

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 14: Guṇatrāya-Vibhāga-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Mc3mAwhOd8s>

## Discerning the Three Gunas - Transcend the modes and attain liberation

The 14th Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Guṇatrāya-Vibhāga-Yoga - The Yoga of Classification of the Three Gunas**.

The session began with the prayer and lighting of the holy lamp, followed by obeisance to Śrī Krishna and Gurudev.

In the previous session, we discussed about the three Gunas - Sattvik, Rajasic, and Tamasic, and how they affect our daily routine. Sattvik Guna stands for goodness; Rajasic stands for passion, attachment and greed; Tamasic stands for ignorance, inertia and complete darkness. A good example of the three gunas are the three brothers - Ravana, Vibhishana and Kumbhakarna, each of whom asked for 'Sona' as a boon, though with different implications. Kumbhakarna stood for Tāmasik Guna. He asked for six months of sleep as a boon. Ravana was under the influence of Rājāsik guṇa. He wanted to control the three realms or the lokas. Vibhishana epitomizes the Sāttvik Guna. He did not want to waste his life sleeping in *ajñāna nidra* (So-Naa) or chasing materialistic pleasures.

Sattvaguna binds one with happiness, Rajoguna binds one with Karma or action, while Tamoguna binds one with illusions (*ajñāna nidra*) that can lead to unrighteous actions and mental confusions.

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that each guna, at some time or the other, tends to prevail over the other gunas. Sometimes, it is the Sattva guna that preponders over Rajo guna while at other times it is the Rajo guna that dominates over Sattva guna. There are occasions and phases when Tamo guna gets the better of Sattva and Rajo gunas. **Thus, the three Gunas are never balanced at all times. One guna or the other will always overpower the other gunas and that is why one should ensure that the Sattva guna remains dominant within oneself.**

One needs to introspect on one's own desires and needs in order to gauge which guna is predominant.

Given below is the implication behind each set of desires:

- **Desire for knowledge and wisdom** points towards the dominance of Sattva guna.
- **Desire for action in any field** implies the dominance of Rajo guna.
- **Desire to lead a life solely revolving around the pleasure of eating and sleeping**, undoubtedly reflects the complete hold that Tamo guna has over such a person.

When the Sun shines bright, the moon seems visibly dimmed. When a dish contains too many spices, only the most pungent spice comes to the notice of our taste buds. **Similarly, the guna that appears the most prominent, tends to overpower the other two gunas. This concept will be reiterated in the next shloka as well.**

This chapter, as mentioned before, outlines how one gets bound by these three gunas. The universe is endowed with these guṇas that make up the material and immaterial world. Yet, it is ultimately only the most pre-eminent guna that keeps a person's nature or Pravr̥tti (that which causes action) under its complete sway.

## 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.

Paramātmā states that sattva Guna attaches us to happiness. However, it is essential to distinguish between two types of happiness:

- **Material happiness:** This type of happiness arises from attachment to material possessions, wealth, and worldly comforts. While it may provide temporary satisfaction, it is ultimately fleeting and can lead to attachment and bondage.
- **Bliss:** This is a deeper, more profound sense of happiness that arises from within. It is a state of inner peace, joy, and contentment that is not dependent on external circumstances.

A person with a higher proportion of Sattva Guna is more likely to experience bliss and be attached to it. On the other hand, attachment to Rajas Guna leads to an excessive focus on action and karma. This Guna drives individuals to constantly strive for more, fueled by their desires and ambitions. As a result, they become entangled in an endless cycle of action and reaction, never finding true fulfillment or peace. Tamo Guna, the third and lowest of the three Gunas, is characterized by ignorance, delusion, and darkness. Individuals dominated by Tamo Guna are often stuck in a state of confusion and ignorance.

It is essential to understand that the three Gunas are constantly interacting and influencing one another. At any given time, one Guna is dominant, while the other two are subordinate. To illustrate this point, consider the analogy of the sun and moon. Just as the sun and moon do not appear in the sky simultaneously, the three Gunas cannot be equally dominant at the same time. When one Guna rises to prominence, the other two recede, only to rise again when the dominant Guna subsides.

