

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

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Interpreter: GĪTĀ VIŚĀRAD ŚRĪ DR. ASHU GOYAL JI

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/50M-nPVpo74>

Sāttvik Excellence: Elevating Life Through Divine Wisdom

The 14th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā is called **Guṇa-Traya-Vibhāga Yoga—the Yoga of the Classification of the Three Guṇas**.

The discourse commenced with the *Dīpam* (lamp) being ceremoniously lit at the lotus feet of *Śrī Bhagavān*, invoking divine grace and illuminating the gathering with a profound sense of Bhakti and reverence.

**Vasudevasutam(n) Devam(n), Kamsacāṇūramardanam I
Devakīparamānandam(n), Kṛṣṇam(v) Vande Jagadgurum II**

**yogeśam(m) saccidānandam (v), vāsudevam (v) vrajapriyam |
dharmaśamsthāpakam(v) vīram(n), kṛṣṇam (v) vande jagadgurum ||**

श्री गुरु चरण कमलेभ्यो

"At the lotus feet of the revered Guru."

By the grace of the Supreme Divine, a seeker is blessed with the opportunity to study, imbibe, and integrate the sacred wisdom of the Gītā into daily life. This rare privilege may be the result of past or present karmic merits, the blessings of ancestors, or the grace of a revered Guru, allowing one to absorb and embody the essence of this divine scripture.

We have not chosen to study the sacred *Gītā*—rather, the *Gītā* has chosen us. Only through the grace and divine intervention of the Supreme are we blessed with the opportunity to receive its wisdom and embody its teachings. Without His blessing, neither true understanding nor spiritual realization of the Gītā would be possible.

māmevaiśyatyasaṁśayaḥ

In the 18th chapter of the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*, *Bhagavān* states that one who reads the *Gītā* attains Him. However, not everyone may have the opportunity to read it. Therefore, it is essential to promote the

Gītā as much as possible, as we do not know who is blessed with the inclination to embrace its wisdom. Whether someone chooses to follow it is ultimately their personal decision and a matter of divine grace.

Today, we will continue our discussion on Chapter 14. In the previous session, respected Śrī Dr. Sanjay Malpani ji covered up to verse 14.8. We will now proceed with the subsequent verses.

The name of Chapter 14 is **Guṇa-Traya-Vibhāga Yoga, which means "The Division of the Three Guṇas."** These **three Guṇas—Sattva, Rāja, and Tama**—form the foundation of all existence. The entire *Prakṛti* (Nature), the universe, and everything we know, think, or imagine are composed of these three Guṇas. Whether it is people, planets, deities, different yonis (forms of life), plants, trees, rooted vegetation, or even animals—everything is made up of these three fundamental elements.

Some may wonder how just three elements can constitute everything in the universe. Even Brahmā ji Himself is composed of these same three Guṇas.

To understand this concept, let's take an analogy:

When we print a color photograph, it contains numerous colors and shades. But does that mean the printer has all those colors? No, definitely not. A standard printer operates using just four basic colors—**CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black)**. Yet, from these four colors, a printer can generate millions of different shades. A basic printer available in the market today can produce around 16 million color variations, and advanced printers can generate even more.

Now, if a man-made printer can create millions of variations from just four basic colors, imagine the infinite variations Bhagavān, the Creator of this universe, can generate using just three fundamental *Guṇas*!

Another analogy is our laptop or smartphone screens. When we use Zoom or any other application, we see colorful images, but how many colors is the screen actually made of? Only three—**RGB (Red, Green, and Blue)**. Every image displayed on an LED screen is created by adjusting the intensity of just these three LED lights. By varying the combinations of RGB, we perceive a vast spectrum of colors and images.

Similarly, the entire ***Prakṛti*** is created through **the combinations of Rāja, Tama, and Sattva**. In *Prakṛti*, no element, object, or being is made entirely of just one Guṇa, nor is any Guṇa completely absent. Everything in existence—whether a person, an object, food, or even a thought—is always a mixture of all three Guṇas. Their proportions may vary, but none of the Guṇas can ever be completely 100% or 0%. Every aspect of creation exists in a dynamic balance of these three fundamental elements.

Another Interesting Analogy

Imagine 1,000 women are given the same ingredients—potatoes, spices, and flour—to prepare Roti and Aloo Sabji. Now, do you think the food prepared by all these women would look and taste exactly the same? No. The reason is that each woman would use a slightly different combination of the given ingredients, even though they are making the same dish. As a result, there would be variations in taste, color, and even the shape of the Roti.

Similarly, in *Prakṛti*, no Guṇa ever exists in isolation or gets completely exhausted.

A single person cannot remain dominated by just one Guṇa throughout the entire day. Let's say someone is primarily Sāttvika—does that mean they remain in a Sāttvika state for the whole day? No. At times, they might exhibit Rājasic qualities, and at other times, they may display Tāmasic tendencies.

For example, while studying the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*, there may be moments when you are fully immersed and deeply concentrated (*Sattva Guṇa*). However, at other times, despite trying your best, you may find it difficult to focus (*Rajo Guṇa*), and sometimes, you may even feel sleepy while reading (*Tamo Guṇa*). This clearly shows that no one is ever 100% of one Guṇa.

In a single day, a person might act with a generous heart toward someone, but in the next moment, they may get upset over a trivial issue. **Doesn't this indicate that within a day, we shift between being Rājasa, Tāmasa, and Sāttvika at different times?**

How can we recognize which Guṇa is dominant within us at any given moment? *Bhagavān* provides the answer in verse 11 of this chapter. But before we get there, let us first look at verse 9, as that is where we will begin today.

14.9

**sattvaṃ(m) sukhe sañjayati, rajaḥ(kh) karmaṇi bhārata,
jñānamāvṛtya 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.

Understanding the Three Guṇas

In this śloka, *Bhagavān* says:

"O Arjuna! Sattva Guṇa binds one to happiness; Rajas drives the embodied soul toward action, while Tamas clouds wisdom, leading to ignorance and delusion."

How to Identify Which Guṇa is Dominant in Us?

Sattva Guṇa - The Mode of Goodness

Sattva Guṇa illuminates the intellect with knowledge and nurtures good virtues. A person dominated by Sattva functions from a state of calmness, serenity, clarity, and tranquility, eliminating ambiguity in decision-making.

One with predominant *Sattva Guṇa* is content with what they have and does not lament over what they lack. External situations or circumstances do not disturb their inner state of happiness and contentment. Their joy is not dependent on watching a reel, talking to someone, or engaging in an activity. Even while sitting alone, they remain at peace. When one reaches a state where no external factor is required for happiness and joy arises from within, it is a sign of Sattva Guṇa rising.

Rajo Guṇa - The Mode of Passion

Rajo Guṇa keeps the mind restless and engaged. A person dominated by Rajas constantly seeks knowledge—wanting to know what is happening, why it is happening, and how it is happening. They are always fiddling with something or keeping themselves occupied.

A key sign of Rajo Guṇa dominance is the inability to sit still—one either engages in unnecessary tasks, plucks grass absentmindedly, or feels an urge to be involved in some action. When boredom arises, understand that *Rajo Guṇa* is at play.

The desire to achieve more fuels a person under the influence of *Rajas*, leading them to relentless activity. One desire gives birth to another, trapping them in an endless cycle of insatiable cravings and intense action in pursuit of material achievements.

Tamo Guṇa - The Mode of Ignorance

Tamas clouds wisdom (*jñānam āvṛtya*), meaning it shields or suppresses knowledge. What does this mean? It kills our alertness—our ability to discern right from wrong becomes clouded, and we lose clarity about what should be done and what should be avoided.

A person dominated by *Tamo Guṇa* is gripped by inertia, laziness, and delusion, refraining from meaningful activities. They may indulge in lethargy, addiction, intoxication, and mundane or even harmful actions. A classic sign of *Tamo Guṇa* is procrastination—postponing tasks that should be done immediately.

In the next verse, *Bhagavān* offers guidance on how to transcend the influence of these *Guṇas*.

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.

