
- The Supersoul gives the individual soul an opportunity to act freely and witnesses his activities.

Srila Prabhupada

- The functions of all these different manifestations of the Supreme Lord automatically become clarified for the pure Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee engaged in transcendental service to the Lord.
- The gigantic universal form of the Lord called adhidaivata is contemplated by the neophyte who cannot approach the Supreme Lord in His manifestation as Supersoul.
- The neophyte is advised to contemplate the universal form, or virāṭ-puruṣa, whose legs are considered the lower planets, whose eyes are considered the sun and moon, and whose head is considered the upper planetary system.

Section-II – Remembering Krsna at the time of death (5-8)

|| 8.5 ||

anta-kāle ca mām eva
smaran muktvā kalevaram
yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ
yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ

At the point of death (**anta-kāle**), he who leaves the body (**muktvā kalevaram yaḥ prayāti**) while knowing Me in truth (**mām eva smaran**), attains a nature similar to Mine (**sah mad-bhāvaṁ yāti**). Of this there is no doubt (**nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ**).

SVCT

- This verse answers the question “How are you to be known at the time of death?”
- Smaran means remembering Me, knowing Me in truth, not like knowing pots or cloth.
- The method of knowing or remembering the Lord is now explained in fourteen verses.

Baladeva

- This verse answers the question “How can one know you at the time of dying?”
- I , being known at that time by knowledge in the form of remembrance, bestow the result—your attainment of My nature (mad bhāvam).
- Mad bhāvam in this verse means “My nature.”
- He who remembers Me attains a nature like Mine, with eight qualities: he becomes sinless, ageless, deathless, without grief, without hunger, without thirst, blissful, and his desires are instantly fulfilled.

Srila Prabhupada

- In this verse the importance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is stressed.
- Anyone who quits his body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is at once transferred to the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord.
- The Supreme Lord is the purest of the pure.
- Therefore anyone who is constantly Kṛṣṇa conscious is also the purest of the pure.
- The word smaran ("remembering") is important.
- Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is not possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service.

Srila Prabhupada

- Therefore one should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the very beginning of life.
- If one wants to achieve success at the end of his life, the process of remembering Kṛṣṇa is essential.
- Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.
- Lord Caitanya has advised that one be as tolerant as a tree (taror api sahiṣṇunā).

Srila Prabhupada

- There may be so many impediments for a person who is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- Nonetheless, tolerating all these impediments, one should continue to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, so that at the end of one's life one can have the full benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Section-II – Remembering Krsna at the time of death (5-8)

|| 8.6 ||

yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ
tyajaty ante kalevaram
taṁ taṁ evaiti kaunteya
sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ

Whatever one thinks of (**yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran bhāvaṁ**) when leaving the body (**tyajaty ante kalevaram**), one attains a state similar (**taṁ taṁ eva eti**) to that object of constant thought (**sadā tad-bhāva-bhāvitaḥ**), O son of Kuntī (**kaunteya**).

Baladeva

- It is not a rule that all remember Me and attain Me.
- Others remember something else and attain that.
- Whatever object (bhāvam) a person remembers, he attains that after giving up his present body and state of mind.
- Bharata, remembering a deer at the point of death, became a deer.
- The last thoughts at death are the subjects of previous thoughts.
- His mind being controlled by that previous remembrance (tad bhāva bhāvitaḥ), he attains a body according to the object he thinks of at death.

Srila Prabhupada

- The process of changing one's nature at the critical moment of death is here explained.
- A person who at the end of his life quits his body thinking of Kṛṣṇa attains the transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord, but it is not true that a person who thinks of something other than Kṛṣṇa attains the same transcendental state. This is a point we should note very carefully.
- How can one die in the proper state of mind?
- Mahārāja Bharata, although a great personality, thought of a deer at the end of his life, and so in his next life he was transferred into the body of a deer. Although as a deer he remembered his past activities, he had to accept that animal body.

Srila Prabhupada

- Of course, one's thoughts during the course of one's life accumulate to influence one's thoughts at the moment of death, so this life creates one's next life.
- If in one's present life one lives in the mode of goodness and always thinks of Kṛṣṇa, it is possible for one to remember Kṛṣṇa at the end of one's life. That will help one be transferred to the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa.
- If one is transcendently absorbed in Kṛṣṇa's service, then his next body will be transcendental (spiritual), not material.
- Therefore the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the best process for successfully changing one's state of being at the end of one's life.

Section-II – Remembering Kṛṣṇa at the time of death (5-8)

|| 8.7 ||

**tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu
mām anusmara yudhya ca
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir
mām evaiśyasy asaṁśayaḥ**

Therefore (**tasmāt**), at all times (**sarveṣu kāleṣu**) remembering Me, fight (**mām anusmara yudhya ca**). Without doubt (**asaṁśayaḥ**), one whose intelligence and mind are offered to Me (**mayy arpita-mano-buddhir**) attains Me (**mām eva eśyasy**).

Baladeva and SVCT

- Since previous thoughts are the cause of thoughts at death, you should remember Me at every moment and fight.
- To teach people, engage in your prescribed duties of fighting.
- Offering your mind and intelligence to Me, you will attain only Me and nothing else.
- Have no doubt about this.
- The mind creates the decision to think of Me.
- The intelligence creates the determination to remain fixed in thinking of Me.

Srila Prabhupada

- This instruction to Arjuna is very important for all men engaged in material activities.
- The Lord does not say that one should give up his prescribed duties or engagements.
- One can continue them and at the same time think of Kṛṣṇa by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- This will free one from material contamination and engage the mind and intelligence in Kṛṣṇa.
- By chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, one will be transferred to the supreme planet, Kṛṣṇaloka, without a doubt.

Section-II – Remembering Kṛṣṇa at the time of death (5-8)

|| 8.8 ||

**abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena
cetasā nānya-gāminā
paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ
yāti pārthānucintayan**

Continuously contemplating Me (**anucintayan**) with mind engaged in the practice of repeated remembrance (**cetasā abhyāsa-yoga-yuktena**), without deviation (**na anya-gāminā**), one attains the transcendental supreme person (**paramaṁ puruṣaṁ divyaṁ yāti**).

SVCT

- Therefore, that person who practices remembrance of Me during his life will naturally remember Me at the time of death, and by that, he will attain Me.
- Therefore, remembering Me by the mind is the highest yoga. That is expressed in this verse.
- Abhyāsa means to repeatedly remember Me.
- The mind should be engaged in this method (yoga) of repetition of remembering Me. It should not wander to other objects of remembrance.
- By this practice one will conquer of the nature of the mind.

Baladeva

- In this verse the Lord emphasizes that constant remembrance leads to remembrance at death.
- With consciousness unswerving, fixed on one point (cetasā nānya gāminā), engaged in the function (yoga) of remembrance by repetition (abhyāsa), contemplating the supreme person, Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa, endowed with great opulence (divyam), a person, becomes like the Lord, just as an insect remembering a bee becomes a bee, attains Him alone.
- [Note: This indicates he can attain sārūpya, or other types of superior liberation, but not necessarily the various rasas like dāsya and sakhya.]

Baladeva

- [Note:

**kīṭaḥ peśaskṛtā ruddhaḥ kuḍyāyām tam anusmaran
saṁrambha-bhaya-yogena vindate tat-svarūpatām**

A grassworm confined in a hole of a wall by a bee always thinks of the bee in fear and enmity and later becomes a bee simply because of such remembrance. **SB 7.1.28**

Srila Prabhupada

- In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa stresses the importance of remembering Him.
- One's memory of Kṛṣṇa is revived by chanting the mahā-mantra, Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- By this practice of chanting and hearing the sound vibration of the Supreme Lord, one's ear, tongue and mind are engaged.
- This mystic meditation is very easy to practice, and it helps one attain the Supreme Lord.

Srila Prabhupada

- Puruṣam means enjoyer.
- Although living entities belong to the marginal energy of the Supreme Lord, they are in material contamination.
- They think themselves enjoyers, but they are not the supreme enjoyer.
- Here it is clearly stated that the supreme enjoyer is the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His different manifestations and plenary expansions as Nārāyaṇa, Vāsudeva, etc.

