

VERSES 12-13

Means and Result of Meditation on the Supreme Brahma

12

Having closed all gates (of the senses) and firmly holding the mind in the heart, having fixed the life breath in the head, engaged in the practice of concentration,

13

Uttering the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahma, and remembering Me; one who departs, leaving the body, attains the supreme goal.

Verse 12 gives the three most important disciplines necessary for the practice of concentration. By properly observing these three disciplines one can develop unobstructed concentration.

1) **Having closed all gates** - In the practice of concentration a yogi controls the five gates that are the sense organs in the gross body (ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose). All of these sense functions have apertures (organs) through which external stimuli reach the mind and cause mental agitation. Not only does the mind receive outer stimuli through these five sense organs, it also reaches out to experience outer objects, which disturbs the mind. These five sense organs are blocked by the practice of dispassion and discrimination. In yogic terms this practice is called *pratyāhāra*.

2) **firmly holding the mind in the heart** - Even though a yogi blocks the sense organs so that the mind will not be agitated by external stimuli nor permitted to reach out through the sense organs to the world, still the yogi's mind can get stimulated and agitated by the memory of past experiences, which cause disturbance in concentration. To eliminate this internal disturbance caused by the memory of past experience, a yogi should fix the mind firmly in the heart. The part of the mind that deals with the experience of emotions and feelings is called *hṛdaya* (heart). This means that all worldly emotions, feelings, and thoughts which, when experienced, agitate the mind, should be replaced by the divine: divine feelings, positive thoughts, and divine emotions.

3) **having fixed the life breath in the head** - The life breath ascends to the head in concentration; the mind follows the life breath (*prāṇa*) and also becomes fixed in the head. It was already explained in verse 10 that "A yogi with unshaken mind, devotion,

and the power of yoga brings all five life forces (*prāṇas*) together, holds them in the space between the two eyebrows and stops their respective functions in the body." The stopping of the movement of all life breath stops all the mental and physical activities, and the mind of the yogi flows toward contemplation of the Self. This is the practice of *dhāraṇā* (concentration). When the mind is kept occupied in concentration on the Self, it is called *yoga dhāraṇām*.

Verse 13 continues:

4) Uttering the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahma -

After fulfilling the three disciplines of concentration described in verse 12, the yogi is capable of uttering the one syllable Om, which indicates Brahma, the indestructible supreme reality. Uttering the one syllable Om does not mean chanting mentally or physically. It means the sound of Om revolves in the mind at all times.

one who departs, leaving the body - By uttering Om with remembrance of the supreme when leaving the body, one attains the supreme goal. This means the yogi merges in the supreme.

Leaving the body means death. When the mind, body, intellect, and senses do not function, and the life energy ceases to exist in the body, that is death. However, a person is only alive in the outer world because of the ego. When, as a result of observing the three disciplines, the mind, intellect, and senses all merge in meditation, then the ego severs its connection with them and resides in its own transcendental nature. That is death of the ego, a true death after which one is never reborn. A yogi whose ego is removed is dead to the outer world. Such a yogi has attained the supreme goal.

Yoga Sutra I: 23 says, "*Īśvara praṇidhāna* is one of the methods of attaining *asamprajñāta samādhi* (superconsciousness beyond knowledge)." **Yoga Sutras I: 27-28** say, "Om is the word denoting God. Constant repetition of Om and meditation on its meaning is surrender to God (*Īśvara praṇidhāna*)."

Śloka 14

अनन्यचेताः सततं यो मां स्मरति नित्यशः ।
तस्याहं सुलभः पार्थ नित्ययुक्तस्य योगिनः ॥ १४ ॥

ananyacetāḥ satatam yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāham sulabhaḥ pārtha nityayuktasya yoginaḥ

अनन्यचेताः	<i>ananyacetāḥ</i>	with the mind not thinking of any other object
सततम्	<i>satatam</i>	constantly
यः	<i>yaḥ</i>	who
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
स्मरति	<i>smarati</i>	remembers
नित्यशः	<i>nityaśaḥ</i>	daily (for a long time)
तस्य	<i>tasya</i>	of him
अहम्	<i>aham</i>	I
सुलभः	<i>sulabhaḥ</i>	easily attainable
पार्थ	<i>pārtha</i>	O Pārtha (Arjuna)
नित्ययुक्तस्य	<i>nityayuktasya</i>	ever steadfast
योगिनः	<i>yoginaḥ</i>	of yogi

VERSE 14

The Lord Gives an Easy Method of Self-Realization

14

O Pārtha (Arjuna), I am easily attainable by that ever-absorbed yogi who constantly remembers Me daily, not thinking of anything else.

