



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 13: Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña-Vibhāga-Yoga

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The Path to Supreme Knowledge: Understanding Immortality, Liberation, and the Eternal Truth

The 13th chapter of Bhagavad Gītā is **Kṣetra Kṣetrajña Vibhāg Yoga - Yoga through Distinguishing the Field and the Knower of the Field**

The 13th chapter delves into profound wisdom, encompassing both verbal and non-verbal elements of divine knowledge. It traverses the spiritual journey from the tangible to the intangible, ultimately reaching the formless Supreme Element (Parabrahmā). In this chapter, the distinction between the Kṣetra (field) and Kṣetrajña (knower of the field) is elaborated upon, teaching the process of separation and discernment.

This session begins with reverence for the Guru through the sacred chant:

**Guru Brahmā Guru Viṣṇu Guru Devo Maheśvaraḥ
Guru Sākṣhāt Paraṁ Brahma Tasmai Śrī Gurave Namaḥ.**

The Guru is extolled as the embodiment of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheshwara, the ultimate reality itself, worthy of the highest veneration. Further, invoking the divine wisdom, the hymn continues:

**Namāmi Sadgurum Śāntam Saccidānanda Vighram
Pūrṇa Brahma Parānandaṁ Viśhyāmaṇḍi Vallabham.**

This salutation to the Guru encapsulates the attributes of calmness, truth, consciousness, and bliss, emphasizing the complete realization of the Supreme Brahman.

**Om Pārthāya Pratibodhitam Bhagavatā Nārāyaṇa Svayaṁ
Vyāseṇa Grathitam Purāṇamuninā Madhye Mahābhāratam
Advaitāmṛtavarṣiṇīm Bhagavatīm Aṣṭādaśadhyāyinīm
Amba Tvām Anusandadhāmi Bhagavad Gīte Bhavadveṣiṇīm.**

The Gītā is lauded as the divine nectar, a fountain of non-dual wisdom, comprising eighteen chapters.

It is a beacon of light guiding humanity towards self-realization and liberation.

Drawing inspiration from the commentary of Jnaneshwar Maharaj, the Gītā is celebrated as a universal scripture intended to illuminate the path of bliss for all beings. The verse from the Jnaneshwari captures this beautifully:

तैसा वाग्विलास विस्तारू । गीतार्थेसी विश्व भरूं ।

आनंदाचें आवारूं । मांडूं जगा ॥ ११६० ॥

The eloquence of it will pour forth and will fill the whole world with the meaning of the Gita, and a canopy of joy will be raised over all the universe.

दिसो परतत्त्व डोळं । पाहो सुखाचा सोहळा ।

रिघो महाबोध सुकाळा- । माजीं विश्व ॥ ११६२ ॥

The eye will have vision of the highest truth, the festival of joy will dawn and the world will enter into the abundance of the knowledge of Brahma

The essence of this chapter emphasizes that the realization of the **Parabrahmā Tatva** (Supreme Truth) is the ultimate goal. The world must embrace this divine essence to experience true joy and unity. The Gītā, therefore, becomes a symbol of enlightenment, fostering self-awareness and universal harmony.

This chapter calls upon humanity to transcend the material, grasp the eternal, and harmonize with the infinite. In doing so, the individual and the world find their true nature, filled with bliss, peace, and liberation.

The Profound Insights of Gītā: Exploring Self-Realization

The wisdom of the Bhagavad Gītā illuminates the path to self-realization and the eternal connection between the individual soul (**Ātman**) and the Supreme Soul (**Paramātma**). It emphasizes that when one attains knowledge of their true self and the inherent relationship with the divine, they transcend all suffering. This realization not only liberates individuals but also enables them to bring relief to others in the material and spiritual realms.

The root of suffering lies in **Deha-bhāvana**—the identification with the physical body—and the neglect of the deeper, eternal essence, the **Ātma-tattva**. This chapter of the Gītā delves into the characteristics of the formless and pure **Nirguṇa Tattva**, separating the **Kṣetra** (field, representing the body and material existence) from the **Kṣetrajña** (the knower of the field, or consciousness).

The Composition of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña

The Kṣetra is described as being composed of 36 elements:

**Mahābhūta-ānyahāṅkāro buddhir avyaktam eva ca,
Indriyāṇi daśaikarṇ ca pañca cendriya-gocharāḥ.**

These elements include the five great elements (**Mahābhūtas: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space**), the mind (**Manas**), intellect (**Buddhi**), ego (**Ahāṅkāra**), and the unmanifest principle (**Avyakta**). The ten senses and their objects, as well as the mental faculties, complete this composition.

The **Mahābhūtas** in their pure form are known as **Tanmātras**, but in the manifest world, they blend with one another, forming the gross elements. For example, Earth contains properties of Water, Fire, Air, and Space. This blending is likened to mixing pure gold with impurities to create different grades,

such as 18-carat or 22-carat gold, for crafting jewelry. Similarly, the Mahābhūtas intermingle to form the material body.

The chapter also describes the collective physical body as **Saṅghāta**, a conglomeration of various components. It highlights the transient and mutable nature of the body, which contrasts with the eternal and infinite essence of the **Kṣetrajña**.

The Characteristics of the Wise

The Gītā expounds on the qualities of the realized soul through verses such as:

**Amanitvam adambhitvam ahimsa kṣāntir ārjavam
Ācāryopāsanam śaucaṁ sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ.**

These qualities include humility (**Amanitvam**), absence of pride (**Adambhitvam**), non-violence (**Ahimsa**), patience (**Kṣānti**), and self-control (**Ātmavinigraha**).

Non-violence (**Ahimsa**) is interpreted expansively. It is not merely refraining from physical harm but engaging in actions for the welfare of others. As explained in the Jnaneshwari, Ahimsa involves dedication of the body, speech, and mind to the well-being of the world:

**आणि जगाचिया सुखोद्देशें । शरीरवाचामानसें ।
राहाटणें तें अहिंसे । रूप जाण ॥ ११४ ॥**

Harmlessness is shown in using one's own body, speech and mind for the good of the world.

This principle underscores that even acts of violence, when performed as a duty for the greater good, align with Ahimsa. For instance, a soldier defending the nation or a judge upholding justice may engage in necessary violence without contravening this principle.

Dnyaneshwa Maharaj ji says:

**हे अनाक्रोश क्षमा । जयापाशीं प्रियोत्तमा ।
जाण तेणें महिमा । ज्ञानासि गा ॥ ३५३ ॥**

He, who practices such quiet endurance, O best beloved, adds greatness to wisdom.

The Gnosis of the Wise

True wisdom manifests not in declarations but in one's qualities and actions. It cannot be measured or proven directly but is recognized through its expressions, much like fertile soil is known by the crops it produces. A realized soul embodies forgiveness (**Kṣamā**) without resentment or anger. Forgiveness is not proclaimed but becomes a natural state of being.

The Bhagavad Gītā reflects this principle through its origin. Spoken by Bhagavān in the battlefield of Kurukshetra, it teaches that fulfilling one's duty, even in challenging circumstances, is the path to spiritual evolution. Bhagavān did not allow Arjuna to abandon his responsibilities; instead, he guided him to face them with wisdom and detachment.

The Legacy of Selflessness

Great saints exemplify these virtues through their lives. Despite facing societal rejection and persecution, they remain unshaken, embodying peace, forgiveness, and selflessness. Their actions, not their proclamations, reveal their enlightened state. The Gītā inspires all to rise above material attachments, understand the eternal truth of the **Ātman**, and act in harmony with the divine will. In doing so, one not only finds personal liberation but also contributes to the upliftment of the world, fulfilling the timeless message of universal peace and bliss.

The Virtue of Forgiveness

The virtue of forgiveness is evident in the lives of saints and enlightened beings. It becomes a natural trait, deeply ingrained in their being. For instance, Gautama Buddha exemplified this in a profound episode. A man, in an attempt to provoke him, spat on his hand. Buddha calmly wiped it away and asked the man if he had more to say. When questioned about his lack of anger, Buddha replied that he would only become angry if the man succeeded in controlling him. Buddha asserted that he was the master of his own emotions and would not be enslaved by anyone else's actions. Later, the man, overcome with remorse, returned to seek forgiveness. Buddha explained that forgiveness had already been granted the previous day, emphasizing that true forgiveness arises naturally and does not require explicit acknowledgment.

Unwavering Composure in the Face of Provocation

This unwavering composure is also seen in the life of Sant Eknath Maharaj. Despite efforts by others to anger him, he remained unperturbed. Such equanimity reflects the qualities of wisdom and spiritual maturity. These traits, described as **amānitvam** (absence of pride) and **adambhitvam** (absence of pretension), are hallmarks of the wise as listed in the Bhagavad Gītā. The truly wise do not demand respect from others nor do they display ostentation.

