

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatrāya-Vibhāga-Yoga

1/3 (Ślōka 1-5), Sunday, 03 November 2024

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/v51djfi91Kw>

The three Gunas form the basis of one's personality. One should adopt Sattvik nature to Do Good, Be Good and Feel Good

The 14th chapter of Bhagavadgītā is known as the **Guṇatrāya Vibhaga Yoga - Yog through Understanding the Three Modes of Material Nature.**

In this chapter, Bhagavān explains the **nature of HIS material energy**, which is the source of the body and its elements. Thus, it is the origin of both mind and matter.

The evening discourse began with the customary lighting of lamp and opening prayer. Followed by a short quiz. It was agreed that instead of taking all the quiz questions in one go, the same will be taken in short intervals during the discussion session.

Quiz 1: What is the name of chapter 14:

Answer: Nitya gave the answer as, **Guṇatrāya Vibhaga Yoga.**

Quiz 2: How many shlokas are there in this chapter:

Answer: There are 27 shlokas in this chapter.

Name of the chapter is Guṇatrāya Vibhaga Yoga. We have learnt about the gunas in chapter 15 as well as in chapter 17. Each one will be taken up in detail in this chapter.

Quiz 3: Can anyone talk about the types of Gunas that we had discussed in previous chapters?

Answer: Vedant took the question and after second attempt answered it correctly. He said that the material nature constitutes following three gunas (modes):

- **sattva** (goodness),
- **rajas** (passion), and
- **tamas** (ignorance).

So, in this chapter, **Gunatraya Vibhaga Yoga** the three qualities listed above have been divided and each one has been explained in detail. Like for example,

- features of each quality
- how one can identify those,
- the quality that is predominant at a particular point of time,
- the one which is supposed to be good for humans, and
- the one which is not good

Goodness (Sattva), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (dullness) are the three Gunas or the three -fold classification of Prakṛti or nature. Bhagavān explains the traits of each of the three Gunas in detail in this Chapter. The three Gunas bind down the soul in the cycle of birth and death. Rajas is part of Nature's creative side – birth, energy, movement, change, action, the season of spring. Tamas is part of Nature's destructive side – death, decay, inertia, heaviness, winter. Sattva is the state in between – harmony, wholesomeness, lucidity, stillness, summer. 'Of these, Sattva, pure and good, can illuminate your soul with its shining light, which is explained further in detail in this Chapter.

14.1

śrībhagavānuvāca

**param(m) bhūyaḥ(ph) praVākṣyāmi, jñānānām(ñ) jñānamuttamam,
yajjñātvā 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.

This is a point where Bhagavān realized that Arjuna is confused. Arjuna has been listening to the Divine knowledge very carefully. However, it was evident that he required more clarity. Consider the example of a mother who feeds her little child. After having a part of the food, the child refuses to eat further by saying that he/she is full. But the mother insists and makes the child eat a few morsels of food. By experience, she is aware that the child is still not full, and she breaks the food into small morsels to continue to feed the child. In the same manner, like how a mother understands her child, Bhagavān understands that HE needs to expound on this topic once again, so that Arjuna can comprehend the Divine wisdom. And so, HE will have to explain those again. So, HE comforted Arjuna and said:

- **param(m) bhūyaḥ(ph) praVākṣyāmi, jñānānām(ñ) jñānamuttamam:** HE will explain the Supreme wisdom, the Best of Knowledge again.
- **yajjñātvā munayaḥ(s) sarve, parām(m) siddhimito gatāḥ.:** And HE further added that by knowing which, all the great saints attained highest of perfection.

Quiz 4: The five days festivals that just got concluded, name the first one?

Answer: Sanvi didi took this up first and gave the answer as Dhanteras.

Quiz 5: What is the story behind the festival Dhanteras? In brief why it is celebrated and what all we do to observe the said festival?



Answer: Samudra Manthan (Churning of the Ocean), a collaborative act by celestial devatas and demons resulted in the discovery of Amrita (the nectar of immortality) and the other 14 ratnas (jewels). The story of Samudra Manthan is mentioned in the Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Padma Purana, and the Mahabharata. It was one of the turning points in the history of celestial devatas and demons and changed their relationship permanently.

