

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 15: Puruṣottama-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-6), Saturday, 15 March 2025

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

Detachment and Realization: The Gateway to Eternity and Attaining the Supreme

The **15th Chapter** of the Bhagavad Gītā – **Puruṣottama Yoga -The Yoga of the Supreme Person**

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

**Vasudevasutam Devam, Kaṁsacāṇūramardanam
Devakīparamānandam, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum**

**Yogeśam Saccidānandam, Vāsudevam Vrajapriyam
Dharmasamsthāpakam Vīram, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum**

श्री गुरु चरण कमलेभ्यो

- "At the lotus feet of the revered Guru."

By the grace of the Supreme Divine, a seeker is blessed with the rare opportunity to study, imbibe, and integrate the sacred wisdom of the Gītā into daily life. This privilege may be the result of past or present karmic merits, the blessings of ancestors, or the grace of a revered Guru. The truth is, we have not chosen to study the Gītā—rather, the Gītā has chosen us. Only through divine intervention are we graced with the wisdom of this sacred scripture. Without Bhagavān's blessing, neither true understanding nor spiritual realization of the Gītā would be possible.

Our engagement with the Bhagavad Gītā is not merely an intellectual pursuit but a path to making this life—and every moment with Bhagavān—more meaningful. Despite its brevity, the Gītā holds unparalleled depth and impact. It is as **old as 5,300 years** and is the very song of God, spoken by Bhagavān Himself. It is often referred to as the essence of the Vedas and Upaniṣads. Saints, scholars, and enlightened beings have proclaimed that there is nothing comparable to the Bhagavad Gītā.

"गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरैः।"

"If one studies the Bhagavad Gītā, there is no need for any other scripture. It alone is sufficient to attain true knowledge."

Remarkably, the Bhagavad Gītā has been printed in sizes as small as a matchbox, yet its power remains immeasurable. Over the centuries, it has been studied and revered by spiritual luminaries such as Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, and in modern times, by renowned figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and even world leaders such as Barack Obama.

Within India, where different sects follow distinct scriptures, the Bhagavad Gītā remains the one sacred text universally accepted across all traditions. This is because it does not prescribe religious rituals or customs but instead illuminates the consequences and manifestations of one's actions. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not instruct how to perform a pūjā, how to dress, or how to follow external rituals—rather, He reveals the essence of Dharma and the path of righteousness.

Just last week, in the discourse on the 12th chapter, respected Śrī Sanjayji Bhaiya elaborated on the 39 characteristics of a true Bhakta (devotee). Nowhere in that discourse was there a mention of specific ways to pray, wear one's hair, clap during rituals, or perform any particular pūjā practices. Instead, the focus was on the qualities that define a devotee's heart and actions—devotion, humility, selflessness, and unwavering faith in Bhagavān.

Thus, the Bhagavad Gītā stands as a universal scripture, guiding seekers beyond rituals and toward the eternal truth.

The Essence of the 12th Chapter - Bhakti Yoga

अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च |

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी || 13||

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः |

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः || 14||

In 39 places of the 12th chapter, Bhagavān does not emphasize rituals, offerings, or external practices. Instead, He asks us to reflect on how our actions transform us internally. Have we freed ourselves from dveṣa (grudges)? Do we see others as friends? Do we extend compassion (karuṇā) to all beings—humans, animals, plants, and even rivers?

Bhagavān speaks only of qualities. In different chapters, He describes various spiritual ideals:

- Chapter 2 - **The Sthitaprajña (the one with unwavering wisdom)**
- Chapter 12 - **The Bhakta (the ideal devotee)**
- Chapter 13 - **The Jñānī (the one with true knowledge)**
- Chapter 14 - **The Guṇātīta (one beyond the three Guṇas)**
- Chapter 16 - **Daivi and Āsuri Guṇas (divine and demonic tendencies)**

These are guidelines for self-assessment, not for judging others. Bhagavān has given us a mirror to reflect on our own progress, rather than critiquing someone else's path.

Bhagavad Gītā - A Timeless Guide Beyond Religion

This unique approach is why the Bhagavad Gītā is regarded as the most significant scripture. It is not confined to religious dogma but is a guide for all seekers. In modern times, thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Vinoba Bhave—who were not religious preachers but leaders in their respective fields—made the Gītā the foundation of their lives.

The same reverence for the Gītā is seen among intellectuals like Albert Einstein, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Carl Jung, and world leaders like Barack Obama. They all come from different backgrounds, yet when it comes to acknowledging the wisdom of the Bhagavad Gītā, their admiration is unanimous.

Unlike other texts that prescribe rituals, the Bhagavad Gītā focuses on the destination, not the path. It does not dictate how one should pray or worship but emphasizes reaching the **Supreme Divine (Paramatmā)**.