Understanding the Dominance of *Guṇas*

In this śloka, *Bhagavān* explains:

"O *Arjuna*, although every embodied soul is under the influence of the three *Guṇas*, at any given time, one *Guṇa* will always be predominant over the other two. The dominance of these *Guṇas* continuously shifts, shaping an individual's temperament and conditioning. One cannot completely eliminate any *Guṇa*, but one can suppress two *Guṇas* to make the third *Guṇa* more dominant. For instance, one can increase Sattva *Guṇa* by suppressing Rajo and Tamo *Guṇa*. Similarly, Rajo *Guṇa* can be increased by suppressing Sattva and Tamas, and Tamo *Guṇa* can take over when Sattva and Rajas are weakened."

How We Spend Our Time Defines Our *Guṇa*

In a 24-hour day:

- About 6 hours are spent sleeping (*Tamo Guṇa*).
- Around 2 hours go into daily routines like eating, bathing, and brushing our teeth.
- That leaves us with 16 hours.
- Now, it is up to us how we utilize these 16 hours.
- If one performs all their karma (work) with full focus and dedication, their Sattva *Guṇa* will increase.
- If one keeps procrastinating, getting distracted, or jumping from one thing to another without completing anything, their Rajo *Guṇa* will rise.
- If one gives in to laziness and chooses to avoid responsibilities altogether, Tamo *Guṇa* will dominate.

Thus, how we schedule and control our 16 hours determines which *Guṇa* will shape our nature. The more alert and mindful a person is during these hours, the more Sāttvika they become. Once a person loses awareness and becomes restless, they shift towards Rajas. If they engage in meaningless or harmful activities, Tamas takes over.

The Subtle Influence of *Guṇas* in Our Actions

Let's take an example:

Spending two hours mindlessly scrolling through reels or videos on the phone is a combination of Rajo and Tamo *Guṇa*. At first, it seems like one is engaged in an activity (***Rajas***), but in reality, it lacks purpose and leads to inertia (Tamas). When asked, "What were you watching?" many might respond, "I don't even know." This is a clear sign of Rajo-Tamo *Guṇa* at play—engagement without awareness.

The Dual Nature of Rajo *Guṇa*

Rajo Guṇa is action-oriented, but it can lean towards either:

- **Sattva** – when used for meaningful and beneficial activities.
- **Tamas** – when engaged in useless or negative actions.

For example:

- Consuming alcohol, indulging in wrongdoings, or engaging in unnecessary activities are expressions of Rajo Guṇa inclining toward Tamas, eventually making one Tāmasika.
- On the other hand, reading the Gītā, performing sevā (selfless service), helping others, and engaging in virtuous acts transform Rajo Guṇa into Sattva Guṇa.

Every Action is Rajo Guṇa - But Where Does It Lead?

Any action we perform is influenced by Rajo Guṇa, whether it is reading scriptures, meditating, or working. However, the direction of this Rajo Guṇa matters:

- If it leads us towards knowledge, wisdom, and self-improvement, it transforms into *Sattva Guṇa*.
- If it leads us toward negativity, criticism, and harmful actions, it strengthens *Tamo Guṇa*.

For instance, if one spends time criticizing others, they are engaged in an action (*Rajas*), but that action pulls them down into Tamas.

In the next verse, *Bhagavān* offers guidance on how to transcend the effects of these Guṇas and move toward a higher state of being.

14.11

**sarvadvāreṣu dehe'smin, prakāśa upajāyate,
jñānaṁ(m) yadā tadā vidyād, vivṛddhaṁ(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.

In this verse, *Śrī Bhagavān* explains the State of Sattva Guṇa:

When the body is energized with *Chetanā* (consciousness), one attains **Viveka—clarity of mind**. But **what does Viveka truly mean?**

Viveka is the ability to discern what must be done and what must be avoided. A person endowed with Viveka does not just think about tasks for years without action; they act decisively and without delay. Thus, the dominance of *Sattva Guṇa* is marked by the immediate execution of important tasks without procrastination.

Bhagavān Introduces an Intriguing Term:

In this verse, *Bhagavān* uses the word "**Sarvadvāreṣu**"—meaning the "**gateways of the body**."

In the ninth chapter, *Bhagavān* describes the **Puruṣa** as the one who resides in the **Pur (body)**, holding the **Jīvātman (soul)**. Over time, the term **Puruṣa** came to be associated with men and women separately, but in the scriptures, **Puruṣa** refers to any being whose body houses the **Jīvātman**.

The Nine Gateways of the Body

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Bhagavān* mentions:

"Nava-dvāre pure dehi"—The body is a city with nine gates.

These nine gateways control the body's interaction with the world and consist of:

- Five Sense Organs (**Jñānendriyas**): Eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin.
- Fourfold Inner Instrument (**Antaḥkaraṇa Chatuṣṭaya**):
 - **Buddhi** (Intellect)
 - **Manas** (Mind)
 - **Citta** (Memory)
 - **Ahaṁkāra** (Ego)

All these gateways are crucial for the body's functioning, and their regulation determines whether one operates in Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas.

The Importance of Awareness:

A person with Sattva Guṇa has clarity in decision-making:

- What to see and what to avoid?
- What to hear and what to ignore?
- What to touch and what not to touch?
- What to speak and what to remain silent about?
- What to eat and what to avoid?

Similarly, **clarity should extend to thoughts:**

- Are we mindfully thinking?
- Are we recollecting the right things?
- Are our decisions leading us in the right direction?
- Are we truly aware of our own actions and their consequences?

Arjuna's Confusion

Arjuna, in his moment of doubt, expresses:

"kāraṇya-doṣ'opahata-svabhāvaḥ"—He feels overcome by weakness and confusion.

How many of us have absolute clarity in life? Many remain in a state of uncertainty, unable to decide between multiple paths. Confusion is when one wants to do something but simultaneously desires something else, leading to hesitation and inaction. Sometimes, a person knows what must be done yet ends up doing the opposite—that is also confusion.

In the next verse, *Bhagavān* will describe the characteristics of *Rajo Guṇa* and how it influences one's actions and thoughts.

14.12

**lobhaḥ(ph) pravṛttirārambhaḥ(kh), karmaṇāmaśamaḥ(s) spṛhā,
rajasyetānījāyante, 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.

Śrī Bhagavān on the Characteristics of Rajo Guṇa

In this verse, *Śrī Bhagavān* describes the traits that arise when Rajas dominates an individual's nature:

- • **Lobhaḥ (Greed):** An insatiable desire for more, leading to discontentment.
- • **Pravṛtti and Ārambhaḥ (Activity and Initiative):** A restless inclination towards action, often motivated by personal ambition.
- • **Aśamaḥ and Spṛhā (Restlessness and Thirst for Enjoyment):** An inability to remain at peace, constantly seeking new experiences.
- • **Rajasyetāni Jāyante:** When Rajas increases, these qualities intensify.
- • **Vivṛddhe Bharataṛsabha:** As Rajas grows stronger, it pervades every aspect of one's thoughts and actions.

Greed in Everyday Life

Śrī Bhagavān illustrates the impact of greed through a simple example:

Greed from Gain (Lābha Lobha)

Tulsidas Ji aptly expresses this in the following verse:

"Jinh ati lābha lobh adhikā"

(Those who acquire excessive wealth often find their greed multiplying rather than diminishing.)

Consider the scenario at Kumbh Mela:

A person of limited means arrives with devotion, focused on spiritual rituals. He does not worry about VIP access, comforts, or lavish meals. He walks long distances with his family, carrying simple food like roti and vegetables, drinking Gangajal, and performing seva with a pure heart. When such a devotee encounters a priest (Pandit), he eagerly agrees to perform rituals despite having only ₹100 in his pocket. The Pandit asks him to perform *Gau Dān* (cow donation), but knowing the devotee's financial limitations, he suggests a symbolic gesture—touching the calf's tail and offering ₹10. The devotee follows every ritual with sincerity, willingly offering 50–70% of his money in devotion, and leaves satisfied and at peace.

Now contrast this with a wealthy individual:

This person arrives at Kumbha as a tourist, booking flights and hotels, expecting VIP treatment. When approached by a Pandit, he hesitates, avoids eye contact, and dismisses the rituals as unnecessary. If the Pandit persists, he reluctantly agrees but negotiates the cost down to 10% of the quoted price. He completes the rituals half-heartedly, pays ₹500 grudgingly, and later complains, "I had to spend ₹500 just to get rid of the annoying Pandit!"

Who Will Attain Mokṣa?

Reflect on this:

- The poor devotee, despite having little, gave selflessly and performed the rituals with genuine faith.
- The wealthy individual, despite having crores, hesitated to part with ₹500 and lacked sincerity in his worship.

