

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 15: Puruṣottama-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-7), Saturday, 03 May 2025

Interpreter: **GĪTĀ VIŚĀRAD ŚRĪ DR. SANJAY MALPANI JI**

YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/dC_aDtQm81k

The soul is bound by material nature and is disillusioned by the five senses and the mind. Hence the soul is entangled in the web of birth and death.

Chapter 15 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gītā - **Purushottama Yog - The Yog of the Supreme Divine**

The session begins with the prayer and lighting of the lamp.

We have gathered today to comprehend the meaning of the shlokas from Chapter 15. Every seeker of L1 is blessed to be bestowed with the opportunity to commence the study of the divine wisdom of Gītā.

During L1, we would learn chapter 12 and 15. In L2, the sadhaks are taught 4 chapters - chapter 16, 9, 14 and 17. In L3, 6 more chapters would be taught (1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) and culminate with L4 where the remaining 6 chapters would be taught. All the four levels can be perceived as a Char-Dhaam Yatra.

The significance of the Gītā

The Srimad Bhagavad Gītā is amongst those scriptures which is easy to comprehend. The Gītā puts the seeker on the path of virtuousness, auspiciousness and well-being.

The Gītā enables the seeker to transcend to elevated states of consciousness. By imbibing the wisdom of the Gītā in daily lives, one is on the path to attain self-realization.

The Gītā provides practical solutions to remain equipoised during the dualities of life. It also lights the path to mind management and the science to live a fruitful life.

The art of mind management imparted by the Gītā

Once, there was a boy who suffered from fits. Upon consulting the psychiatrist, it was concluded that a deep sense of fear lingered in his mind, by virtue of which, the boy had sleepless nights. This

eventually triggered an attack of fits.

The psychiatrist learnt that the boy's father would watch horror films during the night, where it was depicted in one of the scenes about a ghost dwelling on a Peepal tree. There was a Peepal tree beside the boy's room, which he could see when the window was open. The boy had concluded that the Peepal tree beside his room is possessed by a ghost.

The psychiatrist made the boy believe that the ghost has been weeded out of the Peepal tree. The boy was then able to sleep peacefully, and this cured the fits.

Similar to psychotherapy, the Gītā also imparts the art of mind management and the science to transform one's perception towards life. It brings about a shift in one's consciousness and guides the seeker like a compass.

As Bhagavān has explained in the below shloka:

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।

एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ 15.20॥

I have shared this most secret principle of the Vedic scriptures with you, O sinless Arjun. By understanding this, a person becomes enlightened, and fulfills all that is to be accomplished.

A brief introduction of Chapter 15

In this Chapter, Bhagavān explains the entire material creation by using the analogy of an inverted pepal tree.

- The roots of this tree represents Bhagavān, who is the nourisher of the entire cosmos.
- The trunk of the tree represents the creator Brahma Dev.
- The branches of this tree represents the 14 lokas (including planet Earth), which is nourished by the three Gunas of Prakriti (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas).
- The embodied souls wander up and down the branches of this tree (celestial abodes, planet earth or nether regions) depending on their karmic accounts and could also descend down to plant or animal kingdom.

Bhagavān says that detachment is the tool to axe this tree.

We now begin with the shlokas of this Chapter.

15.1

śrībhagavānuvāca
ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥ(ś) śākhā, aśvatthaṃ(m) prāhuravyayam,
chandāṃsi yasya parṇāni, yastaṃ(ṽ) veda sa vedavit.15.1

Srī 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.

In the first five shlokas of this Chapter, Bhagavān explains the entire universal creation with the analogy of the Peepal (sacred fig) tree.

In this shloka, Bhagavān uses the analogy of the inverted sacred fig tree to explain the entire material realm (cosmic creation).

Representation of sacred fig tree as the entire material realm (all creations).

