

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 15: Puruṣottama-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-8), Sunday, 28 January 2024

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/4Kly5mtc7U4>

Tree of Material World Mere Reflection of the Spiritual World Situated on Desire just as the Tree's Reflection situated on Water.

The session began with the customary prayers and lighting the lamp. We are fortunate that we have gathered again for understanding the 15th chapter after 12th chapter where we were able to understand the 'Bhakti yoga'. The 15th Chapter deals with the '**Purushothama yoga**' or the '**yoga of the supreme being**' where in HE explains the process of breaking from the attachment in the material world.

We do not choose something for ourselves. It is HIM who chooses us. In this spiritual journey of learning Gita we have been chosen and we should take this opportunity to pursue till the 18th chapter. We need to consider ourselves blessed for being the chosen ones in this divine experience of Learning, understanding and imbibing Gita.

In the 1st Chapter, Arjuna who remained ever undefeated had expressed :

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति। वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते॥

My limbs fail and my mouth is parched up, my body quivers and my hairs stand on end. Arjuna could not even stand nor desired to fight and kill his family members. Even after this averment by Arjuna, Bhagavan had not started the Gita.

In 2nd chapter Arjuna had started asking what was good for him? He questioned :

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥

Arjuna says; I am confused about my duty, and am besieged with anxiety and faintheartedness. I am Your disciple, and am surrendered to You. Please instruct me for certain what is best for me.

Arjuna had asked Sri Krishna Bhagavān to tell him what is certain? It was only from 2nd Chapter, 11th shloka that HE starts the actual Gītā and explains answering all the doubts in the mind of Arjuna.

Swami Govind Dev Giri ji maharaja says Vedas are the main source of knowledge. We are able to behave, learn and understand, even to talk or walk or speak etc., only because of the Vedas. Vedas are the exhalations of Bhagavān whereas Gītā is HIS direct speak. When we follow the HIM, we are actually chanting the words spoken by HIM.

We are fortunate and we should be delighted to learn Gītā. On having learnt the 12th chapter, we get some confidence that we can easily continue till the 18th chapter. In fact with this confidence we can further learn and move further to becoming a

Gītāvrathi and complete the journey by memorising the entire Gītā too.

In the 15th chapter, the yoga of the Supreme being, Bhagavān tells us about different philosophies to practice. We must have seen in many pictures circulated on Gītā wherein a tree which is upside down is depicted. The origination is from 15th chapter where HE has taken the example of an Upside Down Banyan tree to explain the Purushothama yoga or the Yoga of supreme being.

15.1

śrībhagavānuvāca ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥ(ś) śākhā, aśvattham(m) prāhuravyayam, chandāṃsi yasya parṇāni, yastam(ṽ) veda sa vedavit.15.1

Srī Bhagavān said :

He who knows the Pīpala tree (in the form of creation); which is said to be imperishable, with its roots in the Primeval being (God), whose branch is represented by Brahmā (the Creator), and whose leaves are the Vedas, is the knower of the purport of Vedas.

In this verse Bhagavan explains the 'samsara Swaroop' or the ways of the material world. In starting 2 shlokas he is speaking about 'samsara swaroopa' or the ways of this world.



ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥ(ś) śākham - In the tree the roots are upwards and the branches are downwards. In our body also the head is upside.

aśvattha- 'shvaH' means tomorrow or next moment. whereas 'ashvaH' means which is not just next moment but will keep changing.

prāhura- Full of activity and keeps changing and is 'avyayam' or indestructible. Aswatha tree is called peepal because the tree is fickle and the leaves of the tree are never still and are rustling all the time.

Opposite is 'prathikshana parivarthana manethi na parivarthathi thathaiva thishtathi athaiva avyayam ithi uchyathi' - One which does not changes every moment and is not destructible

The parṇāni (leaves) here are called chandā. The term chandā has 3 different meanings, poetry (chandā shastra), Knowledge and Vedas. Here it could alternatively mean knowledge or the Vedas. Imagine the tree where roots are upside and leaves are downside and there are lots of leaves and they are depicting the knowledge.

yastaṃ(ṽ) veda sa vedavit- One who knows the Veda.

The one who knows the Veda or the knowledge and philosophy of life is herein described as the upside and downside tree. There is no tree which is actually with roots upwards and the branches downwards, but HE has used this as a metaphor to explain the attachment in the material world as a reflection of this tree.