Srila Prabhupada

- The devotee can constantly think of the object of worship, the Supreme Lord, in any of His features—Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, etc.—by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- This practice will purify him, and at the end of his life, due to his constant chanting, he will be transferred to the kingdom of God.
- Yoga practice is meditation on the Supersoul within; similarly, by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa one fixes his mind always on the Supreme Lord.

Srila Prabhupada

- The mind is fickle, and therefore it is necessary to engage the mind by force to think of Kṛṣṇa.
- One example often given is that of the caterpillar that thinks of becoming a butterfly and so is transformed into a butterfly in the same life.
- Similarly, if we constantly think of Kṛṣṇa, it is certain that at the end of our lives we shall have the same bodily constitution as Kṛṣṇa.

Section-III – Remembering Kṛṣṇa (9-13)

|| 8.9-10 ||

kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram
aṅor aṅīyāṁsam anusmared yaḥ
sarvasya dhātāram acintya-rūpam
āditya-varṇam tamasaḥ parastāt

prayāṇa-kāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yoga-balena caiva
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak
sa taṁ param puruṣam upaiti divyam

At the time of death (**prayāṇa-kāle**), a person endowed with devotion (**yaḥ bhaktyā yukto**) and with unwavering mind (**acalena manasā**), who concentrates between the brows (**bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak**) through the strength of yoga practice (**yoga-balena caiva**), and who remembers (**anusmared**) He who is omniscient, beginningless, the teacher (**kaviṁ purāṇam anuśāsītāram**), smaller than the smallest (**aṅor aṅīyāṁsam**), the container of everything (**sarvasya dhātāram**), the inconceivable (**acintya-rūpam**), an independent form like the sun (**āditya-varṇam**), who is above prakṛti (**tamasaḥ parastāt**)—that person attains the transcendental supreme person (**sa taṁ param puruṣam upaiti divyam**).

SVCT

- Without practice of yoga it is difficult to withdraw the mind from sense objects. Without withdrawing the mind from sense objects, it is difficult to think constantly of the Lord.
- Therefore one should execute bhakti along with some type of yoga practice.
- The Lord here speaks of such bhakti mixed with aṣṭāṅga-yoga (yoga-miśra-bhakti) in five verses.
- The Lord is omniscient (kavi). But though one may be omniscient, like Sanaka and others, one may not be eternal.
- Therefore, the Lord is described as purāṇa, without beginning.

SVCT

- Though He is both omniscient and without beginning, this does not indicate that He becomes the instructor of bhakti as Paramātmā.
- Therefore He is called anuśāsītāram, the teacher, who by His mercy gives instructions about devotion to Himself when He appears as Kṛṣṇa or Rāma.
- Though He is merciful, He is still a difficult object to know factually: compared to the smallest He is even smaller. Then, is He like the jīva, the size of an atom?
- No, He is also of the greatest size, spreading everywhere, since everything is contained within Him (sarvasya dhātāram). Thus He is said to be inconceivable in form (acintya-rūpam).

SVCT

- Though He appears of medium size, as a human being, His manifestation is independent of all others.
- Thus He has a form (varṇa) which is like that of the sun (āditya), revealing both Himself and all others.
- Thus, though He is the possessor of māyā-śakti (prakṛti), His form is transcendental to prakṛti or māyā (tamasah parastāt).
- At the time of death (prayāṇa-kāle), with unwavering mind, engaged in bhakti with constant remembrance of Me as described above, the yogī attains Me.
- How does he attain unwavering mind?

SVCT

- He attains it through the strength of his practice of yoga (yoga-balena).
- The yoga process is then described.
- Fixing his prāṇa in the ājñā-cakra (bhruvor madhye), he attains Me.
- [Note: From verse 13 it seems that attaining the Lord means attaining His abode, attaining a distant relationship with the Lord.]

Srila Prabhupada

- The process of thinking of the Supreme is mentioned in this verse.
- The foremost point is that He is not impersonal or void. One cannot meditate on something impersonal or void. That is very difficult.
- The process of thinking of Kṛṣṇa, however, is very easy and is factually stated herein.
- First of all, the Lord is puruṣa, a person—we think of the person Rāma and the person Kṛṣṇa.
- And whether one thinks of Rāma or of Kṛṣṇa, what He is like is described in this verse of Bhagavad-gītā.

Srila Prabhupada

- The Lord is kavi; that is, He knows past, present and future and therefore knows everything.
- He is the oldest personality because He is the origin of everything; everything is born out of Him.
- He is also the supreme controller of the universe, and He is the maintainer and instructor of humanity.
- He is smaller than the smallest. The living entity is one ten-thousandth part of the tip of a hair, but the Lord is so inconceivably small that He enters into the heart of this particle. Therefore He is called smaller than the smallest.
- As the Supreme, He can enter into the atom and into the heart of the smallest and control him as the Supersoul.

Srila Prabhupada

- Although so small, He is still all-pervading and is maintaining everything.
- By Him all these planetary systems are sustained.
- We often wonder how these big planets are floating in the air. It is stated here that the Supreme Lord, by His inconceivable energy, is sustaining all these big planets and systems of galaxies.
- The word acintya ("inconceivable") is very significant in this connection.
- God's energy is beyond our conception, beyond our thinking jurisdiction, and is therefore called inconceivable (acintya).

Srila Prabhupada

- Who can argue this point? He pervades this material world and yet is beyond it.
- We cannot comprehend even this material world, which is insignificant compared to the spiritual world—so how can we comprehend what is beyond?
- Acintya means that which is beyond this material world, that which our argument, logic and philosophical speculation cannot touch, that which is inconceivable.
- Therefore intelligent persons, avoiding useless argument and speculation, should accept what is stated in scriptures like the Vedas, Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and follow the principles they set down. This will lead one to understanding.

Srila Prabhupada

- In this verse it is clearly stated that at the time of death the mind must be fixed in devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- For those practiced in yoga, it is recommended that they raise the life force between the eyebrows (to the ājñā-cakra).
- The practice of ṣaṭ-cakra-yoga, involving meditation on the six cakras, is suggested here.
- A pure devotee does not practice such yoga, but because he is always engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, at death he can remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His grace. This is explained in verse fourteen.

Srila Prabhupada

- The particular use of the word yoga-balena is significant in this verse because without practice of yoga—whether ṣaṭ-cakra-yoga or bhakti-yoga—one cannot come to this transcendental state of being at the time of death.
- One cannot suddenly remember the Supreme Lord at death; one must have practiced some yoga system, especially the system of bhakti-yoga.
- Since one's mind at death is very disturbed, one should practice transcendence through yoga during one's life.

Section-III – Remembering Krsna (9-13)

|| 8.11 ||

yad akṣaram veda-vido vadanti
viśanti yad yatayo vīta-rāgāḥ
yad icchanto brahmacaryam caranti
tat te padam saṅgrahena pravakṣye

Along with the method (**saṅgrahena**), I will speak of the final goal (**tat te padam pravakṣye**) which the knowers of the Veda call om (**yad akṣaram veda-vido vadanti**), and which the sannyāsīs who have given up attachment attain (**viśanti yad yatayo vīta-rāgāḥ**). Desiring this (**yad icchanto**), they practice celibacy (**brahmacaryam caranti**).

SVCT

- “Just by Your mentioning that the yogī should concentrate the prāṇa at the ājñā-cakra, I cannot understand this yoga.
- What is the manner of doing this yoga? What should be chanted? Upon what should one meditate? What is to be obtained by this yoga?
- Briefly You should tell me.” Kṛṣṇa speaks three verses to answer him.
- Please listen as I describe what will be factually attained (padam) along with the method of attainment (saṅgrahena)—that Brahman which the knowers of the Veda call om (akṣara), which the sannāysīs attain.
- [Note: Saṅgraha is analyzed as “the means by which something is completely (samyak) understood (gṛhyate).”]

Baladeva

- “I cannot understand this method of fixing the prāṇa in the ājñā cakra.
- Therefore, what is the method, what is to be chanted, what is the object of meditation, and what is the ultimate goal achieved?”
- Anticipating this question, the Lord speaks.
- The knowers of the Vedas say that the syllable om represents the one indestructible brahman.
- The saṁnyāsīs, having given up ignorance (vīta rāgāḥ), attain (viśanti) that brahma full of knowledge indicated by the sound om.

