

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

1/3 (Ślōka 1-8), Sunday, 29 December 2024

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/wmj2wn-5fpc>

## Bhagavān teaches us how to identify the Three Guṇas - Sāttvik, Rājasik and Tāmasik

The 14th chapter of the Bhagavad-Gītā is known as the **Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga - The Yoga to group the Three Guṇas**.

The first of the three-part session of the 14th chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā being specially conducted for the young and dedicated Kid Sadhaks of Geeta Pariwar started with prayers to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, followed by the lighting of the auspicious lamp so that we are guided towards the path of goodness, with the light of knowledge.

**sadāśiva-samārambhāṁ śaṅkarācārya-madhyamām.**

**asmadācārya-paryantāṁ vande guru-paramparām ॥**

*Originating with the all-pervasive Shiva, to Veda Vyāsji, to my own Guru, I bow with reverence to the entire Guru Parampara (tradition of teachers).*

**ratnākarādhautapadāṁ himālayakirīṭinīm,**

**brahmārājaṛṣirratnāḍhyāṁ vande bhāratamātaram**

*Salute to my Bharat Mata, my Mother India, whos' feet are washed by the sea, who has the Himalaya as her crown, she who is home to many Brahmārishis (scholar sages) and Rajyarishis (king sages).*

Prayers were also offered to Bhagavān Shiva, Maharshi Veda Vyāsji, ones Guru and Bharat Mata, the country whose proud residents we are.

A quick Quiz was conducted at the start on the names of the 6 chapters of Bhagavadgītā that we have learnt so far. Our enthusiastic Sadhaks were quick to call out as follows in sequence to their learning:

**Chapter No.      Name of the Chapter**

12	Bhakti Yoga
15	Purushottama Yoga
16	Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāga Yoga
17	Śraddhā-Traya-Vibhāga-Yoga
09	Rājavidyā-Rājaguhya-Yoga
14	Guṇa Traya Vibhāga Yoga

The 14th Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā **Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga** is about the Yoga of grouping of the three Guṇas.

In Chapter – 9, Rājavidyā-Rājaguhya-Yoga we learnt how Bhagavān created, controls and manages the whole universe with the help of **Prakṛti** or Nature.

In this Chapter, Bhagavān tells us that the universe is created basis these three fundamental Guṇas.

Since all Sadhaks would be studying Science in school, a question was asked to name the basic building block of all matter in this universe. Aarav Ji and Sindhuja Ji correctly said, the basic building block was Atom. Vihaan Ji added that Proton, Electron and Neutron were parts that creates the Atom.

We also know, Protons have positive charge akin to Sato Guṇa, Electrons that busily revolve around the proton are like Rajo Guṇa and Neutrons which has no charge and is lazily lie in the Nucleus or center of the atom is similar to Tamo Guṇa.

Similar to the way an atom is constructed, our universe and all the beings in it are constituted by the three Guṇas.

In this chapter, Bhagavān will describes in detail the concept of Guṇa and how they control our mind and behavior to be a friend or a foe to us.

In much of Bhagavdgītā, Arjuna asks questions to Bhagavān and re responds with an explanation. This chapter is however different. Here Bhagavān shares the knowledge with Arjuna out of his own wish since Bhagavān loves Arjuna and feels he should have this important knowledge. This is similar to how our parents give us good advice and guidance all the time so that we are not mislead.

Bhagavān like a parent has continuously shared the Supreme Knowledge with Arjuna in Chapter – 9 and then Chapter – 15 of the Bhagavadgītā. Since Arjuna still appeared to be in the confused state, HE says that though this knowledge has already been told to Arjuna many times previously, HE will continue to reiterate it since it is the Supreme Knowledge and hence difficult to comprehend and assimilate into one's life.

In this chapter, however Bhagavān takes a more direct approach to explaining the concept to Arjuna.

## 14.1

**śrībhagavānuvāca**  
**param(m) bhūyaḥ(ph) praVākṣyāmi, jñānānām(ñ) jñānamuttamam,**  
**yajñātvā munayaḥ(s) sarve, parām(m) siddhimito gatāḥ. 14.1**

Śrī Bhagavān said :I shall expound once more the supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, acquiring which all sages have attained highest perfection, being liberated from this mundane

existence.

We have seen people become famous like actors and sport persons. However, over time when they are no longer active, people tend to forget about them.