15.2

**adhaścordhvaṃ(m) prasṛtāstasya śākhā,
guṇappravṛddhā viṣayappravālāḥ,
adhaśca mūlānyanusantatāni,
karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke. 15.2**

Fed by the three Guṇas and having sense-objects for their tender leaves, the branches of the aforesaid tree (in the shape of different orders of creation) extend both upwards and downwards; and it's roots which bind the soul according to its actions in the human body, are spread in all regions,

higher as well as lower.

In this shloka Bhagavan further explains the actual meaning of the example of the tree. The word ūrdhva is also considered as Brahman the supreme for all beings and the one who has all the knowledge or 'vedavith'.. Bhagavan spoke about the imaginary tree and here he is explaining.

The branches of the tree extends everywhere in this tree downward and upwards.

guṇapraṇṛddhā- By using this word, HE has referred to the karma theory. Whatever karma one does one has to own it. Our right is only in karma and not in its fruits. Bhagavan does not say don't think about fruits but he is stressing that we do not have rights on the fruits.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन। मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥

One may have all the above practices, and one should understand these are in what measure and which is predominant and then try to balance by increasing the good practices for self improvement. All karmas or Gunas are nourished by the person whether it is any of the three Gunas.

viśayapraṇālāḥ- Meaning all sense objects. If any leaf is about to take shape and is seen coming out, that is referred to as 'pravāla', which is stated as a simile to the flow of the sense objects nourished by the tree like of sound, touch, taste, smell.

adhaśca mūlānyanusantatāni- HE says the karmas are binding us in this world. This karma spreads like the roots and branches of the tree up and down and all over because of the 'guna karma'.

One is bound by the senses and it is important to control the senses else one will be bound to the roots and detachment will not be happening. It is like we have our eyes and we think that we do not want to see but the eye does. However the ownership of seeing will be that of the self.

In this shloka also the essence of Karma and the fruits of karma was explained. One's right is only to do the Karma and not desire for the fruits of the karma. Bhagavan has referred to 'guṇapraṇṛddhā' here.

The karma also originates from 3 Gunas sattvik, rajasik and tamasik. Tamasik guna is considered the worst of the three. One should work upon improving and move towards sattvik guna. Each being has all 3 Gunas in different measures. One needs to know which is in greater measure and address the same by improving to reach the sattvik state of guna. Each person will have one of these Gunas in higher measure.

- If someone loves to sleep all time and do nothing such a person has predominantly Tamasik guna.
- If a person does work all the time but is not interested in worshipping such a person has predominantly Rajasik guna.
- If a person likes to meditate always, wants to listen to pravachana or discourses of Puranas, vedas and upanishads or get involved in bhajans etc. then such a person has predominantly Sattvik guna.

**na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate,
nānto na cādirna ca sampratiṣṭhā,
aśvatthamenam(m) suvirūḍhamūlam,
asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā. 15.3**

The nature of this tree of creation, does not on mature thought, turn out what it is represented to be; for it has neither beginning nor end, nor even stability. Therefore cutting down this Pīpala tree, which is most firmly rooted, with the formidable axe of dispassion

In this shloka Bhagavan explained about the material world.

na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate- Using the example of the upside tree HE had explained the foundation of this material world.

In real world if one does good karma one can beget a good birthing the next life which is an upside and bad karma will beget downgraded life.

Concept of chaturdash bhuvanani; The 14 planes of living beings .

- Type 1 to 8 lives are of superior than human lives
- Type 9 is the human being
- Type 10 is of animals with 4 legs
- Type 11 is of birds with 2 legs 2 wings
- Type 12 is of reptiles with no leg or wing
- Type 13 is of creatures like the spiders, octopus, insects with 6 legs, mosquitoes
- Type 14 is of the least downside beings like plants which cannot move and are rooted

To understand how these birth in next lives as classified in 'Chaturdasha bhuvanani' happens, the answer lies in the concept 'chaturdasha lokas', the 14 Lokas;

They are the 7 Lokas - **Satya Loka, Tapa Loka, Jana Loka, Mahar Loka, Svar Loka, Bhuvar Loka, Bhur Loka** are the ones where it is considered upside for being born.

If a human being does good karma being born in 1 to 8 lives is a possibility. If one has rajasik guna karma such lives will be born in the 9th category as human being on the earth.