Another example is the taste of food that is prepared with various spices. We may sometimes taste the saltiness, or the spiciness, or the sweetness of the dish, but we cannot taste all the spices at once.

The one that is more abundant or prominent stands out. Similarly, the dominant Guna is more evident in a person's character and personality, while the other two are hidden or subdued.

#### 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.

The three Gunas are constantly interacting and influencing one another, leading to a cyclical pattern of dominance and subsidence.

The phrase "**rajaḥ sattvaṃ tamaścaiva**" suggests that Rajas can overpower Sattva and Tamas, while "**tamaḥ sattvaṃ rajastathā**" indicates that Tamas can similarly dominate Sattva and Rajas. These three Gunas are not static entities but are constantly interacting and influencing one another.

Each person has a different combination of these three gunas that exist in a state of imbalance. The gunas are unstable and prone to change in proportion and quantity. The proportion of each guna varies depending on the person's state of mind and activity. For example, a person may be more sattvic when he is meditating, more rajasic when he is working, and more tamasic when he is sleeping. The dominant guna determines the person's behavior and attitude at that point of time, while the other two remain dormant or subdued.

To overcome the negative effects of rajasic and tamasic gunas, one should seek the company of good people or satsanga. This means that one should associate with those who are more sattvic, or who follow the path of goodness, purity, and truth. By being in Satsanga, one can learn from the life-examples and teachings of the sattvic people, and gradually increase one's sattva, while reducing one's rajas and tamas. This will help one to attain a higher state of consciousness and liberation.

There are three possible scenarios that can exist depending on how the gunas prevail over each other in different situations:

**When sattva guna prevails over rajo guna and tamo guna:** This means that when a person is in the mode of goodness, he can overcome the influences of passion and ignorance and act in a calm, harmonious, and wise manner. He is not disturbed by the fluctuations of the mind or the senses, and is focused on the higher goal of self-realization.

**When rajo guna prevails over tamo guna and sattva guna:** This leads one to decipher that when a person is in the mode of passion, he is driven by the forces of desire and action, and is not able to control his emotions or impulses. He is attached to the results of his work; he is restless and dissatisfied. Not interested in the spiritual aspects of life, he gets easily influenced by the mode of ignorance.

**When tamo guna prevails over sattva guna and rajo guna:** A person in the grip of ignorance is essentially in a state of darkness, dullness, and inertia. He is not aware of his true nature, and is deluded by false conceptions of reality. He becomes lazy, careless, and irresponsible, and is unable to perform his duties or follow his dharma. He is not receptive to the modes of goodness or passion and consequently, remains trapped in the cycle of birth and death.

## 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.

When Sattva Guna is predominant, a profound transformation occurs. The entire being, encompassing all aspects of our personality, undergoes a significant shift. The person dominated by Sattva guna embodies luminosity from all the gates of your body (**sarvadvāreṣu dehe'smin**), i.e. the various senses and faculties through which we perceive and interact with the world.

As Sattva Guna gains ascendancy, we experience an increased curiosity and desire to learn. Our minds become more receptive, and we begin to seek knowledge and understanding with renewed enthusiasm. This is reflected in our character, which becomes more Sattvik in nature. We start to embody the qualities of a Sattvik individual and then have a calm and composed mind along with a sense of clarity and purpose. We gain a desire knowledge and self-improvement.