Previous verses explain the methods of worship by which one attains the formless God with its attributes (*adhiyajña*) and the absolute Brahma. However, these methods require regular practice of breath control, meditation, and strict discipline in order to control the senses.

For the average person these methods are hard to practice. Consequently in this verse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells his disciple, Arjuna, that there is an easy way of attaining Self-realization. A yogi who is absorbed in God and who keeps a constant remembrance of the Self (God) all the time, every day, without allowing the mind to hanker after sensual objects, attains Self-realization easily.

However, keeping the mind absorbed in God with constant remembrance of the Self (God) every moment of every day, is not possible unless:

- 1) a yogi has been born with faith and devotion,
- 2) a yogi has achieved faith and devotion by association with spiritual people or a God-realized saint,
- 3) a yogi has attained faith and devotion by firm belief on the teachings of scriptures, or
- 4) a yogi has developed constant contemplation of the Self as a result of controlling the senses, mind, and intellect by the regular practice of meditation.

One who has not attained single-pointedness in meditation cannot hope for easy success in achieving God realization.

Śloka 15

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।
 नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥ १५ ॥

mām *upetya* *punarjanma* *duḥkhālayamaśāśvatam*
nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramām gatāḥ

माम्	<i>mām</i>	to Me
उपेत्य	<i>upetya</i>	having attained
पुनः	<i>punaḥ</i>	again
जन्म	<i>janma</i>	birth
दुःखालयम्	<i>duḥkhālayam</i>	the place of pain
अशाश्वतम्	<i>aśāśvatam</i>	non-eternal
न	<i>na</i>	not
आप्नुवन्ति	<i>āpnuvanti</i>	get
महात्मानः	<i>mahātmānaḥ</i>	the great souls
संसिद्धिम्	<i>saṁsiddhim</i>	to perfection
परमाम्	<i>paramām</i>	highest
गताः	<i>gatāḥ</i>	having reached

VERSE 15

Result of Self-Realization

15

The great souls, having attained Me, do not take birth again, which is the abode of sorrow and is non-eternal; for they have reached the highest perfection.

The previous verse said that one achieves Self-realization by constant contemplation of the Self (God), without being distracted by worldly desire and attachment. This verse says that a Self-realized yogi is no longer subject to rebirth.

Birth and death are two ends of the same rope. One who takes birth will surely die. The period between birth and death is called life. When one takes birth, the ego starts to express itself through the mind, intellect, and senses, creating a sense of individuality (*jīva*). This sense of individuality creates attachment to the body, and the idea that “I am this mind-body complex” is formed. This notion is called ignorance (*avidyā*). Consequently that ego goes through all kinds of suffering.

The ego suffers at every stage of life. The ego suffers in birth, and in illness as the body grows older. The ego suffers with the loss of loved ones, and as a result of discontent when desires are not fulfilled or are obstructed. The ego suffers in old age when the senses, mind, and body become weak and do not function properly but the desire for worldly objects remains the same as before. There is tremendous pain due to the inability to enjoy life in the world. The ego suffers at the time of death when the life energy (*prāṇa*) leaves the body. It is said therefore that in this transitory life from birth to death there is suffering.

A yogi whose mind is absorbed in contemplation of the Self (God) all the time is different than an ordinary person whose mind is absorbed in desire for the world. The ego of that yogi has no opportunity to express itself through the mind, intellect, and senses for the sake of its worldly pursuits. In that yogi’s single-pointed contemplation the ego is separated from its normal field of activity, which is comprised of the world and the instruments of the ego’s expression (mind, intellect, and senses). The ego of that yogi rediscovers its true nature, the Self, which is ever free, non-attached, and desireless.