Consider a journey from Mumbai to Delhi—regardless of the route, mode of transport, or speed, the ultimate goal is to reach Delhi. Some may travel by train, others by car or plane, but in the end, the destination remains the same. Similarly, the Gītā does not focus on the method but on the ultimate goal—realizing the Supreme Divine.

Most conflicts in the world arise from disagreements about which path is correct. But have you ever heard an argument about whether or not we should attain Paramatmā?

Everyone agrees on the goal, but differences arise in how to reach it. Some emphasize one practice, others another, but the ultimate truth remains unchanged.

This is why Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, in the Bhagavad Gītā, does not endorse or criticize any religion or sect. Instead, **He speaks about our inner nature, our pravṛtti (tendencies), and our antarātman (inner self)**.

Transition from Chapter 12 (Bhakti Yoga) to Chapter 15 (Jñāna Yoga)

After studying Chapter 12, which centers on Bhakti Yoga, we now move to Chapter 15, which focuses on Jñāna Yoga. These two are the smallest yet most profound chapters in the Bhagavad Gītā.

Bhagavān has compared the 15th Chapter to an entire scripture. If one has time to study only one chapter—before meals, before a wedding, or even before one's final moments—the 15th Chapter is often recited. This is because Bhagavān Himself has described it as equivalent to Shāstra (sacred scripture).

In this chapter, **Bhagavān explains Īśvara (the Supreme Divine), Prakṛti (Nature), and Jīva (the individual soul). He declares that there is nothing beyond this, which is why this chapter is revered as Shāstra.** It is universally applicable and can be recited at any time.

Additionally, in this chapter, Bhagavān reveals His own divine characteristics, which is why it is known as Puruṣottama Yoga—the Yoga of the Supreme Person.

Metaphor in the 15th Chapter - The Inverted Tree

Bhagavān begins this chapter with a metaphor, making it a profound yet challenging chapter to grasp. It is a chapter meant for seekers of knowledge (jñānīs), but through practical examples and illustrations, we will delve into its meaning and understand it deeply.

So, let us listen carefully and explore the profound wisdom Bhagavān imparts in this chapter, starting with His unique metaphor about the universe.

15.1

śrībhagavānurvāca
ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥ(ś) śākham, aśvattham(m) prāhuravyayam,
chandāṃsi yasya parṇāni, yastaṃ(ṽ) veda sa vedavit.15.1

Śrī Bhagavān said :He who knows the Pīpala tree (in the form of creation); which is said to be imperishable,with its roots in the Primeval being (God), whose branch is represented by Brahmā (the Creator), and whose leaves are the Vedas, is the knower of the purport of Vedas.

I
n a class on the Bhagavad Gītā, many students ask about the meaning of its verses. The speaker responds by explaining a particular shloka and invites those who understand its meaning upon hearing the explanation to raise their hands.

Śrī Bhagavān says:

"He who understands the Pīpala tree (symbolizing creation), which is said to be imperishable, with its roots in the Primeval Being (God), its branches represented by Brahmā (the Creator), and its leaves as the Vedas, is the true knower of the Vedic wisdom."

After hearing this, grasping the meaning of the verse may seem like an impossible task. The Bhagavad Gītā is not a scripture for self-study but one that requires guided interpretation. Its verses are deeply formulaic and esoteric, containing the essence of the Upanishads and serving as a condensed summary of the Śāstras.

To truly understand its teachings, one must study it under the guidance of a knowledgeable teacher, such as Pujya Swamiji, or through authoritative commentaries like those of Śrī Adi Shankaracharya, Śrī Ramdas Ji Maharaj, or the Dnyāneśvarī by Sant Dnyāneśvar Maharaj. It is through these interpretations that we can attempt to grasp its profound wisdom.

There are many ***Brahmāṇḍas (cosmic creations)***, each brought into existence by different Brahmās. Just as there are multiple universes, there are also multiple creators presiding over them. Bhagavān begins HIS explanation of the entire cosmos, or Brahmāṇḍa, through the analogy of an inverted Pīpala (peepal) tree.

HE says:

- **Ūrdhvamūlam** - The root is positioned upwards.
- **Adhaḥ śākham** - The branches extend downwards.

It is important to understand that while the literal meaning suggests an upward root and downward branches, this analogy represents direction rather than physical position.

For example, when a student progresses from the 2nd to the 3rd grade, it does not mean they are physically moving to a higher floor. Regardless of whether the 3rd-grade classroom is on a lower floor, the student's academic advancement remains undeniable. We do not say they have been demoted simply because of the classroom's physical placement. Similarly, '**Ūrdhva**' signifies spiritual elevation rather than a spatial shift.

A being's superiority or inferiority is determined by their qualities and characteristics, not their physical location.