Ahiṃsā: True Non-Violence

The Bhagavad Gītā elaborates further on these characteristics, including **ahiṃsā** (non-violence), which transcends a simplistic understanding. **Ahiṃsā** is not mere passivity or the avoidance of harm, but rather a commitment to the welfare of all beings. It involves using one's body, mind, and speech for the betterment of the world. In certain contexts, acts of force may align with ahiṃsā if they serve a higher purpose or protect others. For instance, a soldier defending their nation or a judge sentencing a criminal is performing their duty with the welfare of society in mind. The Gītā underscores that such actions, when performed with righteousness, align with the principles of ahiṃsā.

The Life of Jnaneshwar Maharaj

The life of Jnaneshwar Maharaj provides further inspiration. Despite facing ostracism and cruelty from society, he never expressed bitterness or regret. Instead, he demonstrated humility and unwavering devotion to his guru. His magnum opus, Jnaneshwari, was a testament to his dedication, offered entirely at the feet of his guru with the words"

किंबहुना तुमचें केलें । धर्मकीर्तन हें सिद्धी नेलें ।

येथ माझे जी उरलें । पाईकपण ॥ १७९२ ॥"

In short, this song of righteousness has been completed with your help, and all that remains for me is to serve you.

(You have perfected this endeavor; I simply offer it at your feet).

Reverence for the Teacher (ācāryopāsanam)

Another essential quality of the wise is **ācāryopāsanam** (reverence for the teacher). This involves sitting close to the teacher, listening attentively, and imbibing their teachings. Purity (**śaucam**)—both external and internal—reflects in their character, as does the strength of self-restraint (**ātma-vinigrahaḥ**). Such individuals also embody **ananya-bhakti** (undivided devotion), which the Gītā describes as "**māyī ca ananya-yogena bhaktiravyabhichāriṇī**" (13.11). This devotion is exclusive and unflinching, focusing solely on the divine without distraction by material desires.

Ananya-Bhakti: Devotion to the Divine

Ananya-bhakti can be compared to the longing of a child for their mother. While toys may momentarily distract the child, they ultimately seek the comfort of their mother's presence. Similarly,

a true devotee desires nothing but the divine, foregoing worldly pleasures or material gains.

Solitude and Moderation in the Life of the Wise

The wise are also described as **vivikta-sevī** (those who enjoy solitude) and **laghvāśī** (those who practice moderation in consumption). They periodically retreat from the distractions of the world to engage in deep contemplation and connect with the divine. This solitude fosters inner transformation. However, when they do interact with others, they seek the company of like-minded individuals, valuing satsanga (association with the virtuous) as a vital tool for spiritual progress.

Balancing Solitude and Social Interaction

As Ramdas Swami remarked, alternating between solitude (**ekaṅta**) and social interaction (**lokānta**) is a balanced way to live. During social interactions, staying connected to virtuous company helps maintain focus on the spiritual path.

The Pursuit of Wisdom and Self-Realization

The pursuit of wisdom leads to an intense yearning for self-realization, as described in the Gītā. This yearning manifests as a deep, almost restless longing for the ultimate truth. This **trṣṇā** (thirst) for the eternal propels the wise towards enlightenment, allowing them to transcend the mundane and attain the supreme knowledge of the self. The Gītā highlights these qualities in its discussion on the path of the wise, showing how they culminate in spiritual liberation.

13.11

**adhyātmajñānanityatvaṃ(n), tattvajñānārthadarśanam,
etajjñānamiti proktam, ajñānaṃ(m) yadato'nyathā. 13.11**

Constancy, in Self-knowledge and seeing God everywhere as the object of true knowledge—all this is declared to be knowledge, and what is contrary to it, is called ignorance.

This verse emphasizes the supremacy of self-realization in understanding the true nature of existence. The ultimate goal is to attain **Ādhyātma-jñāna**, a profound awareness of the eternal **Ātman** (soul), which transcends the temporary material world. The Gītā instructs that true knowledge begins with understanding the eternal truth of the self. Without this self-awareness, no external solutions can resolve life's problems.

Samarth Ramdas Swami ji in Dasabodha says:

पहावे आपणासि आपण । या नाव ज्ञान ॥०५-०६-०१॥

Essence: Knowledge is self-knowledge. Seeing ourselves, recognizing our true nature is knowledge. The knowledge that Sadgurus give to ordinary people to save them from the ocean of worldly life is self-knowledge.

The True Meaning of Spiritual Knowledge

The term **Ādhyātma** derives from "Adhi," meaning inward, and **Ātma**, referring to the self. Spiritual knowledge, therefore, is not about external practices or the accumulation of texts, but about an inward journey toward understanding one's true nature. **Ādhyātma-jñāna** refers to the knowledge of the self—the realization of one's true identity beyond the physical body and mind.

The verse highlights the timeless and constant nature of **Ādhyātma-jñāna**. True spiritual knowledge remains stable and unwavering. It is the recognition of one's identity with the eternal Ātman, beyond the transient material world. In this state, the individual's identity transcends the ego, and they no

longer live merely as a body, but as the eternal self, realizing their true nature.

The Importance of Self-Realization

The Gītā emphasizes that the realization of the **Ātman** is the most crucial aspect of spiritual life. Until one understands their true nature—who they really are—they remain lost in the cycle of worldly attachments, constantly seeking fulfillment in material pursuits. Only by recognizing the eternal self can one achieve lasting peace and resolution of all personal struggles. The life of Raman Maharshi stands as an exemplary model of this profound wisdom, famously stating, "Who am I?" as the key to self-realization.

This pursuit of self-awareness is not confined to merely reading sacred scriptures or practicing rituals. It involves the inner journey of entering into the self, the direct experience of one's true nature. This is what is meant by **Ādhyātma-jñāna**, a continual awareness of the self, which is not lost amidst the distractions of daily life.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji says:

आपला आपणपेयां । विसरु जो धनंजया ।
तेचि रूप यया । अज्ञानासी ॥ ७१ ॥

It is called ignorance because through it arises that forgetfulness of our true nature as the Self, O' conqueror of wealth.

The Illusion of External Knowledge

The Bhagavad Gītā also addresses the limitation of acquiring external knowledge. **Tattva-jñāna** refers to the knowledge of the eternal truth—the understanding of the divine essence. The Gītā stresses that knowledge of the world or the material realm, though valuable, is secondary to the knowledge of the eternal self. It reminds us that despite gaining all knowledge about the world, one can still remain ignorant of their true self. This ignorance, or **Ajnana**, is the root cause of human suffering.

The Gītā presents the idea that most individuals live their lives caught in the web of worldly pursuits. They chase external achievements and distractions, but they neglect the essential task of understanding their true self. Just as a student may focus on various questions in an exam but neglect the mandatory first question, people often get caught up in life's material endeavors and fail to confront the question of their own identity. This neglect of **Ātman**-realization is considered ignorance by the Gītā.

The Restlessness of Material Success

An example is given of a successful businessman who had attained great wealth and achieved numerous accomplishments. Yet, despite all his material success, he felt a profound emptiness within. He had everything one could desire in terms of material wealth and achievements, but he could not find peace or fulfillment. This existential restlessness stemmed from the absence of self-realization—he had not addressed the question of who he truly was.

This dissatisfaction is a common experience when individuals focus on external achievements without understanding their deeper spiritual nature. The Gītā emphasizes that without realizing the eternal self, all other accomplishments remain hollow, leaving a void in one's heart.

The Compulsory Question of Self-Knowledge

In the Gītā, the realization of the self is treated as a compulsory question, a fundamental and essential task. Just as an exam has a compulsory question that must be answered, self-realization is

the indispensable question that must be addressed in life. The Gītā warns that without addressing this, all other aspects of life remain incomplete.

The verse also mentions that those who remain unaware of their **Ātman** live their lives in **Ajnana** (ignorance), failing to recognize the eternal truth that lies within. The Gītā emphasizes that this ignorance is the root of all suffering. Until one becomes aware of their immortal self, they will remain trapped in the cycle of birth, death, and suffering.

The Path to Liberation through Self-Realization

The Bhagavad Gītā presents the realization of the **Ātman** as the key to spiritual liberation. This knowledge, or **Tattva-jñāna**, is not about external achievements, but the internal realization of one's divine essence. By recognizing that one is not merely the body or mind but the eternal soul, a person achieves freedom from the illusions of the material world.