## 14.12

### **lobhaḥ(ph) pravṛttirārambhaḥ(kh), karmaṇāmaśamaḥ(s) sprhā, 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.

When Rajasic Guna is dominant, an individual's behavior and actions are significantly impacted. Rajasic Guna is characterized by an insatiable desire for more, leading to excessive attachment to worldly objects and desires. This attachment manifests in various ways, such as:

- **Lobhaḥ** (Greed and wastefulness): Individuals with dominant Rajasic Guna often accumulate more than they need, leading to waste and excess. For example, filling one's plate with more food than can be consumed, only to waste it later.
- **Pravṛttiḥ Ārambhaḥ** (Selfish motives): Actions performed with the intention of personal gain or recognition are indicative of Rajas Guna. This includes seeking admiration or fame through one's actions.
- **Karmaṇām** (passionate endeavors): When Rajasic Guna is dominant, individuals may prioritize their desires over moral principles, even if they know their actions are incorrect.
- **Aśamaḥ** (restlessness) manifests in individuals who are unable to find peace due to the overpowering thoughts of desires. An illustrative example is Ravana's relentless pursuit of lust, leading him to abduct Ma Sita despite being knowledgeable and being aware that the action is wrong. The attachment and drive to fulfill desires become so intense that sleep becomes elusive.
- **Sprhā** (an incessant preoccupation with desires): The individual is consumed by thoughts of specific objects or experiences. The constant fixation on trivial matters, such as food or impending meals, hinders focus and leads to the dominance of Rajasic guna.

Any Karma that is done without a desire is "**Nishkaam Karma**". Karma done with selfish motives are said to have Rajasic Guna. Rajasic Guna creates lot of attachment to the worldly objects; with that the person starts doing more and more Karma. In our daily lives, we often initiate good deeds or actions with the intention of gaining recognition, praise, or admiration from others. While these actions may appear noble on the surface, they can actually be driven by the influence of Rajasic Guna. Rajasic

Guna also affects an individual's mental state and motivation.

When this Guna is dominant a person's mental clarity is compromised leading to excessive thoughts and mental chatter can make it difficult to focus and relax, even when trying to sleep. Individuals with dominant Rajasic Guna are motivated to act based on their desires, rather than a sense of purpose or duty. The surge in Rājasic Guṇa fosters materialism, obstructing detachment from worldly pleasures. Chapter 17 provides insights on how to control the prevalence of Rajasic guna once its dominance is recognized, and offers guidance on achieving a balanced and detached approach to life.

#### 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.

The first characteristic of Tamasic Guna is "**aprakāśo**" or a lack of illumination. This refers to a lack of desire for knowledge or understanding. In contrast, individuals with dominant Sattva Guna are driven to acquire knowledge and wisdom.

The second characteristic is "**apravṛttiśca**" or a lack of motivation or purpose. This refers to a lack of desire to engage in any activity or pursue any goals. In contrast, individuals with dominant Rajas Guna are driven to act, but often with a desire for personal gain or recognition.

The third and fourth characteristics are "**pramādo**" and "**moha**," which refer to confusion, delusion, and ignorance. Individuals with dominant Tamasic Guna often lack clarity and discernment, leading to poor decision-making and a lack of direction.

A striking example of the influence of Tamasic Guna can be seen in the behavior of some parents who are willing to compromise their values and ethics for the benefit of their children. Specifically, some parents in schools and colleges are drawn to schemes that offer unfair advantages, such as allowing their child to cheat during exams in exchange for extra money. These parents are often driven by a deep attachment to their child's success and despite knowing that such actions are wrong, they are willing to overlook their moral principles due to their emotional attachment.

When Tamas Guna is on the higher side, individuals become more prone to delusion and a lack of discernment. They may knowingly engage in incorrect or unethical behavior, despite being aware of the consequences.

#### 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.

In this shloka and the subsequent one, Parameśvara forewarns us that the fate awaiting souls after death is intricately tied to the predominant gunas or desires shaping their personalities. The gunas prevalent when the soul departs from the physical body determines the subsequent place of birth.

Those departing with predominance of Sāttvika guna are destined for Swarga loka or Brahmā loka, the elevated abodes of the heavens.

A Rajo guni person tends to employ his intellect for personal gains, while a Sāttvika individual utilizes knowledge for the collective welfare of those around him. It is therefore advised to share one's knowledge and engage in charitable acts in accordance with one's capacity. Simple yet impactful actions such as teaching a less fortunate person or contributing to their education fees, significantly contribute to spiritual growth.