The worst 7 Lokas is tamasik where we will get the other lower degraded lives in **Atala Loka, Vitala Loka, Sutala Loka, Talatala Loka, Mahatala Loka, Rasatala Loka, Patala Loka**.

We do not know the required measure of the karmas to get the best. But we have to follow good karma.

When we started learning Gita we are attempting to understand and strive towards adopting the learnings to become a better person. Age is not a limitation to start in this journey and any point of life is good to adopt.

nānto na cādirna - The tree referred has neither a starting point nor an ending, it is eternal. **It is an example to imagine and not to be taken figuratively.**

aśvatthamenam suvirūḍhamūlam - This Aswatha tree is firmly rooted and is strong. The question is

how to get detached from this worldly desires.

asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā - Bhagavān advises to cut all the roots with the axe of detachment.

A story was shared to explain the concept of detachment:

Once Shukhdevji went to Mithila and asked Janakji to impart him the ultimate knowledge. Janakji was observing some rituals and asked Shukhdevji to carry a bowl of oil and take it around Mithila as a part of the ritual with a warning that not even a drop of oil to be spilled. Shukhdevji completed the Parikrama with full concentration ensuring not even a drop of oil spilled.

Janakji asked him how was the scene around him when he was going around Mithila, whether he saw the mountains, the rivers, the wind blowing etc. Shukhdevji could not answer as he never observed anything around him for he was fully engrossed in ensuring that oil does not spill. Janakji responded saying that Shukhdevji already had demonstrated complete detachment with the world and that was the knowledge gained by him.

Likewise in this world one should not be attached to the character being played in this world.

15.4

**tataḥ(ph) padaṃ(n) tatparimārgitavyaṃ(ṡ),
yasmingatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ,
tameva cādyam(m) puruṣam(m) prapadye,
yataḥ(ph) pravṛttiḥ(ph) prasṛtā purāṇī.15.4**

Thereafter a man should diligently seek for that supreme state, viz., God, having attained which they return no more to this world; and having fully resolved that he stands dedicated to the Primeval Being (God Nārāyaṇa) Himself, for whom the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and meditate on Him.

Bhagavān has herein explained, after cutting the roots from the origination what needs to do? We should work towards seeking the goal of the 'paramdharma' or HIS abode. One must seek this place as the goal, a place from where we need never return to earth and be reborn.

- **tataḥ(ph) padaṃ(n) tatparimārgitavyaṃ**- attaining the goal a person will never come back and be reborn
- **tameva cādyam(m) puruṣam(m) prapadye**- Surrender to the supreme Bhagavān and seek refuge in HIM
- **yataḥ(ph) pravṛttiḥ(ph) prasṛtā purāṇī**- The activity, the energy and the will power in all the supreme power will be spread and extended in a continuous form. This has been explained in all the Puranas. There is no starting point and from that energy of the supreme the samsara is spreading from whom we seek refuge.

The Supreme Bhagavan is the one whom we should seek and that is by cutting the roots by attachment.

15.5

**nirmānamohā jitasaṅgadoṣā,
adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ,
dvandvairvimuktāḥ(s) sukhaduḥkhasaṅjñaiḥ(r),
gacchantyamūḍhāḥ(ph) padamavyayaṃ(n) tat. 15.5**

They who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, and are constantly abiding in God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and who are completely immune to all pairs of opposites going by the names of pleasure and pain, and are undeluded, attain that supreme immortal state.

HE further explains how one can start seeking and think of oneself as '**aham Brahmāsmi**' (I am that) which is a concept of Vedanta. Here the qualities are explained to help us attain the goal.

1. **nirmānamohā**- Free from pride and delusion
2. **jitasaṅgadoṣā**- Free from attachment. One who has conquered attachment
3. **adhyātmanityā**- Spirituality which is not just by reading Gītā or worshipping gods. It is dwelling in self awareness and controlling the Kama (lust) krodha (anger) lobha (desire) Moha (attachment).
4. **vinivṛttakāmāḥ**- All desires vanquished
5. **dvandvairvimuktāḥ** - The duality of opposing feelings like
6. **sukhadukha** - pleasure and pain
7. **gacchantyamūḍhāḥ** - Undeluded person
8. **padamavyayan** - Once we have these qualities one can reach the eternal goal

15.6

**na tadbhāsayate sūryo, na śasāṅko na pāvākaḥ,
yadgatvā na nivartante, taddhāma paRāmaṃ(m) mama. 15.6**

Neither the sun nor the moon nor fire can illumine that supreme self-effulgent state, attaining which they never return to this world; that is My supreme abode.