As one's wealth increases, so does one's greed. When we were younger and had less, we were more giving. But as we accumulate wealth, we become selective, calculating whom to help and whom not to. We begin to favor those who can return the favor.

The selfless giver is often called a fool—naïve and easy to exploit. Yet, such a person is content because they trust and give without expectations.

The more greed grows, the stronger *Rajo Guṇa* becomes, and vice versa. No matter how much one acquires, satisfaction remains elusive.

Expectations and Dissatisfaction

The speaker once came across a video that illustrated an important truth:

- A person who arrives at Kumbh expecting VIP treatment leaves dissatisfied.
- A person who arrives without expectations marvels at the arrangements—clean ghats, well-maintained toilets, and quality prasādam. They praise Yogi Ji and PM Modiji for their efforts.

Why? Because expectation breeds dissatisfaction. Even when we receive much, we focus on what we didn't get, rather than being grateful for what we have.

Ask yourself:

- How often have we thanked Bhagavān for what He has given?
- How often have we complained about what we haven't received?
- If we reflect honestly, we will realize we complain more than we express gratitude.

The Nature of Greed

Greed is not limited to wealth—it extends to position, property, relationships, and recognition.

Greed itself is not inherently wrong. It is the unjust means we use to fulfill that greed that leads us astray. Seeking rightful wealth, success, and prosperity is fine, but when greed pushes us towards dishonesty, corruption, and manipulation, it becomes dangerous.

Signs of *Rajo Guṇa*

- ***Pravṛtti***: An intense drive for action, often driven by selfish ambition.
- ***Ārambhaḥ***: A restless eagerness to start new projects, often without clarity of purpose.
- ***Aśamaḥ (Restlessness)***: Inability to find peace, always searching for the next pleasure.
- One can even observe the effects of *Rajas* in a person's physical state.
- A person dominated by *Rajo Guṇa* has restless eyes, always scanning their surroundings, distracted and unfocused.
- A *Sāttvika* individual has calm, steady eyes, needing to be called and directed toward something.

Prajñā Chakṣu (The Wise Gaze)

Brahmālin Swami Sharanānanda Maharaj beautifully stated:

"Whoever you lay your eyes on, you must give your heart to. That is why, choose carefully where you look."

When we set our eyes upon something, we begin to desire it.

Desires and Attachment

Consider a simple example:

You visit a friend's house and eat a delicious laddoo. You immediately ask, "Where did you get this from?" Later, you call them and say, "If you're ordering for yourself, please get some for me too." Your heart is now attached to that laddoo. Even after going home, you keep thinking about it. Later, you eat another laddoo elsewhere, but your mind is still fixated on the one you ate before.

This is *Spṛhā*—the unending cycle of desire. Even years later, we remember certain pleasures and long for them again.

This is how *Rajo Guṇa* operates—keeping the mind restless, attached, and never satisfied.

- *Rajo Guṇa* fuels ambition, but unchecked ambition breeds greed, restlessness, and

dissatisfaction.

- True contentment lies in gratitude, devotion, and selfless action.
- A person free from excessive Rajas finds joy in simplicity, while one trapped in greed remains perpetually unsatisfied.

In the next verse, *Śrī Bhagavān* will further explore the characteristics of *Tamo Guṇa* and its effects on human nature.

14.13

aprakāśo'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.

Śrī Bhagavān explains that *Tamo Guṇa* is the opposite of *Sattva Guṇa*. When Tamas dominates an individual's nature, it manifests as ignorance, laziness, and confusion—hindering progress, clarity, and spiritual growth.

Qualities of Tamas

1. "Aprakāśo'pravṛttiśca" (Obscurity and Inertia)

- *Aprakāśa* refers to a lack of discernment, leading to ignorance and an unclear understanding of reality. A Tamasic person struggles to perceive situations clearly and remains trapped in misconceptions.
- While Tamas is essential in moderation (even great saints like Swamiji need six hours of sleep), excessive inertia—such as sleeping 10-12 hours a day and studying only for two—leads to stagnation.
- Even when others offer guidance, a Tamasic individual resists, choosing to act contrary to advice. Attempts to help them often result in arguments rather than understanding.

2. "Apravṛtti" (Lethargy and Inactivity)

- *Apravṛtti* signifies laziness, an unwillingness to take initiative, and neglect of essential responsibilities.
- A Tamasic person avoids tasks for months, only acting when compelled by external pressure.

3. "Pramādo moha eva ca" (Heedlessness and Delusion)

- *Pramāda* represents carelessness and lack of awareness, leading to repeated mistakes and wasted time on trivial matters. Such individuals disregard advice and fail to learn from past experiences.
- *Moha* refers to deep-seated delusion—an inability to distinguish between right and wrong, or illusion and reality. This state of confusion often leads to poor decisions and destructive consequences.

Anecdote: The Monkey and the Crocodile

The following story illustrates the dangers of a *Tamasic mindset*:

A kind-hearted monkey lived by a river and befriended a crocodile by sharing sweet plums with him daily. One day, the crocodile's wife, driven by her *Tamasic* nature, developed a delusional belief: "If these plums taste so sweet, imagine how delicious the monkey's heart must be!" She convinced her husband to invite the monkey home for a meal—secretly intending to eat his heart.

The crocodile, blinded by his wife's influence, invited the monkey to visit. The unsuspecting monkey accepted and climbed onto the crocodile's back to cross the river. Midway, the crocodile revealed his plan. The intelligent, *Sāttvika* monkey remained calm and cleverly said, "Oh dear friend, monkeys do not carry their hearts in their bodies. We leave them hanging on trees! If you take me back, I will fetch mine for you." The foolish crocodile, consumed by *Moha*, believed him and turned back. As soon as they reached the tree, the monkey swiftly climbed to safety and bid farewell to the crocodile, saying, "Your greed has not only cost you my friendship but also the sweet plums you once enjoyed."

- A *Tamasic* person, lost in delusion and heedlessness, often makes choices that lead to regret.
- Ignorance and inertia prevent growth, while clarity and wisdom lead to true fulfillment.
- To overcome *Tamas*, one must cultivate awareness, discipline, and the ability to discern reality from illusion.

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.

The Influence of Sattva at the Time of Death

In this verse, *Śrī Bhagavān* explains how the predominance of *Sattva* Guṇa at the time of death shapes the soul's journey.

Sattva represents purity, knowledge, and virtue. When an individual departs from this world with a mind dominated by *Sattva*, their soul transitions in a state of clarity, harmony, and righteousness.

- ***Pralayaṃ yāti*** – Refers to the moment of death, marking the departure of the soul from the physical body.
- ***Dehabhṛt*** – Meaning "embodied being," it signifies a person who has lived a virtuous life aligned with higher values.
- ***Amalān Lokān*** – The pure and stainless realms to which a *Sāttvika* soul ascends after death.

When *Sattva* dominates at the time of death:

- The mind remains calm, pure, and virtuous.
- The soul ascends to higher, auspicious realms, free from impurities.
- Death becomes a peaceful transition, leading to spiritual elevation.

Analogy: The Falling Tree

A tree that leans toward the west will fall in that direction when it is uprooted. Similarly, a person whose nature is **predominantly *Sāttvika* will attain realms that reflect their inner purity at the time of death.**

Thus, cultivating *Sattva* Guṇa throughout life ensures a graceful and elevated transition into the next

existence.

14.15

**rajasi pralayaṃ(ñ) gatvā, karmasaṅgiṣu jāyate,
tathā pralīnastamasi, mūḍhayoniṣu jāyate. 14.15**

Dying when *Rajas* predominates, he is born among those attached to action; even so, the man who has expired during the preponderance of *Tamas* is reborn in the species of the deluded creatures such as insects and beasts etc.

The Influence of Guṇas on Rebirth

In this verse, *Śrī Bhagavān* explains how the state of mind and the predominant *guṇa* at the time of death shape the soul's next birth.

The Path of *Rajas*: Rebirth Among the Action-Oriented

Rajasi Pralayaṃ Gatvā, Karmasaṅgiṣu Jāyate

- When a person dies under the influence of *Rajas* (passion and activity), their soul is drawn toward beings who are deeply attached to action and worldly pursuits.
- Such individuals are reborn in circumstances that encourage ambition, desires, and relentless activity.
- Their lives revolve around material gains and achievements, often accompanied by restlessness and dissatisfaction.