The story of Dhanvantari is intricately woven with the grand narrative of the Samudra Manthan, or the churning of the ocean of milk, a pivotal event described in ancient Hindu texts like the Bhagavata Purana and the Vishnu Purana. According to these accounts, the Devas (gods) and the Asuras (demons) jointly churned the ocean to obtain amrita, the elixir of immortality, hoping it would grant them eternal life and unparalleled power.

As the churning reached its zenith, Dhanvantari emerged from the ocean, holding a pot of amrita. Dhanvantari is Avatar of Bhagavān Vishnu, who then went on to be the **physician of the Devas and the God of Ayurvedic medicine**. The day when Dhanvantri emerged is celebrated as Dhanteras. His presence blessed the celestial devatas with good health and immortality, establishing him as the supreme healer in the Hindu scriptures. He had a bowl in his hand due to this reason on this day we follow a tradition of buying utensils etc. **The worship of Dhanvantari, who is regarded as the divine doctor and the portent of health and well-being, is at the center of the festival of Dhanteras.**

When he appeared with the Divine Amrit in his hands, the Asuras snatched the jug from Dhanvantari immediately. Then, again there was a struggle between Asuras and the Devas for the Amrit. When they were struggling, four drops of the Amrit fell at four different places: Allahabad or Prayag at Uttar Pradesh, Haridwar at Uttarakhand, Ujjain at Madhya Pradesh, and Nasik at Maharashtra. This is why Kumbh Mela is held every 12 years in these places.

The struggle continued. To end it, Bhagavān Vishnu took the form of the beautiful damsel Mohini who mesmerized the Asuras with her beauty and told the Asuras that she would distribute the Amrit among the gods and the demons in a fair manner. The Asuras were so engrossed in the beauty of Mohini; they did not realize that they had been fooled. She was only distributing the Amrit to the Devas.

When Rahu saw what was happening, he took the form of a Deva and sat among the Devas. But the luminescence that he presented was utterly different from what Devas possessed. Surya and Chandra noticed this immediately and informed Bhagavān Vishnu, who was in the form of Mohini. Mohini cut off Rahu's head with the Sudarshana Chakra. But Rahu had already taken the Amrit. So, he did not die. Since then, his head has been called Rahu, and the body has been called Ketu, which then formed planets later. When it ended, there was again another battle between Devas and the Asuras. But this time, Devas were immortal and thus trounced Asuras.

**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).

Let's understand the meaning of Pralaya. It indicates the end of the world - a period of dissolution or destruction of the entire universe or cosmic creation. The concept of types of pralaya encompasses various forms of dissolution as described in different texts.

Vedanta classifies Types of pralayas into four categories:

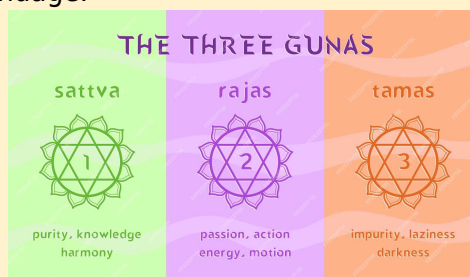
- **Nitya Pralaya:** The constant dissolution of all beings, like death or sleep that occurs daily,
- **Nimitta Pralaya:** (also known as Brahmā Pralaya) It occurs at the end of a Kalpa (one day in the life of Brahmā Ji), when Brahmā Ji goes into his sleep. Approximately 1000 Mahayugas form one Kalpa. A great fire consumes the Bhu, Bhuvah, and Shah Lokas and dissolves them.
- **Prakrita Pralaya:** Occurs at the end of Brahmā Ji's lifetime when the whole world (Brahmānda) dissolves and merges with Prakṛti, and
- **Atyantika Pralaya:** When man attains liberation, he merges with Bhagavān Narayana.

In this shloka, Bhagavān Śrī Krishna assures Arjuna that those who have equipped themselves with the knowledge HE has bestowed:

- They will no longer have to accept repeated confinement in a mother's womb.
- They will also not be obliged to stay in a state of suspended animation in the womb of Paramatma at the time of the universal dissolution, or
- Be reborn along with the next creation.

In a nutshell, those who are equipped with this Divine wisdom are free from the cycle of birth and death.

Let's now understand why one is chained or caught in the web of birth and death. The three *guṇas* (modes of material nature) are the cause of bondage, and the pure or divine knowledge will alone illumine the path out of bondage.



Question: How to gain the Supreme knowledge?