Thus, **Ādhyātma-jñāna** is the foundation of all spiritual practices. It is the true knowledge that liberates the soul from worldly attachments and leads to inner peace. The Gītā teaches that only by understanding the Ātman can one transcend the limitations of the material world and attain lasting joy and freedom.

The verse concludes by affirming that knowledge of the **Ātman** is the highest form of wisdom, the most essential knowledge that must be sought. All other forms of knowledge, while important, pale in comparison to this realization. **The Gītā urges every individual to prioritize self-knowledge, for it is the key to solving the existential dilemmas of life.**

13.12

**jñeyaṃ(m) yattatpraVākṣyāmi, yajjñātvāmṛtamaśnute,
anādimatparaṃ(m) brahma, na sattannāsaducyate. 13.12**

I shall speak to you at length about which ought to be known, and knowing which one attains Supreme Bliss. That supreme Brahma, who is the lord of the (two) beginningless entities - (Prakṛti and Jiva) is said to be neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being)

This verse speaks of the essence of **jñeya**—that which is to be known. It declares that by knowing this truth, one attains immortality (**amṛtatva**). The term **jñeya** signifies not only what is worth knowing but also what can be known through effort and realization.

The knowledge referred to here is not merely intellectual or worldly but experiential and transformative. By attaining this understanding, one transcends the fear of death and realizes their eternal nature. This is the state of amṛtam aśnute—a blissful immortality where one identifies with the undying essence of existence.

This immortality does not imply physical continuity but the profound realization of one's indestructible essence. It is a state where the soul (**ātman**) becomes free from the limitations of the body and mind, and fear of mortality dissolves entirely. As illustrated in the tale of King Parikshit, who overcame his fear of death upon imbibing the wisdom of the Bhagavata Purana, the realization of one's eternal self leads to unshakable peace.

The verse continues to describe this supreme reality, the **parambrahmā**, as **anādimat**—without beginning. Unlike things that have a beginning and are bound to have an end, this ultimate truth is eternal and infinite. It transcends time and space, existing beyond the realms of creation and destruction.

The nature of this brahman is unique:

- It is described as na sat tan na asat—neither existence (**sat**) in the conventional sense nor non-existence (**asat**).
- This means it is beyond dualities, encompassing both existence and non-existence. It cannot be confined to material forms or formless voids but pervades all.

To comprehend this truth, one must embark on the journey of spiritual inquiry. The realization of this brahmān grants a state of supreme bliss and contentment that transcends all worldly pleasures. Physical desires, sensory indulgences, and material pursuits have limits—they can only satisfy for a while, after which they leave one yearning for more. However, the attainment of **amṛtatva** (immortality) brings ultimate fulfillment, where no longing remains. This **amṛtatva** is the state of **paramānanda**—supreme bliss. It is not derived from external experiences but arises from the inner realization of one's eternal and infinite nature.

The path to this realization begins with understanding the field (**kṣetra**) and the knower of the field (**kṣetrajña**), as explained earlier in the Gītā. Once the seeker comprehends their true self as distinct from the body and mind, they are guided to the higher knowledge of **parambrahmā**.

The **parambrahmā** is described as formless and eternal (**anādi nirākāra**). It is the substratum of all existence, the ultimate reality that underlies the physical and metaphysical realms. This truth is accessible to human understanding through devotion (**bhakti**), knowledge (**jñāna**), and meditation (**dhyāna**).

The process of realizing this truth must be initiated at some point in life. The human experience offers a rare opportunity to seek the ultimate reality. By recognizing this, one begins the journey toward self-realization and the discovery of their infinite, indestructible nature.

This verse urges one to direct their efforts toward the knowledge of jñeya, the eternal and all-encompassing truth. It is by knowing this truth that one achieves liberation from fear, fulfillment beyond material satisfaction, and the bliss of realizing one's immortal essence. This knowledge is the ultimate purpose of life, guiding the seeker to transcend all limitations and align with the eternal brahmān.

13.13

**sarvataḥ(ph) pāṇipādaṃ(n) tat, sarvato'kṣīsiromukham,
sarvataḥ(ś) śrutimalloke, sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati. 13.13**

It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth in all directions, and ears all around; for it stands pervading all in the universe.

This verse explains that the Supreme Being has hands and feet everywhere (**sarvataḥ pāṇipādam**), eyes, heads, and faces in all directions (**sarvato'kṣīsiromukham**), and ears everywhere (**sarvataḥ śrutimalloke**). The Divine pervades all existence, encompassing and transcending all creation (**sarvamāvṛtya tiṣṭhati**).

The Universal Presence of the Divine

The essence of this teaching is that the Supreme Consciousness is present in every being and permeates everything in the universe. The reference to "**hands and feet everywhere**" symbolizes that all actions performed in the world are ultimately carried out by this universal power. Similarly, the eyes, ears, and mouths represent the divine seeing, hearing, and speaking through all beings.

This idea reflects the understanding that every individual, every action, and every part of creation is an expression of the same divine essence. The hands and feet of all are essentially His; the eyes through which one sees and the ears through which one hears are also manifestations of the same omnipresent reality.

The Metaphor of the Pot and the Ocean

This concept can be compared to the relationship between pots and the ocean. If pots are immersed in the ocean, the water within the pots is the same as the water outside them. Similarly, the Divine exists both within every being and beyond all beings, inseparable and all-encompassing. This analogy emphasizes that the parambrahmā (Supreme Reality) is both immanent and transcendent. It is the substratum of all existence, present in every form and formlessness.

Saguna and Nirguna Aspects

The verse also highlights the dual nature of the Divine:

- As **saguna** (with attributes), the Divine manifests in the form of deities and physical expressions.
- As **nirguna** (without attributes), it remains formless and infinite.

Both aspects coexist harmoniously. For instance, in the Kailash caves, sculptures of deities like Shiva and Parvati carved out of the mountain are still part of the mountain itself. Similarly, all forms are expressions of the formless Divine.

देव देऊळ परिवारु। की जे कोरूनि डोंगरु।

ऐसा भक्तीचा व्यवहारू का न व्हावा।।'

Saint Dnyaneshwar, while seeing these idols and sculptures, while describing Advaita in his Amritanubhava, said, 'the Divine is a family of temples. Or a mountain. Why should such a practice of devotion not be practiced.' If there are deities, temples, and families of devotees in the same mountain, then why should there be no Advaita in the Supreme Divine and devotees? For this reason, it is called 'the simile of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji'.

A Conscious Energy

The Divine is not just an inert energy like electricity but a conscious, all-knowing force. While electricity is powerful, it lacks awareness. The brahmān, on the other hand, is pure consciousness, the underlying intelligence of the universe. It knows and responds, present everywhere and in everything.

The Realization of Saints and Seekers

Enlightened beings perceive this divine essence in all. They see no distinction between themselves and others because their awareness transcends the physical body. Their spiritual vision, like a "super X-ray," penetrates beyond the surface to recognize the underlying unity.

A profound example of this perspective is seen in the life of RamaKrishna Paramahansa. When suffering from cancer, he continued to experience oneness with the Divine. Despite physical pain, he saw no separation between himself and others. When his disciples, like Swami Vivekananda, expressed sorrow over his condition, he reassured them, stating that he had already merged his consciousness with the Divine. To him, eating, experiencing, and existing were not confined to his body—he perceived the same Divine eating through others and living in all beings.

This realization is what dissolves the duality between the self and the universe. It is the understanding that the **nirguna** (formless Divine) operates through **saguna** (manifest forms) and that all actions, all sights, and all sounds are expressions of the same cosmic consciousness.

The All-Pervasive Nature of the Divine

The verse concludes by reaffirming that the Divine pervades all existence, acting, observing, and hearing through every being. This teaching invites seekers to rise above the illusion of separateness and recognize the unity of all creation. The journey toward this realization involves transcending the physical and identifying with the eternal brahman that dwells in all.

By understanding this truth, **one attains a state of harmony and fearlessness, where distinctions between "self" and "other" dissolve, and the seeker experiences the infinite, all-encompassing presence of the Divine. This awareness is the essence of spiritual wisdom, guiding one toward liberation and ultimate bliss.**

13.14

**sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṃ(m), sarvendriyavivarjitam,
asaktaṃ(m) sarvabhṛccaiva, nirguṇaṃ(ñ) guṇabhoktṛ ca. 13.14**

Through perceiving all sense objects, it is really speaking devoid of all senses. Nay, though unattached, It is the sustainer of all nonetheless; and though attributeless, It is the enjoyer of Guṇas, the three modes of Prakṛti.