In the yogi who has attained Self-realization the ego’s function comes to an end, and all suffering also comes to an end. Such great souls who have achieved the highest perfection will have no need to take rebirth into a transitory existence, which is the abode of sorrow and misery. After identifying with the infinite and eternal Self, such yogis do not come back to the finite world.

Śloka 16

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥ १६ ॥

ābrahmabhuvanāllokāḥ punarāvartino'ṛjuna
māmupetya tu kaunteya punarjanma na vidyate

आब्रह्मभुवनात्	<i>ābrahmabhuvanāt</i>	up to the world of Brahmā
लोकाः	<i>lokāḥ</i>	worlds
पुनरावर्तिनः	<i>punarāvartinaḥ</i>	subject to return
अर्जुन	<i>arjuna</i>	O Arjuna
माम्	<i>mām</i>	to Me
उपेत्य	<i>upetya</i>	having attained
तु	<i>tu</i>	but
कौन्तेय	<i>kaunteya</i>	O Son of Kuntī (Arjuna)
पुनर्जन्म	<i>punarjanma</i>	rebirth
न	<i>na</i>	not
विद्यते	<i>vidyate</i>	is

VERSE 16

No Rebirth for God Realized Souls

16

O Arjuna, all worlds, including the world of Brahmā, are subject to return; but, O Son of Kuntī, one who reaches Me has no rebirth.

The previous verse stated clearly that one who achieves Self-realization is freed from the cycle of birth and death. To emphasize that statement this verse states that all other worlds, even the world of Brahmā, which is known as the highest of the different planes of existence, are subject to change. Everything that is created is conditioned by time, space, and causality; therefore all other worlds are changeable. However, one who identifies with the eternal, infinite Self does not take rebirth because the Self is not bound by time, space, and causality.

If the ego of enjoyments (*vāsanās*) exists in a yogi, even in one who achieves *Brahmā Loka* (the realm of the creator), then the accompanying *saṁskāras* force the yogi to take birth when, after the total dissolution of the universe (*pralāya*), the new creation begins. However, those yogis who continue to seek liberation after attaining *Brahmā Loka*, achieve Self-realization (*krama mukti*) gradually by removing their ego at the time of total dissolution.

Mahat tattva, or cosmic intellect, is the first evolute of *prakṛti*. It is called Brahmā, the god of creation, or Hiranyagarbha, the golden womb, from which the creation starts. The ego exists even in *Brahmā Loka*, causing the state of “the ignorance of duality,” in which the ego is subject to rebirth. A yogi who goes beyond *Brahmā Loka* and achieves the non-dual state is not subject to rebirth.

Śloka 17

सहस्रयुगपर्यन्तमहर्षद् ब्रह्मणो विदुः ।
रात्रिं युगसहस्रान्तां तेऽहोरात्रविदो जनाः ॥ १७ ॥

sahasrayugaparyantam---aharyad brahmaṇo viduḥ
rātrim yugasahasrāntām te'horātravido janāḥ

सहस्र युग पर्यन्तम्

sahasra yuga paryantam

extending a thousand
yugas (eons)

अहः

ahaḥ

day

यत्

yat

which

ब्रह्मणः

brahmaṇaḥ

of Brahmā

विदुः

viduḥ

know

रात्रिम्

rātrim

the night

युग सहस्रान्ताम्

yuga sahasrāntām

ending in a thousand
yugas (eons)

ते

te

they

अहो रात्र विदः

aho rātra vidāḥ

knower of day and
night

जनाः

janāḥ

people

VERSES 17-19

*The Whole Creation,
Including the World of Brahmā, is Transitory*

17

Those people who know the day of Brahmā, which lasts a thousand yugas (eons), and the night, which lasts a thousand yugas, they know the day and night.

The previous verse said that all worlds appear and disappear, including the world of Brahmā, which is the highest in creation. The question naturally arises as to what are the time frames of the world's appearance and disappearance. In verses 17-19 the Lord explains the transitory nature of the creation.