These illuminating words of wisdom have been further illustrated with an anecdote about a yajña organized by a king. Amongst the people present, two contributors stood out – a merchant who contributed 50,000 rupees and an elderly lady who gave a modest 10 rupees. Although the material contribution of the merchant was greater, the spiritual contribution of the elderly lady surpassed it. The essence lies in the fact that the merchant contributed half of his wealth, whereas the old lady dedicated her entire savings to the yajña, thereby elevating the spiritual significance of her offering.

#### 14.15

**rajasi pralayaṃ(ñ) gatvā, karmasañgiṣu 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.

When an individual is dominated by Rajas Guna, their actions are driven by a desire for personal gain, recognition, or satisfaction. When such an individual passes away, their soul is likely to return to Earth, reborn in a form that requires intense labor and struggle. Every individual has a unique set of skills, talents, and resources. It is their fundamental duty to utilize these gifts for the greater good. This can be achieved through either Rajasic Guna or Sattva Guna. However, when actions are driven by Sattva Guna, they are characterized by selflessness, compassion, and a desire to benefit others. In contrast, actions driven by Rajasic Guna are often motivated by personal gain or recognition.

Selfless action has the power to transform not only the lives of others but also our own spiritual journey. When we utilize our resources, skills, and knowledge to benefit others, we accumulate positive karma and move closer to spiritual growth. The impact of our actions is not measured by their scale or grandeur but by the intention and selflessness behind them. Whether we help one person or thousands, the effect on our spiritual journey remains the same. The story of the king's Yajna illustrates this point beautifully. The old lady's contribution of 10 rupees, although seemingly small, was more significant than the wealthy individual's donation of 50,000 rupees. This anecdote highlights the importance of giving with an open heart and a willingness to sacrifice. When we contribute to society with a sense of selflessness and generosity, we accumulate positive karma and move closer to spiritual growth.

In contrast, when we perform actions with the primary intention of benefiting others, our actions are characterized by Sattva Guna. This Guna is driven by a sense of selflessness, compassion, and a desire to serve others. When we perform actions with the primary intention of benefiting ourselves, our actions are characterized by Rajas Guna. This Guna is driven by a sense of self-interest, attachment, and a desire for personal gain.

#### 14.16

**karmaṇaḥ(s) sukṛtasyāhuḥ(s), sāttvikam(n) nirmalam(m) phalam,  
rajasastu phalam(n) duḥkham, ajñānam(n) tamasaḥ(ph) phalam. 14.16**

The reward of a righteous act, they say, is Sāttvika 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 consequences of Karma performed with Sattva Guna are described as pure and untainted fruits - "**sāttvikam nirmalam phalam**". When our thoughts and actions are guided by Sattva Guna, we experience a life of prosperity, peace, and happiness. Mira Bai and Tulsidas ji, despite lacking formal education, possessed a deep understanding of spiritual truths through intuitive knowledge and Sattva Guna. Their minds were filled with wisdom, compassion, and devotion, which they expressed through their poetry, music, and selfless service.

In contrast, the consequences of Karma performed with Rajasic Guna are described as painful fruits - "**rajasastu phalam duḥkham**". Although we may experience temporary happiness or satisfaction, the ultimate result of actions driven by selfish motives and attachments is pain and suffering.

The consequences of Karma performed with Tamasic Guna are described as ignorance and darkness - "**ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam**". When our actions are guided by Tamasic Guna, we experience a life of ignorance, confusion, and suffering.

Individuals who live a life dominated by Rajasic Guna are reborn as creatures that are driven by instinct and forced to perform laborious tasks, such as donkeys. Similarly, individuals who live a life dominated by Tamasic Guna are reborn in a state of ignorance and darkness.

**14.17**

**sattvātsañjāyate jñānam(m), rajaso lobha eva ca,  
pramādamohau tamaso, bhavato'jñānameva ca. 14.17**

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

Bhagavān proceeds to elaborate on the repercussions of the three gunas.