In this Shloka, Bhagavān says, it is different for those who acquire the Supreme Knowledge like the Rishi Munis, the wise sages like Veda Vyas Ji, Parashuram Ji, Vishwamitra Ji who had written the principles and philosophy on whose foundation our Indian culture has been built. Such people attain *parām siddhim*, the perfect and permanent accomplishment of union with the Paramātmā.

Knowledge can be of different types. Let us take the example of seeing a big tree in front of us.

Some of us may instantly recognize it as a Mango tree by looking at the shape of the leaves and the size of the tree. This is possible because such people have that general knowledge.

There may be some others who know the process of photosynthesis going on in the tree. That would amount to the person having scientific knowledge.

Then comes Supreme knowledge where one knows how the creation of the tree happened and how we can see it with the eyes and who gave us those eyes to see with. When one gets this supreme knowledge about creation and its nurturing, one is said to attain *parām siddhim* like the wise sages. When one reaches this stage of learning, there is nothing more to learn as it is realizing the knowledge about our Creator, the Paramātmā.

## 14.2

**idaṃ(ñ) jñānamupāśritya, mama sādharṃyamāgatāḥ,  
sarge'pi nopajāyante, pralaye na vyathanti ca. 14.2**

Those who, by practising this knowledge have entered into My being, are not born again at the cosmic dawn, nor feel disturbed even during the cosmic dissolution (Pralaya).

Parameśvara assures that once one is able to realize and imbibe this Knowledge, he becomes ONE with the Paramātmā by getting assimilated unto HIM. The wise, because of this union with Bhagavān, is spared from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth into the mortal world at the time of every new Creation, which occurs after every **Pralaya** (major calamity). Such people neither have birth nor death.

In English, we call Bhagavān as GOD which can be expanded as **G**enerator, **O**perator, **D**estroyer. HE is the Creator, the Guardian who maintains, and the Destroyer of this universe. Sages who have acquired this Supreme Knowledge are very aware of this concept about GOD and hence they neither have any doubt nor are afraid of any event in this universe.

## 14.3

**mama yonirmahadbrahma, tasmingarbhāṃ(n) dadhāmyaham,  
sambhavaḥ(s) sarvabhūtānāṃ(n), tato bhavati bhārata. 14.3**

My primordial Nature, known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures; in that womb I place the seed of all life. The creation of all beings follows from that union of Matter and Spirit, O Arjuna.

Bhagavān, in this Shloka elaborates on HIS process of creation. HE says that HE instructs **Prakṛiti** on Creation and imbues **Chetana** or consciousness into the Creation.

We have often heard people say the term ‘Better Half’ for their spouses. In the process of Creation, **Prakṛiti** partners with Bhagavān as HIS better half. While Bhagavān provides the consciousness, it is **Prakṛiti** who nurtures the Creation. It is **Prakṛiti** who is responsible for the creation of all living beings (**sarva-bhūtānām**) totaling to 84 Lakh **Yonis** or species that lives on this earth.

In our Śāstra we have a story known as Andha-Pangu-Nyaya.

A blind man can walk but not see, and a lame man cannot walk but can see. The blind man takes the lame man over his shoulder, and as he walks the lame man gives him directions to the destination. Thus, as a combination they work very well, but individually neither the blind man nor the lame man can successfully reach their destination.

Similarly, Bhagavān provides the vision of Chetana or consciousness. HE instructs **Prakṛiti** (like the lame man) and **Prakṛiti** like the blind performs the work of actual creation (that is walking to the desired destination). As a combination Bhagavān and **Prakṛiti** creates and nurtures all in this universe.

#### 14.4

**sarvayoniṣu kaunteya, mūrtayaḥ(s) sambhavanti yāḥ,  
tāsām(m) brahma mahadyoniḥ(r), ahaṁ(m) bījapradāḥ(ph) pitā. 14.4**

Of all embodied beings that appear in all the species of various kinds, Arjuna, Prakṛti or Nature is the conceiving Mother, while I am the seed giving Father.

In this Shloka, Bhagavān has declared that HE is the father of all beings, all the creatures covered under 84 lakhs yonis or species. **Prakṛti** on the other hand is the mother. So, that makes all beings on this earth siblings since irrespective of our species we have the same parents ultimately.