Time in this earthly creation is divided into four *yugas* or eons: Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvāpara Yuga, and Kali Yuga. Human time is calculated in terms of 360 days to the year, which is equivalent to one celestial day. One cycle of the fourfold *yugas* constitutes one celestial *yuga*, which is equivalent to 12,000 celestial years.

360 human days = 1 human year = 1 celestial day

360 celestial days = 1 celestial year

12,000 celestial years = 1 celestial yuga = 4,320,000 human years

The human years and celestial cycles are calculated as follows:

<u>Yuga</u>	<u>Duration in Human Years</u>	<u>Equivalent in Celestial Years</u>
Kali Yuga	432,000	1,200
Dvāpara Yuga	864,000	2,400
Treta Yuga	1,296,000	3,600
Satya Yuga	1,728,000	4,800
Total	4,320,000	12,000

Together these four eons constitute one cycle. When this cycle of fourfold eons repeats one thousand times it is conceived of as constituting one day of Brahmā.

$4,320,000 \times 1000 = 4,320,000,000 = 1 \text{ day of Brahmā}$

The same time constitutes Brahmā's night. Hence, a day and a night of Brahmā will be equivalent to 8,640,000,000 human

years. Brahmā's day is called a *kalpa* (or *sarga*), the period of existence of one creation. Brahmā's night is called *pralāya*, the period of one dissolution.

During the night of Brahmā (*pralāya*), everything is absorbed in *mula prakṛti* (the unmanifest), and remains there in a latent state or "seed form." Again, that seed germinates at the beginning of the *kalpa* (day of Brahmā), and a new period of creation occurs. In the macrocosm this rhythm of cosmic day and cosmic night (the processes of evolution and involution) goes on eternally.

By understanding the duration of Brahmā's day and night, in which the whole creation appears and disappears, one can see that the time of one human life on earth is insignificant and transitory. However, those who do not understand that life in the world is transitory get attached to objects and create their own pain.

To help understand this concept, consider an adult mayfly's life: in comparison to a human life, an adult female mayfly's life is very brief. In 24 hours the adult female mayfly emerges, mates, lays hundreds of eggs, and dies. In the same way an ignorant person creates a family, gets attached to egocentric desires, lives in misery, and dies. A human's life compared to a day of Brahmā, is as transitory and insignificant as a mayfly's life is to a human life.

One who has developed dispassion for the world by understanding its transitory nature constantly thinks of the Self (God). Therefore in verse 15 the Lord said, "Great souls, having attained Me, do not again take birth." Such a one is absorbed in the imperishable, eternal, and infinite Self, and never again takes rebirth.

Śloka 18

अव्यक्ताद् व्यक्तयः सर्वाः प्रभवन्त्यहरागमे ।
रात्र्यागमे प्रलीयन्ते तत्रैवाव्यक्तसंज्ञके ॥ १८ ॥

*avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ prabhavantyaḥ arāgame
rātryāgame praliyante tatraivāvyaktasamjñake*

अव्यक्तात्	<i>avyaktāt</i>	from the unmanifested
व्यक्तयः	<i>vyaktayaḥ</i>	the manifested, the embodied being
सर्वाः	<i>sarvāḥ</i>	all
प्रभवन्ति	<i>prabhavanti</i>	proceed, emanate
अहरागमे	<i>aḥ arāgame</i>	at the coming of day
रात्रि आगमे	<i>rātri āgame</i>	at the coming of night
प्रलीयन्ते	<i>praliyante</i>	dissolve, merge
तत्र	<i>tatra</i>	there
एव	<i>eva</i>	verily
अव्यक्त संज्ञके	<i>avyakta samjñake</i>	in that which is called the unmanifested

From the unmanifest all embodied beings emanate at the coming of the day. At the coming of night they merge into that alone, which is known as unmanifest.

The duration of Brahmā's day and Brahmā's night, each a thousand celestial eons long, was explained in the previous verse. In this verse the emanation and dissolution of all sentient and insentient beings is explained.

