

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatrāya-Vibhāga-Yoga

2/3 (Ślōka 7-14), Sunday, 22 September 2024

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/1juiwtLykTA>

Bhagavān tells us about the Good, Not So Good and the Bad Gunas

The 14th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Gunatrāya Vibhaga Yoga - Yoga for Understanding the Three Types of Nature**.

This was the second of the three-part interpretation session of the 14th chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, specially conducted for the young and keen Sadhaks of Geeta Pariwar.

As always, we 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 blessings of the Paramātmā, our Guru and the light of knowledge.

In Chapter 14 Bhagavān describes the concept of Guṇas in detail.

In the last session, we learnt that there are three Guṇas:

- **Sāttvik**- goodness
- **Rājasik**- attachment and sorrow
- **Tāmasik**- ignorance and inactivity

Today, we will learn more about them.

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.

In this Shloka Bhagavān tells how Rajasik Guna attaches us and influences our behavior. We all love physical activities and to play games. We become very active and energized when we play. In fact, some of us get so attached to such activities that we can't even stop moving and sit still even during Vivechan sessions or maybe in our classes too!

This is definitely not a good thing to do and one needs to control such Rajasik tendencies to overdo the activities that we like. Our effort should be to move towards Sattvik Gunas.

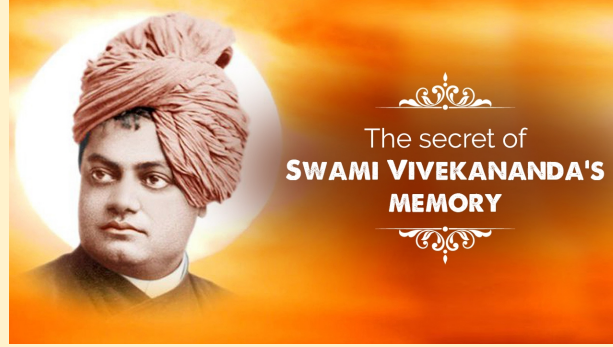
Sometimes we are just unable to focus on our studies as our mind keeps wondering. This happens under the influence of Rajasik and Tamasik Guna. However, when we are able to direct our minds to Sattvik Guna, it becomes calm, and we are able to concentrate well to finish our studies quickly.



In the olden days, where Rishi-Munis taught students at Gurukul, there was a concept called **Trikaal Sandhaya Vandana** where students had to do Prāṇayama, which is gaining control over our breathing. It has been proven that the more one gets control over their breathing, the more control they gain over their minds and the more control one gets over one's mind, their concentration and focus towards the activity at hand increases.

There is a very nice story about Swami Vivekananda when he was traveling by ship. He was sitting on the deck of the ship reading a book. As he completed reading each page, he tore it and threw it into the sea. The captain who was watching him was surprised by this action of Swami Vivekananda and asked him the reason for doing so. The captain was curious to know what Swamiji would do in case he had to refer to some knowledge in that book. Swami Vivekananda said that he had memorized the book completely and hence he didn't need the book anymore. The captain surprised, put him to test by asking some questions and lo and behold, Swamiji could tell every word without any mistake or faltering. So strong was Swami Vivekananda's grasping power that he could memorize a book by just reading it once.

There is another story where some English men were rifle shooting. Swami Vivekananda also happened to be there. The English men baited Swamiji to shoot thinking that a monk would not be able to do it. But Surprise! Surprise! Swamiji's first shot itself hit the Bulls Eye. This was again possible due to the intense concentration power that Swamiji possessed.



Swami Vivekananda **was able to develop such concentration through the practice of Prāṇayama and controlling his breathing effectively.**

Likewise, if we also do this regularly, over time, we will also be able to enhance our Sattvik Guna to improve our concentration and grasping power significantly. That will definitely give us a positive edge to do very well, be it in our studies or maybe a competition or even in our performance in dancing or singing.

In fact, singing helps a lot in gaining control over ones breathing. You will notice that famous Bhakta's like Meera Bai or Kabir Dasji were all accomplished poets and singers. Hey all were able to control their breathing from the usual 15-20 per minute to 10-12 per minute.

To reiterate, all this is possible when one gets control over their Rajasik and Tamasik Guna and enhances their Sattvik Guna through making sacrifices and developing control over their activities. This is not easy but definitely doable; Great men like Swami Vivekananda or Dr. Abdul Kalam had acheived it. If good children like you start practicing the good Gunas, soon you too can the Sattvik Gunas.