Baladeva

- The students of brahman, desiring to know this brahman and its form as om, follow vows of celibacy, living in the gurukula.
- I will speak about what is to be attained (padam) along with the method (samgrahena), so that you can easily attain that knowledge.
- Samgraha means literally that by which truth can be completely (samyak) grasped (grhyate), a method.

Srila Prabhupada

- Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has recommended to Arjuna the practice of ṣaṭ-cakra-yoga, in which one places the air of life between the eyebrows.
- Taking it for granted that Arjuna might not know how to practice ṣaṭ-cakra-yoga, the Lord explains the process in the following verses.
- The Lord says that Brahman, although one without a second, has various manifestations and features.
- Especially for the impersonalists, the akṣara, or omkāra—the syllable om—is identical with Brahman.
- Kṛṣṇa here explains the impersonal Brahman, into which the renounced order of sages enter.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the Vedic system of knowledge, students, from the very beginning, are taught to vibrate om̐ and learn of the ultimate impersonal Brahman by living with the spiritual master in complete celibacy.
- In this way they realize these two of Brahman's features.
- This practice is very essential for the student's advancement in spiritual life, but at the moment such brahmacārī (unmarried celibate) life is not at all possible.
- The social construction of the world has changed so much that there is no possibility of one's practicing celibacy from the beginning of student life.

Srila Prabhupada

- Throughout the world there are many institutions for different departments of knowledge, but there is no recognized institution where students can be educated in the brahmacārī principles.
- Unless one practices celibacy, advancement in spiritual life is very difficult.
- Therefore Lord Caitanya has announced, according to the scriptural injunctions for this Age of Kali, that in this age no process of realizing the Supreme is possible except the chanting of the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Section-III – Remembering Kṛṣṇa (9-13)

|| 8.12-13 ||

**sarva-dvārāṇi saṁyamya mano hr̥di nirudhya ca
mūrdhny ādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam āsthito yoga-dhāraṇām**

**om̐ ity ekākṣaram brahma vyāharan mām anusmaran
yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham sa yāti paramām gatim**

He who leaves his body (**yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham**) while withdrawing the senses from senses objects (**sarva-dvārāṇi saṁyamya**), concentrating the mind in the heart (**mano hr̥di nirudhya ca**), fixing the prāṇa at the ājñā-cakra (**mūrdhny ādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam āsthitaḥ**), completely absorbing his thoughts in Me (**yoga-dhāraṇām**), uttering “om” (**om̐ ity ekākṣaram brahma vyāharan**) and remembering Me constantly (**mām anusmaran**), attains My planet (**sa yāti paramām gatim**).

SVCT

- Elaborating what was previously spoken, the Lord describes the method of yoga.
- Withdrawing the openings of all the senses (sarva-dvārāṇi) from the external objects; confining the mind to the heart, with no desire for other objects; fixing the prāṇa between the brows (mūrdhni); and taking shelter of Me completely (yoga-dhāraṇām); uttering just one syllable, om, the form of Brahman; and meditating continuously upon Me (mām anusmaran) represented by om— giving up his body, he attains sālokyam (paramām gatim).
- [Note: From this statement it would appear that this yogamiśra-bhakta attains a similar state as the three types of sakāma-bhaktas mentioned in chapter 7.]

Baladeva

- This verse speaks of the method of yoga. One should control all the external doors of knowledge (the senses such as the ear), withdrawing them (pratyahara) from the sense objects such as sound, receiving the sense objects by senses disinterested in enjoyment by repeatedly seeing their faults.
- But even in controlling the senses, the mind will wander.
- Therefore, concentrate the mind, the door to internal knowledge, upon Me, situated in the heart, even though by the mind one remembers the sense objects.

Baladeva

- Then, one should control the prāṇa, the door to actions, in the lotus of the heart, and then one should gradually, as one gains control, establish it at the ājñā cakra and then at the top of the head (mūrdhṇy ādhāya), on the path of the suṣumna moving upwards, under the instruction of the guru.
- Doing this, one should carry out the practice of thinking (yoga dhāraṇām) of Me (ātmanaḥ) from foot to head.

Baladeva

- One should pronounce internally om, representing brahman.
- Om is praised with the words eka akṣaram. Om is the chief sound (eka) which is indestructible (akṣaram).
- Then one should meditate (anusmaran means dhyāna) on Me, paramātmā, indicated by that sound.
- Meditating in this way, when he departs, giving up the body, he attains liberation in the form of attaining My planet—sālokya (paramam gatim).
- [Note: Perhaps there is a distinction between the yoga miśra bhakta and the aṣṭaṅga yogī described in chapter 6, who attained liberation through vision of ātmā and paramātmā.]

Srila Prabhupada

- It is clearly stated here that om̐, Brahman and Lord Kṛṣṇa are not different.
- The impersonal sound of Kṛṣṇa is om̐, but the sound Hare Kṛṣṇa contains om̐.
- The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is clearly recommended for this age. So if one quits his body at the end of life chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, he certainly reaches one of the spiritual planets, according to the mode of his practice.
- The devotees of Kṛṣṇa enter the Kṛṣṇa planet, Goloka Vṛndāvana.
- For the personalists there are also innumerable other planets, known as Vaikuṅṭha planets, in the spiritual sky, whereas the impersonalists remain in the brahma-jyoti.

Section-IV – Pure Devotional Service (14-16)

|| 8.14 ||

**ananya-cetāḥ satataṁ
yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāhaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha
nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ**

The devotee who remembers Me (**yo yoginaḥ mām smarati**) daily (**nityaśaḥ**), at all times (**satataṁ**), without deviation to other processes or goals (**ananya-cetāḥ**), who desires association with Me in one of the primary relationships (**nitya-yuktasya**), easily attains Me (**tasya ahaṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha**).

SVCT

- Having spoken of pradhānī bhūtā bhakti, bhakti mixed with karma, mentioned in āрто jijñāsur arthārthī (BG 7.16), and with desire for liberation in jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya (BG 7.29), and also bhakti mixed with yoga in this chapter (verse 9-13), now the Lord speaks of kevalā bhakti, the best bhakti, devoid of any material tinge.
- The mind of that devotee is free from performing other processes such as karma-yoga or jñāna-yoga, free from worship of other persons or devatās, and free from other goals, such as attainment of Svarga or mokṣa.

[Note: The jñāna-miśra-bhakta, referred to as the jñānī in the enumeration of the four types does not have a desire for material results nor for liberation. Therefore he has not been mentioned in the previous sentence. However, the jñāna-miśra-bhakta retains some elements of the jñāna process while practicing bhakti and is thus distinguished from the kevala-bhakta who performs only bhakti.]

SVCT

- Thus he is called ananya-cetāḥ, with mind not thinking anything else except the Lord.
- He remembers Me every day, (nityaśaḥ), constantly (satatam), not depending upon appropriate time, place, person, or purity.
- I can be easily attained (sulabhaḥ) by that person, by that bhakti.
- It is not mixed with the difficulties encountered in practicing yoga, jñāna or other processes.
- He constantly desires association with Me (nity-yuktasya).
- Yoginaḥ here refers to the person doing bhakti-yoga. Or it can mean a person who has a relationship (yoga) with the Lord, in dāsya, sākhyā or other relationships.

Baladeva

- Having taught the process of bhakti mixed with yoga for those desiring liberation alone, the Lord now teaches pure bhakti, which was previously mentioned as eka bhakti in relation to the jñāni with knowledge of the Lord who desired only the Lord.
- The person whose consciousness is in Me alone (ananya cetāḥ), not in any other method such karma or aṣṭāṅga yoga and not with any other goal such as svarga loka or liberation; who desires only Me; who through such processes of japa and deity worship, continually (satatam), every day (nityaśaḥ), without regard for time, place or purity, remembers Me, the Supreme Lord, who drinks the breast milk of Yaśodā, who appear in this world in many forms such as Nrsimha and Rāma, the only dear object—such a person easily attains Me, who am aware of his affection for Me.
- He attains Me easily, not encountering the difficulties in karma, aṣṭāṅga yoga or other processes.