The term *avyakta* (unmanifest) means the lower nature of God in its subtle state. *Prakṛti* remains dormant in that subtle state until it is influenced by the energy of the conscious principle (*puruṣa*). When *prakṛti* is influenced by the conscious principle (*puruṣa*), it is described as the start of the day of Brahmā. In Sāṃkhya Yoga this first stage of evolution is known as *mahat* or cosmic intellect. When Brahmā's day starts, *prakṛti* becomes active and begins creating sentient and insentient beings according to their respective *saṃskāra* (imprints in the mind of actions in past births).

When at the end of a thousand celestial eons Brahmā's night begins, the gross *prakṛti* merges back into its subtle state (*avyakta*). At that time all sentient and insentient beings, in their multitude names and forms, leave their gross existence and merge into the subtle state of *prakṛti* that is known as the unmanifest (*avyakta*).

Prakṛti is manifest and unmanifest in the same way that people are active in the day and inactive in the night. During the day people remain actively engaged in various duties, holding different titles such as engineer, doctor, teacher, or student according to their work. At night while sleeping, their title and separate function are unrecognizable to someone who does not know them for they are inactive. However, the *vāsanās* still exist in their minds in a dormant form. When they awaken they will engage in their respective work according to their *vāsanās* and once again they will identify with their separate titles. Similarly, when the creator (Brahmā) is asleep (inactive), everything is merged into it (unmanifest). When, after a thousand celestial eons, the creator (Brahmā) is awake (active), the pre-existing desires (*vāsanās*) project out (become manifest).

Śloka 19

भूतग्रामः स एवायं भूत्वा भूत्वा प्रलीयते ।
रात्र्यागमेऽवशः पार्थ प्रभवत्यहरागमे ॥ १९ ॥

*bhūtagrāmaḥ sa evāyaṁ bhūtvā bhūtvā pralīyate
rātryāgame'vaśaḥ pārtha prabhavatyaharāgame*

भूतग्रामः	<i>bhūtagrāmaḥ</i>	multitudes of beings
सः	<i>saḥ</i>	that (the same beings who merged in the unmanifest)
एव	<i>eva</i>	verily
अयम्	<i>ayam</i>	this (the same beings who merged in the unmanifest)
भूत्वा भूत्वा	<i>bhūtvā bhūtvā</i>	being born again and again
प्रलीयते	<i>pralīyate</i>	dissolves
रात्रि आगमे	<i>rātri āgame</i>	at the coming of night
अवशः	<i>avaśaḥ</i>	helpless
पार्थ	<i>pārtha</i>	O Pārtha (Arjuna)
प्रभवति	<i>prabhavati</i>	comes forth
अहरागमे	<i>aharāgame</i>	at the coming of day

This multitude of beings is born again and again, and is dissolved (into the unmanifest) helplessly, O Pārtha (Arjuna), at the coming of night; and it rises again at the coming of day.

The previous verse said that at the coming of the day of Brahmā all embodied beings emanate from the unmanifest, and at the commencement of the night of Brahmā they merge back into that same unmanifest (*avyakta*). This verse explains that unless one attains Self-realization, the cycle of birth and death goes on revolving.

All sentient and insentient beings merge helplessly into the unmanifest (*avyakta*), carrying their attachments to sensual objects and their desires for worldly enjoyments. Their merging is not by their will; rather they are helplessly pulled to the unmanifest. This merging is not the end of the cycle of birth and death because the *vāsanās* (desires) become the cause of rebirth. This process of emanation of beings out of the unmanifest, and their dissolution back into the unmanifest, has been continually revolving from time without beginning.

When the embodied soul leaves the body, it is called death; meaning death of the gross manifestation. The subtle energy-body composed of mind and intellect with all its innate tendencies (*saṁskāras*), continues to exist in a dormant state. As soon as a physical body is manifested, the same energies and *saṁskāras* (subtle tendencies) start acting through that gross body. However, if the mind and intellect are freed from desires and attachments to the world reality, then there will be no causative factor for rebirth. The cycle of birth and death will be stopped.