From this comes the concept of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**

**Ayam Nijah Paro Vetī Ganana Laghucetasam**

**Udaracaritanam Tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**

Our Śāstra teach us that **The World Is One Family**. Once we are able to realize and internalize this thought, we will never be able to hate or harm anyone else as we will consider everyone as a family member.

There is a beautiful prayer song that goes as,

**Har Desh Me Tu, Har Vesh Me Tu**

**Tere Naam Anek, Tu Ek Hi Hai**

It says that Bhagavān resides in every being of every country, in every form. Though HE may have many names, HE is the only one. So, irrespective of race, creed, species, all are part of the one and only one Parameśvara.

Unfortunately, today’s world is very divided between religions, races, castes, creeds and so forth. Bhagavān says such differences exist because we are all ignorant, covered under the shroud of ignorance.

A bar of 100% pure gold is very flexible so we cannot make jewelry with it. We need to add a little impurity in it to make it a hard and rigid alloy. We can then use that alloy to make beautiful jewelry.

When Bhagavān gives consciousness for **Prakṛti** to create us, it is in the purest form. **Prakṛti** has to now add some impurities in the form of Guṇas in us to create effective versions of us who have the capability to follow the path back to Bhagavān's refuge; like preparing the gold alloy to make jewelry.

However, we forget the main purpose of our lives and become selfish, greedy proud etc., which are bad qualities leading to ignorance.

Here again, **Bhagavān** is our savior. HE now **tells us all about the three Guṇas and how we can control them instead of being controlled by them. That will lead us on the path to reach Bhagavān.**

All of us would have seen puppet shows where the puppeteer through three strings controls the movement of the puppets. We can only see the puppets as the puppeteer and strings are invisible to us. In a similar manner we are all puppets being controlled day in and day out by **Prakṛti** the puppeteer with the three strings of Guṇas known as Sato, Rajo and Tamo.

Early in the morning, we are in the influence of Tamo Guṇa when our mother tells us to wake up, but we keep procrastinating by saying, 'another five minutes'. Sato Guṇa powers us when after waking up some of us do Puja or Meditation. In the afternoons, it is Rajo Guṇa that controls us when we go out to play with friends. Our mothers keep calling us to come back home but we keep playing since at that time we are enjoying the game. It is again Rajo Guṇa that breaks our concentration when we are studying and hear our favorite cartoon start playing on the TV.

## 14.5

### **sattvaṃ(m) rajastama iti, guṇāḥ(ph) prakṛtisambhavāḥ, nibadhnanti mahābāho, dehe dehinamavyayam. 14.5**

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas-these three Guṇas born of Nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body, Arjuna.

From the fifth Shloka onwards, Bhagavān explains about the three Guṇas. As explained earlier, it is the presence of the Guṇas that binds us.

There are three Guṇas (inherent qualities or attributes) seen in every individual are Sāttvik or Sato, Rājasik or Rajo and Tāmasik or Tamo; These Guṇas come from **Prakṛti** and influence the nature of the mind and compel a person to have desires or behave in a particular way.

In Sanskrit, the word Guṇa means also means Rope and symbolizes binding between objects. Similarly, the Guṇas bind us to the Saṃsāra or worldliness. We will need to learn to break these bonds of Guṇas to reach the lotus feet of Bhagavān.

Once we are successful in breaking the shackles of the Guṇas we become **Guṇatita**, that is, someone who has been able to overcome the three Guṇas. **Guṇatita is the state of pure devotion to the Paramātmā, where one is not controlled by the Guṇas and affected by anything that happens in the material world,**

## 14.6

**tatra sattvaṃ(n) nirmalatvāt, prakāśakamanāmayam,  
sukhasaṅgena badhnāti, jñānasaṅgena cānagha. 14.6**

Of these, Sattva being immaculate, is illuminating and flawless, Arjuna; it binds through attachment to happiness and knowledge.

We had briefly learnt in Chapter – 17 that Sato Guṇa is for goodness and simplicity, Rajo Guṇa is for action, passion, and attachment while Tamo Guṇa is for evilness, ignorance, and laziness.