Understanding Through Tattva

What does it mean to understand something through Tattva (essence or fundamental truth)? To illustrate this, let's look at the life of Swami Ram Tirtha, a saint and scholar who was a disciple of

Swami Vivekananda. His name is counted among the brightest Indian minds. Before renouncing the world, he was a mathematics professor at Lahore University.

You may have heard variations of this story attributed to other great personalities, but originally, it belongs to Swami Ram Tirtha.

During British rule in India, there was an unwritten rule that no student could score full marks in an exam. However, Swami Ram Tirtha became the first in history to achieve 100/100 in his matriculation exam. His answer sheet was sent for rechecking because he had done something remarkable— At that time, exams typically had 8-9 questions, and students were required to answer only five. Instead of selecting just five, he solved all the questions and confidently wrote, "Check any five." His deep understanding and confidence left no room for doubt, compelling the examiners to award him full marks.

Beyond academics, he was a profound scholar and an even greater ascetic. His life bore striking similarities to Swami Vivekananda's—both traveled to the USA, both gained recognition there, and both left an indelible mark on spiritual thought. Swami Ram Tirtha was three to four years younger than Swami Vivekananda. When Swami Vivekananda returned from his famous Chicago session, it was Swami Ram Tirtha who welcomed him at Lahore University.

Swami Ram Tirtha's Journey to America & The Challenge of the Straight Line

Swami Ram Tirtha, a revered scholar and saint, once received an invitation to an event in the United States. In those days, travel was by ship, and the journey across the ocean took about 14 days. Accompanied by some of his students, Swami ji prepared to board the vessel.

As they stepped onto the ship, they overheard that a king was among the passengers. Upon hearing this, Swami Ram Tirtha abruptly refused to travel on that ship. His students were baffled and questioned his decision, but he remained firm. Despite their doubts, they followed his advice and disembarked.

The next day, they boarded another ship. However, this created a new problem—all their luggage had already been taken on the previous ship! Now, they had no belongings, no food, and no idea how they would manage for the next 14 days at sea.

A Meeting with the Captain

When the ship finally reached the port of New York, Swami Ram Tirtha was seen sitting on the deck, engaged in deep conversation with the captain. Captain asked, "Is someone coming to receive you at the port?" Swami ji smiled and replied, "Certainly." The captain, curious, asked, "Who will be coming?" With a serene expression, Swami ji answered, "Would you not like to welcome me as a guest at your home?"

The captain was taken aback but felt an immense sense of respect for this monk. He gladly invited Swami ji to stay at his house and even prepared a special vegetarian meal for him.

The Mathematics Puzzle

That evening, while they were having dinner, the captain's 8-year-old son approached them with his mathematics book. He had an exam the next day and needed help. Although the captain himself was good at mathematics, he requested Swami Ram Tirtha, a former mathematics professor, to guide his son.

Swami ji looked at the question and asked, "Do you want the answer that will help you score marks in

your exam, or do you want the answer that is actually correct?" The child was confused, and even the captain looked puzzled. "What do you mean?" Captain asked. Swami ji smiled and said, "The answers taught in schools are not always correct." The captain, now even more intrigued, said, "That's impossible! The question is simple—'What is a straight line?'"

Challenging the Definition of a Straight Line

The captain confidently answered, "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. When we join two dots, without adding any other dots, we get a straight line." Swami ji calmly asked, "Are you absolutely certain?" "Of course," the captain replied.

Then, Swami ji began his series of thought-provoking questions:

- "What is the base of these two dots you are drawing?"
- "The table," replied the captain.
- "What is the base of this table?"
- "The floor of the room," said the captain.
- "And what is the base of this room?"
- "The land," he answered.

Now Swami ji gave his final question:

"If you keep drawing this 'straight line' on the surface of the Earth, where will it eventually lead?" The captain suddenly realized the flaw in his thinking. "It will form a circle... because the Earth itself is round!"

Swami ji nodded, "Exactly. A so-called 'straight' line, when extended indefinitely, becomes a circle. So, is it truly straight?" The captain was speechless.

The Debate that Shook America

Fascinated by this idea, the captain called a mathematics professor from New York University to challenge Swami ji's reasoning. The professor presented counterarguments, but Swami Ram Tirtha, being a master of mathematics and logic, had an answer for every challenge.

Soon, the debate attracted top mathematicians from across the country. They realized that Swami Ram Tirtha's argument had deep mathematical and philosophical significance. Many scholars had to agree that his perspective was correct!

During these discussions, Swami ji also introduced the **concept of zero (śūnya)** and its connection to the universe. His revolutionary insights spread like wildfire, and within just 14 days, he delivered 18 lectures on zero across different American states.

On the 14th day, Swami Ram Tirtha was invited to a special dinner—hosted by none other than the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt!