The soul itself is neither born nor does it die. It does not go through the process of emanation and dissolution. Just as water turns to ice and melts back to water, only that which is created in nature (*prakṛti*) melts back into nature (*prakṛti*) while nature itself remains unchanged.

Śloka 20

परस्तस्मात्तु भावोऽन्योऽव्याक्तोऽव्यक्तात्सनातनः ।
यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति ॥ २० ॥

*parastasmāttu bhāvo'nyo'vyākto'vyaktātsanātanah
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu naśyatsu na vinaśyati*

परः	<i>paraḥ</i>	higher
तस्मात्	<i>tasmāt</i>	than that
तु	<i>tu</i>	but
भावः	<i>bhāvaḥ</i>	existence
अन्यः	<i>anyaḥ</i>	another
अव्यक्तः	<i>avyaktaḥ</i>	unmanifested
अव्यक्तात्	<i>avyaktāt</i>	than the unmanifested
सनातनः	<i>sanātanah</i>	eternal
यः	<i>yaḥ</i>	who
स	<i>sa</i>	that
सर्वेषु	<i>sarveṣu</i>	in all
भूतेषु	<i>bhūteṣu</i>	in beings
नश्यत्सु	<i>naśyatsu</i>	in being destroyed
न	<i>na</i>	not
विनश्यति	<i>vinaśyati</i>	is destroyed

VERSE 20

*Is There A Truth Higher Than The Unmanifest from Which
Creation Takes Place and Dissolves?*

20

But higher than that unmanifested there is yet another unmanifested eternal existence, which is not destroyed when all beings are destroyed.

The previous verse stated that everything is created from the unmanifest, which is the subtle body of Brahmā or cosmic intelligence, and everything that is created goes back to that same cause. This cycle revolves eternally. Now the question arises, “Is this the highest truth and is there nothing beyond this truth?”

This verse answers the question saying that beyond the unmanifest that is described in verses 18-19, there is another unmanifest that is higher and superior because it does not go through any kind of modification. It is the principle of pure consciousness (God) and it is the controller of the lower unmanifest. It is also eternal, without beginning or end.

Even at the time of the final dissolution, when all worlds, including the world of Brahmā, are destroyed, the supreme divine consciousness exists in its own pristine glory, absorbing everything within itself, including *prakṛti*. In verses 8-10 this supreme consciousness was described as the fruit of worship of the *adhiyajña* aspect of God, which is the all-pervading supreme God of Creation, Īśvara.

Śloka 21

अव्यक्तोऽक्षर इत्युक्तस्तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ।
यं प्राप्य न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥ २१ ॥

*avyakto'kṣara ityuktastamāhuḥ paramām gatim
yam prāpya na nivartante taddhāma paramam mama*

अव्यक्तः	<i>avyaktaḥ</i>	unmanifested
अक्षरः	<i>akṣaraḥ</i>	imperishable
इति	<i>iti</i>	thus
उक्तः	<i>uktaḥ</i>	called
तम्	<i>tam</i>	that
आहुः	<i>āhuḥ</i>	(they) say
परमाम्	<i>paramām</i>	the highest
गतिम्	<i>gatim</i>	goal
यम्	<i>yam</i>	which
प्राप्य	<i>prāpya</i>	having reached
न	<i>na</i>	not
निवर्तन्ते	<i>nivartante</i>	return
तत्	<i>tat</i>	that
धाम	<i>dhāma</i>	abode
परमम्	<i>paramam</i>	highest
मम	<i>mama</i>	My

VERSE 21

*The Adhiyajña, Which is Indestructible, Is the Supreme Eternal
Unmanifest and the Highest Goal*

21

What is called the unmanifest and imperishable is said to be the supreme goal. That is My highest abode. Those who reach it never return again.