Baladeva

- The implication of the genitive case in this verse (tasya aham sulabhah: I am attained by that person) is that though he attains Me, I am the cause or doer of his attainment (he is not the agent): I cannot tolerate separation from him, and thus I will show Myself to him.
- I am easy to attain for him, because I destroy the obstacles, and I perfect his sādhana.
- Śruti confirms this:
yam evaiṣa vṛnute tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām

The Lord is attained by that person alone whom the Lord chooses. He reveals His own form to that person. Mundaka Upaniṣad 3.2.3.

- Kṛṣṇa himself will say: **dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ** (I give the devotee the means by which he attains Me. BG 10.10)

Srila Prabhupada

- This verse especially describes the final destination attained by the unalloyed devotees who serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead in bhakti-yoga.
- Previous verses have mentioned four different kinds of devotees—the distressed, the inquisitive, those who seek material gain, and the speculative philosophers.
- Different processes of liberation have also been described: karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga and haṭha-yoga.
- The principles of these yoga systems have some bhakti added, but this verse particularly mentions pure bhakti-yoga, without any mixture of jñāna, karma or haṭha.

Srila Prabhupada

- As indicated by the word *ananya-cetāḥ*, in pure bhakti-yoga the devotee desires nothing but Kṛṣṇa.
- A pure devotee does not desire promotion to heavenly planets, nor does he seek oneness with the brahma-jyoti or salvation or liberation from material entanglement.
- A pure devotee does not desire anything.
- In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* the pure devotee is called *niṣkāma*, which means he has no desire for self-interest.
- Perfect peace belongs to him alone, not to them who strive for personal gain.

Srila Prabhupada

- Whereas a jñāna-yogī, karma-yogī or haṭha-yogī has his own selfish interests, a perfect devotee has no desire other than to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- Therefore the Lord says that for anyone who is unflinchingly devoted to Him, He is easy to attain.
- A pure devotee always engages in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa in one of His various personal features.
- Kṛṣṇa has various plenary expansions and incarnations, such as Rāma and Nṛsimha, and a devotee can choose to fix his mind in loving service to any of these transcendental forms of the Supreme Lord.

Srila Prabhupada

- Such a devotee meets with none of the problems that plague the practitioners of other yogas.
- Bhakti-yoga is very simple and pure and easy to perform.
- One can begin simply by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- The Lord is merciful to all, but as we have already explained, He is especially inclined toward those who always serve Him without deviation.
- The Lord helps such devotees in various ways. As stated in the Vedas (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.23), *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas/ tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām*: one who is fully surrendered and engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord can understand the Supreme Lord as He is.

Srila Prabhupada

- And as stated in Bhagavad-gītā (10.10), dadāmi buddhi-yogam tam: the Lord gives such a devotee sufficient intelligence so that ultimately the devotee can attain Him in His spiritual kingdom.
- The special qualification of the pure devotee is that he is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa without deviation and without considering the time or place.
- There should be no impediments.
- He should be able to carry out his service anywhere and at any time.

Srila Prabhupada

- Some say that the devotee should remain in holy places like Vṛndāvana or some holy town where the Lord lived, but a pure devotee can live anywhere and create the atmosphere of Vṛndāvana by his devotional service.
- It was Śrī Advaita who told Lord Caitanya, "Wherever You are, O Lord-there is Vṛndāvana."
- As indicated by the words satatam and nityaśaḥ, which mean "always," "regularly," or "every day," a pure devotee constantly remembers Kṛṣṇa and meditates upon Him.
- These are qualifications of the pure devotee for whom the Lord is most easily attainable. Bhakti-yoga is the system that the Gītā recommends above all others.

Srila Prabhupada

- Generally, the bhakti-yogīs are engaged in five different ways: (1) śānta-bhakta, engaged in devotional service in neutrality; (2) dāsya-bhakta, engaged in devotional service as servant; (3) sakhya-bhakta, engaged as friend; (4) vātsalya-bhakta, engaged as parent; and (5) mādhyama-bhakta, engaged as conjugal lover of the Supreme Lord.
- In any of these ways, the pure devotee is always constantly engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Supreme Lord and cannot forget the Supreme Lord, and so for him the Lord is easily attained.
- A pure devotee cannot forget the Supreme Lord for a moment, and similarly the Supreme Lord cannot forget His pure devotee for a moment. This is the great blessing of the Kṛṣṇa conscious process of chanting the mahā-mantra—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Section-IV – Pure Devotional Service (14-16)

|| 8.15 ||

**mām upetya punar janma
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ
saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ**

Attaining Me (**mām upetya**), those great souls (**mahātmānaḥ**) do not return (**na punar āpnuvanti**) to a birth which is full of suffering and temporary (**duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam janma**), having attained the highest goal of personal service to Me (**saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ**).

SVCT

- “What happens to that person who attains You?”
- Attaining Me, they do not attain birth again which is full of suffering (duḥkhālayam) and temporary, but attain a birth similar to Mine, which is full of joy, because it is eternal.
- According to the Amara Kośa, śāśvata means certain, eternal, continual, everlasting.
- When I take My birth, which is full of joy, spiritual, and eternal, in the house of Vasudeva, My devotees, being My eternal associates, will also take such birth, and not at other times (caused by karma).

SVCT

- Other devotees attain perfection, but those who exclusively think of Me (ananya-cetāḥ) attain the very highest perfection (paramām saṁsiddhim)—a position as an assistant in My pastimes.
- This indicates the observable superiority of the kevala-bhakta over all other types of devotees mentioned.

Baladeva

- What is the result for a person who has attained this stage?
- Attaining Me, whose qualities have been described, great souls do not take birth again in the material world.
- What is this birth?
- It is filled with many pains, such as staying in the womb (duḥkhālayam). That birth is not permanent.
- As soon as one is born one disappears.
- They do not take birth because they have attained the most excellent refuge (paramam saṁsiddham), Me.

Baladeva

- The Lord will later say avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas tam āhuḥ paramām gatim: that is called the highest goal which is unmanifest and eternal. (BG 8.21)
- What persons attain Me? They are very noble minded and generous persons (mahātmanah).
- This means that they concentrate only on Me, the ocean of knowledge and bliss, who am inclined to give mercy to the devotees, who totally depend on My devotees.
- They do not consider such things as sārṣṭi— attaining great powers like Mine (Mixed devotees and practitioners of aṣṭāṅga yoga attain these.), and they take Me as their life-sustaining medicine. These persons attain Me, the highest perfection.

Baladeva

- This verse declares the superior position of those devotees who are dedicated solely to the Lord (ananya cetasaḥ) to His other devotees, such as the saniṣṭhas.
- [Note: The pariniṣṭha devotee also performs prescribed duties, like the saniṣṭha, but only to teach others. His main activity is worship of the Lord. If the prescribed duties interfere with the worship, he can avoid those duties with no ill effect. Bhagavat dharma is his main occupation and varṇāśrama is secondary. The saniṣṭha devotee performs his prescribed duties as worship of the Lord, and by that becomes purified. The nirapekṣa devotee does not depend at all on prescribed duties of karma for purification or realization of the Lord. His advancement depends solely on association of devotees and grace of God.]

Section-IV – Pure Devotional Service (14-16)

|| 8.16 ||

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

O Arjuna (**arjuna**), all persons including the inhabitants of Brahmaloaka (**ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ**) take birth again (**punar āvartinah**). But having attained Me, O son of Kuntī (**mām upetya tu kaunteya**), a person does not take birth again (**punar janma na vidyate**).

Baladeva

- Though those who do not worship Me may attain svarga loka by their particular karmas, they fall from those worlds.
- The letter ā (bringing towards) with brahma here means that they attain worlds up to and including Brahma-loka.
- All the jīvas residing in svarga and other planets, along with those on Brahma loka, return to the earth and take birth after exhausting their karmas.
- The Lord repeats the words mām upetya mentioned in the first line of the previous verse to strengthen His statement.
- Attaining Me, those pure devotees do not take birth again.

Baladeva

- This should be understood. Those who attain Brahma-loka by sacrificing themselves at death through knowledge of the five fires will fall after the completion of their enjoyment.
- But those who are saniṣṭha devotees of the Supreme Lord, experiencing one after the other all the different planets, do not fall after going there.
- With the destruction of those planets they, along with the ruler of the planet, go to the Supreme Lord's planet.