Sāttvik individuals exude tranquility, possess heightened knowledge, and ascend to higher realms. Sattva guna instills a natural curiosity to explore the knowledge of the self, akin to the spontaneous acts of eating or drinking. Recognizing the underlying reality of Brahmān amidst the changing world leads to the attainment of higher planes of existence.

In contrast, Rājasik individuals exhibit an overarching attachment, even towards invaluable possessions, positioning them in the middle realms. Rajo guṇa propels increased action driven by desires, giving rise to greed and anxiety. Such individuals are consumed by a self-centered perspective, viewing themselves as the sole doers. This category extends to those who possess knowledge but refrain from sharing it with others, leading to similar births where karmic actions hold significance.

Tāmasik individuals, unfortunately, find themselves at the lowest level of existence. Tamo guṇa fosters a narrow perspective that considers a part as the whole- metaphorically speaking, being unable to grasp the complete picture-resulting in carelessness, laziness, and ignorance that intensify the web of delusion. The consequences of these gunas serve as a guiding force, shaping the destinies

of individuals based on their predominant qualities and actions.

#### 14.18

**ūrdhvaṃ(ñ) gacchanti sattvasthā, madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ,  
jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā, adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ. 14.18**

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.

Individuals dominated by:

- **Sattva Guna ascend to higher realms**, characterized by wisdom, peace, and harmony.
- **Rajasic Guna remain in the middle**, marked by activity, passion, and a pursuit of worldly desires.
- **Tamasic Guna descends to lower realms**, characterized by darkness, ignorance, and suffering.

#### 14.19

**nānyaṃ(ñ) guṇebhyaḥ(kh) kartāraṃ(m), yadā draṣṭānupaśyati,  
guṇebhyaśca paraṃ(m) vetti, madbhāvaṃ(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 delves into the concept of transcending the gunas, explaining that Prakṛti in its entirety, encompassing the material nature, revolves around these inherent qualities or gunas. However, only Brahmān, the Supreme God, stands beyond the confines of these Gunas. While Sāttva guna is inherently good, it binds individuals to the material world due to attachment to happiness.

The key revelation lies in the understanding that a soul free from entanglement with any particular guna, achieves liberation. The term 'liberation', in this context, implies transcending the influences of Sāttvaguna, Rajoguṇa and Tamoguṇa, which hinder the path leading to ultimate freedom. The liberated soul has risen above the constraints of these qualities and is no longer tethered to their sway.

Śrī Bhagavān encourages individuals to aspire for this transcendence, emphasizing the necessity of moving beyond the three guṇas to unite with the Supreme Being. By recognizing the ephemeral nature of the material world governed by these qualities, one can attain a state of spiritual liberation and unity with the eternal and transcendent reality represented by the Supreme. This path involves cultivating discernment and realizing the fundamental truth that lies beyond the intricate web woven by the Guṇas, ultimately leading to the profound union with HIM.

#### 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 exhorts us to rise beyond the influence of the guṇas and attain **Paramātmā**, the ultimate Divine Reality.

The individual who achieves this state becomes **Guṇatīta**, liberated from the shackles of the three modes of material nature, devoid of attachment to karmas, and impervious to the effects of these guṇas that perpetuate the cycle of samsara. Such a soul, untouched by the fluctuations of the material world, attains the divine union with the Supreme Being.

**This transcendence marks a profound shift from the transient and ephemeral nature of the physical realm to the enduring and infinite realm of spiritual fulfillment and bliss.**

**14.21**

**arjuna uvāca  
kairliṅgaistrīnguṇānetān, atīto bhavati prabho,  
kimācāraḥ(kh) kathaṁ(ñ) caitāṁs, 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?