The three Guṇa's can be well understood through following three characters of Ramayana:

- **Vibhishan** who had exhibited **Sato Guṇa**. He is pious and objects to any wrongdoing like he did when Ravana kidnapped Sita Mata. He sides with the virtuous like he did with Bhagavān Śrī Ram.
- **Ravana** who exhibited of **Rajo Guṇa**. He is focused towards getting what he desires, even if he has to take it by force, like he took away Golden Lanka from Kuber Ji because he coveted it.
- **Kumbhakaran** who exhibited **Tamo Guṇa**. He is lazy and indolent, sleeps for six months and wakes to eat.

Bhagavān says that Sato Guṇa is pure and gives us enlightenment. It brings wellbeing to us. It leads us to happiness given that it arises from goodness. However, we are likely to want to experience this happiness over and over forming an attachment to it. Thus, though Sato Guṇa signifies Goodness, but it still is like a golden chain that binds us to this world.

**Bhagavān also says that our Sato Guṇa should not lead us to inactivity. We must control it so that it does not interfere with us doing and discharging our duties and responsibilities.**

**14.7**

**rajo rāgātmakam(m) viddhi, tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam,  
tannibadhnāti kaunteya, karmasaṅgena dehinam. 14.7**

Arjuna, know the quality of Rajas, which is of the nature of passion, as born of desire and attachment. It binds the soul through attachment to actions and their fruit.

Rajo Guṇa can be seen through intense activity and passion of action. It is the passion to do action to fulfill one's desire and wants. Having a desire per se is not wrong. What is wrong is developing attachment to the desire and try to get the object of desire by hook or by crook. The way Ravana took away Lanka from Kuber Ji is an example of the negative effect of Rajo Guṇa. Rajo Guṇa can have a positive influence also. Like we see in Rana Pratap Ji or Shivaji Maharaj Ji. It was Shivaji Maharaj Ji's passion to see India being governed by native Indians and not intruder from other parts of the world that lead him to wage such big wars without fear.

In Chapter – 16, we learnt about Daiva and Asuri Guṇa sampada. It is for the benefit when Rajo Guṇa becomes friends with Daiva Guṇa, like it happened in the case of Shivaji Maharaj Ji. However, as in the case of Ravana, it is detrimental when Rajo Guṇa becomes friends with Asuri Guṇa.

**We must therefore be alert and see that our Rajo Guṇa is always good friends with Daiva Guṇa and need to stop, if we ever notice that is becoming friends with Asuri Guṇa and we are forming bad habits.** Of course, we who have joined Geeta Pariwar have already made our Rajo Guṇa good friends with Daiva sampada. We need to keep it that way.

**tamastvajñānajaṃ(m) viddhi, mohanaṃ(m) sarvadehinām,  
pramādālasyanidrābhiḥ(s), tannibadhnāti bhārata. 14.8**

And know Tamas, the deluder of all those who look upon the body as their own self, as born of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sleep and sloth, Arjuna.

In this Shloka Bhagavān explains Tamo Guṇa, the symbol of darkness, sloth, and ignorance. Tamasik Guṇa ties the strap of ignorance over our eyes of knowledge and good actions. Like sometimes, in the morning, we feel very slothful and want to sleep a little more. While 6 to 8 hours of sleep is important, but then there are those who sleep for even 12 hours. This lethargy in us is due to Tamo Guṇa. In fact, Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Ji said that if we bring very tasty food in front of such people, they are likely to pass it because for them the influence of Tamo Guṇa is so strong that they would love to continue to sleep. Another example that is very relevant today is our addiction to reels and shorts. Sometimes, we keep scrolling and watching reels for hours, sometimes even defying our parent's instructions. This definitely is Tamo Guṇa and must be checked to 10 to 15 minutes in a day for entertainment purpose.

Bhagavadgītā doesn't tell us to give up any of the Guṇas completely. Like we definitely must sleep to rejuvenate ourselves, though sleep falls under Tamo Guṇa.

What **Gītā consistently and repeatedly tells us is *samatvaṃ yoga uchyate*, that is maintaining a balance between all.**

Bhagavān in addition has given us a checklist where he has advised to keep Tamo Guṇa at minimum, just as much as needed to survive; Rajo Guṇa in friendship with Daiva Guṇa; and Sato Guṇa to a level where it does not interfere with us doing our daily duties and responsibilities.

With watchfulness and practice, we will definitely be able to hit the balance and also gain control over our Guṇas instead of the Guṇas controlling us. That will lead us to the path of becoming **Guṇatita**.