From a Penniless Monk to a Guest of the President

Imagine this—Swami Ram Tirtha, who landed in America with no money, no luggage, and no contacts, was now sitting at the dinner table with the President of the most powerful nation!

His journey from being an unknown traveler to a celebrated scholar in a foreign land was nothing short of extraordinary. His teachings, blending mathematics, spirituality, and philosophy, left an everlasting impact, proving that true wisdom knows no boundaries.

Moral of the Story:

True knowledge is not about memorizing facts but about understanding the deeper truths of existence.

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and the Highest Truth

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the great Advaita philosopher, emphasized the concept of "**Śreṣṭatva Śreṣṭam**"—*the highest among the highest*.

The highest or the greatest is referred to as "**Ūrdhva**" (*upward, superior*). Even in the human body, this principle is evident. If our hands or legs are severed, we can still survive, but the loss of the head means the end of life. The head is akin to the roots of a tree—essential for existence. A tree can survive without branches or leaves, but once its roots are severed, it ceases to exist.

The Inverted Peepal Tree and the Nature of the Cosmos

Bhagavān describes the entire cosmos—Brahmāṇḍa—using the analogy of an inverted Aśvattha (peepal) tree:

- **Ūrdhvamūlam (Roots above):** The roots represent the supreme reality, the source of all creation.

- **Adhaḥ śākham (Branches extend downward):** The material world spreads downwards, symbolizing the vast, ever-changing existence.

The Aśvattha tree has deep symbolic meaning:

1. **Aśvattham** is derived from śva (tomorrow) and aśva (not existing tomorrow), signifying the impermanent and ever-changing nature of the world.

2. The peepal tree's leaves sway even with the gentlest breeze, just as the universe is in constant motion.

This aligns with the definition of **Samsāra (worldly existence):**

"Samyak Sarati Iti Samsārah"—That which constantly moves is Samsāra.

Thus, this Brahmāṇḍa is Asāśvata (impermanent), yet at the same time, it is...

Avyayam - Eternal and Indestructible

While the cosmos is in a state of perpetual transformation, it is also **Avyayam** (indestructible).

For instance, can we truly destroy a piece of paper?

- If we tear it, it still exists in smaller pieces.
- If we soak it in water, it merely changes form.
- If we burn it, it turns into ash and disperses into the air.

Nothing is ever destroyed; it only transforms. This applies to all living beings as well—though individual forms change, existence itself remains. Even when millions perished during the pandemic, did the weight of Earth change? No—because life, like energy, is never lost; it only shifts form.

The Vedic Leaves and True Knowledge

- **Chhandānsi yasya parṇāni (The leaves are the Vedas):**

Just as we cannot count the leaves of a tree, knowledge is vast, like an ocean. No one can claim to have grasped its entirety.

• **Vedavit - The True Knower of the Vedas:**

Bhagavān mentions Vedavit, emphasizing that understanding varies from person to person based on their capacity.

Swamiji Govind Dev Giri Maharaj once shared an incident from Chennai where he met a five-year-old boy reading an English newspaper.

Swamiji asked: "What are you reading, dear child?" The boy, without looking up, confidently replied, "The newspaper!" Swamiji chuckled and said: "Very good! Can you read it aloud for me?"

The boy straightened up, cleared his throat, and fluently began reading a paragraph from the newspaper. His pronunciation was impeccable, his tone confident. Swamiji listened intently. When the boy finished, Swamiji asked, "That was excellent! Now, tell me, what does this paragraph mean?" The boy's smile faltered. He blinked in confusion. Boy: "Meaning...? I don't know. I was just reading the words."

This highlights a critical difference: reciting words is not the same as understanding them.

Who Truly Knows the Gītā?

People perceive the Bhagavad Gītā differently:

1. Some see it merely as a book used for courtroom oaths.
2. Some read it as a scripture but fail to absorb its wisdom.
3. Some memorize all 18 chapters yet struggle to grasp their essence.
4. Some recognize it as a conversation between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna but remain unaware of what was actually discussed.
5. Some listen to discourses and gain partial understanding.
6. But then, there are a few, like Pujya Swamiji, who not only study and understand it deeply but also live its teachings in every moment of life.

Each of these individuals "knows" the Gītā in different ways, but who is the true knower?

- **Vedavit is the one who understands the essence and applies it in life.**
- **Knowledge without application is like a tree without fruit.**

We all "know" what the Vedas are, but true wisdom lies in living its teachings.

Bhagavān further explains this world and its impermanence in the next Śloka.