Answer: The same can be gained by:

- by reading Gītā again and again.
- by giving full attention to vivechan discussions,
- By doing daily revisions.
- By SW Adhyaya

In this manner we too will get acquainted with the knowledge and at the time of dissolution, will

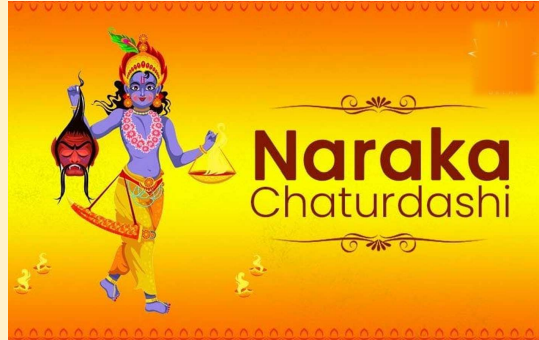
remain unaffected without any form of fear, worry or anxiety.

14.3

**mama yonirmahadbrahma, tasmingarbham(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.

Quiz 6: Dhan Teras is followed by which festival?



Answer: Three four kids attempted the answer, but finally the correct answer was given by Saanvi Didi. **Naraka Chaturdashi** (also known as **Kali Chaudas**, **Narak Chaudas**, **Roop Chaudas**, **Choti Diwali**, **Narak Nivaran Chaturdashi** and **Bhoot Chaturdashi**) is an annual Hindu festival that falls on Chaturdashi (the 14th day) of the Krishna Paksha in the Hindu calendar month of Ashvin (according to the amanta tradition) or Kartika (according to the purnimanta tradition). It is the second day of the five-day long festival of Diwali (also known as Deepavali). Hindu literature narrates that the asura (demon) Narakasura was killed on this day by Krishna and Satyabhama and also 16000 women were released from his imprisonment. The day is celebrated by early morning religious rituals, and festivities follow on.

Coming back to this shloka, Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that HE is the one who creates the entire universe. The creation of each and every Bhuta (elements of nature) takes place due to the union of non-living entity (i.e., which does not contain life) and consciousness or Chetana (which is the indication of life).

andha-pangu-nyaya is often used by modern preachers while explaining the union of non-living entity and the Consciousness.



The metaphor centers around a blind man (*andha*), who can walk but cannot see, and a lame man (*pangu*), who can see but cannot walk. Individually, neither can move forward effectively. However, when they combine their strengths—the lame man guiding the blind man from his vantage on the blind man's shoulders—they are empowered to progress. Similarly, the combo of Prakṛti and Puruṣa come into play in creation of this universe. Prakṛti can be compared to the blind man and

Puruṣa can be compared to the lame man who is instructing or directing Prakṛti. This mutual dependency emphasizes how co-operation brings completeness where individuals lack self-sufficiency. The analogy reminds us that:

- Everyone has a role, irrespective of their individual limitations.
- Just as the blind and lame need each other, the Divine consciousness helps one grow stronger when practitioners and resources across cultures and skills unite for a common goal
- It inspires teams to look for complementary partnerships, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in service.
- Recognizing our individual limitations fosters humility, encouraging devotees to depend on Krishna and the association of others.

As they say - "**Many hands make light work**". We can complete a task quicker and easier by working with others. Whether in school or workplace, we often work in teams to achieve different objectives. Therefore, we should learn to work with others

Quiz 7: Why do we celebrate Diwali festival?

Answer: This was easy as almost all the kids answered in a chorus and said, it is celebrated to mark the home coming of Bhagavan Ram, Devi Sita and Laxman. They had returned to Ayodhya after completing 14 years of exile. In order to welcome THEM people of Ayodhya took to:

- cleaning the entire town,
- decorating
- lighting of lamps

So, since then this has become a tradition among Hindus. Every year they celebrate Diwali by cleaning their houses, decorating and putting lights.

14.4

**sarvayoniṣu kaunteya, mūrtayaḥ(s) sambhavanti yāḥ,
tāsām(m) brahma mahadyoniḥ(r), ahaṁ(m) bijapradāḥ(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 living and non-living things, all the creatures covered under 84 lakhs yonis or species. The Prakṛti on the other hand is the mother in whose womb the entire creations come into existence. So, Bhagavān is called as Param Pita or Supreme Power as everything happens under HIS directions/ HIS control/ HIS instructions.