Arjuna, in his role as a facilitator for humanity's understanding, seeks deeper insights into the distinctive attributes, conduct, and transformative process of an individual who has transcended the three guṇas. **He earnestly inquires about the discernible marks that identify such an elevated Soul, and wishes to comprehend the conduct that sets such a soul apart. Arjuna's inquiry reflects a genuine curiosity about the qualities and behaviors indicative of one who has achieved the elevated state of becoming a Guṇātīta.**

Furthermore, Arjuna seeks knowledge on the means through which an individual rises above the three Guṇas. His desire for understanding encompasses the practical aspects of the journey toward spiritual transcendence. This inquiry indicates an eagerness to grasp the transformative steps and practices that lead to the state of being beyond the influences of Sāttvik, Rājasik, and Tāmasik qualities.

In essence, Arjuna's questions demonstrate his sincere commitment to comprehending the nuanced aspects of spiritual evolution. He aspires to facilitate not only his understanding, but also serve as a medium through which this holy knowledge would reach the masses. He is almost like a representative of humanity at large, through whom Sri Bhagavān explains this knowledge thus paving the way for a deeper exploration of the qualities, conduct, and transformative path that leads to becoming a Guṇātīta.

**14.22**

**śrībhagavānuvāca  
prakāśaṁ(ñ) ca pravṛttiṁ(ñ) ca, mohameva ca pāṇḍava,  
na dveṣṭi saṁpravṛttāni, 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.

**He who remains undisturbed by the influence of the gunas and observes the working of these gunas from the objective perspective of a witness, remains established in identity with HIM, and never falls off from that state.**

He who does not get attached to the illumination born out of Sattva, nor activity born out of Rajas or even ignorance born out of Tamas, is above the three guṇas. He would not long for them if they are absent; and acting like an objective onlooker, he would be in control over his mind. He will remain indifferent and unaffected.

#### 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.

Such an individual understands that there is a reality beyond the Gunas and is not:

- Repelled by the manifestations of the Gunas
- Attached to the cessation of the Gunas

The story of Jada Bharat illustrates this concept. Despite being subjected to various insults and abuses, Jada Bharat remained silent and unaffected. He understood that there was a reality beyond the worldly interactions and chose to focus on his duties, unaffected by external circumstances.

The individual who transcends the Gunas is not influenced by the thoughts, emotions, or external events that arise from the Gunas. They remain steadfast, performing their duties without attachment or diversion.

#### 14.24

**śamaduḥkhasukhaḥ(s) svasthaḥ(s), śamaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ,  
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīraḥ(s), tulyanindātmasaṁstutiḥ. 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 describes the characteristics of a person who has achieved equanimity as:

- **śamaduḥkhasukhaḥ** - Happiness and sorrow: They do not get overly attached to happiness or distressed by sorrow.
- **tulyapriyāpriyo** - Pleasant and unpleasant experiences: They view both with equanimity.

Bhagavān consistently underscores the importance of equanimity, the sentiment having been echoed in Chapter 2 as well:

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते || 2.48||

*"Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, O Arjuna, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yoga."*

Detaching oneself from both success and failure might seem perplexing, as worldly achievements often bring elation. The universe operates on the principle that what brings happiness will also bring proportionate sorrow. For example, a mother experiences happiness and sorrow from her child. A student's excitement about good grades can be followed by disappointment about poor grades. One should enjoy good things in moderation, as excess can lead to problems. For example, a person with diabetes may overindulge in sweets at a party, leading to increased sugar levels and health issues.

It is essential to cultivate equanimity in all situations, whether happy or sorrowful. This attitude should not be delayed until retirement. A person with equanimity views material possessions with detachment, seeing no difference between gold and stone **ṣamaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ**. They are indifferent to material wealth and possessions. A child, unaware of the differences between objects, remains unaffected by them. Similarly, a person with equanimity remains unaffected by people, things, or places. They treat everyone and everything with equal respect and detachment.

## 14.25

### **mānāpamānayostulyaḥ(s), tulyo mitrārīpakṣayoḥ, sarvārambhaparitṛyāgī, 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.

Such an individual is characterized by:

- **Equanimity:** They remain unaffected by honor or dishonor, praise or criticism.
- **Neutrality:** They view friends and enemies with the same detachment.
- **Non-attachment:** They renounce all attachment to actions and their consequences.