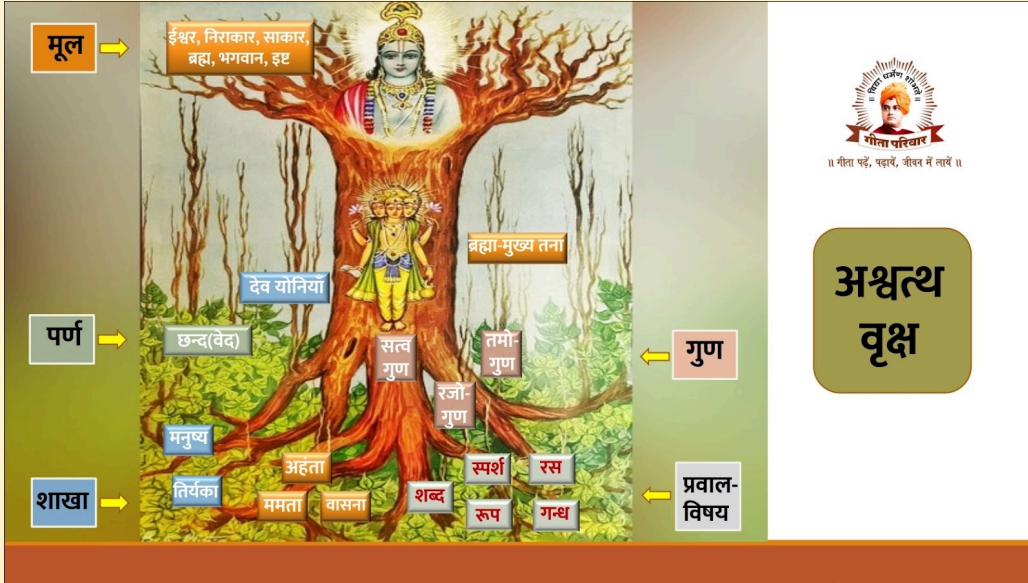
15.2

**adhaścordhvaṃ(m) prasṛtāstasya śākhā,
guṇappravṛddhā viṣayappravālāḥ,
adhaśca mūlānyanusantatāni,
karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke. 15.2**

Fed by the three Guṇas and having sense-objects for their tender leaves, the branches of the aforesaid tree (in the shape of different orders of creation) extend both upwards and downwards; and its roots which bind the soul according to its actions in the human body, are spread in all regions, higher as well as lower.

The Upside-Down Peepal Tree: Understanding Creation

Bhagavān explained the world and creation through the analogy of an inverted Peepal tree.



The Structure of the Cosmic Tree

- The Supreme Soul (Paramātmā) resides in the roots of this tree. One may call Him Paramātmā, perceive Him as Saguṇa (with qualities), Nirguṇa (without qualities), or refer to Him by the name of their Iṣṭa Deva (chosen deity).
- Brahmā ji resides in the trunk, providing stability. It is through Him that the three Guṇas—Sattva (purity), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (inertia)—are created. These Guṇas combine to form various life forms (Yonīs).
- Branches extend both upwards and downwards, representing different realms of existence.

The Uniqueness of Creation

Despite being created from the same elements, every being is unique. Even among 8.2 billion people today, no two retinas or fingerprints match—not even with our ancestors. Our thoughts, behavior, and preferences also differ, showcasing Bhagavān’s intricate design of diversity.

The Fourteen Lokas (Realms of Existence)

The cosmic tree extends across 14 Lokas:

Higher Lokas (Spiritual Realms):

1. Satya-loka (Brahmā-loka)
2. Tapa-loka
3. Jana-loka
4. Mahar-loka
5. Svar-loka (Svarga-loka)
6. Bhuvan-loka
7. Bhuloka (Earth - realm of humans and creatures)

Lower Lokas (Subterranean Realms):

8. Atala-loka
9. Vitala-loka
10. Sutala-loka
11. Talatala-loka
12. Mahatala-loka
13. Rasatala-loka

14. Pātāla-loka

Among these, Bhu-loka is designated for humans, while the lowest realms symbolize instability and constant movement.

Leaves as the Vedas & Roots as Desires

- The Chhandas (leaves) of this tree represent the Vedas, which provide knowledge and guidance.
- The roots extend in all directions, entangling beings in Aham (ego), Vāsanā (latent desires), and Kāmanā (cravings). These attachments keep one bound to the cycle of karma and rebirth.

The Cycle of Birth & Death

The three Guṇas form the five great elements (**Pañca Mahābhūtas**), which further manifest into the five senses (Tattvas):

- Sound (**Shrotra**) - Hearing
- Touch (**Sparsa**) - Sensation
- Vision (**Chakshu**) - Sight
- Taste (**Rasa**) - Taste
- Smell (**Ghrana**) - Smell

These senses act as gateways for desires, influencing actions and determining our next birth—whether we evolve into a higher form or regress to a lower one.