We have often seen some people desiring and wanting some things very badly, similar to the thirst one may feel after not drinking water for days in the desert. They are willing to anything to get the object of their desire. This is because of the attachment developed due to the Rajasik Guna in them. This is a bad thing as the inability to get that thing leads to sorrow and pain.

14.8

**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 Tamasik Guna, the symbol of darkness and **Ajnana** or ignorance. Tamasik Guna 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. Due to this laziness, we get late and have to rush to school in a hurry. This lethargy in us in the morning is due to Tammasik Guna. What we should do at such times is give one hard push to the Tamasik Guna and cheerfully jump out of the bed and start a bright new day on time, like a Sattvik Guna person would do.



Pramāḍā is another Tamasik Guna that we must try to avoid. It means doing something which one is not supposed to do like gossiping about other people with friends and also not do something which one is supposed to do like not studying for our upcoming exam but watching TV.



Alasya is that Tamasik trait that makes us procrastinate in doing things on time and perpetually postpone it to tomorrow. Swami Tejanandaji says we must **To-Marro** (to give a tight slap) to those who procrastinate and leave everything to do tomorrow. procrastination.

We must remove this word Tomorrow from our dictionary and do our jobs and duties on time. You will see all toppers and those who have successfully cleared IAS exams say that they had maintained **consistency in their routine of activities and regularly completed their studies with out fail.** This of course, comes from the Sattvik Guna that they develop through practice.

Bhagavān gives some very good tips on how to study consistently and with focus in Chapter-6

of Bhagavadgītā. Following those tips will definitely help us to excel in our studies and activities within a short span of six months. **But again, that too starts with, developing our Sattvik Guna** like eating the right food, doing the right activities, behaving in the right manner with others.



We have heard of people who promptly fall fast asleep while doing Savāsana during Yoga sessions. That is because of their love for the Tamasik Guna, called **nidrā** or oversleeping.

14.9

**sattvaṃ(m) sukhe sañjayati, rajaḥ(kh) karmaṇi bhārata,
jñānamāvr̥tya tu tamaḥ(ph), pramāde sañjayatyuta. 14.9**

Sattva draws one to joy and Rajas to action; while Tamas, clouding wisdom, impels one to error, sleep and sloth Arjuna.

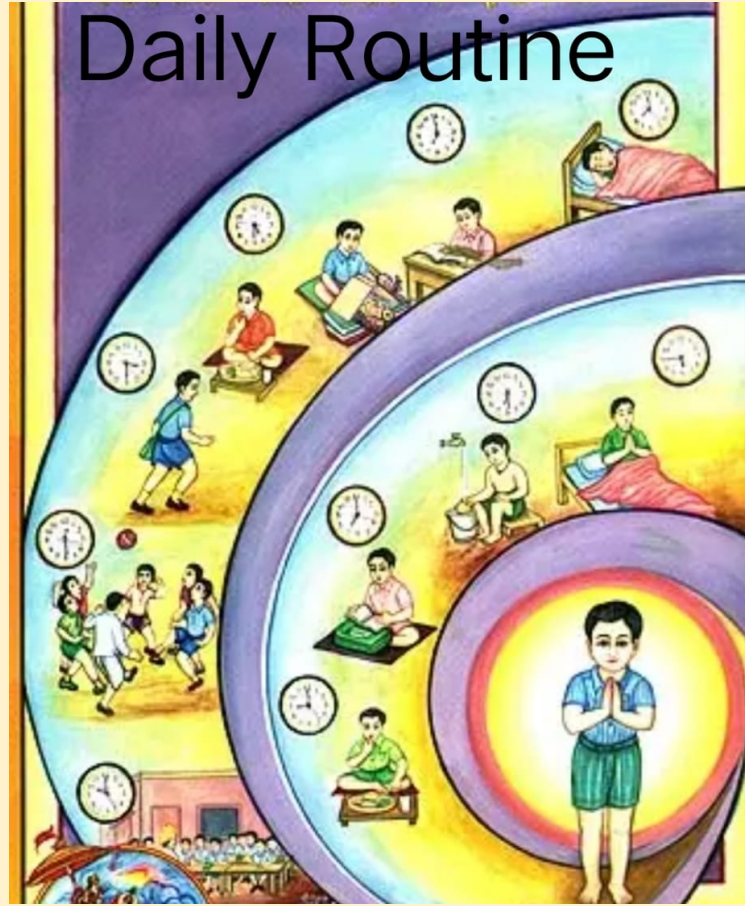
Bhagavān explains the different effects of the three Gunas in this Shloka.

Sattvik Guna binds a person to happiness. It gives small doses of happiness and binds a person to it.

Rajasik Guna binds the person to actions. In order to get the things of desire, Rajasik Guna makes a person very active.