Baladeva

- Note: These are devotees who are dedicated to the Lord but have some interest in experiencing the higher planets.
- At the end of chapter 6 Baladeva has said that the *sanisthas* follow the path of *niškāma karma yoga*, followed by *aṣṭāṅga yoga* to achieve liberation.
- They follow prescribed karmas without interest in results, only to realize *ātmā* and *paramātmā*, and after realization still perform the karmas, with desire to see *svarga* only to serve the Lord and see the worlds created by the Lord.
- Eventually he transcends all of this. Even the *nirapekṣa* devotee may go to *svarga*, but this is a test, to see if he has true detachment. This is explained in *Govinda Bhāṣya* 3.4.33.

Baladeva

- Smṛti says:

**brahmaṇā saha te sarve samprāpte pratisaṅcare
parasyānte kṛtātmānaḥ praviśanti param padam**

Those who are on Brahma-loka with exalted status at the time of dissolution go directly to the supreme abode, along with Lord Brahmā. Kurma Purāṇa 1.11.284

Srila Prabhupada

- All kinds of yogīs-karma, jñāna, haṭha, etc.—eventually have to attain devotional perfection in bhakti-yoga, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, before they can go to Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode and never return.
- Those who attain the highest material planets, the planets of the demigods, are again subjected to repeated birth and death.
- As persons on earth are elevated to higher planets, people on higher planets such as Brahmaloḳa, Candraloḳa and Indraloḳa fall down to earth.
- The practice of sacrifice called pañcāgni-vidyā, recommended in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, enables one to achieve Brahmaloḳa, but if, on Brahmaloḳa, one does not cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then he must return to earth.

Srila Prabhupada

- Those who progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the higher planets are gradually elevated to higher and higher planets and at the time of universal devastation are transferred to the eternal spiritual kingdom.
- Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, in his commentary on Bhagavad-gītā, quotes this verse:

**brahmaṇā saha te sarve
samprāpte pratisaṅcare
parasyānte kṛtātmānaḥ
praviśanti paraṁ padam**

"When there is devastation of this material universe, Brahmā and the devotees who are constantly engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are all transferred to the spiritual universe and to specific spiritual planets according to their desires."

Section-V – Comparing the Material and Spiritual Worlds (17-22)

|| 8.17 ||

sahasra-yuga-paryantam
ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātrim yuga-sahasrāntām
te 'ho-rātra-vido janāḥ

Those who know (**yad viduḥ**) that a day of Brahmā (**brahmaṇo ahah**) lasts one thousand cycles (**sahasra-yuga-paryantam**), and also know that a night of Brahmā lasts one thousand yuga cycles (**rātrim yuga-sahasrāntām**) are knowers of the day and night of Brahma (**te aho-rātra-vido janāḥ**).

SVCT

- It is said in Bhāgavatam:

amṛtaṁ kṣemam abhayaṁ tri-mūrdhno 'dhāyi mūrdhasu

Deathlessness, fearlessness and freedom from the anxieties of old age and disease exist in the kingdom of God, which is beyond the three higher planetary systems and beyond the material coverings.

SB 2.6.19

- “But some say that there is fearlessness on Brahmaloḳa as well, and thus, it is not possible for the sannyāsī to die there, if they desire to stay there.”

SVCT

- No, if even Brahmā, the master of that planet, must die, what can we say of others?
- Those who are knowledgeable of scripture, who know that the day of Brahmā lasts a thousand yugas, also know that the night lasts a thousand yugas, because they are knowers of day and night.
- By such days, fortnights and months pass.
- A hundred of such years make the life of Brahmā.
- Then after that, Brahmā dies.
- However, a Brahmā who is a Vaiṣṇava attains liberation.

Srila Prabhupada

- The duration of the material universe is limited.
- It is manifested in cycles of kalpas.
- A kalpa is a day of Brahmā, and one day of Brahmā consists of a thousand cycles of four yugas, or ages: Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali.
- The cycle of Satya is characterized by virtue, wisdom and religion, there being practically no ignorance and vice, and the yuga lasts 1,728,000 years.
- In the Tretā-yuga vice is introduced, and this yuga lasts 1,296,000 years.

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- In the Dvāpara-yuga there is an even greater decline in virtue and religion, vice increasing, and this yuga lasts 864,000 years.
- And finally in Kali-yuga (the yuga we have now been experiencing over the past 5,000 years) there is an abundance of strife, ignorance, irreligion and vice, true virtue being practically nonexistent, and this yuga lasts 432,000 years.
- In Kali-yuga vice increases to such a point that at the termination of the yuga the Supreme Lord Himself appears as the Kalki avatāra, vanquishes the demons, saves His devotees, and commences another Satya-yuga.
- Then the process is set rolling again.

Srila Prabhupada

- These four yugas, rotating a thousand times, comprise one day of Brahmā, and the same number comprise one night.
- Brahmā lives one hundred of such "years" and then dies. These "hundred years" by earth calculations total to 311 trillion and 40 billion earth years.
- By these calculations the life of Brahmā seems fantastic and interminable, but from the viewpoint of eternity it is as brief as a lightning flash.
- In the Causal Ocean there are innumerable Brahmās rising and disappearing like bubbles in the Atlantic.
- Brahmā and his creation are all part of the material universe, and therefore they are in constant flux.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the material universe not even Brahmā is free from the process of birth, old age, disease and death.
- Brahmā, however, is directly engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord in the management of this universe—therefore he at once attains liberation.
- Elevated sannyāsīs are promoted to Brahmā's particular planet, Brahmāloka, which is the highest planet in the material universe and which survives all the heavenly planets in the upper strata of the planetary system, but in due course Brahmā and all the inhabitants of Brahmāloka are subject to death, according to the law of material nature.

Section-V – Comparing the Material and Spiritual Worlds (17-22)

|| 8.18 ||

avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ
prabhavanty ahar-āgame
rātry-āgame praliyante
tatraivāvyakta-samjñake

At the beginning of Brahmā's day (**ahar-āgame**), all living entities (**sarvāḥ**) become manifest from the unmanifest state (**avyaktād vyaktayaḥ prabhavanty**), and thereafter, when the night falls (**rātry-āgame**), they are merged into the unmanifest again (**tatra eva avyakta-samjñake praliyante**).

Baladeva

- Those who are less advanced than the above mentioned persons, the inhabitants of svarga, earth and the lower planets, will meet destruction in each day of Brahmā.
- [Note: The planets and inhabitants above svarga loka are not destroyed at the end of Brahmā's day, but those below are destroyed. Those on Brahma-loka may continue until the end of Brahmā's one hundred years.]
- At the commencement of Brahmā's day, when Brahmā awakens from sleeping state (avyaktāt), all bodies, senses, objects of enjoyment, and places of enjoyment (sarvāḥ vyaktayaḥ) become manifest.

Baladeva

- At the commencement of Brahmā's night, when it is time to sleep, they disappear within Brahmā (tatra eva), caused by his sleep (avyakta-samjñake).
- The word avyakta in this verse does not refer to pradhāna, since this verse is speaking of the daily creation and destruction, during which time the elements like ether remain intact.
- [Note: Merging into the pradhāna will only take place at the end of Brahmā's life.]
- Thus avyakta here refers to the sleeping state of Brahmā.

Section-V – Comparing the Material and Spiritual Worlds (17-22)

|| 8.19 ||

**bhūta-grāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ
bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate
rātry-āgame 'vaśaḥ pārtha
prabhavaty ahar-āgame**

In this way all the moving and non-moving entities (**sah bhūta-grāmaḥ**), having appeared (**bhūtvā bhūtvā**), disappear at the coming of night (**rātry-āgame pralīyate**), and reappear at the approach of day (**prabhavaty ahar-āgame**), under control of karma (**avaśaḥ**).

Baladeva

- But if they all disappear, they may not appear again.
- This fear arises from the logic that once being destroyed a thing will not manifest again.
- This verse refutes that idea.
- All moving and non-moving beings under the control of their karmas (avaśaḥ) appear at the commencement of the day.
- The meaning here is that the intelligent person will become detached from this world, understanding that the world is disturbed by such a flow of birth and death.