One should strive to reach the ultimate goal of reaching the 'paramdhama' (ultimate resting place). To get to this place, HE explains;

The sun does not illuminate and neither the Moon from the sun, and so also the fire. They are not the main source of light. All these 3 do not illuminate the world that we reach after attaining the ultimate resting place from where we do not return. The light will be present but not from these 3 sources. HE is '**Sat chitt anandan roopa**', who is present all the time, who is knowledgeable and who lightens up the place with bliss. The energy for Sun is also from the supreme Bhagavan.

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

That which sees not with the eye, that by which one sees the eye's seeing, know That to be the Brahman

and not this which men follow after here.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

“There the Sun cannot shine and the moon has no lustre: all the stars are blind: there our lightnings flash not, neither any earthly fire. For all that is bright is but the shadow of His brightness and by His shining all this shines.”

Neither does the sun shine there, nor the moon with all the stars, nor does this lightning shine. What to say of this fire? Everything shines after HIM who alone shines. By HIS light all this shines variously.

15.7

**mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke, jīvabhūtaḥ(s) sanātanaḥ,
manaḥ(ś) śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi, prakṛtisthāni karṣati. 15.7**

The eternal Jīvātmā in this body is a fragment of My own Self; and it is that alone which draws around itself the mind and the five senses, which abide in Prakṛti.

Every living being is a part of HIM in this world. In this Sanātana(starting point is not known), with the senses of mind, HE is the eternal living being. But if a person thinks everything belongs to to him, it is clarified that in every being HE is present. The 6 senses which includes the mind, no doubt connects all to ourselves, our body and we think that everything belongs to us. But even these sensory organs are not ours.

Each and every living being has a fragmented part of Bhagavān within himself.

15.8

**śarīraṃ(ṡ) yadavāpnoti, yaccāpyutkrāmatīśvaraḥ,
grhītvaitāni saṃyāti, vāyurgandhānīvāśayāt.15.8**

Even as the wind wafts scents from their seat, so, too, the Jīvātmā, which is the controller of the body etc., taking the mind and the senses from the body which it leaves behind, forthwith migrates to the body which it acquires.

How the world is created and destroyed and How the soul goes from one body to another was explained in this shloka;

In Chapter 2 Shloka 12 :

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥

Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

As a person sheds worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts off its worn-out body and enters a new one.

As the air carries fragrance whether good smell or bad smell in the air, the soul is also carried from one body to the other.

śarīraṃ(y) yadavāpnoti- when one leaves one's body and gets another body it is likened to the wind which flows from the garden from where it carries fragrance, or if it passes through a dirty place it carries bad smell. The soul does not have any attributes and is not attached to the sense objects but it goes out like the wind without any attachment. The karma phala remains the same but soul is not attached to the physical body.

Question and Answer

Arun Ji

Question: What is the meaning of Asakti?

Answer: It implies to attachment.

Sri Nalini Ji

Question: In shloka 5, dvandvairvimuktāḥ(s) sukhaduḥkhasañjñaiḥ(r), what does dvandva arises in the mind due to attachment?

Answer: Dvandva refers to dualities of life such as happiness and misery, being valued and being insulted, appreciation and condemn. The dualities which are positive and negative is called Dvandva and one who maintains equanimity during these dualities of life (pleasant or unpleasant) and remains equipoised is called dvandvairvimuktāḥ.

Question: How does one develop the nature to remain equipoised?

Answer: The reaction time towards negative situations of life can be reduced by being involved in virtuous tasks or remain in the company of virtuous people. On a scale of 10, if the Ego is on 9, one needs to work towards reducing it by being attentive towards one's behavior and actions. Every action should be performed with an intention to please the Divine. This comes with constant practice.

Praniti Ji

Question: Like how the lotus remains untainted with the water in its surrounding, one needs to give up on attachment. How can one sustain in the material realm without attachment and give in 100%?

Answer: If one gives up on attachment, only then one would be able to contribute 100%. A soldier is devoid of attachment and hence, he is able to keep the interest of the nation above one and all.