In the 10th shloka from the 9th Chapter of Gītā, Bhagavān has explained the same concept. HE had said:

**mayādhyakṣheṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-charācharam
hetunānena kaunteya jagad viparivartate ||9.10||**

Working under My direction, this material energy brings into being all animate and inanimate forms, O son of Kunti. For this reason, the material world undergoes the changes (of creation, maintenance, and dissolution).

All the creatures under the 84 lakh yonis or species take form through following four ways. The entire creation belongs these four groups are: **Pindaj, Andaj, Swedaj, and Udbhij.**

- **Pindaj** are mammals which are born directly from the body or occurring by means of a placenta or placenta like organ; such as humans and other animals.
- **Andaj** are born from an egg, such as birds, fishes, and amphibians.
- **Swedaj** are born from or out of the sweat, dander (material shed from the body of various animals), shed skin cells and flakes, organic detritus, biotic material, or moisture generated by breathing, perspiration, saliva, and other secretions (*sweda* means sweat) such as insects and other tiny or microscopic creatures.
- **Udbhij** (also spelled as Udvij) are born from the ground or grow out of earth (*udbh* – *ud* means comes up, created, or born from *bhu* means ground or land) such as trees and plants. First three groups belong to animal kingdom (*Kingdom Animalia*) and the last one belongs to the plant kingdom (*Kingdom Plantae*).

Quiz 8: *What is the significance behind Govardhan Pooja?*



Answer: The sacred festival, also known as Annakut Puja, primarily commemorates the **lifting of the Govardhan Hill by Lord Krishna** to protect the residents of Vrindavan from the wrath of Lord Indra. The cultural significance of Govardhan Pooja extends beyond this mythological tale, embodying values of gratitude, humility, and environmental consciousness.

14.5

**sattvaṁ(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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that the three gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) play role of attaching our soul to the body. Imagine a rope, whose primary function is to tie or to bind something. In the same manner, the three Gunas bind the soul to the body. It is due to the presence of the three Gunas that one develops attachment towards worldly objects (i.e., they have a mindset of ME, MINE, etc.).

Like for example,

- It's my pencil,
- get off, this is my seat,
- it's my house

However, the kids attending the session are into learning Gītā. So, they might not be saying the above. As they have more of Sattvic qualities. But the one's having tamasic qualities may do the kind of talks mentioned above. The three gunas are often associated with color. **White is symbol of Sattvic, Red is symbol of Rajasic and Black is symbol of Tamsic.**

Quiz 9: What is your understanding about Sattva Guna?

Answer: Saanvi Didi said helpful nature. Later the same was said in one word which is, goodness.

Quiz 10: What is your understanding about Rajasic Guna?

Answer: Rajasic Guna involves too much of activity and along with that having the tendency of getting attached to the activity.

Quiz 11: What is your understanding about Tamasic Guna?

Answer: Tamasic is laziness, procrastination, taking up wrong acts etc.

Let's understand the three Gunas.

Goodness (Sattva), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (dullness) are the three Gunas or the three-fold classification of Prakṛti or nature. The three Gunas bind down the soul in the cycle of birth and death (Just like how a rope binds the objects).

- Sattva is the state endowed with goodness – harmony, calmness, peace, helping, sharing, caring etc. **Those with Sattva Guna Do good, be good and feel good. Such people see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.**
- Rajas is part of Nature's creative side – energy, movement, change, action and attachment towards worldly objects (my pencil, my bag, my seat), such people with attachment neither do good nor bad and sometimes exhibit self-centered nature.
- Tamas is part of Nature's destructive side – decay, inertia, lethargy, sloth or laziness. As they say - **"An idle mind is the devil's workshop".**

Amongst the three Gunas, Sattva Guna (pure and good), can illuminate your soul with its shining light. We shall understand this further in the next session. Until then, let's try to give up one bad habit which we all have and adopt Sattva Guna by reading the Gītā.

The session ends with prayer and Hanuman Chalisa.

Question and Answer

Saanvi Ji

Question: What is the meaning of Uchyate?

Answer: It refers to the one who spoke (say the shloka).

Vandan Ji

Question: Are vivechan sessions conducted in all levels?

Answer: Yes, it will be conducted for all levels.



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write- up. Please invest three minutes of your time to provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

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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.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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