Srila Prabhupada

- The less intelligent, who try to remain within this material world, may be elevated to higher planets and then again must come down to this planet earth.
- During the daytime of Brahmā they can exhibit their activities on higher and lower planets within this material world, but at the coming of Brahmā's night they are all annihilated.
- In the day they receive various bodies for material activities, and at night they no longer have bodies but remain compact in the body of Viṣṇu.
- Then again they are manifest at the arrival of Brahmā's day.

Srila Prabhupada

- Bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate [Purport. 8.19]: during the day they become manifest, and at night they are annihilated again.
- Ultimately, when Brahmā's life is finished, they are all annihilated and remain unmanifest for millions and millions of years.
- And when Brahmā is born again in another millennium they are again manifest. In this way they are captivated by the spell of the material world.
- But those intelligent persons who take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness use the human life fully in the devotional service of the Lord, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.
- Thus they transfer themselves, even in this life, to the spiritual planet of Kṛṣṇa and become eternally blissful there, not being subject to such rebirths.

Section-V – Comparing the Material and Spiritual Worlds (17-22)

|| 8.20 ||

paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo
'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanah
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu
naśyatsu na vinaśyati

Superior to the unmanifest state of Brahmā's night (**tasmāt avyaktāt tu parah**) is another unmanifest state which is eternal (**anyah sanātanah avyaktah bhāvah**), which is not destroyed (**yaḥ na vinaśyati**) when everything else is destroyed (**sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu**).

Baladeva

- The rebirth of everyone stated in verse 16 has been elaborated in verses 17-19 by showing the birth and destruction of all entities under the control of karma.
- Now what the devotee attains (mām upetya) is described.
- Superior to the avyakta state of the night of Brahmā or Hiraṇyagarbha, there is another object (bhāvaḥ), which is very different, being the worthy object of worship. The remarkable qualities are stated.
- This object is invisible (avyaktaḥ), different from the forms assumed by the ātmā. However, by mercy, it can be perceived. This has been stated already (verse 14).
- This object is without beginning (sanātanaḥ) and is not destroyed when all bodies are destroyed at the end of Brahmā's day.

Srila Prabhupada

- Kṛṣṇa's superior, spiritual energy is transcendental and eternal.
- It is beyond all the changes of material nature, which is manifest and annihilated during the days and nights of Brahmā.
- Kṛṣṇa's superior energy is completely opposite in quality to material nature.
- Superior and inferior nature are explained in the Seventh Chapter.

Section-V – Comparing the Material and Spiritual Worlds (17-22)

|| 8.21 ||

avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas
tam āhuḥ paramām gatim
yaṁ prāpya na nivartante
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama

That which was described as eternal and unmanifest (**avyaktah akṣarah ity uktah**) is called the supreme goal (**tam āhuḥ paramām gatim**). Attaining that eternal form (**yaṁ mama paramaṁ dhāma prāpya**), they do not return (**na nivartante**).

SVCT

- The word avyakta of the previous verse is explained.
- That which is avyakta is without destruction (akṣara): Nārāyaṇa.
- As the śruti says, eko nārāyaṇa āsīn na brahmā na ca śaṅkaraḥ: only Nārāyaṇa existed, and not Brahmā or Śiva.
- Attaining My eternal form (mama paramam dhāma), they do not return.
- The word akṣara may also be interpreted as the impersonal Brahman, in which case dhāma paramam mama means “My form of light,” since dhāma also means “light.” [Note: This would be the attainment for jñānīs and yogīs who also perform a small amount of bhakti without offense.]

Srila Prabhupada

- The supreme abode of the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is described in the Brahma-saṁhitā as cintāmaṇi-dhāma, a place where all desires are fulfilled.
- The supreme abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, is full of palaces made of touchstone.
- There are also trees, called "desire trees," that supply any type of eatable upon demand, and there are cows, known as surabhi cows, which supply a limitless supply of milk. In this abode, the Lord is served by hundreds of thousands of goddesses of fortune (Lakṣmīs), and He is called Govinda, the primal Lord and the cause of all causes.

Srila Prabhupada

- The Lord is accustomed to blow His flute (veṇuṁ kvaṇantam).
- His transcendental form is the most attractive in all the worlds—His eyes are like lotus petals, and the color of His body is like the color of clouds.
- He is so attractive that His beauty excels that of thousands of Cupids.
- He wears saffron cloth, a garland around His neck and a peacock feather in His hair.
- In the Bhagavad-gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa gives only a small hint of His personal abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, which is the supermost planet in the spiritual kingdom.

Srila Prabhupada

- A vivid description is given in the Brahma-saṁhitā.
- Vedic literatures (Kāṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11) state that there is nothing superior to the abode of the Supreme Godhead, and that that abode is the ultimate destination (puruṣān na paraṁ kiñcit sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ).
- When one attains to it, he never returns to the material world.
- Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode and Kṛṣṇa Himself are nondifferent, being of the same quality.
- On this earth, Vṛndāvana, ninety miles southeast of Delhi, is a replica of that supreme Goloka Vṛndāvana located in the spiritual sky.
- When Kṛṣṇa descended on this earth, He sported on that particular tract of land known as Vṛndavāna, in the district of Mathurā, India.

Section-V – Comparing the Material and Spiritual Worlds (17-22)

|| 8.22 ||

**puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha
bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā
yasyāntaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam**

That supreme person (**sah paraḥ puruṣaḥ**), within whom exist all entities (**yasya antaḥ-sthāni bhūtāni**) and by which this universe is pervaded (**yena sarvam idaṁ tatam**), is attained by pure ananyā bhakti (**ananyayā bhaktyā tu labhyah**), O son of Pṛthā (**pārtha**).

Baladeva

- This verse describes the easy method of bhakti for attaining the Lord. That person (Myself) is attained by exclusive bhakti (ananyayā bhaktyā) alone, previously described in verse 14.
- I can be attained by bhakti yoga, but am difficult to attain by bhakti mixed with yoga.
- The qualities of that Lord are then described in the next line.
- (Everything is within Him), and by Him this whole universe (sarvam idam) is pervaded (tatam).

Srila Prabhupada

- It is here clearly stated that the supreme destination, from which there is no return, is the abode of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person.
- The Brahma-saṁhitā describes this supreme abode as ānanda-cinmaya-rasa, a place where everything is full of spiritual bliss.
- All the variegatedness manifest there is of the quality of spiritual bliss—nothing there is material.
- That variegatedness is expanded as the spiritual expansion of the Supreme Godhead Himself, for the manifestation there is totally of the spiritual energy, as explained in Chapter Seven.

Srila Prabhupada

- As far as this material world is concerned, although the Lord is always in His supreme abode, He is nonetheless all-pervading by His material energy.
- So by His spiritual and material energies He is present everywhere—both in the material and in the spiritual universes.
- Yasyāntaḥ-sthāni means that everything is sustained within Him, within either His spiritual or material energy.
- The Lord is all-pervading by these two energies.
- To enter Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode or the innumerable Vaikuṅṭha planets is possible only by bhakti, devotional service, as clearly indicated here by the word bhaktyā.

Srila Prabhupada

- No other process can help one attain that supreme abode.
- The Vedas (Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad 1.21) also describe the supreme abode and the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
- Eko vaśī sarva-gaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ. In that abode there is only one Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose name is Kṛṣṇa. He is the supreme merciful Deity, and although situated there as one He has expanded Himself into millions and millions of plenary expansions.
- The Vedas compare the Lord to a tree standing still yet bearing many varieties of fruits, flowers and changing leaves.

Srila Prabhupada

- The plenary expansions of the Lord who preside over the Vaikuṅṭha planets are four-armed, and they are known by a variety of names—Puruṣottama, Trivikrama, Keśava, Mādhava, Aniruddha, Hṛṣīkeśa, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Śrīdhara, Vāsudeva, Dāmodara, Janārdana, Nārāyaṇa, Vāmana, Padmanābha, etc.
- The Brahma-saṁhitā (5.37) also confirms that although the Lord is always in the supreme abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, He is all-pervading, so that everything is going on nicely (goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūtaḥ).
- As stated in the Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8), parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate/ svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca: [Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport] His energies are so expansive that they systematically conduct everything in the cosmic manifestation without a flaw, although the Supreme Lord is far, far away.