This verse reveals the paradoxical nature of the Divine: It illuminates all the qualities of the senses (**sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṃ**), yet it is independent of them (**sarvendriyavivarjitam**). It is unattached (**asaktaṃ**), sustains all (**sarvabhṛt**), is beyond all qualities (**nirguṇaṃ**), and yet experiences them (**guṇabhoktṛ ca**).

The Supreme: Beyond and Within All Senses

The Supreme Being is described as knowing the functions of all senses—sight, sound, touch, and more—without needing the senses themselves. It is the ultimate knower, perceiving and understanding without relying on physical faculties. This inherent awareness makes the Divine distinct from any entity limited by sensory perception.

An analogy can be drawn to the sun and the moon, which universally share their light and coolness with all, without discrimination. Similarly, the parambrahmā (Supreme Reality) exists equally for all beings, transcending distinctions of good and bad, rich and poor, or high and low.

The Nurturer of All

The Divine is the sustainer of creation (**sarvabhṛt**), nourishing and upholding every aspect of the universe. This nurturing is impartial and constant, providing for all without attachment. It reflects the perfect balance of being deeply involved in creation while remaining unbound by it.

Nirguna and Gunabhoktṛ: The Paradox of Form and Formlessness

Although the Supreme is nirguna (beyond all qualities), it partakes in the experiences of the material world (**guṇabhoktṛ**). Creation, being composed of the three gunas (qualities) of **Prakṛti—sattva, rajas, and tamas**—is sustained and experienced through the Divine. The material manifestation, with its endless diversity, is an expression of the same formless essence.

This interplay between the formless and the manifest is beautifully expressed in the analogy of rivers merging into the ocean. Rivers, distinct as they are, become one with the ocean upon merging, yet their connection to the ocean remains eternal. Similarly, the Divine, though formless, assumes form to interact with creation, while still retaining its essence as the infinite, formless Reality.

Saguna and Nirguna Worship

The teachings emphasize that both **saguna** (worship of the Divine in form) and **nirguna** (worship of the formless Divine) are valid paths to realize the ultimate truth. While the formless Divine may be intellectually understood as infinite and absolute, the embodied form makes it accessible and relatable for human worship.

Men of wisdom say:

सगुण निर्गुण दोन्ही ज्याची अंगे |
तोचि आम्हा संगे क्रीडा करी ||

This is exemplified by saints and sages who, despite attaining the realization of the formless, continue to worship the saguna aspect. For instance, Swami Vivekananda revered deities despite his profound realization of the formless truth. Jnaneshwar Maharaj, too, practiced devotion to Vitthala in form. Ramana Maharshi taught self-inquiry but acknowledged the importance of idol worship as a means of maintaining spiritual connection while in the body.

The continuity of this connection is likened to maintaining potential in an electrical system—essential for sustaining energy flow. Similarly, devotion to the saguna form helps retain the link between the seeker and the Divine.

The Equanimity of the Supreme

The Supreme sees no difference between good and bad, pleasure and pain, or form and formlessness. This neutrality challenges individuals to transcend dualities and recognize the Divine in all. Worshipping only the “good” or rejecting the “bad” creates an incomplete understanding. The Divine encompasses both.

The formless Supreme pervades even idols, as the body itself is a manifestation of form. The interplay of form and formlessness reveals that the parambrahmā is equally present in both aspects.

Resolving Conflicts in Worship

A common **question arises: which is superior—saguna or nirguna worship?** The resolution lies in understanding that the Supreme is both. **The nirguna aspect has the power to manifest as saguna, and the saguna aspect retains the essence of the nirguna.** Acknowledging this unity eliminates conflict between the two approaches. Devotees are encouraged to pursue the path that aligns with their nature, without rejecting others’ paths. Just as a chemist offers various medicines for different ailments, spiritual practices cater to individual inclinations. Recognizing this diversity fosters harmony and respect for all forms of worship.

The Ultimate Truth

The teachings conclude that the Divine is beyond all labels and limitations. **It is the one reality that sustains, pervades, and transcends all existence. To realize this truth, one must rise above dualities, honor all forms of devotion, and recognize the universal presence of the Supreme in every aspect of life.**

By embracing this understanding, individuals can move closer to liberation, experiencing the infinite and eternal nature of the Divine both within and beyond themselves.

bahirantaśca bhūtānām, acaraṃ(ñ) carameva ca, sūkṣmatvāttadavijñeyaṃ(n), dūrasthaṃ(ñ) cāntike ca tat. 13.15

He exists, without and within, all beings and constitutes the moving and the unmoving creation as well. And by reason of its subtlety, it is incomprehensible. It is close at hand and stands afar, too.

This verse highlights the paradoxical qualities of the Supreme Reality, which exists both within and outside all beings (**bahirantaśca bhūtānām**), in the moving and the immovable (**acaraṃ carameva ca**). Its subtlety makes it incomprehensible (**sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṃ**), and it is simultaneously far and near (**dūrasthaṃ cāntike ca tat**).

Omnipresence in the Moving and the Still

The Divine permeates all that is dynamic and still, encompassing the entire spectrum of existence. It is present in the visible and the invisible, in the tangible and the intangible. Just as atoms—comprising electrons, protons, and neutrons—form the foundation of physical objects, the Supreme is the underlying consciousness that animates all forms of life.

In the material world, even seemingly inert objects exhibit motion at a microscopic level. For instance, electrons orbiting the nucleus in an atom create a dynamic interplay within matter. Similarly, the Divine operates in all aspects of creation, whether manifest or subtle.

Subtlety and Vastness

The Supreme Reality is described as being extremely subtle (**sūkṣmatvāt**), making it difficult to perceive or comprehend. The subtler an entity, the more pervasive it becomes. For example, ice occupies a fixed space, water flows more freely, and vapor disperses even further, becoming all-pervasive. Likewise, the more refined the nature of existence, the greater its capacity to pervade all things.

The Divine is both gross and subtle, encompassing all levels of existence while transcending them. This duality allows the Supreme to operate seamlessly within and beyond creation, connecting the finite with the infinite.

Near and Far

The Divine is described as both far away (**dūrasthaṃ**) and close (**cāntike**). Its vastness makes it seem distant, yet its intimate presence within every being brings it near. This unique characteristic reflects its ability to be both immanent and transcendent.

For example, electricity powers numerous gadgets and equipment without being seen. Its presence is inferred through its effects, just as the **Chaitanya Tatva** (consciousness) operates invisibly yet pervades all life.

The Reflection of Consciousness

The relationship between the Divine and the individual soul is likened to the reflection of the sun in multiple water pots. If the water in a pot evaporates or the pot breaks, the reflection disappears, but the sun itself remains unchanged. Similarly, **the Chaitanya Tatva within each being is a reflection of the Supreme Consciousness**. When a being ceases to exist, the reflection vanishes, but the Supreme remains intact.

In this context, the Supreme is referred to as the **Kṣetrajña** (knower of the field), present as the eternal observer in all beings. Even though the forms may perish, the essence of the Divine remains undisturbed.

Dnyaneshwar Maharajji beautifully expresses it:

कां पूर्ण कुंभ उलंडला । तेथ बिंबाकारु दिसे भ्रंशला ।
परी भानु नाही नासला । तयासवें ॥ १४१ ॥

or as when a pot full of water is turned upside down, the surface can no longer reflect the sun; but nevertheless the sun is not destroyed with the reflection.

Unity Amidst Diversity

The analogy of multiple pots filled with water and reflecting the moon illustrates the indivisibility of the Divine. The moon's reflection may appear in numerous vessels, but the moon itself remains singular and unaffected by the condition of the pots. Similarly, the Divine pervades all beings, yet remains indivisible and unaltered.

This is expressed in the Sanskrit term **avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu**—the Divine, though appearing divided among beings, is in truth undivided. The reflections may vary based on the medium, but the original source remains constant.

The Pervasive Nature of the Divine

The Supreme is the foundation of all creation, pervading every atom and every being. Its subtlety enables it to exist in the smallest particle, while its vastness allows it to encompass the entire cosmos. It is this paradoxical nature that makes the Divine both elusive and all-encompassing.

By understanding the pervasive and unified presence of the Supreme, one gains insight into the eternal truth. The Divine exists as the essence within and beyond creation, making it the ultimate source of all existence. This realization dissolves the apparent duality of life, enabling one to experience the infinite presence of the param brahma in every aspect of existence.

13.16

**avibhaktam(ñ) ca bhūteṣu, vibhaktamiva ca sthitam,
bhūtabhartṛ ca tajjñeyaṃ(ñ), grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca. 13.16**

Though integral like space in its undivided aspect, it appears divided as it were, in all animate and all inanimate beings. And the Godhead, which is the only object worth knowing, is the sustainer of beings (as Viṣṇu), the destroyer (as Rudra) and the creator of all (as Brahma).