Tamasik Guna hides whatever existing knowledge is there in mind, and the person will end up doing things one is not supposed to do and end up doing all the wrong things.

It is important to follow proper routine of waking up early, doing Yoga and Prāṇayama, eating the right food and of course do Puja everyday in order to win over Tamasik and Rajasik Gunas. If we can do this it will give every positive improvements in our lives in a very short time.



14.10

**rajastamaścābhibhūya, sattvaṃ(m) bhavati bhārata,
rajaḥ(s) sattvaṃ(n) tamaścaiva, tamaḥ(s) sattvaṃ(m) rajastathā. 14.10**

Overpowering Rajas and Tamas, Arjuna, Sattva prevails; overpowering Sattva and Tamas, Rajas prevails; even so, overpowering Sattva and Rajas, Tamas prevails.

Amongst friends we sometimes see one or two start dominating over the others. It is the same amongst the three Gunas.

Some activities are Sattvik, some are Rajasik and others are Tamasik.

All of us have a mixture of all these three Gunas in us. Like the three friends, sometimes, we become Sattvik and start reading Bhagavadgītā, sometimes Rajasik when we ignore to study for our exams to go and play and sometimes, we become Tamasik, feeling feel tired and promptly going off sleep leaving our game and of course our plan to study for the upcoming exams. It all depends on which Guna is dominant and on the rise at that moment.



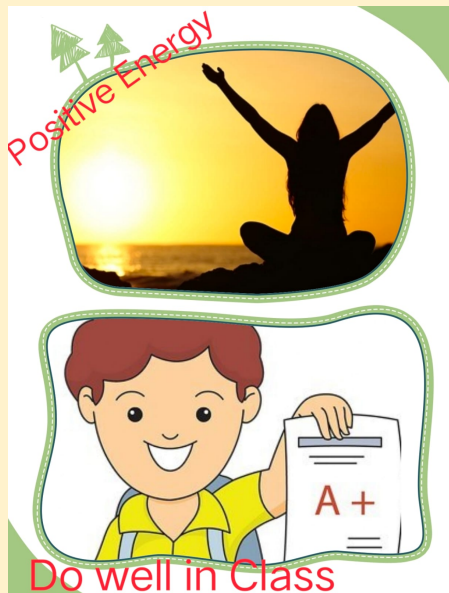
14.11

**sarvadvāreṣu dehe'smin, prakāśa upajāyate,
jñānaṃ(m) yadā tadā vidyād, vivṛddhaṃ(m) sattvamityuta. 14.11**

When light and discernment dawn in this body, as well as in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattva is predominant.

Bhagavān tells how to know the level of Sattvik Guna in ourselves.

When one's Sattvik Guna is on the rise, one become enlightened. We are filled with positive energy and desire to receive knowledge. We become steadfast in our focus to study and do well in our class.



14.12

**lobhaḥ(ph) pravṛttirārambhaḥ(kh), karmaṇāmaśamaḥ(s) spṛhā,
rajasyetānijāyante, vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha. 14.12**

With the preponderance of Rajas, Arjuna, greed, activity, undertaking of action with an interested motive, restlessness and a thirst for enjoyment make their appearance.

In this Shloka, Bhagavān explains that with the rise in Rajasik Guna, one is overpowered by **lobhaḥ** or greed and **pravṛttira** or strong inclination to fulfil that want. Such people with predominant Rajasik Guna are in constant pursuit to fulfil their desires and wants. Their desires are uncontrollable and they are always restless to get more.



14.13

**aparakāśo'pravṛttiśca, pramādo moha eva ca,
tamasyetāni jāyante, vivṛddhe kurunandana. 14.13**

With the growth of Tamas, Arjuna, obtuseness of the mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties, frivolity and stupor-all these appear.

People with Tamasik Gunas are **aparakāśo**, with no light of knowledge, ignorant and unenlightened. They are listless and lazy, **'apravṛttiśca** with no motivation or intention to do any action like those who just lie on their beds and don't even get up to switch off the light at night, expecting someone else will do that. Nobita is an example, who made a stick with which she could lie on the bed and switch off the light and showed it to Doremon.



14.14

**yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu, pralayaṃ(m) yāti dehabhṛt,
tadottamavidāṃ(m) lokān, amalānpratipadyate. 14.14**

When a man dies during the preponderance of Sattva, he obtains the stainless ethereal worlds (heaven etc.,) attained by men of noble deeds.

Bhagavān explains the fate of the soul after death based on the predominant Guna at the time of death. However, we will know about in detail in the next session

The Sadhaks were asked to commit on giving up a bad habit and imbibing a good habit.