The Path of *Tamas*: Rebirth in Lower Forms

Tathā Pralīnastamasi, Mūḍhayoniṣu Jāyate

- A person who dies under the dominance of *Tamas* (inertia, ignorance) is reborn in *mūḍhayoni*—lower or deluded life forms.
- This includes rebirth as animals, insects, or other creatures driven by instinct and survival, with minimal capacity for higher reasoning or spiritual evolution.
- A life dominated by negligence, ignorance, and lack of higher purpose leads to regression rather than spiritual progress.

The Importance of *Sattva*

Śrī Bhagavān highlights that the *guṇa* prevailing at the time of death determines the soul's next destination:

- **Rajas** → Rebirth in an active, ambitious, and desire-driven existence.
- **Tamas** → Rebirth in lower, instinct-driven forms of life.

Thus, cultivating *Sattva*—through purity, wisdom, and spiritual discipline—ensures a higher birth and ultimately leads toward *mokṣa* (*liberation*).

By leading a balanced, virtuous, and spiritually inclined life, one can elevate consciousness and ensure an auspicious transition beyond this life.

14.16

karmaṇaḥ(s) sukṛtasyāhuḥ(s), sātṭvikaṁ(n) nirmalaṁ(m) phalam, rajasastu phalaṁ(n) duḥkham, ajñānaṁ(n) tamaśaḥ(ph) phalam. 14.16

The reward of a righteous act, they say, is Sātṭvika i.e., faultless in the form of joy, wisdom and dispassion etc., sorrow is declared to be the fruit of a Rājasikā act and ignorance, the fruit of a Tāmasika act.

The Influence of Guṇas on the Outcomes of Actions

In this verse, *Śrī Bhagavān* explains how the results of actions are shaped by the dominant guṇa (quality) that drives them.

Sātṭvika Actions: The Path to Purity and Liberation

Karmaṇaḥ Sukṛtasyāhuḥ, Sātṭvikaṁ Nirmalaṁ Phalam

- Actions performed under the influence of Sattva (purity) yield nirmala (spotless) and uplifting results.
- The rewards of such actions include inner joy, wisdom, clarity, and detachment, all of which promote spiritual growth and progress toward liberation (mokṣa).

Rājasika Actions: The Path of Desire and Sorrow

Rajasastu Phalaṁ Duḥkham

- Actions driven by *Rajas* (passion) stem from desires and attachments.
- While they may seem fulfilling initially, they often culminate in duḥkha (sorrow) due to:

- o Unfulfilled expectations
- o Increased cravings
- o Karmic burdens
- o Restlessness and dissatisfaction

Tāmasika Actions: The Path of Ignorance and Stagnation

Ajñānaṁ Tamaśaḥ Phalam

- Actions rooted in *Tamas* (ignorance) lead to *ajñāna* (delusion and lack of discernment).
- Such actions cause:

- o Confusion and lack of direction
- o Regression into lower states of existence
- o Disconnection from spiritual growth

The Three Guṇas and Their Consequences

Śrī Bhagavān highlights the distinct results of actions influenced by each guṇa:

- **Sattva** → Produces pure, selfless actions that yield peace, wisdom, and spiritual progress.
- **Rajas** → Produces ambition-driven actions that lead to temporary fulfillment but eventual sorrow.
- **Tamas** → Produces ignorant and careless actions that result in delusion, stagnation, and downfall.

Reflection: The Guṇas and Our Interaction with the World

The way one engages with the world is a reflection of their dominant guṇa:

- **Sattva** → Contented and peaceful
- **Rajas** → Discontented and restless

- **Tamas** → Can be either contented (out of ignorance) or discontented (due to confusion)

This verse underscores the importance of cultivating *Sattva*—by fostering clarity, selflessness, and a higher purpose—so that one can transcend the limiting influences of *Rajas* and *Tamas* and advance toward *mokṣa* (liberation).

Śrī Bhagavān reinforces the same teaching in the next two verses, further elaborating on how the three guṇas (*Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*) shape not only one's present life but also their future trajectory.

14.17, 14.18

**sattvātsaṅjāyate jñānaṁ(m), rajaso lobha eva ca,
pramādamohau tamaso, bhavato'jñānameva ca. 14.17
ūrdhvaṁ(ñ) gacchanti sattvasthā, madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ,
jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā, adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ. 14.18**

Wisdom follows from *Sattva*, and greed, undoubtedly, from *Rajas*; likewise, obstinate error, stupor and also ignorance follow from *Tamas*.

Those who abide in the quality of *Sattva* wend their way upwards; while those of a *Rājasikā* disposition stay in the middle. And those of a *Tāmasika* temperament, enveloped as they are in the effects of *Tamoguṇa*, sink down.

Śrī Bhagavān explains the direct consequences of the three guṇas on an individual's life and their ultimate destiny:

- ***Sattva* (Goodness)** leads to knowledge and wisdom (*jñāna*), illuminating the path toward higher realms.
- ***Rajas* (Passion)** fosters greed and attachment, binding the soul to material pursuits and repeated rebirths on Earth.
- ***Tamas* (Ignorance)** results in negligence and delusion, causing spiritual regression and leading to lower births.

Furthermore, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes:

- Those dominated by *Sattva* ascend to higher celestial realms (*uttama lokas*).
- Those influenced by *Rajas* remain bound to earthly existence, caught in the cycle of ambition and desire.
- Those entrenched in *Tamas* descend into lower realms—either the nether worlds or the animal kingdom.

However, transcending all three modes (*guṇātīta*) leads one to Him—the ultimate *liberation* (*mokṣa*).

We will explore this further in the upcoming verses.

14.19

**nānyaṁ(ñ) guṇebhyaḥ(kh) kartāraṁ(m), yadā draṣṭānupaśyati,
guṇebhyaśca paraṁ(m) vetti, madbhāvaṁ(m) so'dhigacchati. 14.19**

When the discerning person sees no one as doer other than the three Guṇas, and realizes Me, the supreme Spirit standing entirely beyond these Guṇas, he enters into My being.

Bhagavān declares that a discerning person (*jñānī*) recognizes that all actions are carried out solely by the **three guṇas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas**. Such a person sees no individual as the true doer but understands that these modes of nature govern all activities.

Upon realizing *Bhagavān* as the Supreme Spirit, who exists beyond the influence of the guṇas, the seeker attains transcendence and enters into **His divine being (mad-bhāvam)**

From this verse onward, *Bhagavān* shifts the focus from the influence of the guṇas to the path of liberation beyond them, which He further elaborates in the next verse.

14.20

**guṇānetānatītya trīn, dehī dehasamudbhavān,
janmamṛtyujarāduḥkhaiḥ(r), vimukto'mṛtamaśnute. 14.20**

Having transcended the aforesaid three Guṇas, which have caused the body, and freed from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow, the embodied soul attains supreme bliss.

Bhagavān reveals that by rising above the influence of the **three guṇas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas**—one becomes free from the bondage of the material body. This transcendence liberates the soul from the fourfold experiences of birth, old age, death, and suffering.

When a seeker surpasses even Sattva, they are no longer bound by the fluctuations of the material world. Freed from the cycle of birth and death, they attain the state of **supreme bliss (param sukham)**, merging into *Bhagavān*'s divine presence.

In these verses, *Bhagavān* emphasizes that *true liberation (mokṣa)* is achieved not merely by cultivating *Sattva* but by going beyond all three guṇas, thereby transcending the material realm entirely.

The speaker introduces the next five shlokas, describing them as deeply profound—akin to Ph.D. level wisdom. He acknowledges that fully grasping their depth may be challenging, but he will do his best to explain them in a way that is accessible. Likewise, as listeners, we should make an earnest effort to understand and absorb their meaning.

14.21

**arjuna uvāca
kairlīṅgaistrīnguṇānetān, atīto bhavati prabho,
kimācāraḥ(kh) katham(ñ) caitāṃs, trīnguṇānavartate. 14.21**

Arjuna said :What are the marks of him who has risen above the three Guṇas, and what is his conduct? And how, Lord, does he rise above the three Guṇas?

A seeker must recognize that one who has risen above the influence of the *Guṇas* operates from a higher state of consciousness, beyond the limitations of material experience. In simple terms, this is a transcendental state of existence, **free from the binding effects of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas**.