The Supreme Consciousness is described as both indivisible and seemingly divided, embodying the essence of creation, sustenance, and dissolution.

Indivisibility Amidst Perceived Division

The Supreme Being (**avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu**) is inherently indivisible, yet it appears divided within the myriad forms of creation (**vibhaktam iva ca sthitam**). This paradox arises from the perception of individuality caused by the external forms of beings. For example, water in different pots may appear separate, but when the pots are broken, the water merges and reveals its underlying unity. Similarly, the Supreme Consciousness resides in all living and non-living entities, but its true nature remains singular and undivided.

Just as space exists in a pot, a room, and the vast sky, it appears fragmented due to the boundaries of the pot or walls of the room. Yet, in reality, space is one and indivisible. In the same way, the Supreme Consciousness, though present in every being, is not inherently divided—it only appears so because of the physical forms and limitations of perception.

The Threefold Role of the Supreme

The Supreme performs three fundamental functions in creation, each represented by a specific aspect:

- 1. **Bhūtabhartṛ (The Sustainer)**: The Supreme nourishes and sustains all beings in its form as Vishnu. This nurturing role ensures the balance and continuity of life, providing the support required for existence.
- 2. **Grasiṣṇu** (The Dissolver): The aspect of Rudra (Shiva) represents the dissolution or destruction of forms. This function is crucial for transformation and renewal, allowing for the cyclical nature of existence.
- 3. **Prabhaviṣṇu** (The Creator): In its creative role, the Supreme manifests as Brahmā, bringing forth new forms and initiating the process of life.

These three functions—creation, sustenance, and dissolution—reflect the interplay of Trigunatmaka (the three fundamental qualities of nature: sattva, rajas, and tamas) within the infinite, formless Supreme Reality. The roles of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Shiva embody these principles, making the formless and boundless Supreme comprehensible through relatable forms.

Unity Within Diversity

The perceived division of the Supreme in individual beings arises from the limitations of form, much like the reflections of the moon in multiple pots of water. Though the reflections appear distinct, the moon itself remains unchanged. When the pots break, the reflections vanish, but the moon remains as it is. Similarly, the Supreme Consciousness, though reflected uniquely in each being, remains untouched and unaltered by the death or destruction of individual forms.

This indivisible nature (**avibhaktam**) of the Supreme is described as appearing divided (**vibhaktam iva**), emphasizing the illusory nature of separation. The Divine essence pervades all beings, sustaining and governing them while remaining beyond division or fragmentation.

Journey from External to Internal Realization

The understanding of this indivisible essence requires an inward journey. While external pilgrimages (**tirtha yatra**) may provide merit, the true peace and realization of the Self (**atmik shanti**) arise through introspection and self-discovery (**antar yatra**). This inward journey reveals the eternal truth of the Supreme within, eliminating the need for external searching.

This concept is beautifully echoed in the poetic wisdom of saints, where the Supreme is said to be present within oneself, not in distant places or external symbols. The realization that the Divine resides within makes the pursuit of the Supreme a deeply personal and internal process.

Sant Kabir Das ji says:

मोको कहां ढूँढे रे बन्दे
मैं तो तेरे पास में
ना तीरथ मे ना मूरत में
ना एकान्त निवास में
ना मंदिर में ना मस्जिद में
ना काबे कैलास में
मैं तो तेरे पास में बन्दे
मैं तो तेरे पास में
ना मैं जप में ना मैं तप में

ना मैं बरत उपास में
ना मैं किरिया करम में रहता
नहिं जोग सन्यास में
नहिं प्राण में नहिं पिंड में
ना ब्रह्माण्ड आकाश में
ना मैं प्रकृति प्रवार गुफा में
नहिं स्वांसों की स्वांस में
खोजि होए तुरत मिल जाउं
इक पल की तालास में
कहत कबीर सुनो भई साधो
मैं तो हूं विश्वास में

Essence:

Where are you looking for me friend? I am next to you
I do not exist in places of pilgrimage, in idols or in hermitages
Neither in the temples, nor in the mosques, nor in Kaba and in Kailasa
Where are you looking for me friend? I am next to you
I am not in prayer, nor in asceticism. I am not in the binding fasting
Nor am I in the rituals of ceremonies, nor in yoga and renunciation
Where are you looking for me friend? I am next to you
Neither in the vital energy, nor in the body, nor in the ether of the universe
I am not in the rotating cave of nature,4 in the breath of all the breaths
Where are you looking for me friend? I am next to you
The one who is looking for me, I will meet him right away in a moment of search
Listen o' saintly brother, Kabir says I exist in faith
Where are you looking for me friend? I am next to you

Or as a Marathi bhakti Geet goes:

कुठे शोधिशी रामेश्वर अन कुठे शोधिशी काशी,
हृदयातील भगवंत राहिला हृदयातुन उपाशी

Essence: Why search HIS presence in holy places while the Divine residing within is left unattended.

Transcendence of the Supreme

The Supreme Consciousness transcends all boundaries and limitations, existing as both the essence and the enabler of creation, sustenance, and dissolution. It is present in every being, yet it is beyond them all. Its presence is evident in the cycle of life and death, in the nourishment of all creatures, and in the infinite continuity of existence. By recognizing the Supreme's indivisibility amidst apparent diversity, one transcends the illusions of separation and perceives the eternal unity that pervades all. This understanding leads to the ultimate realization of the Self as one with the infinite, formless Supreme Reality.

13.17

**jyotiṣāmapī tajjyotiḥ(s), tamaśaḥ(ph) paramucyate,
jñānaṃ(ñ) jñeyamaṃ(ñ) jñānagamyamaṃ(m), hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam. 13.17**

That supreme Brahma is said to be the light of all lights, and entirely beyond Maya. That Godhead is knowledge itself, worth knowing and worth attaining through real wisdom, and is particularly abiding in the hearts of all.

The Supreme Being is described as the ultimate source of illumination, transcending all darkness and ignorance, residing in the heart of every being.

The Light Beyond Lights

The Supreme is the ultimate light (**jyotiṣāmapi tajjyotiḥ**), far surpassing any physical light, whether it be the flame of a lamp or the brilliance of electricity. It is not dependent on any external source of illumination. It is the light that dispels not just physical darkness but the deeper darkness of ignorance (**tamaśaḥ paramucyate**). This transcendental light is the essence that reveals truth and wisdom.

Unlike external light, which aids in perceiving the external world, this inner illumination enables self-realization. It is the light of awareness, the foundation of all knowledge, and the essence of consciousness. It resides beyond ignorance (**tamas**), making it eternal and supreme.

The Triad of Knowledge

The Supreme is described as threefold:

- 1. **Jñānam (Knowledge)**: It is the means of knowing, the very essence of wisdom and understanding.
- 2. **Jñeyam (The Object of Knowledge)**: It is that which is to be known, the ultimate truth and the essence of all existence.
- 3. **Jñānagamyam (The Goal of Knowledge)**: It is the destination of all knowledge, the realization of the ultimate reality.

This triad reflects the unity of the knower (**jñātā**), the object to be known (**jñeya**), and the act of knowing (**jñānam**). When these three merge, the realization of the Supreme is achieved. Just as experiencing the sweetness of a dessert unites the eater, the dessert, and the act of eating, understanding the Supreme unites the seeker, the sought, and the process of seeking.

The Universal Presence

The Supreme resides in the hearts of all beings (**hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam**). It is the inner essence that permeates every individual, irrespective of distinctions such as caste, creed, nationality, or status. There are no boundaries to its presence; it is universal and impartial.

This essence is repeatedly emphasized throughout the Bhagavad Gītā. For instance:

- In Chapter 15, it is described as the soul within every living entity: **sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ** (I am seated in everyone's heart).
- In Chapter 10, it is declared as the indwelling Self: **aham ātmā guḍākeśaḥ sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ** (I am the soul residing in the hearts of all beings).

Inner Light vs. Outer Light

To understand the Supreme, external illumination is not required. The light that reveals the outer world—whether a lamp or electricity—can only show external objects. When such light disappears, as in darkness, the external world is hidden. However, self-awareness remains unaffected. The knowledge of one's own existence does not rely on external light. It is illuminated by the inner light of consciousness, which is eternal and self-sufficient. This inner light—the **atmanjyoti**—is the spark of divinity within. It is through this inner illumination that one can realize the essence of the Supreme.