The Endless Cycle of Samsāra

Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya Ji beautifully described the cycle of life and rebirth in his verse:

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं, पुनरपि जननी जठरे शयनम्
इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे, कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे

"Again and again, one is born, And again and again, one dies.
And again and again, one sleeps in the mother's womb.

Help me cross this endless sea of life, O Supreme Divine!"

Bhagavān emphasizes that we remain trapped in this cycle due to indulgence in senses and attachments. .

This emotional connection illustrates how attachments create bondage, leading to karma and rebirth.

In the next Śloka, He continues explaining the path to liberation.

15.3

**na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate,
nānto na cādirna ca sampratiṣṭhā,
aśvatthamenam(m) suvirūḍhamūlam,
asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā. 15.3**

The nature of this tree of creation, does not on mature thought, turn out what it is represented to be; for it has neither beginning nor end, nor even stability. Therefore cutting down this Pīpala tree, which

is m

Bhagavān said that the mystery of the aśvatth tree is not easy to understand for the embodied souls, as they are deeply entangled in the continuous cycle of life and death.

The Symbolism of the Aśvatth Tree

- **Na rūpamasyeha tathopalabhyate** - This signifies that the depiction of the world as an inverted tree is merely an illustrative analogy, not a literal representation of reality. It serves as a symbolic way to understand the transient and interconnected nature of existence.
- **Nānto na cādirna ca sampratiṣṭā** - This conveys that while the tree depicted in the analogy has a beginning and an end, the world created by Bhagavān is eternal and without a fixed form, constantly evolving and changing.

The Root Causes of Bondage

The concept of **Ahanta (self-consciousness), Mamata (attachment), and Vāsanā (desires)** form the roots of this worldly tree. To attain liberation, one must sever these bindings using the weapon of detachment, known as "**asaṁgaśastreṇa**."

ऊपर वाला पासा फेंके, नीचे चलते दांव कभी धूप कभी छांव, कभी धूप तो कभी छांव।

Bhagavān keeps playing His divine strategy, and we keep getting entangled in it.

The Illusion of Self and Possession

Consider this example: If someone asks the speaker his name, he replies, "Aashu." But is Aashu his name or his body? His name belongs to him, just as his body does. However, the body is ever-changing. A five-year-old looks completely different from their sixty-year-old self. If pictures of a person from different stages of life were placed in a row, would someone recognize them as the same individual? Not necessarily. This illustrates that while our body constantly changes, our essence remains the same.

Yet, the moment we start considering our body as "ours," we extend this attachment to everything related to it—our spouse, siblings, children, and parents. This is Mamata (attachment).

For instance, when people die in distant events such as wars, we may feel bad but do not cry because we lack a personal attachment to them. However, when a loved one perishes in the same war, we grieve deeply. This emotional connection binds us to the illusion that we cannot live without those we are attached to, shaping our karma.

The Endless Loop of Desires

Desires (Vāsanā) are never-ending. People are caught in an endless cycle, always chasing the fulfillment of their wishes. Consider a child who asks his mother for a toy and promises never to demand anything else. In that moment, he truly believes it. But soon, a new desire emerges. Similarly, humans pray to Bhagavān, promising, "Give me this, and I will not ask for anything else." Bhagavān must smile, knowing that the same prayer was uttered yesterday.

If one desire is fulfilled, another takes its place—first a house, then the furniture, then a better location, then a bigger space. Because of Ahanta, Mamata, and Vāsanā, a person keeps taking birth in different forms, trapped in the cycle of life and death.

To break free, one must wield the weapon of detachment, Asaṁgasastreṇa. For instance, if a person loves food, simply giving them more food does not end their craving; it only increases it. Desires, when fed, grow stronger.

The Story of Shukadev Ji and King Janaka

Shukadev Ji, the son of Maharshi Veda Vyasa, was born after twelve years in his mother's womb. The moment he was born, he wished to renounce the world for penance. In time, he developed pride in his detachment. Seeking clarity, he approached his father, who imparted the knowledge of the Bhāgavatam and advised him to seek wisdom from King Janaka.

The Test of Patience

When Shukadev Ji arrived at Mithila, he announced himself with a long introduction, listing his knowledge and virtues. The palace guards informed King Janaka, who, contrary to his usual practice of immediately meeting ascetics, instructed the guards to make him wait.

Shukadev Ji was perplexed but waited under a tree. As the hours passed, his pride was tested. He demanded a seat, citing his status, but was asked to wait longer. The cycle continued for six days. Each time he sent a message, his self-introduction shortened. By the seventh day, his ego had nearly dissolved.

Finally, Janaka welcomed him, offering food and water. He then assigned Shukadev Ji a task—to carry a vessel filled with oil through the grand festival procession without spilling a drop.

The Lesson of Detachment

Shukadev Ji walked carefully, ensuring that not a drop of oil was spilled. After six hours, when he returned, Janaka asked, "Did you see the grandeur of Mithila?"