Let's try to visualise and imagine this inverted Peepal (sacred fig) tree with the below descriptions

- The sacred fig tree is inverted.
- The roots of this tree are facing upwards, while the branches and leaves are running downwards.
- This mystic tree is eternal. The roots of this tree eternally nourishes the branches of this tree.
- The leaves of this tree represent the Vedas.

Bhagavān says that the one who truly understands this inverted Peepal (sacred fig) tree is the knower of the Vedas.

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 it's roots which bind the soul according to its actions in the human body, are spread in all regions, higher as well as lower.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains and describes further about the inverted Peepal (sacred fig) tree.

Let's try and further imagine the inverted Peepal tree with the detailed descriptions.

The roots

- The roots of this tree are facing upwards (as it is inverted).
- The roots represent Bhagavān himself who nourishes this tree (the tree represents the entire material realm).

The trunk

- The trunk of this tree represents Brahmā Dev - the creator of the entire universe.

The branches

- The branches (emerging from the trunk) of this tree extend both upwards and downwards.
- The branches are nourished by the three Gunas (the three modes of nature) - Sattva (mode of goodness), Rajas (mode of passion) and Tamas (mode of ignorance).
- It is the three Gunas which irrigates the branches of this tree.
- The branches represents the entire material creation. This encompasses all beings from various abodes (celestial abodes, planet earth and nether regions).
- The branches positioned upwards represent the celestial abodes, the ones in between represent planet Earth and those downwards represent nether regions.
- This encompasses all life forms (plant and animal kingdom as well on Mrityuloka or planet Earth) from all the Lokas

The fourteen lokas (branches of this tree)

In Vedic cosmology, the 14 Lokas, or worlds, are divided into seven higher realms (Vyāhṛhis or

celestial abodes) and seven lower realms (Patalas or hellish regions)

1. Vyahrhis (celestial abodes or realms):

These seven worlds are considered to be above the Earth and are realms of higher consciousness and spiritual attainment.

- **Bhuloka:** Our world, the Earth.
- **Bhuvārloka:** The sphere of space.
- **Svaraloka:** The Surya Mandala
- **Mahārloka**
- **Janaloka**
- **Tapaloka**
- **Satyaloka:** The realm of truth and the highest celestial abode.

Mahar, Jana and Tapa encompasses other stars (like the sun), milky way and other galaxies of the cosmos.

2. Patalas (Nether regions or hellish abodes)

These seven worlds are located beneath the Earth and are classified as hellish regions.

- **Atala**
- **Vitala**
- **Sutala**
- **Rasatala**
- **Talatala**
- **Mahatala**
- **Patala**

The soul wanders up and down (celestial abodes, planet earth or nether regions) based on their karmic merits.

A small note to the seeker

- Bhagavān has expounded on the three Gunas and their traits in Chapter 14.
- The three modes of faith has been expounded by HIM in Chapter 17.
- The traits of saintly persons and the traits of demoniac natured persons have been explained in Chapter 16.

We would understand more about the above chapters when we reach L2.

Hence, the seekers need to refrain from discontinuing the classes, as the Divine wisdom of the Gītā transforms the seeker from within and brings about a shift in one's consciousness

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

In this shloka, Bhagavān says that this mystic inverted Peepal tree is fictional, and does not exist in reality.

Few examples

Say for example, a horse with a horn (unicorn) or a horse with wings and the ability to fly (Pegasus) are fictional and are not seen on planet earth in reality.

Say for example, if one is narrating the story of a mystical tree with enchanting flowers and the child desires to see the fictional enchanting flowers in reality, it would not be possible to manifest the same.

In the same manner, **the inverted Peepal tree is is fictional. It is an analogy to depict the entire material world.**

The representation of material world with few examples.

- When a fan rotates at a high speed, it appears to be stationary.
- When a top spins on the ground, it is hard to notice the spins.

In the same manner, the entire cosmos is expanding rapidly and hence, it is hard to spot the beginning and the end.

Why is the seeker required to axe down this fictional or mystical tree?