External light may reveal the world, but the inner light reveals the self. This self-awareness is the starting point of the inward journey toward the realization of the Supreme.

The Path to Realization

The journey to realizing the Supreme requires igniting the inner lamp of knowledge. This is not merely intellectual knowledge but experiential wisdom that transcends physical and mental realms. It is this inner awakening that dispels the darkness of ignorance and reveals the ultimate truth. The heart becomes the seat of this realization, where the seeker finds the divine essence within. This inward journey is not constrained by physical travel or external rituals. It is the realization that the Supreme has always been present within, waiting to be discovered.

13.18

**iti kṣetraṃ(n) tathā jñānaṃ(ñ), jñeyaṃ(ñ) coktaṃ(m) samāsataḥ,
madbhakta etadvijñāya, madbhāvāyopapadyate. 13.18**

Thus the truth of the kṣetra (body) and knowledge, as well as of the object worth knowing, ie., God, has been briefly described; and knowing this in reality, My devotee attains to My being.

The nature of the **kṣetra** (field, or body), **jñāna** (knowledge), and **jñeya** (the object of knowledge, or the Supreme) is summarized, emphasizing the transformative power of this understanding.

The Essence of Knowledge

The verse encapsulates the intricate relationships between the **kṣetra**, **jñāna**, and **jñeya**. The kṣetra, which represents the body, encompasses both the physical and mental aspects of existence. It is transient, subject to change, and characterized by modifications (**vikāra**). Alongside it, **kṣetrajña**, the knower of the field, remains constant and aware. This understanding is not limited to theoretical knowledge but extends to **jñāna**, the awareness of what is to be realized. Finally, **jñeya** signifies the ultimate truth worth knowing: the Supreme Being.

These aspects have been described concisely (**samāsataḥ**), providing a framework for understanding the nature of existence and its connection to the divine.

From Knowledge to Realization

The understanding of the **kṣetra** and **kṣetrajña**, when accompanied by the realization of jñeya, leads to a profound transformation. This process goes beyond intellectual comprehension, much like the difference between knowing about the sweetness of a dessert and actually tasting it. The theoretical awareness of the Supreme evolves into experiential wisdom, transforming the seeker.

This realization culminates in attaining the essence of the Supreme (**madbhāvāyopapadyate**). The devotee who truly comprehends these truths becomes one with the divine nature, embodying the qualities of the Supreme Being.

The Supreme Nature: Sat-Chit-Ānanda

The Supreme is described as having the nature of **sat** (eternal existence), **chit** (absolute consciousness), and **ānanda** (infinite bliss):

- **Sat** (Existence): The Supreme is eternal and unchanging. Unlike the transient physical world, it is ever-present and cannot be negated.
- **Chit** (Consciousness): The Supreme embodies limitless knowledge and awareness, illuminating all aspects of existence.
- **Ānanda** (Bliss): The Supreme is the source of infinite, unbroken joy—a bliss that transcends all worldly pleasures and sorrows.

Through realization, the devotee aligns with this divine nature, achieving a state of **sat-chit-ānanda**.

Liberation Through Devotion

By understanding the **kṣetra**, **jñāna**, and **jñeya**, the devotee attains liberation, transcending the sorrow of the material world. Immersed in the Supreme, the realized soul experiences a bliss that no worldly suffering can disturb. This state of divine unity ensures that the cycles of grief and joy tied to the material world no longer affect the individual.

The journey of self-discovery leads to the realization that the Supreme is not an external entity to be worshipped merely in an idol form. While idol worship serves as a focal point of devotion, the true essence of the Supreme lies in its eternal, conscious, and blissful nature. This realization bridges the gap between the external and internal, guiding the seeker toward ultimate fulfillment.

Beyond Worldly Sorrow

Once the devotee attains this state of divine realization, worldly sorrow can no longer overwhelm them. Anchored in the Supreme, the soul remains unaffected by the fleeting challenges of existence. This unshakable state of peace and joy becomes the hallmark of liberation.

Through this verse, the path to divine realization is laid bare, highlighting the transformative power of understanding, devotion, and experiential knowledge in attaining unity with the Supreme.

13.19

**prakṛtiṃ(m) puruṣaṃ(ñ) caiva, vidyanādi ubhāvapi,
vikāraṃśca guṇaṃścaiva, viddhi prakṛtisaṃbhavān. 13.19**

Prakṛti (matter) and Puruṣa (Spirit), know both these as beginningless. And know all modifications such as likes and dislikes etc., and all objects constituted of the three Guṇas as born of Prakṛti.

The relationship between **prakṛti** (nature) and **puruṣa** (consciousness) is elaborated upon, highlighting their eternal nature and distinct roles in the functioning of the universe.

Understanding Prakṛti and Puruṣa

Here, **prakṛti** and **puruṣa** are described as **anādi** (beginningless). This implies that they are both eternal and without origin, forming the foundational principles of existence. However, **prakṛti** and **puruṣa** should not be interpreted in a narrow sense as merely the physical male and female. Instead, they represent the dynamic and passive aspects of reality, respectively:

- **Prakṛti** represents the material aspect of existence. It encompasses all physical elements, the field of activity, and the **vikāras** (modifications or transformations) within creation.
- **Puruṣa**, on the other hand, is the conscious principle—the unchanging witness residing within the **kṣetra** (the body or field). This conscious essence (**Chaitanya**) is described as **avikāri** (unchanging), contrasting with the mutable nature of **prakṛti**.

Interplay Between Prakṛti and Puruṣa

While both **prakṛti** and **puruṣa** are eternal, they differ fundamentally in their characteristics. **Prakṛti** is dynamic and responsible for all activity, modifications, and the **guṇas** (qualities: **sattva**, **rajas**, and **tamas**). Conversely, **puruṣa** remains a silent observer, providing the consciousness that animates and enlivens **prakṛti**. Together, their interplay results in the functioning of the universe. The **puruṣa** resides within the **kṣetra**, offering awareness, while **prakṛti** facilitates all action and change. Without this synergy, the cosmic processes would cease.

Prakṛti: The Source of Modifications

The verse emphasizes that all **vikāras** (transformations or defects) and qualities emerge from

prakṛti. This includes the three **guṇas**—**sattva** (goodness and balance), **rajas** (activity and desire), and **tamas** (ignorance and inertia)—which form the foundation of all material phenomena. These qualities bind the soul to the material realm, creating cycles of actions and consequences. However, **puruṣa** remains unaffected by these modifications. It is the unchanging, eternal consciousness that observes but does not partake in the material fluctuations.

The Spiritual Significance

The realization of **puruṣa** as the **avikāri** essence inspires saints and devotees to focus their devotion on the unchanging Supreme. Worship and spiritual practices are not aimed merely at fulfilling worldly desires but at purifying the inner self and aligning it with the divine. Through devotion, the kṣetra (body and mind) becomes a reflection of the Supreme.

Tulsidas beautifully encapsulates this in his verse:

इति वदति तुलसीदास शंकरशेषमुनिमनरंजनम्।
ममहृदयकंजनिवासकुरु कामादिखलदलगंजनम् ॥

Tulsidas prays for the Bhagavān to reside in his heart, as the divine presence eradicates all impurities and evils (**vikāras**). By inviting the Supreme into the heart, the devotee experiences inner purification and a connection to the unchanging consciousness.

Avikāri Devotion

Devotion to the **avikāri** Supreme is driven by a desire to transcend material modifications and attain unity with the eternal essence. This devotion is unwavering (**avyabhichāri bhakti**), focusing on establishing a permanent relationship with the divine consciousness within. The ultimate aim of spiritual practice is to purify the self, allowing the **puruṣa** to shine unobstructed by the veils of **prakṛti**.

By understanding the eternal interplay of prakṛti and puruṣa, one can transcend the limitations of the material world. Devotion, meditation, and inner purification guide the seeker toward realizing the Supreme's unchanging, blissful nature. This profound insight into the workings of creation underscores the importance of aligning with the eternal consciousness, which remains untouched by the transience of material existence.

13.20

**kāryakaraṇakartṛtve, hetuḥ(ph) prakṛtirucyate,
puruṣaḥ(s) sukhaduḥkhānām(m), bhoktṛtve heturucyate.. 13.20**

Prakṛti is said to be responsible for bringing forth the evolutes and the instruments; while the individual soul is declared to be responsible for the experience of joys and sorrows.

The relationship between **prakṛti** (nature) and **puruṣa** (consciousness) is further explored, highlighting their distinct roles in the processes of existence and experience.