Most of us have a habit to making New Years Resolutions. As we step into 2025, let each of us take a *Sankalp* or resolution on how we will gain control over our Guṇas this year and resolutely run with it throughout the year.

We will talk about our resolutions and progress made on our next Vivechan session on 5th January 2025.

The session concluded with Hari Nama Sankirtana, followed by a Questions and Answers session, and chanting of Hanuman Chalisa.

### Questions and Answers

**Vishalakshi Ji**

**Q:** Can you please explain the third Shloka again?

**A:** Bhagavān says that **Prakṛti** is the mother of all Beings in this universe. Bhagavān is the father who gives the consciousness to the Beings.

**Utkarsh Chaudhari Ji**

**Q:** What is the difference between Dharma and Karma?



**A:** Dharma is a set of rules and instructions that tells us what is right and what is the wrong. Karma is Actions and Activities. Dharma tells us how to do Karma in the correct manner. We usually associate Dharma with religion, but in Bhagavadgītā, it refers to a set of principles that one must follow.

### Arya Ji

**Q:** Why did Bhagavān tell Bhagavāngītā to Arjuna and not to Yudhisthira?

**A:** That is because, it was Arjuna who was confused and unwilling to fight in the battle. Like sometimes, we go to give an exam and suddenly feel that we can't remember anything that we had learnt. That is when our parents or teachers calm us down so that we can write the exam. Same was the case with Arjuna. Yudhisthira on the other hand was already full of composure and ready for the battle.

### Mokshita Ji

**Q:** Can you please explain the fourth Shloka again?

**A:** Bhagavān says that HE is the father and **Prakṛti** is the mother of the 84 Lakh Yonis or species on this earth.

### Utsav Singhania Ji

**Q:** *tasmād yogī bhavārjuna* is written under the logo of Learn Geeta. What does it mean?

**A:** You will learn this Shloka in the next chapters. Here Bhagavān tells Arjuna to become a Yogi and do his duty as if he is doing it for Bhagavān and offer all his actions to the Paramātmā. Likewise, for Jñāna Yoga and Bhakti Yoga.

### Sonali Kunte Ji

**Q:** What does Pralaya mean?

**A:** It means devastation and destruction. There are many types of Pralaya like Nitya Pralaya, Naimetik Pralaya, Maha Pralaya etc. Maha Pralaya is when everything is destroyed, and Brahmā Ji again recreates this universe.

### Gaurav Iratkar Ji

**Q:** What does *om śrīparamātmāmane namaḥ* mean?

**A:** This is an invocation and obeisance to the Paramātmā for granting us with the intellect to accept the wisdom of Bhagavadgītā.

### Mitali Midgule Ji

**Q:** What is the meaning of *Yonī*?



**A: *Yoni*** has two meanings. One is species and the other is the cause of our birth.

**Aditi Ji**

**Q:** Can you please explain the eighth Shloka again?

**A:** In this Shloka, Bhagavān talks about Tamo Guṇa or ignorance and how it misleads us onto a wrong path.

The types of Tamo Guṇa are:

- **Pramāḍ** means not doing what one is supposed to do or choosing a wrong action over the right one.
- **Ālasya** or laziness implies not taking timely action or postponing an action to a future date for no reason.
- **Nidrā** or oversleeping.

**Naishitha Ji**

**Q:** Can you please explain the seventh Shloka again?

**A:** Bhagavān explains Rajo Guṇa in this Shloka. HE explains how forming attachments to our desires can lead us to actions that can sometimes take us on the path of downfall.

**Deepika Jaswal Ji**

**Q:** Was Arjuna more *Dharmik* or righteous than Yudhisthira?

**A:** All Pandavas were equally *Dharmik*.

**Karthikeya Somisetty Ji**

**Q:** Can you please explain the sixth Shloka again?

**A:** Bhagavān explains Sato Guṇa in this Shloka. It is characterized by purity, immaculacy and enlightens one with knowledge and wisdom. However, excess of this Guṇa can also lead to being bound and may make one inactive.

**Sonam Joshi Ji**

**Q:** Is it a sin if I kill an insect unknowingly or by mistake?

**A:** If it is done unintentionally, it will not be considered a sin, but we must pray for forgiveness from Bhagavān when we realize that a mistake has been committed by us.

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**Thank you-For reading the summary**

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

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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