Question: The one with spiritual knowledge would be virtuous and hence susceptible to be deceived by the other. Please clarify.

Answer: One is deceived due to lack of attentiveness or lack of care. Irrespective of whether one who is virtuous or sinful, if one lacks attentiveness and the alertness, one would be deceived.

Sridharan Ji

Question: All the Gunas come from Saṁskāras which influence the thoughts, words and deeds. Then how does detachment play its role?

Answer: One's nature is derived from Saṁskāras carried forward from many lifetimes. However, one is also bestowed with wisdom and free will to perform the actions. The inner consciousness provides the basic instinct if an action is right or wrong.

Gunavanti Ji

Question: What does aśvattha imply in the first shloka?

Answer: It refers to peepal tree or banyan tree.

Bhargav Ji

Question: What does aśvatthamenam(m) suvirūḍhamūlam imply?

Answer: aśvattha refers to peepal tree or banyan tree. Even when there is no air, the leaves of this tree show movement. Bhagavān uses this peepal tree to represent the universe (inverted tree), where he signifies the root of this universe while the branches and leaves signify the entities of this universe.

Bharadwaj Ji

Question: Can one have attachment towards one's desires?

Answer: One cannot be devoid of attachment. However, high intensity of desires and attachment makes one achieve one desire and aspire for the next one and this cycle continues. If one fails to accomplish a desire, one is gripped by misery. Hence, one can control the high intensity desires.

Bhagawat Ji

Question: If one is not a vegetarian from many generations, how can one proceed with the study of Gītā and other spiritual practices?

Answer: The scriptures advise to walk on the path of non-violence and refrain from harming other living creatures. There are five Koshas as stated below:

- (1) **Annamaya** Kosha - The mountains, rivers come to this category
- (2) **Prāṇamaya** Kosha - All the plant species come under this category and consuming plants or fruits is considered to be a vegetarian diet as per the scriptures.
- (3) **Manomaya** Kosha - Living entities which are devoid of wisdom - say smaller species of fishes which are devoid of wisdom. In Goa and Bengal, those who consume fish are also considered to be vegetarian by some fraction of believers.
- (4) **Vijñanamaya** Kosha - All other living creatures belong to this category and consuming them is a deviation from vegetarianism.
- (5) **Anandamaya** Kosha - One who can contemplate on the inner state to attain the almighty and this is possible only in the human form. However, irrespective of whether one practices vegetarianism or refrains from vegetarian diet, one can attain the Divine with sincere devotion.

Shiv Kumar Ji

Question: How can one remain in Sathvik Guna in this current times one would move towards Rajo Guna during daily activities.

Answer: It is not possible to be devoid of Rajo Guna. To uplift oneself from Tamas to Sattva, one should align it with Sattva guna so that the prescribed actions are beneficial to one and other.

Amit Kumar Ji

Question: It is easy to learn with pictorial descriptions. Which book could one refer to?

Answer: Geeta Press - Sadhak Sanjivini has visual descriptions which one could refer. In vivechans, it is explained with illustrations and narrations. It is Code 6 for Hindi and Code 1080 for English.

Gangadhar Ji

Question: What is the process to give up desires?

Answer: By giving up attachments, one can cut down on desires. There is no harm in consuming Jalebi or Rasagulla. But being attached to its taste and relishing it every moment is when one is gripped by desires.

Shubhangi Ji

Question: How can one perform Pooja?

Answer: As recommended by Bhagavān Shankaracharya, one could engage in devotion of five devatas - Bhagavān Narayan, Bhagavān Shiv, Devi, Ganesh Ji and Surya Dev along with Ishta Dev. One mala Japa is also recommended on a daily basis.

Shivraj Ji

Question: How can one identify a true Guru?

Answer: There are few traits -

- (1) He should be from an acharya or mutt parampara
- (2) He should understand the scriptures instead of being a motivational speaker
- (3) He should focus on devotion towards the Divine instead of devotion towards himself. If he focuses on the devotion towards divine, then the Guru is a Sadguru.

Sudeshna Ji

Question: Does the lifespan depend on Karma?

Answer: It depends on the past life karma.

Question: What happens to the one who commits suicide?

Answer: It is a sin as per scriptures and one would have to face the consequences for taking one's own life.

The session ends with prayer and Hanuman Chalisa.



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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