- **Prakṛti** is declared as the cause (**hetuḥ**) of action (**kārya**), the instruments of action (**karaṇa**), and the sense of doership (**kartṛtva**).
- **Puruṣa**, on the other hand, is considered the cause of experiencing (**bhoktṛtva**) pleasure (**sukha**) and pain (**duḥkha**).

Roles of Prakṛti and Puruṣa

- **Prakṛti as the Cause of Action:** Prakṛti governs the material world and is the origin of all

activity. The body, mind, and senses (**karaṇa**) are products of prakṛti and serve as the tools for action. Actions performed in the material realm are driven by the qualities (**guṇas**) of prakṛti.

- **Puruṣa as the Experiencer:** While prakṛti provides the means for action, puruṣa—the conscious essence within—is the experiencer of the results. It is puruṣa that feels pleasure and pain arising from interactions with the material world.

The Root of Attachment and Suffering

Although **puruṣa** is inherently distinct and unaffected by **prakṛti**, the soul (**jīvātmā**), which is a reflection of **puruṣa**, identifies itself with the body and mind. This identification leads to entanglement in the cycles of action and reaction governed by **prakṛti**. The sense of doership (**kartṛtva**) and the subsequent experiences of pleasure and pain are results of this mistaken identification. The **jīvātmā**, forgetting its true nature, becomes attached to the modifications of **prakṛti**. As a result, it suffers or enjoys the outcomes of actions performed under the influence of the **guṇas**.

An Analogy for Understanding

This dynamic between **prakṛti** and **puruṣa** can be understood through an analogy. Imagine a chariot:

- 1. The chariot represents the body and mind, crafted by **prakṛti**.
- 2. The charioteer is the **puruṣa**, who is meant to guide and oversee the journey.
- 3. When the charioteer becomes overly identified with the chariot and its movements, he begins to feel every bump, joy, or pain associated with the journey, forgetting his role as an observer.

Similarly, the **puruṣa**, by associating itself with **prakṛti**, experiences the joys and sorrows that arise from material existence.

The Path to Liberation

Liberation (**mokṣa**) lies in disentangling the **puruṣa** from its identification with **prakṛti**. By realizing that:

- **Prakṛti** is merely the enabler of action, and
- **Puruṣa** is the eternal, unchanging witness,

one transcends the cycle of attachment to pleasure and pain. Detachment from the influence of the **guṇas** and the recognition of one's true nature as pure consciousness leads to liberation.

The Eternal Interplay

This verse also emphasizes that both **prakṛti** and **puruṣa** are indispensable for the functioning of the universe. **While prakṛti drives creation, actions, and outcomes, puruṣa provides the awareness required to experience existence.** Together, they form the foundation of life's duality, but their roles remain distinct. The understanding of this duality is crucial for achieving self-realization and rising above material bondage.

This wisdom forms a cornerstone for spiritual progress, urging the seeker to discern between the mutable (**prakṛti**) and the immutable (**puruṣa**), ultimately aligning with the eternal truth of their being.

13.21

**puruṣaḥ(ph) prakṛtistho hi, bhukte prakṛtijānguṇān,
kāraṇaṃ(ṅ) guṇasaṅgo'sya, sadasadyonijanmasu. 13.21**

Only the Puruṣa in association with Prakṛti experiences objects of the nature of the three Guṇas

evolved from Prakṛti and it is attachment with these Guṇas that is responsible for the birth of this soul in good and evil wombs.

The interplay between **puruṣa** (consciousness) and **prakṛti** (nature) is examined, revealing how their union influences the cycle of birth and experiences in the material world.

- The **puruṣa** (consciousness), residing within **prakṛti**, experiences the qualities (**guṇas**) born of **prakṛti**.
- Attachment (**saṅga**) to these qualities becomes the cause (**kāraṇa**) of its births in both superior (**sat**) and inferior (**asat**) forms.

Understanding the Dynamic Between Puruṣa and Prakṛti

- **The Role of Puruṣa:** The **puruṣa**, the eternal and conscious essence, resides within **prakṛti**. While it is unchanging and distinct, through identification with the body, it begins to partake in the experiences shaped by the three **guṇas**—**sattva** (purity), **rajas** (passion), and **tamas** (ignorance). This identification leads the **puruṣa** to mistakenly believe itself to be the body and mind, resulting in the experience of joy and sorrow.
- **The Role of Prakṛti:** **Prakṛti** operates through its **guṇas**, driving the material world and its activities. The body, mind, and senses—manifestations of **prakṛti**—engage in actions influenced by these **guṇas**.

The Root of Birth and Experiences

When the **puruṣa** forgets its true nature, it identifies with the modifications of **prakṛti**. This identification leads to attachment (**saṅga**) to the **guṇas**, which in turn drives the cycle of birth and rebirth (**saṃsāra**). The **jīvātmā** (individual soul), entangled in this cycle, takes birth in superior or inferior forms based on its attachment to the various qualities of **prakṛti**.

An Analogy for Union and Confusion

The relationship between **puruṣa** and **prakṛti** can be illustrated through a striking analogy:

- **A red-hot iron ball:** When an iron ball is heated in fire, it begins to glow red and radiate heat, appearing as though it is fire itself.
- Similarly, the **puruṣa**, though inherently formless and pure consciousness, becomes enmeshed with the body (**prakṛti**) and assumes its attributes. The body, infused with the **puruṣa's** consciousness, becomes vibrant and animated, while the **puruṣa** appears bound by the limitations of the body.

This union is referred to in Vedantic philosophy as the **chid-jaḍa-granthi**, or the knot between consciousness (**chit**) and matter (**jaḍa**). This knot binds the two so tightly that the individual forgets its true identity as pure consciousness and believes itself to be the body and mind.

The Path to Liberation

Breaking this knot requires deep self-awareness and spiritual practice. The enlightened ones, who can disentangle **puruṣa** from **prakṛti**, recognize their true nature as eternal, formless consciousness. This realization leads to liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth, allowing the **puruṣa** to exist in its purest form, free from the influence of the **guṇas**.

The Chaitanya Tattva in All Beings

While the **puruṣa** resides in every being, its expression varies based on the field of activity and spiritual practice. Each individual's state is shaped by their attachment to the **guṇas** and their ability to align with the higher self. The realization that the same divine consciousness exists within all beings yet manifests uniquely in each reveals the deeper unity amidst diversity.

Dnyaneshwar Maharaj ji describes it in beautiful way:

तें परम तत्त्व पार्था । होती ते सर्वथा ।

जे आत्मानात्मव्यवस्था- । राजहंसु ॥ ११४३ ॥

O' Partha, they become united with Brahma, the highest truth who are able to discriminate between the Self and the Not-Self, as the royal swan [is able to separate milk from water].

Reflections and Wisdom

This verse emphasizes that **the entanglement of the puruṣa and prakṛti is the root cause of human suffering. By recognizing this entanglement and working towards detachment from the guṇas, one can rise above the dualities of pleasure and pain. Through devotion, knowledge, and self-discipline, the seeker can align with the eternal truth and achieve liberation, ultimately merging with the supreme consciousness.**

Question and Answers

Madhuri Ji

Question: How can we rise above the constant stream of thoughts (**sankalpa-vikalpa**) in our minds? This persistent wavering often becomes a barrier to spiritual awareness and self-consciousness. Even in mundane situations, these conflicting thoughts—whether positive or negative—can weigh us down. For instance, if a negative thought arises, like a fear of recurring health issues, it distracts us from focusing on higher truths. How do we deal with such mental tendencies and ascend beyond them?

Answer: The nature of the mind is inherently dual, constantly oscillating between two choices—positive and negative, beneficial and harmful. This duality is described as **sankalpa-vikalpa-ātmaka manaḥ** (a mind characterized by resolutions and doubts). It is natural for the mind to suggest both constructive and distractive thoughts. For example, when you decide to attend a spiritual discourse on the Bhagavad Gītā (**sankalpa**), your mind may simultaneously suggest an alternative, such as watching a television show or going to another program (**vikalpa**). Rising above this wavering requires deliberate effort. When the mind drifts into negativity—such as persistent fears about health or anxieties—it needs to be consciously redirected toward positivity. The tendency of the human mind to dwell more on negative thoughts is well-known. Overcoming this requires engaging the mind in constructive activities and uplifting practices, tailored to individual preferences and inclinations.