Section-VI – Supremacy of Pure Devotion in attaining Kṛṣṇa (23-28)

|| 8.23 ||

yatra kāle tv anāvṛttim
āvṛttim caiva yoginaḥ
prayātā yānti taṁ kālam
vakṣyāmi bharataṣabha

O best of Bharata's lineage (**bharataṣabha**), I will now explain (**vakṣyāmi**) about the paths (**yatra kāle**) by which the yogīs (**yoginaḥ**) return or do not return (**anāvṛttim āvṛttim caiva**).

Baladeva

- The Lord has said that the devotees do not return to this world and those averse to the Lord return.
- By which paths do the devotees and those following kāmīya karmas (yogināḥ) travel so that they do not return or return?
- Kāla means the deities presiding over kāla.
- Since agni or dhūma are not related to time, the word kāla is still used (in a more general sense) because of the majority of words in the sequence including ahara and the other sequence including ratri are related to time.

Baladeva

- [Note: On the path of liberation, day, the waxing moon, the uttarāyaṇa are related to time, and on the path of return, the night, the waning moon and the dakṣināyaṇa are time related. Fire, light and smoke are not related to time.]
- Moreover, it should be understood that the word kāla refers to the path protected by the series of devatās starting with fire and series of devatās starting with smoke.

Srila Prabhupada

- The unalloyed devotees of the Supreme Lord, who are totally surrendered souls, do not care when they leave their bodies or by what method.
- They leave everything in Kṛṣṇa's hands and so easily and happily return to Godhead.
- But those who are not unalloyed devotees and who depend instead on such methods of spiritual realization as karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga and haṭha-yoga must leave the body at a suitable time and thereby be assured whether or not they will return to the world of birth and death.

Section-VI – Supremacy of Pure Devotion in attaining Kṛṣṇa (23-28)

|| 8.24 ||

agnir jyotir ahaḥ śuklaḥ
ṣaṇ-māsā uttarāyaṇam
tatra prayātā gacchanti
brahma brahma-vido janāḥ

The knowers of Brahman (jñānīs) (**brahma-vido janāḥ**) who depart (**tatra prayātā**) on the path of fire and light (**agnir jyotir**), the waxing fortnight, and the northern progress of the sun (**ahaḥ śuklaḥ ṣaṇ-māsā uttarāyaṇam**) attain Brahman (**brahma gacchanti**).

Baladeva

- This verse speaks of the path of no return.
- The two words agni and jyoti indicate the presiding devatā of light, which is mentioned in the śrutis.
- Ahaḥ means the deity of the day.
- Śukla means the deity of the waxing fortnight.
- Ṣaṅ-māsā uttarāyaṇam means the presiding deity of the six months leading up to the summer solstice.
- Understood here are also other deities such as the presiding deity of the year.

Baladeva

- Chāndogya Upaniṣad says:
- On dying, such persons, whether they undergo cremation rites or not, go to the deity of light. From the deity of light, they go to the deity of the day. From the deity of the day they go to the deity of the waxing fortnight. From the deity of the waxing fortnight they go to the deity of the six months leading to the summer solstice. From there they go to the deity of the year. From the deity of the year, they go to the deity of the sun, then the deity of the moon, and then the deity of lightning. A non-human form takes them to brahman. This is the path of the devas, the path of brahman. Those who go by this path do not return to repeated human birth. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.15.5

Baladeva

- The meaning is this.
- When persons who worship brahman situated in the eye die (asmin), whether their sons or disciples perform cremation rites (śabyam) or not, in either case, because of their uninterrupted worship, those worshippers go to their object of worship by means of the deities starting with the deity of the light. The rest is clear.
- Between the deity of the year and the deity of the sun the deity of air should also be inserted. Following the deity of lightning, there should be inserted the deity of water, Indra, and Brahmā. From other śrutis these details of the path are understood. The non-human mentioned in the verse refers to an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord.

Baladeva

- The writer of Vedānta has also mentioned these deities. ātivāhikās tal-liṅgāt: the words such as “light” refer to the names of the conducting deities, since this is indicated later in the text of the non-human who leads them to brahman. (Vedānta Sūtra 4.3.4)
- Therefore the devotees go to the Lord by the path served by twelve devatās (light, day, waxing fortnight, six months leading to the summer solstice, year, air, sun, moon, lightning, water, Indra, Brahmā) who are following the orders of the Lord.
- They do not return to the material world.

Baladeva

- The commentators have said:

**arcir dina-sita-pakṣair ihottarāyaṇa-śaran-marud-ravibhiḥ
vidhu-vidyud-varuṇendra-druhiṇaiś cāgāt padaṁ harer muktaḥ**

The liberated soul goes to the Lord through the light, the day, the waxing fortnight, the solstice, the year, air, the sun, the moon, lightning, water, Indra and Brahmā.

Srila Prabhupada

- When fire, light, day and the fortnight of the moon are mentioned, it is to be understood that over all of them there are various presiding deities who make arrangements for the passage of the soul.
- At the time of death, the mind carries one on the path to a new life.
- If one leaves the body at the time designated above, either accidentally or by arrangement, it is possible for him to attain the impersonal brahma-jyoti.
- Mystics who are advanced in yoga practice can arrange the time and place to leave the body.

Srila Prabhupada

- Others have no control—if by accident they leave at an auspicious moment, then they will not return to the cycle of birth and death, but otherwise there is every possibility that they will have to return.
- However, for the pure devotee in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no fear of returning, whether he leaves the body at an auspicious or inauspicious moment, by accident or arrangement.

Section-VI – Supremacy of Pure Devotion in attaining Kṛṣṇa (23-28)

॥ 8.25 ॥

**dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ
ṣaṅ-māsā dakṣiṇāyanam
tatra cāndramasaṁ jyotir
yogī prāpya nivartate**

Departing on the path of smoke, the night, the waning fortnight (**dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ**), the southern course of the sun (**ṣaṅ-māsā dakṣiṇāyanam**), and attaining Svargaloka (**tatra cāndramasaṁ jyotir prāpya**), the karma-yogī returns (**yogī nivartate**).

Baladeva

- Now the Lord speaks of the path of return.
- As in the previous verse, smoke, night, waning fortnight, and six months leading to the winter solstice refer to the respective presiding deities.
- The deities of the year, pitṛ loka, and ether should be added before the moon (cāndramasam).

Baladeva

- Chāndogya Upaniṣad says:
- The householders who perform sacrifices, social work and charities go to the deity of smoke. From there they go to the deity of night, the deity of the waning fortnight, the six months leading to the winter solstice, but do not reach the deity of the year. From the winter solstice deity they go to the pita loka and from there to ether, from ether to the deity of the moon, King Soma. They become food for the deities, and the deities enjoy them. Having exhausted their puṇyas there, they then return to earth on the path. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.10.3-

Baladeva

- Attaining the planet of the moon by performance of kāmīya karmas through the path protected by eight devatās carrying out the orders of the Lord (deities of smoke, night, waning fortnight, winter solstice, year, pitra loka, ether, and moon), after their enjoyment is over, they return to earth.

Srila Prabhupada

- In the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Kapila Muni mentions that those who are expert in fruitive activities and sacrificial methods on earth attain to the moon at death.
- These elevated souls live on the moon for about 10,000 years (by demigod calculations) and enjoy life by drinking soma-rasa.
- They eventually return to earth.
- This means that on the moon there are higher classes of living beings, though they may not be perceived by the gross senses.

Section-VI – Supremacy of Pure Devotion in attaining Kṛṣṇa (23-28)

|| 8.26 ||

śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī hy ete
jagataḥ śāśvate mate
ekayā yāty anāvṛttim
anyayāvartate punaḥ

These two paths, of light and dark (**ete śukla-kṛṣṇe gatī**), are accepted in this world as being without beginning (**jagataḥ śāśvate mate**). By one path, one does not return (**ekayā yāty anāvṛttim**), and by the other path, one returns (**anyayāvartate punaḥ**).

Baladeva

- This verse summarizes the two paths.
- The path of light is called śukla or white because it consists of enlightenment.
- The path of smoke is called kṛṣṇa or dark because it is devoid of enlightenment.
- These two paths (gatī) are accepted to be without beginning (śaśvataḥ) for those of this world (jagataḥ) qualified respectively for jñāna and karma, because saṁsāra itself has no beginning.
- The rest of the verse is clear.