They enthusiastically committed as below:

- **Devika Ji:** I will stop procrastinating and do homework on time everyday.
- **Yug Ji:** I will stop lying.
- **Ananya Ji:** I will control anger.
- **Pritesh Ji:** I forget and leave books in the school locker. I will now remember to bring back the books.
- **Aadishakti Ji:** I sometimes forget to join my regular Gītā class or the Vivechan session. From now on, I will put an alarm and remember to join on time.
- **Madhushree Ji:** I keep eating while studying. I will stop doing that. I will start meditation and read the Hanuman Chalisa every day and also put Bindi on my forehead.
- **Shivi Ji:** I bite my nails all the time, specially in class. I will stop doing that. I will also try to improve my handwriting.
- **Samvit Ji:** I will stop lying. I will control my anger and I will not be forgetful.
- **Kritka Ji:** I will not waste time after completing my studies and make a schedule of my activities.
- **Anay Ji:** I will not litter my house by throwing my toys all over but play with one at a time.
- **Gargi Ji:** I will stop watching and playing on the Mobile phone.
- **Riya Ji:** I sometimes sleep late. I will try to go to sleep and wake up on time. I will ensure my mind doesn't wonder while I study. I will pray to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna if I become sad or

distracted.

- **Udyog Bharti Ji:** I will stop lying and will control my anger.
- **Viha Ji:** I will stop beating my younger brother and will listen to what my mother says.
- **Mohit Ji:** I play on the Mobile phone even while I have my meals. I will stop doing that.

After this, the Sadhaks prayed to their favorite Bhagavān, asking his help to ensure that they were successful in doing as they had promised.

Sadhaks were also asked to come to next weeks Vivechan session and report how they were progressing on their commitments.

The session was followed by a Questions and Answers session and concluded with prayer to the Bhagavān and rendition of Hanuman Chalisa.

Questions and Answers:

Viha Phasate Ji

Q: Can very young children learn and memorize Bhagavadgītā ?

A: There are many very young children who have memorized Bhagavadgītā You can also do it.

Viha Ji has also cleared Jijyasu exam and will appear for the Pathak exam soon

Madhushree Ji

Q: How can I control my breathing?

A: You can do that through Dhyan and Prāṇayama like Kapalbhali, Anulom-Vilom etc. If you do that regularly, you can control your breathing.

Devika Vyas Ji

Q: What Guna should one imbibe to attain Moksha?

A: As per Vedanta, they will have to imbibe **Sadhana Chatushtaya** which includes

1. **Viveka** (Judgement): The ability to distinguish between what is right and wrong. This comes with developing Sattvik Guna.

2. **Vairagya** (Detachment): Cultivating non-attachment towards the things and events of the world.

3. **Shatsampat** (Six Virtues): The six spiritual qualities of:

- - Shama - Control of the mind
- - Dama - Control of the senses
- - Uparati - Withdrawal from worldly pleasures
- - Titiksha - Resolution and patience
- - Shraddha - Faith and confidence
- - Samadhana - Focused mental discipline

4. **Mumukshutva** (Desire for Liberation): A passionate desire and aspiration to attain Moksha.

Prithesh Ji

Q: What lies between Swarga (Heaven) and Naraka (Hell)?

A: That is not really known but there is definitely space.

Anay Ji

Q: How many chapters will be taught in Level-3?

A: Six chapters will be taught in Level-3.

Riya Agarwal Ji

Q: Even if I study for 2-3 hours, I don't get the confidence that I have learnt and prepared well. What should I do?

A: Create pointers of what you have studied in your mind. Revise those pointers till you get them right. Another way which is easier is to write short notes of what you have learnt. That will help you to jog your memory and will also help to revise.

Ananya and Yug Ji

Q: How to memorize fast?

A: Dhyan or Meditation and Prāṇayama is like the key to intelligence. If you do these regularly and diligently for six months to a year, you will find that you can memorize much faster and retain the learning for longer period of time.

Kritka Ji

Q: How to control my anger?

A: Besides doing Dhyan or Meditation and Prāṇayama, you must do Puja everyday. Also as soon as you get angry, try reverse counting or chanting Shlokas of Bhagavadgītā. You can also do Surya Namaskar.

Aadishakti Ji

Q: I can't do Prāṇayama as I have a morning shift school?

A: You can do it in the evening before having a heavy meal.

Q: What can you do after completing Level-4?

A: You can study for Gītā Vichakshan, or start from Level-1 again. You can also become a volunteer as a Bal Sakha.



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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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