- This mystical tree represents the entire material realm.
- We all are under the influence of the material realm or Maya (delusions of material world).
- Hence, we are unable to cut through the delusions and continuously wander up and down on the branches of the tree based on the karmic merits (across the lokas).
- This, the soul is entangled in the web of life and death.

Hence, it is essential to cut through the clutches or reins of the material realm (i.e., to axe down the tree)

Thought to ponder

- How will one axe down this tree when it is fictional? i.e., how to axe down the clutches of the material realm when it is continuously expanding and is beyond one's imagination?
- When the tree is mystical and fictional, which has neither a beginning nor an end, one would not be able to find the root or trunk of the tree to axe it down.
- When one is unable to comprehend the entire creation, how can one axe down the reins of the material world?

How to axe down this fictional inverted Peepal tree?

- The key to axe down this fictional tree is pure knowledge.
- By having the true knowledge about this tree, one will be able to understand the entire material creation and will eventually know the secret to axe down the tree.
- The Gītā states that there is nothing more purer or sacred than the true knowledge.

The weapon to axe down this fictional inverted Peepal tree

- Detachment is the weapon or the axe which can bring down the tree.
- By being detached, one can overcome the delusions of the material realm and transcend

beyond the influence of the material realm (the path to attain liberation).

How do we elevate to the state of being detached?1. The first step is to **unconditional surrender towards the Supreme Divine.**

When Arjuna was gripped by confusion on the battlefield, he says the below :

गाण्डीवं संसते हस्तात्त्वक्चै व परिदह्यते |
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः || 1.30||

My bow, the Gāṇḍīva, is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning all over. My mind is in quandary and whirling in confusion; I am unable to hold myself steady any longer.

Arjuna laments throughout Chapter 1 and exclaims that he does not want to slay his kinsmen. Bhagavān patiently listens to Arjuna.

However, in Chapter 2, when Arjuna surrenders unconditionally and asks Bhagavān to light his path on the best way forward, Bhagavān then imparts the divine wisdom of Gītā.

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः |
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् || 2.7||

I am confused about my duty, and am besieged with anxiety and faintheartedness. I am Your disciple, and am surrendered to You. Please instruct me for certain what is best for me.

2. Attain pure knowledge

The pure knowledge is bestowed upon those seekers who unconditionally surrender to the Supreme Divine.

3. Attma tattva or self realisation

The next step is to attain self-realisation (knowledge of the self - I am the soul)

**In a nutshell, Unconditional surrender and unwavering faith -> Attaining pure knowledge
-> Self-realisation -> Detachment from the material realm.**

The analogy of the lotus

जो जग में रहुँ तो ऐसे रहुँ,
जैसे कमल का फूल रहे।।

- The lotus emerges from a slush and yet remains untainted by the muddy water.
- In the same manner, the quality of detachment teaches the art of living in the material world by being unaffected from the worldly delusions.

15.4

**tataḥ(ph) padaṃ(n) tatparimārgitavyaṃ(ṡ),
yasmingatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ,**

tameva cādyam(m) puruṣam(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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that, by having axed the interved Peepal tree with detachment, one is able to reach the source of this tree (the source of all creation) which is Bhagavān himself.

Bhagavān explains that **the only way to cut down this mystical Peepal tree is by totally surrendering to the Supreme Divine and seeking HIS refuge.**

By doing this, we will not return to this material world, and after death will go to HIS divine Abode. **Having reached HIS lotus feet, one is not entangled in the web of life and death.**

The primary goal is to focus on the internal state (Radha) instead of the senses redirected to the other world (Dhara). When one perfects this state of drawing the senses towards the inner self, one is on the path to attain liberation.

Hence, our country has many temples of Radha Krishna which emphasises the transformation of the inner self.