Srila Prabhupada

- The same description of departure and return is quoted by Ācārya Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (5.10.3-5).
- Those who are fruitive laborers and philosophical speculators from time immemorial are constantly going and coming.
- Actually they do not attain ultimate salvation, for they do not surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

Section-VI – Supremacy of Pure Devotion in attaining Kṛṣṇa (23-28)

|| 8.27 ||

naite sṛtī pārtha jānan
yogī muhyati kaścana
tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu
yoga-yukto bhavārjuna

The yogī who knows (**yogī jānan**) these two paths (**ete sṛtī**) is never bewildered (**na muhyati kaścana**). Therefore, at all times (**tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu**) have a concentrated mind (**yoga-yukto bhavā**), Arjuna (**arjuna**).

Baladeva

- Understanding these two paths clearly is a cause of discriminating intelligence.
- This power of discrimination is praised in this verse.
- Knowing these two paths, understanding that the path of light leads to liberation and the path of smoke leads to rebirth, a yogī, My devotee, is not bewildered: he does not believe in the necessity of prescribed actions (karma yoga) which lead to the path of smoke.
- Be fixed in samādhi (yoga yuktaḥ), Arjuna, in order that you do not return.

Srila Prabhupada

- Kṛṣṇa is here advising Arjuna that he should not be disturbed by the different paths the soul can take when leaving the material world.
- A devotee of the Supreme Lord should not worry whether he will depart by arrangement or by accident.
- The devotee should be firmly established in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.
- He should know that concern over either of these two paths is troublesome.
- The best way to be absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to be always dovetailed in His service, and this will make one's path to the spiritual kingdom safe, certain and direct.

Srila Prabhupada

- The word *yoga-yukta* is especially significant in this verse.
- One who is firm in *yoga* is constantly engaged in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness in all his activities.
- Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī advises, *anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ*: one should be unattached in material affairs and do everything in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness.
- By this system, which is called *yukta-vairāgya*, one attains perfection.
- Therefore the devotee is not disturbed by these descriptions, because he knows that his passage to the supreme abode is guaranteed by devotional service.

Section-VI – Supremacy of Pure Devotion in attaining Kṛṣṇa (23-28)

|| 8.28 ||

vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu caiva
dāneṣu yat puṇya-phalaṁ pradiṣṭam
atyeti tat sarvam idaṁ viditvā
yogī param sthānam upaiti cādyam

Knowing this (**idaṁ viditvā**), the yogī endowed with devotion (**yogī**) surpasses all the pious results (**atyeti tat sarvam puṇya-phalaṁ**) declared (**pradiṣṭam**) by studying the Vedas, performance of sacrifice (**vedeṣu yajñeṣu**), austerity and giving in charity (**tapaḥsu dāneṣu**). He attains the spiritual, eternal place (**ādyam param sthānam upaiti**).

SVCT

- This verse relates the results of knowing what has been explained in this chapter.
- Surpassing (atyeti) all the results of other processes, the yogī, possessing devotion, attains the best place, which is non-material (param) and eternal (ādyam).
- [Note: This seems to indicate that this verse refers to the yogā-miśra-bhakta. A mere yogī without bhakti could not attain the place of the Lord or even liberation. A yogī with a small amount of bhakti could attain liberation. Such yogīs were described in chapter 6. A devotee with some mixture of yoga however attains sālókya.]

SVCT

- The superiority of the devotees has been previously stated.
- It is made clear in this chapter.
- As well, in this chapter, the supreme position of the ananya-bhakta among all types of devotees has been indicated.
- Thus the commentary on the eighth chapter of the Gītā for the pleasure of the devotees has been completed by the mercy of the ācāryas.

Baladeva

- This verse describes the type of knowledge described in the seventh and eighth chapters.
- Whatever results are promised in the form of svarga, kingdom and such, through avidly studying the Vedas while following rules such as observing celibacy and serving the guru, through avidly performing sacrifice completely with all parts, through intently undergoing austerities according the rules of scripture, through intently giving charity with faith, while examining the suitability of place, time and person—all of this the yogī surpasses.

Baladeva

- How does he surpass all of this?
- Knowing the glories of Me, the Lord, and My devotee, mentioned in chapters seven and eight (idam vidityā), by the mercy of devotee association, he considers all those other activities (tat sarvam) as insignificant as grass, without the happiness they promised.
- That yogī, having become devoted to Me, attains My abode which is without beginning (ādyam) and real (param).
- [Note: This is to the ananya bhakta, the pariniṣṭhita devotee rather than the yoga miśra bhakta, since that has been the last subject discussed.]
- The amśa of Kṛṣṇa, the puruṣa, is obtained by bhakti mixed with yoga, through the path of light, but Kṛṣṇa Himself is attained only through unalloyed bhakti. This is explained in the eighth chapter.

Srila Prabhupada

- This verse is the summation of the Seventh and Eighth chapters, which particularly deal with Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service.
- One has to study the Vedas under the guidance of the spiritual master and undergo many austerities and penances while living under his care.
- A brahmacārī has to live in the home of the spiritual master just like a servant, and he must beg alms from door to door and bring them to the spiritual master.
- He takes food only under the master's order, and if the master neglects to call the student for food that day, the student fasts. These are some of the Vedic principles for observing brahmacarya.

Srila Prabhupada

- After the student studies the Vedas under the master for some time—at least from from age five to twenty—he becomes a man of perfect character.
- Study of the Vedas is not meant for the recreation of armchair speculators, but for the formation of character.
- After this training, the brahmacārī is allowed to enter into household life and marry.
- When he is a householder, he has to perform many sacrifices so that he may achieve further enlightenment.
- He must also give charity according to the country, time and candidate, discriminating among charity in goodness, in passion and in ignorance, as described in Bhagavad-gītā.

Srila Prabhupada

- Then after retiring from household life, upon accepting the order of vānaprastha, he undergoes severe penances—living in forests, dressing with tree bark, not shaving, etc.
- By carrying out the orders of brahmacarya, householder life, vānaprastha and finally sannyāsa, one becomes elevated to the perfectional stage of life.
- Some are then elevated to the heavenly kingdoms, and when they become even more advanced they are liberated in the spiritual sky, either in the impersonal brahma-jyoti or in the Vaikuṅṭha planets or Kṛṣṇaloka.
- This is the path outlined by Vedic literatures.

Srila Prabhupada

- The beauty of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, is that by one stroke, by engaging in devotional service, one can surpass all the rituals of the different orders of life.
- The words *idaṁ veditvā* indicate that one should understand the instructions given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this chapter and the Seventh Chapter of Bhagavad-gītā.
- One should try to understand these chapters not by scholarship or mental speculation but by hearing them in association with devotees.
- Chapters Seven through Twelve are the essence of Bhagavad-gītā. The first six and the last six chapters are like coverings for the middle six chapters, which are especially protected by the Lord.

Srila Prabhupada

- If one is fortunate enough to understand Bhagavad-gītā—especially these middle six chapters—in the association of devotees, then his life at once becomes glorified beyond all penances, sacrifices, charities, speculations, etc., for one can achieve all the results of these activities simply by Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
- One who has a little faith in Bhagavad-gītā should learn Bhagavad-gītā from a devotee, because in the beginning of the Fourth Chapter it is stated clearly that Bhagavad-gītā can be understood only by devotees; no one else can perfectly understand the purpose of Bhagavad-gītā.
- One should therefore learn Bhagavad-gītā from a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, not from mental speculators.

Srila Prabhupada

- This is a sign of faith.
- When one searches for a devotee and fortunately gets a devotee's association one actually begins to study and understand Bhagavad-gītā.
- By advancement in the association of the devotee one is placed in devotional service, and this service dispels all one's misgivings about Kṛṣṇa, or God, and Kṛṣṇa's activities, form, pastimes, name and other features.
- After these misgivings have been perfectly cleared away, one becomes fixed in one's study.

Srila Prabhupada

- Then one relishes the study of Bhagavad-gītā and attains the state of feeling always Kṛṣṇa conscious.
- In the advanced stage, one falls completely in love with Kṛṣṇa.
- This highest perfectional stage of life enables the devotee to be transferred to Kṛṣṇa's abode in the spiritual sky, Goloka Vṛndāvana, where the devotee becomes eternally happy.