As we are just beginning our spiritual journey through the *Bhagavad Gītā*, we can attempt to grasp these answers at a theoretical level. However, only highly evolved souls, operating from elevated states of consciousness, can truly comprehend and embody this knowledge.

In the forthcoming shlokas, *Bhagavān* systematically answers Arjuna's questions, one by one.

14.22

**śrībhagavānuvāca
prakāśaṃ(ñ) ca pravṛttiṃ(ñ) ca, mohameva ca pāṇḍava,
na dveṣṭi saṃpravṛttāni, na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati. 14.22**

Śrī Bhagavān said :Arjuna, he who abhors not illumination (which is born of *Sattva*) and activity (which is born of *Rajas*) and even stupor (which is born of *Tamas*), when prevalent, nor longs for them when they have ceased.

In this shloka, *Bhagavān* begins to sequentially address Arjuna's questions, first explaining the traits of one who has transcended the three *Guṇas*.

Bhagavān describes the transcendentalist as one who neither resents nor rejoices in the presence or absence of the effects of ***Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas***. They do not reject the illumination that arises from *Sattva*, nor do they resist the activity driven by *Rajas* or the delusion caused by *Tamas*. Likewise, when these qualities diminish, they do not long for them or lament their absence.

In essence, such a person remains unaffected by the fluctuations of the *Guṇas*. Whether experiencing knowledge and clarity (*Sattva*), ambition and restlessness (*Rajas*), or ignorance and inertia (*Tamas*), they remain in a state of equipoise, neither craving nor rejecting any of them.

This profound concept illustrates the transcendental state, where one is no longer bound by the influences of the material realm. *Bhagavān* further elaborates on this in the forthcoming shlokas.

14.23

**Udāsīnavadāsīno, guṇairyo na vicālyate,
guṇā vartanta ityeva, yo'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate. 14.23**

He who, sitting like a witness, is not disturbed by the *Guṇas*, and who, knowing that the *Guṇas* alone move among the *Guṇas*, remains established in identity with God, and never falls off from that state.

In this shloka, *Bhagavān* continues explaining to Arjuna that the transcendentalist remains neutral toward the ***Guṇas (modes of nature)*** and is unaffected by them. Such individuals are firmly established in an unwavering state and exhibit equanimity in all situations.

To understand what it means to be neutral or maintain equanimity, we must recognize that it is the perfect balance of the mind—a state of serenity and calmness in response to life's ups and downs. It is the ability to remain undisturbed, neither elated by pleasant experiences nor disturbed by unpleasant ones. Equanimity is not indifference but rather a deep acceptance of things as they are.

For example, a person with equanimity does not mind whether there is too much salt in their food or too little—they simply eat without preference or complaint, focused only on nourishment.

A great saint from Maharashtra, ***Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj***, exemplified this state. Once, while passing through a village, he took two fistfuls of sand and placed them in two separate spots. When his disciples asked why, he explained, "One is for those who praised me when I arrived, and the other is for those who stood at a distance and criticized me. I neither rejoice in praise nor feel envious of criticism—both are the same to me."

For those influenced by the three Guṇas, the mind is constantly swayed—either attracted to positivity or repelled by negativity. However, true spirituality lies in equanimity, where one neither chases after pleasure nor avoids discomfort but remains steady in the middle. This is not a dull state but an awakened acceptance of reality.

In essence:

- The agreeable leads to pleasure.
- The disagreeable leads to suffering.
- Equanimity leads to neutrality, where one is beyond both pleasure and suffering.

Furthermore, such elevated beings are free from the sense of doership (the idea that "I am the doer"). They transcend the ego-driven consciousness of I, me, mine and instead operate from a state of surrender, where actions flow naturally, without attachment.

For example, we do not claim credit for involuntary bodily functions like digestion or heartbeat—these occur effortlessly. But when it comes to voluntary actions, we are often caught in the illusion of personal effort and ownership. The transcendentalist, however, sees all actions as part of a greater flow and does not identify as the doer.

Swami Ram Tirtha embodied this principle perfectly. He never said, I am hungry or I need to go somewhere. Instead, he would say, Ram is hungry or Ram has to go there, completely dissociating himself from the ego and personal identity.

Such is the nature of one who has transcended the **Guṇas—unshaken, neutral, and free from the illusion of doership**. *Bhagavān* elaborates further in the forthcoming shlokas.

14.24

**śamaduḥkhasukhaḥ(s) svasthaḥ(s), śamaloṣṭāsmakāñcanaḥ,
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīraḥ(s), tulyanindātmasaṃstutiḥ. 14.24**

He who is ever established in the Self, takes pain and pleasure alike, regards a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value, is possessed of wisdom, accepts the pleasant as well as the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike.

In this shloka, *Bhagavān* continues explaining that the transcendentalist possesses an **equitable vision (sama-darśana)**. To such a person, a piece of stone, a lump of earth, and a piece of gold hold the same value. They remain unshaken in happiness and distress, unaffected by praise or criticism, and maintain neutrality in both pleasant and unpleasant situations.

However, one must understand the subtle difference between being equitable (*sama-darśana*) and being foolish. For instance, if someone finds a lost gold ring and remains free from greed, their neutrality toward gold and earth is a sign of transcendence. But being foolish would mean keeping pure gold outside the house and locking up a lump of earth in a safe. True equanimity does not mean a lack of discernment—it means remaining detached while still exercising wisdom.

Similarly, in today's world, some claim to see divinity in all beings, even animals, and may place a dog at the dining table to eat alongside them. Such actions, though seemingly rooted in equality, often stem from misplaced idealism rather than genuine understanding. If one truly sees the divine in a dog, it is more appropriate to feed it respectfully outside rather than imposing human customs upon it.

Respect and order are essential in life. If a saint visits your home, he should be seated in an honored place and served accordingly. Likewise, parents should be fed first before serving oneself. While **equanimity (sama-darśana)** is an important quality, it does not mean disregarding **social or moral order (sama-vartan)**. One cannot be the same toward everything in all situations, but one should strive for a balanced and fair perspective.

A story from Mahatma Gandhi's life beautifully illustrates this distinction. Gandhi used a simple stone to scrub himself while bathing. One day, while traveling to another village, his attendant, Mira Behan, forgot the stone. She offered to replace it with another, but Gandhi refused. Curious, she asked why, since it was just an ordinary stone. Gandhi replied, "Was the stone spoiled or destroyed?" She admitted it was not. Then he said, "In that case, I will bathe without it, but I will not take another simply because I lost it." The next day, Mira Behan went back to retrieve the same stone.

This story highlights the difference between two perspectives:

- The **materialistic view (sama-darśana)**: A lost gold ring would prompt most people to search for the ring but not for a lost stone.
- The **transcendentalist's view (sama-vartan)**: Importance is given not to material value but to usefulness and detachment.

A transcendentalist does not assign value based on material worth but based on purpose and necessity. *Bhagavān* emphasizes that true transcendence lies in maintaining detachment while exercising wisdom in the material world.

14.25

**mānāpamānayostulyaḥ(s), tulyo mitrārīpakṣayoḥ,
sarvārambhaparitāgī, guṇātītāḥ(s) sa ucyate. 14.25**

He who is equipoised in honour or ignominy, is alike towards a friend or an enemy, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, is said to have risen above the three Guṇas.

In this shloka, *Bhagavān* continues to explain that the transcendentalist remains equanimous in honor and dishonor, treats friends and foes alike, and does not waver between emotions of joy and sorrow. Such individuals have relinquished the sense of enterprise—the attachment to personal ambition and material pursuits.

One must be cautious not to become arrogant in moments of happiness. Often, when life blesses us with joy, we become inflated with ego. Conversely, when faced with sadness, we resign ourselves to fate, saying, "This is just my bad luck; it always happens to me." However, *Bhagavān* reminds us that whatever we experience in life is the result of our own past actions—the seeds we have sown. True transcendence lies in accepting life's fluctuations with a steady mind, free from both pride and despair.

Bhagavān elaborates on this further in the next verse.

14.26

**mām(ñ) ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa, bhaktiyogena sevate,
sa guṇāṇśamatītyaitān, brahmabhūyāya kalpate. 14.26**

He too who, constantly worships Me through the Yoga of exclusive devotion-transcending these three

Guṇas, he becomes eligible for attaining Brahma.