Equanimity emerges as the key to attaining Moksha, as the oscillation between overexcitement and despair resulting from the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of desires creates disillusionment- not only for the individual but also for those around him. **The immutable law of Nature dictates that all actions bear consequences—today's happiness may yield to tomorrow's sorrow, and today's misery may pave the way for future bliss. The incessant fluctuations of the guṇas, driven by external circumstances, can bind the Jīvātman (True Self) to the cycle of Saṃsāra.**

Those who can rise above these Guṇas and maintain equanimity in all situations are poised to attain HIM. Their childlike and guileless perspective on the world, much like that of a child who perceives no distinction between gold, a clod of earth, and a stone, underscores their detached and unaffected outlook.

Drawing a parallel with the role of a soldier, akin to Arjuna, who fulfills his duty by engaging in warfare without harboring personal animosity toward individual enemies, highlights the importance of critiquing actions rather than individuals. Recognizing the Jīvātman as an inseparable part of Paramēśvara (Supreme Consciousness) and being inherently faultless, further reinforces the wisdom of detachment.

**To transcend the Guṇas, one is advised to adhere to the principle of detachment from actions, perform duties devoid of personal desires, remain equanimous in the face of outcomes, and maintain a single-minded focus on Bhagavān.** This approach aligns with the path of selfless action, leading to a state of liberation whereby the individual rises above the influence of the three guṇas and attains union with HIM.

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.

Such an aspirant is characterized by calmness and nonchalance in the face of honor and dishonor, treating both friend and foe with equanimity, and renouncing all personal enterprises. These individuals, referred to as guṇātīt, have risen above the three guṇas, signifying a state of spiritual transcendence.

The emphasis here is on performing one's duty without attachment, as illustrated through the example of a soldier. Śrī Bhagavān encourages Arjuna to fulfill his role as a warrior without being tethered to the outcomes of the impending war. **The guṇātīt individuals perform all actions selflessly, with a focus on the welfare of society rather than on personal gains.**

Chapter 12 of the Bhagavadgītā particularly praises such guṇātīt devotees, describing them as those indifferent to worldly gains, externally and internally pure, skillful, untroubled, and free from selfishness in all undertakings. Such devotees, who mirror the qualities of equanimity and selflessness, hold a special place in HIS realm.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 12.16॥

A shining example of this ethos is found in the actions of our **Swami Govind Dev Giri Maharaj, who founded the Geeta Parivar and initiated the "Learn Geeta" program.** Swamiji's endeavors are rooted in spreading the divine message of the Bhagavadgītā for the spiritual upliftment of seekers, entirely devoid of personal motives or gains. This selfless initiative reflects the essence of a guṇātīt, dedicated to the welfare of others and to the dissemination of spiritual wisdom.

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.

Those who worship with a single-minded focus, transcending the influences of the Guṇas, attain Brahmān. This realization unveils the nature of Parameshwar as indestructible, unchangeable, and as the source of eternal bliss.

**Yogeshwar, in these profound verses, reveals HIS true form as the essence of Brahmān, residing in the eternal abode of Brahmā.** The path to attaining this divine realization is through unwavering devotion and transcendence of the Guṇas-the inherent qualities that govern the material world.

**Brahmān, as explained, is immortal and imperishable (Avyaya), enduring even the cosmic dissolution.** The eternal Dharma (Sanatan dharma) is a reflection of the unchanging truth, unlike the transient nature of scientific theories and effects. The divine bliss (ananda) emanating from Brahmān is unending (śhāśhvata), remaining constant and undiminished in all states.

**The chapter concludes with a profound understanding that rising above all virtues and transcending their limitations, leads to the ultimate bliss.** The 17th Chapter further elaborates on the harmonious balance of these virtues, providing practical guidance on applying them to lead a content and spiritually enriched life. In essence, the teachings emphasize the eternal and unchanging nature of Parameshwar, the path to realization and the everlasting bliss that awaits those who recognize and transcend the impermanence of this material world.

The session ended with Hari Sankirtan

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



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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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