Verses 8 and 10 said that one who meditates on the supreme *puruṣa* achieves the supreme *puruṣa*. Verse 13 said that one who departs uttering, with constant remembrance, the one syllable Om that indicates the indestructible *puruṣa*, attains the supreme goal. Both of these methods of worship focus on the formless supreme *puruṣa* with attributes. Verse 14 said that one who is absorbed in Me (Lord Kṛṣṇa with form and attributes) attains the same supreme indestructible absolute. These three states of realization do not differ from one another because in the **Bhagavad Gītā**, Śrī Kṛṣṇa represents the Self or pure consciousness. In order to establish that all three of these states of attainment are in fact the same, Lord Kṛṣṇa in this verse says that after achieving the supreme goal, there is no rebirth.

Verse 20 said that the unmanifest, eternal existence is beyond destruction, whereas all other creations are subject to birth and death as explained in verses 18-19. Now this verse also says that a human's supreme goal is to achieve the imperishable Self (supreme consciousness), which is the highest dwelling place of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One who reaches that highest dwelling place of the Self never goes through the cycle of birth and death again.

Verse 16 states that even after attaining Brahmā Loka (the world of Brahmā), one still comes back to experience previously unmanifested desires and cravings. In addition, verse 15 said that birth is "the abode of sorrow and non-eternal." Therefore, ending the cycle of rebirth is the only way to attain freedom from all pain and misery. The cycle of birth and death can only be stopped by achieving the supreme goal, which is the attainment of the supreme divine *puruṣa* (the supreme divine consciousness or God).

Śloka 22

पुरुषः स परः पार्थ भक्त्या लभ्यस्त्वनन्यया ।
यस्यान्तःस्थानि भूतानि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ॥ २२ ॥

*puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha bhaktyā labhyastvananyayā
yasyāntaḥsthāni bhūtāni yena sarvamidam tatam*

पुरुषः	<i>puruṣaḥ</i>	puruṣa
सः	<i>saḥ</i>	that
परः	<i>paraḥ</i>	highest
पार्थ	<i>pārtha</i>	O Pārtha (Arjuna)
भक्त्यः	<i>bhaktyaḥ</i>	by devotion
लभ्यः	<i>labhyaḥ</i>	is attainable
तु	<i>tu</i>	verily
अनन्यया	<i>ananyayā</i>	without another object
यस्य	<i>yasya</i>	of whom
अन्तः स्थानि	<i>antaḥ sthāni</i>	dwelling within
भूतानि	<i>bhūtāni</i>	beings
येन	<i>yena</i>	by whom
सर्वम्	<i>sarvam</i>	all
इदम्	<i>idam</i>	this
ततम्	<i>tatam</i>	pervaded

VERSE 22

*What Is the Path to Attain the
Eternal Unmanifest Supreme Puruṣa?*

22

That supreme puruṣa, O Pārtha (Arjuna), in whom all beings reside, and by whom all this is pervaded, is attainable by exclusive devotion alone.

The previous verse said that the highest goal for a human being is to attain a state of supreme divine consciousness. In this verse the Lord explains how to attain that state of supreme divine consciousness.

exclusive devotion alone - This is the means to attain the supreme *puruṣa* (God). However, as long as the mind, intellect, and senses are pulled by egocentric desires and attachments, one cannot develop exclusive devotion for God. Therefore, one should completely detach one's mind, intellect, and senses from all worldly desires and attachments, because they are false, fleeting, and the cause of pain and sorrow. This detachment from a false identification to the world will develop absorption in the real supreme *puruṣa* (God). Then one achieves a state of exclusive devotion to the supreme Lord in which the ego ceases all its worldly pursuits and the yogi identifies with the Self alone.

The supreme *puruṣa* (God) is the very substratum of the whole creation. It is just like molten iron, which as it cools takes the shape of the different molds into which it is poured. In fact, in all the different names and forms created by the molten iron, the sole all-pervading reality is that iron; there is nothing else but the iron. Similarly, when pure consciousness is poured into the molds of different desires, various types of creations with different names and forms, take shape. All those names and forms reside in their substratum, and that substratum, which is the supreme *puruṣa* (God), pervades all that is created.

One who has attained Self-realization by exclusive devotion to God understands that in this multiplicity of names and forms the only reality is the supreme *puruṣa* (God). The infinite is simply projecting out into the world as finite.