In this shloka, *Bhagavān* explains how one can transcend the three guṇas. He states that those who practice exclusive and unwavering devotion (***avyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate***)—remaining constantly absorbed in Him—transcend the influence of material nature. Such individuals, having realized the distinction between the body and the soul, remain untouched by the *guṇas*.

However, this verse is often misinterpreted. Some believe it means one must worship only a particular deity—such as *Bhagavān śiva*, *Bhagavān Rama*, or *Bhagavān Krishna*—while excluding others. But *Bhagavān*'s teaching goes far beyond sectarian devotion. The true meaning is that instead of seeking refuge in Him, people often take solace in their family, wealth, intellect, status, or influence. Only when all else fails—when personal capabilities and external support prove inadequate—do they turn to Him. This conditional surrender is *vyabhichārī bhakti* (fickle devotion), whereas *avyabhichārī bhakti* (pure devotion) is to depend on Him alone, unconditionally, at all times.

The Nature of Attachment & True Surrender

It is human tendency to balance devotion with material pursuits, trying to sail in two boats—seeking worldly pleasures while also asking for divine blessings. In difficult times, we rely first on our abilities, status, or powerful connections. Only when all efforts fail do we turn to God for help. *Bhagavān Śrī Rama* explains this attachment beautifully in the following doha:

जननी जनक बंधु सुत दारा । तनु धनु भवन सुहृद परिवारा ॥

(*janani - mother, janak - father, bandhu - friends, sut - children, dārā - spouse, tanu - body, dhanu - wealth, bhavan - property, suhrid - well-wishers, parivār - family*)

These ten aspects of life bind us with threads of attachment. *Bhagavān* suggests gathering all these threads of worldly love, stringing them into a necklace, and offering it at His lotus feet. This symbolizes seeking refuge in Him alone, beyond all worldly bonds.

"सब कै ममता ताग बटोरी। मम पद मनहि बाँध बरि डोरी॥
समदरसी इच्छा कछु नाही। हरष सोक भय नहि मन माहीं॥"

"By collecting all these threads of attachment and tying them to My feet, the seeker attains equanimity, becoming free from desires, joy, sorrow, and fear."

True bliss is attained only at *Bhagavān*'s lotus feet, where there is no deception, no loss, and no suffering. By surrendering completely—without relying on external factors—one transcends the three *guṇas* and attains spiritual liberation.



The Guṇa Traya framework reveals a fundamental truth: every being is a unique blend of Sattva (purity), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance). An individual's thoughts, actions, and behaviors are a direct reflection of their dominant guṇa. Understanding this dynamic provides profound insights into human nature and serves as a powerful tool for self-transformation.

By consciously nurturing *Sattva*, regulating *Rajas*, and minimizing *Tamas*, one can cultivate inner harmony, elevate their consciousness, and move toward lasting peace and spiritual fulfillment.

Vyaktiḥ tadanusāra lakṣaṇam, lakṣaṇam tadanusāra vyaktiḥ.

A person is recognized by their characteristics, and the characteristics reflect the person.

This profound statement encapsulates the idea that an individual's dominant guṇa not only shapes their inherent qualities but is also reflected in their actions, speech, and preferences. By observing external traits, one can gain insights into a person's inner nature. Likewise, by consciously cultivating desirable guṇas, one can foster positive behaviors and qualities, leading to spiritual growth, clarity, and a well-balanced life.

The three guṇas—***Sattva (purity), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (inertia)***—pervade all aspects of human life and behavior, influencing thoughts, actions, preferences, and surroundings. Understanding how the guṇas manifest in different facets of life provides valuable self-awareness. By identifying one's predominant guṇa, a person can take conscious steps to nurture Sattva, balance Rajas, and minimize Tamas, fostering spiritual growth and overall well-being.

Below is a comparison of how these guṇas manifest across various aspects of life

Behavior: The way one interacts with the world reflects their dominant guna.

- *Sattva*: **Contented**
- *Rajas*: **Discontented**
- *Tamas*: **Contented / Discontented**

A person who is content with everything is Sattva Guni, while one who constantly complains—about arrangements, people, or circumstances—is influenced by Rajo Guna.

How to Cultivate Sattva Guna?

Bhagavān explains in the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā:

Santusto yena kenacit – Satisfied with whatever one has.

A person who finds contentment in what is available to them and remains joyful in all situations embodies the essence of Sattva Guna.

Examples of Sattvic Behavior:

1. Sri Jaya Dayal Goenka (Founder of Gītā Press)

Jaya Dayal Ji was a successful merchant in Kolkata. Since bajra (pearl millet) was not widely grown there, he decided to import it from Rajasthan in large quantities. Upon hearing this, the market price of bajra dropped, affecting small traders who began to suffer losses. When they approached Dayal Ji, he immediately instructed his accountant to cancel the order, prioritizing the well-being of others over his business interests.

o Moral: Although he was conducting legitimate business, he chose to adjust his actions to prevent harm to others.

2. Swami Premanand Ji Maharaj

Swami Premanand Ji Maharaj used to conduct a yatra (procession) and bhajan sessions at 2 AM, which devotees attended with great enthusiasm. However, some residents of the area found it disruptive and complained. Upon hearing this, Swami Ji immediately stopped the yatra.

o Moral: Singing bhajans is not wrong, yet when it caused discomfort to others, Swami Ji chose to adjust.

A Higher Perspective on Peace

Most people justify their actions by saying, "I am right; why should I change?" However, true Sattva Guni behavior is not just about maintaining one's own peace but ensuring that one's actions do not disturb the peace of others.

- A **Sattva Guni** person finds peace within and ensures others' peace is not disturbed by them.
- A **Rajo Guni** person constantly seeks external validation and complains when things do not go their way.
- A **Tamo Guni** person remains lazy, yet resents others for their hard work and progress.

Thus, Sattva Guna is not just about personal contentment—it is about fostering harmony in one's surroundings, making sure that one's peace does not come at the cost of others' discomfort.

Speech: The tone and intent of speech indicate the prevailing guna.



- *Sattva*: **Pleasant**
- *Rajas*: **Deceptive**
- *Tamas*: **Lacks discretion**

Bhagavān lays down the principles of Satvic speech in the Gītā:

satyaṃ priyahitaṃ ca yat – Truthful, pleasant, and beneficial speech.

Speech is an essential reflection of one's *guṇa* (nature). The way a person speaks determines whether they are influenced by *Sattva* (purity), *Rajas* (passion), or *Tamas* (ignorance).

The Three Types of Speech

1. *Sattva Guni Speech (Truthful, Pleasant, and Beneficial)*

A *Sattva Guni* person speaks truthfully, ensures their words are pleasant, and makes sure their speech benefits others.

Even the scriptures emphasize this principle:

सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात्
न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् ।
प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयात्
एष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

"Speak the truth, speak pleasantly,
Do not speak the truth in an unpleasant manner,
Even if pleasant, do not speak untruth.
This is the eternal path of righteousness."

Similarly, Saint Kabir beautifully explains:

"ऐसी वाणी बोलिए, मुन का आपा खोए,
अपना तन शीतल करे, औरां को सुख होए।"

"Speak in a way that calms your own mind and brings joy to others."

A person influenced by *Sattva Guna* understands that words have the power to heal or harm. Their speech soothes, inspires, and spreads positivity.

2. *Rajo Guni Speech (Truthful but Harsh or Sarcastic)*

A Rajo Guni person speaks the truth but does not care about how their words affect others. Their speech often comes with aggression, sarcasm, or arrogance.

There is even a sarcastic take on such behavior:

"ऐसी वाणी बोलिए, जमकर झगड़ा होए,

पर उससे ना बोलिए, जो आपसे तगड़ा होए।"

"Speak in a way that sparks a fight,

But be careful not to argue with someone stronger than you!"

Some people argue aggressively over trivial matters, creating conflict where none exists. Others take pride in mocking or belittling others, thinking it is a sign of intelligence—when in reality, it is a form of foolishness.

If our words hurt someone, they lack righteousness. True intelligence lies in using speech to uplift, not to insult.

3. Tamo Guni Speech (Harsh, Irrelevant, and Disturbing)

A Tamo Guni person does not think before speaking. Their speech is often unpleasant, unhelpful, and unwelcome. People tend to avoid such individuals because their words lack value, relevance, and kindness.