Shukadev Ji realized that he had been so focused on the vessel that he had seen nothing around him.

King Janaka smiled and said, "***This is the first lesson: Live in the world like a lotus in water—untouched by distractions, with your mind fixed on Bhagavān.***"

Shukadev Ji stayed in Mithila for seven days, learning seven invaluable lessons of life from Janaka. These teachings deepened his understanding of detachment and devotion.

Conclusion

Paramātmā sang se vishayo ka asang" - The closer one is to Bhagavān, the more naturally detachment happens. **Just as a lotus remains untainted despite growing in muddy waters, one must live in this world without being consumed by it.** True liberation lies in severing the bonds of ego, attachment, and desire, and immersing oneself in divine consciousness.

15.4

**tataḥ(ph) padaṃ(n) tatparimārgitavyaṃ(ṡ),
yasmingatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ,
tameva cādyāṃ(m) puruṣaṃ(m) prapadye,
yataḥ(ph) pravṛttiḥ(ph) prasṛtā purāṇī.15.4**

Thereafter a man should diligently seek for that supreme state, viz., God, having attained which they return no more to this world; and having fully resolved that he stands dedicated to the Primeval Being (God Nārāyaṇa) Himself, for whom the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and meditate on Him.

Bhagavān instructed Arjuna to sever all attachments with the weapon of detachment and wholeheartedly worship the **Supreme Divine, Paramātmā**. One must seek that Supreme Abode,

upon attaining which one is never bound to this world again.

We should recognize that we are under the refuge of the Primordial Supreme Being, from whom creation has expanded since time immemorial. Realizing Him frees one from the cycle of worldly existence. Therefore, one should engage in constant contemplation and meditation upon that Supreme Being.

Bhagavān further elaborates on the state of such enlightened beings in the next verse.

15.5

**nirmānamohā jitasāṅgadoṣā,
adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ,
dvandvairvimuktāḥ(s) sukhaduḥkhasaññaiḥ(r),
gacchantyamūḍhāḥ(ph) padamavyayaṃ(n) tat. 15.5**

They who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, and are constantly abiding in God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and who are completely immune to all pairs of opposites going by the names of pleasure and pain, and are undeluded, attain that supreme immortal state.

They who are free from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, and are constantly abiding in God, whose cravings have altogether ceased and who are completely immune to all pairs of opposites going by the names of pleasure and pain, and are undeluded, attain that supreme immortal state.

Bhagavān describes the qualities of great souls who have attained a higher state of consciousness. These enlightened beings are free from pride and delusion, have conquered attachment, are devoted to the contemplation of the Supreme, and are liberated from all desires. Their characteristics are as follows:

1. Nirmāna-mohā: Freedom from Pride and Delusion

The first sign of an enlightened soul is complete freedom from pride and illusion. They no longer see themselves as the doer or the owner.

मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।
जो भी अपने पास है, वह धन किसी का है दिया॥

"I am not the doer, nor is anything mine. This body is given by someone; all that I possess is a gift from another."

2. Jita-saṅga-doṣhā: Overcoming Attachment

The second trait is detachment from material possessions and emotional dependencies. Attachment arises from wanting to hold on to things we like and avoid things we dislike. Even small things, like not getting our morning tea the way we want, can disturb us. Bhagavān says great souls rise above such attachments and do not let external circumstances dictate their inner peace.

3. Adhyātma-nityā: Constant Contemplation of the Supreme

These souls are continuously engaged in spiritual study and meditation. Unlike ordinary people, whose interest in spirituality may fluctuate, they remain unwavering in their devotion, regularly reflecting on sacred texts like the Bhagavad Gītā and engaging in worship.

4. Vinivṛitta-kāmāḥ: Freedom from Desires

Their hearts are free from cravings and worldly desires. They no longer seek fleeting pleasures but remain content in divine bliss.

5. Dvandvair vimuktāḥ: Rising Above Dualities

They transcend all dualities—pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion, honor and dishonor, life and death. Such a yogi remains steady and unaffected by external circumstances.

Attaining the Supreme Abode

These great souls ultimately attain the Supreme Abode (padam avyayaṁ tat), from where they do not return to this world. Having surrendered completely to the Divine, they are taken under His eternal refuge and protection.

In the next verse, Bhagavān reveals the divine nature of His abode

15.6

**na tadbhāsayate sūryo, na śasāṅko na pāvākaḥ,
yadgatvā na nivartante, taddhāma paRāmaṁ(m) mama. 15.6**

Neither the sun nor the moon nor fire can illumine that supreme self-effulgent state, attaining which they never return to this world; that is My supreme abode.