Practical Steps to Overcome Sankalpa-Vikalpa:

- **1. Engage in Positive Activities:** Channel your mental and physical energy into meaningful and productive actions. Involve yourself in activities that bring joy, purpose, and a sense of fulfillment.
- **2. Practice Yogāsana and Prāṇāyāma:** Breathing exercises and physical postures help synchronize the mind with the flow of life energy (**prāṇa**). **Prāṇāyāma** in particular helps control mental fluctuations by connecting the breath with the mind.
- **3. Read and Chant Stotras (Sacred Hymns):** Recitation of sacred texts or hymns helps to purify the mind and shift focus toward divinity. It is a powerful method to dispel negative thoughts.
- **4. Focus on Selfless Actions:** Engaging in noble and selfless deeds (**satkārya**) diverts the mind from unhelpful mental chatter and aligns it with higher ideals.
- **5. Avoid Negative Influences:** Reduce exposure to distressing or harmful content, such as sensational news or stories that evoke fear and sadness. This creates a more conducive mental environment for positivity.

- **6. Visit Sacred Places or Attend Spiritual Discourses:** Spending time in spiritual environments, like temples or satsangs, helps cultivate peace and clarity of mind.
- **7. Regular Mantra Japa (Chanting):** Chanting a sacred mantra given by one's Guru is among the most effective ways to control and purify the mind. Whenever the mind starts to waver, focus on the mantra to bring it back to a state of calmness and balance.

By practicing these methods, the mind can gradually rise above its wavering tendencies, achieving steadiness and focus on higher truths. With consistent effort and divine grace, one can transcend the dualities of the mind and realize inner peace and spiritual awakening.

Sudha Ji

Question: I had heard that this particular chapter is quite tough, and indeed it is. Because when I think about it during my free time, it becomes overwhelming. I don't even find the time to listen to it again or understand how to reach that point. This is one of my concerns.

Answer: To reach the deeper understanding, it is important to constantly remind ourselves that we are not merely the body, but also the pure consciousness, the **ātmatattva**. By repeatedly shifting our focus from the body-consciousness to the realization of the Self, we begin to move closer to this truth. We often know our family members or those closest to us well because of the deep connections and time spent with them. Similarly, once we connect with the divine, we start to understand the Supreme Being (**Parabrahman**). To know the Creator of the universe, we must spend time with Him, keep Him in our thoughts, and meditate upon His qualities. The more time we devote to remembering Him, the deeper our connection becomes.

As we spend more time with Him, our spiritual practices grow, and the more we practice, the closer we come to knowing Him. It is also essential to have the grace of the Guru, who helps us along our path, guiding us through the challenges. Our curiosity and eagerness to know the divine will help us move closer to Him.

Even though this chapter may seem tough, contemplation of its teachings slowly cultivates the desire to understand the higher truth. Over time, our attachment to worldly matters loosens. After listening to such teachings, it becomes evident that we need to remain calm and focused, rising above trivial matters. Small irritations or insults no longer hold power over us.

While we may not have reached the ultimate state yet, the decreasing influence of worldly distractions is a sign that we are on the right path. When we are ready, and when the divine calls us, we will reach that state. The desire to walk the path of truth must arise in the heart first.

Question: In the third chapter, there is a line, "**guna guneshu vartanta iti matva na sajayate.**" Please explain the meaning.

Answer: The verse "**guna guneshu vartanta iti matva na sajayate**" means that the qualities (the **gunas**) are active through their respective actions, but the wise person does not become entangled in them. The **gunas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas**—are the fundamental qualities that govern creation.

- **Sattva** represents knowledge and clarity.
- **Rajas** is associated with action, desire, and movement.
- **Tamas** is the quality of inertia, darkness, or ignorance.

These three **gunas** are necessary for the functioning of the universe, as action needs to flow in the right direction, and sometimes it must be stopped, which is where Tamas comes in. The wise person, or the jnani, understands that these qualities are operating within him or her, but they do not identify with them.

A useful analogy to explain this is the steering, petrol, and brake in a car. The Sattva can be seen as the steering, directing the car's movement. The Rajas is the petrol, providing the energy to move the car forward, and the Tamas is the brake, allowing the car to slow down or stop. Just like the car is not the driver, the jnani knows that they are not the gunas, but they use them as tools for fulfilling their purpose in the world.

The key point is that, while these qualities influence actions and behavior, the wise person does not get attached to them or identify with them as their true nature. They observe the functioning of these qualities from a distance and remain unaffected by their impact, understanding that they are merely instruments for the divine play. This detachment from the qualities is what Bhagavān explains in this part of the Gītā.

Shweta Ji

Question: I'm still a bit confused. When we talk about " Prakṛti" and "Puruṣa" in the context of the body and soul, is it correct to say that our body is Prakṛti and we, as conscious beings, are Puruṣa? And if we are the essence of the Supreme Being, why did we get separated from Him? Why did we become distant from God?

Answer: Yes, you are right in saying that the body is considered Prakṛti, while we, as conscious beings, are Puruṣa. The body is made up of the elements and governed by nature, while the soul (or consciousness) is the Puruṣa, the eternal, unchanging self.

Now, the confusion about why we feel distant from God is a profound question. It's important to understand that initially, our soul was in its pure, divine state, closely connected with the Supreme Being. But when the soul entered the material world and took on a body, it became entangled in the senses and the attachments of the physical world. The analogy of a metal ball heated by fire can help explain this: just as the ball takes the shape of the fire, our soul took on the identity of the body. Over time, because of this identification with the body and mind (known as body-consciousness), we started perceiving ourselves as separate from God.

In earlier ages like the Satya Yuga, there was greater awareness of the soul's true nature, recognizing that the body is separate from the self. However, as time passed through the different Yugas (**Satya, Treta, Dwapar, and Kali**), the attachment to the physical body and the material world became stronger. This increasing identification with the body led us to forget our true, divine essence and began to identify more with our physical form. We became trapped in the desires and pleasures of the material world, focusing on bodily comforts and worldly achievements.

Today, in Kali Yuga, this identification has reached such an extreme point that many people cannot think beyond the physical body. They are caught up in their senses, desires, and ego, which increases mental stress and confusion. This ego attachment creates feelings of superiority or inferiority based on one's appearance, wealth, or status, and as a result, many mental health issues arise.

The separation from God is essentially a result of this deepening attachment to the material world and the body. God, through teachings and spiritual practices, aims to guide us back to our true nature. The Gītā and other scriptures help us remember that we are not just the body but the eternal soul.

To give an example: Just as a child may forget their roots and become absorbed in their life with their spouse, forgetting their parents, we too have forgotten our origin (the Supreme) and become immersed in our bodily existence. This attachment to the body creates the illusion of separation from God.

The path to spiritual awakening involves breaking free from this attachment, recognizing that we are not the body but the soul, and understanding that the body is just an instrument. This shift from body-consciousness to soul-consciousness is the key to spiritual growth and ultimate liberation.

In the end, the journey is to transcend the body and the ego and to remember our true nature as the eternal soul, connected to the Supreme Being. The more we realize this, the more we can detach from the material world and align with our divine essence.

Surekha Ji

Question: I have two questions if I may ask. The first question is about the word "yoga" that appears at the end of each chapter in the Bhagavad Gītā. I understand that yoga means "union," but I don't fully understand with what or whom we need to unite. For example, in Karma Yoga, it is about connecting with work; in Jnana Yoga, it is about connecting with knowledge. I have asked this question before, but I did not receive a clear answer. Could you please explain?

Answer: The purpose of the word "yoga" in the Bhagavad Gītā is to indicate different paths or methods of union. Essentially, yoga means "connection," and the goal is to unite with the divine essence, or the supreme consciousness—God. The various forms of yoga are all different ways to achieve this connection.

For example:

- **Karma** Yoga: This involves union through action. It teaches that by performing our duties selflessly and dedicating the results to God, we can connect with the divine.
- **Jnana** Yoga: This is the path of knowledge, where through wisdom and understanding of the true nature of the self, we unite with the divine.
- **Bhakti** Yoga: This is the path of devotion, where through love and surrender to God, we establish a close relationship with Him.
- **Dhyana** Yoga: This involves union through meditation, where deep concentration and mindfulness lead to self-realization and connection with the higher self.
- **Raja** Yoga: This is often referred to as the royal path, which integrates aspects of control over the mind, meditation, and ethical living.

Each person can choose the path that best resonates with them, based on their strengths, interests, and spiritual inclination. For example, some may feel closer to God through selfless service (Karma Yoga), others through knowledge (Jnana Yoga), and some through devotion (Bhakti Yoga).

The key idea is that yoga is a means to connect with the supreme energy, the divine essence that is always present with us. Through different paths, we realize that we are not separate from the divine but are indeed a part of it.

So, the word "yoga" is a way of telling us that, no matter the path, the ultimate aim is to unite with the Supreme, whether through action, knowledge, devotion, or meditation.

The session ended with prayer and chanting of Hanuman Chalisa.



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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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