A Tamo Guni person might lose relationships, respect, or even business opportunities simply because their speech lacks refinement and consideration.

The Ideal Speech

The true measure of good speech is that it should leave people feeling uplifted and at peace.

- A Sattva Guni person speaks wisely, truthfully, and kindly.
- A Rajo Guni person speaks truthfully but without concern for how their words impact others.
- A Tamo Guni person speaks without thinking, causing discomfort and irritation.

By cultivating Sattva in speech, one not only improves one's own life but also spreads harmony and understanding in the world.

Food: The choice and significance of food reflect one's dominant guna.



- Sattva: Importance of **nourishment**
- Rajas: Importance of **taste**
- Tamas: **Addictive, impure**

Bhagavān explains in the Bhagavad Gītā how one's food choices reflect their inherent nature (guṇa). The way a person consumes food indicates whether they are influenced by **Sattva (purity)**, **Rajas (passion)**, or **Tamas (ignorance)**.

1. Sattva Guni - Eating for Nourishment and Balance

A Sattva Guni person eats based on hunger and follows a disciplined and timely eating routine. They prioritize nourishment and listen to their body's needs. Their approach to food is balanced and mindful.

- They consume food that is fresh, wholesome, and sattvic (nutritious, light, and easy to digest).
- They do not overeat or indulge in cravings but instead eat what is beneficial for their body and mind.
- They respect mealtime and do not delay or skip meals based on personal preferences.

2. Rajo Guni - Eating for Taste and Cravings

For a Rajo Guni person, taste is more important than hunger. Their eating habits are driven by desires and impulses rather than the body's natural needs.

- If they see something tasty, they will eat it even if they are not hungry.
- Suppose they have had lunch, but later their favorite dish arrives through Swiggy—they will eat it despite being full.
- On the other hand, if the available food is not enjoyable, they might skip meals just because it does not satisfy their taste.

Their food habits are pleasure-driven, often leading to overeating, unhealthy choices, and dissatisfaction when they do not get what they crave.

3. Tamo Guni - Eating Without Awareness or Discipline

A Tamo Guni person lacks awareness and concern about food quality, hygiene, or nutrition.

- They do not consider whether food is healthy or harmful, fresh or stale.
- They might consume leftovers, spoiled food, or even someone else's leftovers without thought.
- They have no fixed eating schedule and might eat at improper times, consuming harmful or intoxicating substances.

Their eating habits are marked by neglect, laziness, and indifference, often leading to poor health and a lack of vitality.

Clothing: The preference for attire is shaped by the predominant guna.



- **Sattva:** White, light-colored, suitable

- *Rajas*: Colorful, fashionable
- *Tamas*: Dirty, improper

Sattva Guni:

- Wears clean, light-colored, simple, and comfortable clothes.
- Prefers cotton and breathable fabrics for practicality and comfort.
- Chooses clothing that protects from heat and is soothing to the body.

Rajo Guni:

- Prioritizes fashion, trends, and expensive attire.
- Wears bright, flashy, and stylish clothes to keep up with trends.
- Frequently changes styles, seeking attention and admiration.

Tamo Guni:

- Wears unclean, untidy, or even torn clothes.
- Neglects hygiene and appearance, sometimes reusing clothes without washing.
- Indifferent to how they are perceived, often wearing worn-out or inappropriate outfits.

Sattva in dressing—clean, simple, and comfortable attire. One's clothing choices reflect their inner qualities and mindset.

Residence: The condition and organization of living spaces reveal the prevailing guna.



- **Sattva:** Clean and pure
- **Rajas:** Luxurious
- **Tamas:** Unclean, disorganized

Sattva Guni:

- Keeps their residence clean, organized, and simple.
- Creates a peaceful and pleasant atmosphere.
- Avoids extravagance while ensuring comfort and harmony.

Rajo Guni:

- Focuses on luxury and decoration, often filling the home with expensive and unnecessary items.
- Prioritizes appearance and status over simplicity.
- Enjoys grandeur but may lack true peace in the space.

Tamo Guni:

- Lives in an unclean, cluttered, and disorganized environment.
- Neglects proper maintenance and hygiene.
- Shows little concern for aesthetics or comfort.

A person's living space reflects their inner nature. A Sattva-influenced home promotes tranquility, while Rajas leads to excess, and Tamas results in disorder.

Investment: The choice of where to invest reflects one's priorities and guna.



- *Sattva*: **Safe** investments, **charity**
- *Rajas*: **Speculative** investments
- *Tamas*: **Gambling**

Sattva Guni:

- Prefers safe and secure investment options with guaranteed returns (e.g., LIC, PPF, KVP).
- Focuses on long-term financial stability and security.
- Donates 10% of their annual income to charity for the welfare of others.

Rajo Guni:

- Engages in speculative investments like mutual funds and stocks.
- Seeks high-risk, high-reward opportunities to maximize gains.
- Prioritizes wealth accumulation over financial security.

Tamo Guni:

- Avoids structured investments and indulges in gambling to multiply wealth quickly (e.g., betting, online gambling apps).
- Takes reckless financial risks, often leading to losses.
- Lacks financial discipline and long-term planning.

Work: The nature and motivation behind actions indicate the dominant guna.



- *Sattva*: **Beneficial**
- *Rajas*: **Desire-driven**
- *Tamas*: **Indecisive**

A Sattva Guni person works with responsibility, focusing on what is essential, beneficial, and timely. A Rajas Guni person, on the other hand, engages in work that excites or pleases them—following desires rather than necessity. For instance, studying is important (Sattva), while playing is enjoyable (Rajo).

Meanwhile, a Tamo Guni person avoids work altogether, doing things only when forced or when there is no other option. They are indecisive, passive, and often use illogical reasoning to justify their inaction.

One common doha associated with Tamo Guni people is:

"अजगर करे ना चाकरी, पंछी करे ना काम
दास मलूका कह गए, सबके दाता राम"

(Just as a python does not work, nor do birds toil, Saint Maluka said that Bhagavān provides for all.)

A humorous yet thought-provoking story illustrates this mindset:

During a satsang, a woman approached a saint, visibly distressed. "Maharaj, my husband refuses to work! And whatever little he earns, he wastes on alcohol. Please make him understand." The saint turned to the man and asked, "Is this true?" The man, unfazed, nodded, "Absolutely, Maharaj!" The saint probed further, "But why do you do this?"

With a smug smile, the man replied, "Maharaj, don't you always preach that Bhagavān provides food to all? In my house, roti is always available. So why should I bother working?"

The saint was momentarily silent. The audience watched, amused yet curious. Sensing his chance, the man chuckled, "May I say something more?" The saint nodded. The man grinned, "See, Maharaj, Bhagavān gives roti to everyone, but He doesn't provide alcohol. That's why I only work to earn for alcohol!" The audience burst into laughter, but the saint sighed, realizing the depth of ignorance in his words. This is exactly how a Tamo Guni person thinks—lazy, indecisive, and using flawed logic to justify inaction.

Emotion: Emotional tendencies highlight the underlying guna.



- *Sattva*: **Welfare** of self and others
- *Rajas*: **Self-serving**
- *Tamas*: **Harmful** to others

When Srī Hanumān jī was sent to Rāvaṇa, he asked Srī Rāma, "**What message should I convey?**"

Srī Rāma replied:

"*Kāju hamāra ripu su tāsō, hita anahita kachhu nahi abhilāṣo.*"

"Even the one who has wronged me, I wish for his well-being. Convey that we intend no harm."

This response reflects Srī Rāma's Sattva Guṇa—the highest quality of virtue, which prioritizes both self-benefit and the welfare of others. A Sattva Guṇī person constantly seeks ways to uplift themselves and those around them.

The Three Guṇas: Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas

1. Sattva Guṇa (Virtuous, Selfless Nature)

A Sattva Guṇī person thinks about the greater good and acts with righteousness. Like Srī Rāma, they desire harmony, even towards those who have wronged them.

2. Rajo Guṇa (Self-Serving, Ambitious Nature)

A Rajo Guṇī person is primarily focused on their own benefit, often disregarding others.

There's a saying:

"*Apanā kāma banatā, bhāra meri jāya jantā.*"

(As long as my work gets done, the public can go to ruin.)