Bhagavān's Supreme Abode

Bhagavān describes His divine abode, stating that once a being attains it, they never have to return to this material world. While souls in the fourteen realms of existence are bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death, His Supreme Abode is eternal, self-luminous, and untouched by darkness. Unlike the material world, which relies on the sun, moon, and fire for illumination, His divine realm is the very source of all light.

Bhagavān is often described as the Supreme Light, the ultimate source of radiance that illuminates everything, including the sun and the moon. This is why He is known as Paramātmā, the Supreme Light. The Vedas affirm this truth:

"तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ॥"

"Lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality."

Bhagavān as the Eternal Light

Swami Goswami Ji echoes this sentiment in his verse:

"बंदउँ गुरु पद कंज कृपा सिंधु नररूप हरि ।

महामोह तम पुंज जासु बचन रबि कर निकर ॥" (5)

"I bow at the lotus feet of my Guru, who is an ocean of grace and the very manifestation of Bhagavān. His words are like the sun's rays, dispelling the dense darkness of ignorance."

Across different traditions and faiths, light is considered a symbol of the Divine. In the Vedas, Bhagavān is called Laghu Jyoti (the eternal light); in Christianity, God is referred to as Divine Light; and in Islam, He is known as Noor-e-Ilahi (the Light of God).

Bhagavān further emphasizes that His Supreme Abode is self-illuminated and the very source of light for the sun, moon, and fire.

"Yad gatvā na nivartante"

"One who reaches that Supreme Abode never returns to this material world."

Becoming One with the Supreme

Just as a drop of water from the ocean shares the same properties as the ocean itself, when it merges back into the ocean, it becomes indistinguishable. Similarly, when a being realizes Bhagavān, they become one with Him.

"जानत तुमहिं तुमहिं होइ जाई"

"Upon truly knowing You, one becomes You."

Saint Kabir beautifully expresses this realization:

"जब मैं था तब हरि नहीं, अब हरि है मैं नाहीं।

प्रेम गली अति सांकरी, जामें दो न समाहीं॥"

"When I existed, Bhagavān was not there; now Bhagavān is, and I am not.

The path of divine love is so narrow that two cannot walk together."

In the next session, we will delve deeper into the upcoming verses of the Bhagavad Gītā, exploring their profound wisdom.

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

Questions and Answers

Mohini Ji

Q: Which book should I refer to for understanding the meaning of each shloka in the Bhagavad Gītā?

A: You can refer to any book from Gītā Press. Anvaya Gītā provides the Srimad Bhagavad Gītā with Padachchheda (verse division) and Anvaya (word order analysis). For a detailed understanding, ŚrīmadBhagavadgītā Sadhak-Sanjeevani is highly recommended.

Ramchandran Ji

Q: You mentioned the story of Ved Vyasa Ji and Sukhadev Ji. However, King Janaka was the father of Sita Ji. How do the stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata align in this context?

A: "Janak" is a title and a tradition (sampradāya), not just a single individual. Throughout history, there have been a total of 73 Janaks. The King Janaka mentioned in this context is not Sita Mata's father. The Bhagavatam references 73 King Janakas, with **Sita Ji's father being the 49th in the lineage.**

Rama Bhadekar Ji

Q: You mentioned that by giving up mamatā (attachment), ahantā (ego), and vāsanā (desires), one attains the supreme abode. However, in today's society, this seems impossible.

A: Transformation does not happen in a single day—it can take multiple lifetimes. Gradually, one becomes less indulgent and more accepting of whatever comes their way. Who is more commendable: a person who is excessively choosy or someone who accepts what life offers? In the same way, we must slowly detach ourselves from material enjoyments and desires. It won't happen overnight. For instance, if you are accustomed to using an air conditioner all the time, try turning it off occasionally even when electricity is available. This small act is an effort to reduce **vāsanā (desires)**.

Mamata Ji

Q: Why do we need a Guru, and how do we find the right one?

A: Just as you need a teacher to understand chemistry—because merely reading a textbook may not help you grasp the concepts—similarly, to attain supreme cosmic knowledge, a Guru is essential.

To identify a true Guru and avoid fraudsters, consider these four criteria:

- 1. A Guru should not be self-declared.
- 2. A self-declared Guru with disciples over a few generations is not enough. The Guru's lineage (sampradāya) must continue for thousands of years.
- 3. The Guru must be well-versed in the scriptures and capable of teaching them. A mere motivational speaker is not a Guru. A true Guru has undergone the Guru Śiṣya Paramparā.
- 4. The ultimate test is whether the Guru encourages you to worship himself or Bhagavān. A Sadguru will always guide you toward Bhagavān.

"Guru kāro janakar, pāni piyo chāñkar."

(Seek a Guru with wisdom, just as you drink purified water.)

Once you take **dīkṣā (initiation)**, the Guru leads you on the right path.

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