A common example is seen in temples—some people carelessly push aside others' footwear just to place their own conveniently, without regard for the inconvenience they cause.

The speaker recalls an incident from a *Srī Satsaṅga*:

A wealthy man, worth ₹200-300 crores, was seen leaving while wearing someone else's shoes. When confronted by the rightful owner, he returned them but immediately started searching for another pair. Seeing this, the speaker offered his own shoes. Without hesitation, the man accepted and walked away—never once considering how the speaker would manage. This is the nature of a Rajo Guṇī person: self-centered, always prioritizing their own needs.

3. Tamo Guṇa (Destructive, Ignorant Nature)

A Tamo Guṇī person not only harms others but also brings destruction upon themselves.

As Srī Tulasīdāsa says:

"Jimi hima upala kṛṣī dali garahiṁ, karahiṁ anīti nija sukha jasa marahiṁ."

"Just as hailstones destroy crops, those blinded by selfishness and unethical behavior harm others for temporary pleasure but ultimately destroy themselves."

A Tamo Guṇī person is reckless, indulging in actions that cause harm without considering long-term consequences. They are driven by ignorance and often meet self-inflicted ruin.

Interest: The focus of one's interest reflects their dominant guna.



- **Sattva:** Service and duty
- **Rajas:** Show for respect
- **Tamas:** Adharmic, absurd

A **Sattva Guṇī** person engages in religious and righteous activities with a pure heart, always considering how they can be helpful to others.

A **Rajo Guṇī** person performs religious acts, but their intention is to show off and seek recognition.

A **Tamo Guṇī** person indulges in actions that harm others, engage in Adharma, and cause suffering.

Desires: The nature of one's desires showcases the prevailing guna.



10. इच्छायें



गुणत्रय
सत्त्व, रज, तम

सत्त्वगुण

आवश्यकता का महत्व



रजोगुण

इच्छाओं का महत्व



तमोगुण

दूसरे की इच्छाओं का बाधक



- *Sattva*: **Necessity**-oriented
- *Rajas*: **Desire**-oriented
- *Tamas*: **Obstacle to others' desires**

A Sattva Guṇī person prioritizes needs and necessities over mere desires. Those familiar with economics understand the distinction between needs and wants, and a Sattva Guṇī individual always ensures that necessities take precedence.

A Rajo Guṇī person, on the other hand, prioritizes wants over needs, indulging in desires even before fulfilling essential requirements.

A Tamo Guṇī person does not focus on their own needs or wants but instead thinks, "How can I become an obstacle in others' desires?" They find satisfaction in hindering others rather than uplifting themselves.

Association: The choice of companions reveals the dominant guna.



11. संग



गुणत्रय
सत्त्व, रज, तम

सत्त्वगुण

सज्जनों का संग



रजोगुण

उच्च का संग



तमोगुण

अच्छे लोगों से दूरी



- *Sattva*: Association **with noble people**
- *Rajas*: Association **with the elite**
- *Tamas*: **Avoidance of good company**

"Binū satsaṅga viveka na hoi, Rāma kṛpā binu sulabha na soi."

"Without Satsaṅga (association with the wise and saintly), true wisdom (Viveka) does not arise. And without Śrī Rāma's grace, nothing is easily attained."

By the grace of Śrī Rāma, I am blessed to be surrounded by good and virtuous people.

A Sattva Guṇī person naturally seeks the company of noble and righteous individuals, engaging in uplifting conversations and good thoughts. They find joy in wisdom, spirituality, and meaningful connections.

A Rajo Guṇī person enjoys the company of influential, high-status, and wealthy individuals, valuing power, prestige, and material success over deeper virtues. Their interactions are often driven by ambition and personal gain.

A Tamo Guṇī person actively avoids good and righteous people, as well as spiritual guides. They perceive such individuals as boring and prefer environments that indulge in negativity, ignorance, or harmful distractions.

Gosvāmī Tulasīdāsa jī says:

"Gagana chaḍhai raja pavan prasaṅgā, kīcahiṁ milai nīca jala saṅgā."

"Dust rises to the sky when carried by the wind, but the same dust becomes mud when mixed with dirty water."

Lesson from this Analogy:

Just as dust's fate depends on what it associates with—uplifted by the wind or dragged down by dirty water—our character and direction in life are shaped by the company we keep.

It is essential to observe a person's priorities before forming close associations. Someone might be inherently good but make occasional mistakes—that does not make them bad. Similarly, a person may appear virtuous but have misplaced priorities.

Thus, rather than judging people hastily, we should carefully discern their values, aspirations, and guiding principles before choosing their company.

These insights form the 11 essential frameworks of Guṇa-Traya (Three Modes of Nature).

Once, Gandhījī received a letter that was nearly 11 pages long. He read it carefully, then removed the pin holding the pages together and returned the letter. He remarked, "The pin is useful to me, so I kept it. The letter is not useful, so I returned it."

Lesson:

Just as Gandhījī took only what was valuable to him, we too should develop the wisdom to accept what is useful and let go of what is not. Whether it is advice, experiences, or interactions, we must learn to extract what benefits us and discard what does not serve our growth.

14.27

**brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham, amṛtasyāvyayasya ca,
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya, sukhasyaikāntikasya ca. 14.27**

For, I am the substratum of the imperishable Brahma, of immortality, of the eternal Dharma and of unending immutable bliss.

In this shloka, *Bhagavān* declares that He is the foundation of the formless Brahman, the immortal, imperishable, and ultimate source of bliss. He concludes this teaching by emphasizing that unwavering devotion to the Supreme Divine enables one to transcend the three modes of nature (*Guṇa-Traya*) and attain liberation.

If the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* were to be summarized in one line, it would be:

"Mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja" (Surrender unto Me alone.)

Through exclusive devotion and unconditional surrender to the Supreme Divine, one transcends the limitations of material existence and ascends to higher states of consciousness.

The session concluded with *Harinām Sankīrtan*, followed by an engaging **Question and Answer** session, where thought-provoking queries were addressed with practical wisdom and deep spiritual insights.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS:

Sanjana ji:

When *Bhagavān* was imparting *Jñāna* to Arjuna, did others not hear it?

Answer:

The conversation between *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* and Arjuna lasted approximately 40-45 minutes. Since it took place on the battlefield, the warriors on both sides were occupied with preparations for war and, therefore, did not hear the dialogue.

Sapna ji:

Q: What is the purpose of our life? If it is *Bhagavad-Prāpti* (attaining *Bhagavān*), then why did *Bhagavān* send us here?

Answer:

Yes, the ultimate purpose of life is *Bhagavad-Prāpti*.

Just as parents send their children to the market to learn how to buy things and expect them to return home, similarly, *Bhagavān* has sent us into this world to learn, grow, and ultimately attain Him. We have been trapped in the cycle of birth and death for countless lifetimes. It is only when we truly realize that we have had enough of this material existence that the desire for *Bhagavad-Prāpti* awakens within us.

Ranjana ji:

Q: I have completed L-4 and want to rejoin L-1, but I am unable to join. What should I do?

Answer:

If you are unable to join through the website, try accessing it via the mobile app. If the issue persists, please contact our helpline at 1800-203-6500 for assistance.

Q: During *Ekādaśī*, if it falls on a Sunday, should we water *Tulsi* or not?

Answer:

It is okay if you do not water *Tulsi* on that day. However, you should also not pluck or consume *Tulsi* leaves and avoid touching the plant as a mark of reverence.

Shital ji

Q: What is *Nityānta* and *Sūtrātmā*?

Answer:

- **Nityānta** refers to the Supreme Controller, the one who governs everything in the universe.
- **Sūtrātmā** is the source of all Ātmās (souls), the divine essence that pervades and connects all beings.

Chitra ji

Q: Which *Adhyāya* of the *Bhagavad Gītā* should one read for good health?

Answer:

While maintaining good health requires proper care through diet and lifestyle, if you wish to read a scripture for well-being, you may **recite the *Rāma Rakṣā Stotra*, which is known for its protective and healing benefits.**

The discourse concluded with a *prārthanā* offering at the *padakamala* (lotus feet) of *Śrī Hari*, followed by the recitation of the *Hanumān Chalisa*.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyām(m) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṃvāde
Guṇatrayavibhāgayogo nāma caturdaśo'dhyāyaḥ.**



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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