15.5

nirmānamohā jitaśaṅgadoṣā, adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ, dvandvairvimuktāḥ(s) sukhaduḥkhasañjñaiḥ(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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the eligibility to attain liberation and reach HIS divine abode as stated below:

1. Those who are free from pride and delusion

- The liberated persons are free from vanity and egotism.

2. Those who have overcome the sense of attachment

- The liberated persons are detached or untainted by the delusions of material realm.

3. Who are absorbed constantly on the inner self and on the Supreme Divine

- The primary focus is to transform and purify the inner self.
- Those who are liberated are focussed on the internal self and are constantly absorbed in the Supreme Divine.

4. Who are free from desires and who have overcome sense gratification

- Those who are truly liberated are free from desires.
- Their mind does not hanker towards the pleasures of the senses.

Who are equipoised towards the dualities of pleasure and pain

- Those who are liberated are equitable towards dualities - Pleasure and pain; victory and defeat; profit and loss; honor and dishonor etc.
- They accept anything that comes their way as the will of the Divine and see an opportunity for self transformation.
- They count the blessings instead of lamenting over the shortcomings.

Bhagavān has expounded on the same in Chapter 12 as stated below:

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 12.14॥

Those who are ever-content, steadily united with Me in devotion, self-controlled, of firm resolve, and dedicated to Me in mind and intellect.

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ 12.19॥

Those who take praise and reproach alike, who are given to silent contemplation, content with what comes their way, without attachment to the place of residence, whose intellect is firmly fixed in Me, and who are full of devotion to Me, such persons are very dear to Me.

Let's understand this further with the analogy of the bulb

- The filament of the bulb is made of tungsten (as the melting point of tungsten is very high).
- The glass bulb encapsulates the tungsten filament, and thereby prevents the air from fusing out the filament.
- The bulb is then infused with an inert gas like argon or krypton to protect the filament from oxidation.
- The filament is connected to the bulb's base through copper and lead wires.
- When an electric current is passed through the filament, it heats up and glows, emitting light.

Key learning from the electric bulb

- Like how the bulb encapsulates the tungsten filament (by removing the air), the seeker needs to focus on removing the impurities (say greed, anger, hatred etc) from the inner self.
- Like the tungsten filament which has a high melting point, we need to derive the ability to remain equipoised during the dualities of life.
- Only then, one's inner state will remain unaffected by the external circumstances.

What is the difference between Sādhanā and sadhya?

- Sādhanā is the means to attain the final goal (sadhya).
- The ultimate goal is to attain liberation and reach HIS divine abode.
- Sadhanas like chanting, prayer, meditation, pooja etc are the means to reach the ultimate goal of liberation.

**na tadbhāsayate sūryo, na śasāñko na pāvākaḥ,
yadgatvā na nivartante, taddhāma paRāmaṃ(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.

In this shloka, Bhagavān gives a description of HIS divine abode. HE says that if is self-luminous and nether the sun, moon nor the fire can lit HIS abode. Infact, the blazzing, the radiant moon and the fire derieve their luminance from HIS divine energy. Hence, they cannot illumine HIS divine abode.

Like how we use Google maps or a GPS to reach a location, Bhagavān has described the details of HIS divine abode. Bhagavān says that, those liberated souls who reach HIS divine abode never return back to this material world or the samsara and are free from the cycle of life and death.

15.7

**mamaivāṃśo jīvaloke, jīvabhūtaḥ(s) sanātanaḥ,
manaḥ(ḥ) ṣaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi, prakṛtisthāni karṣati. 15.7**

The eternal Jīvātmā in this body is a fragment of My own Self; and it is that alone which draws around itself the mind and the five senses, which abide in Prakṛti.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that the embodied soul is a small fragment of HIS supreme soul. Hence, it's nature is divine. Let's understand this in detail.

The difference between Prakṛti (HIS material energy) and Puruṣa (HIS divine energy)

- Prakṛti refers to the nature that is originated from HIS material energy.
- Any being that emanates from Prakṛiti is perishable (as it is made of panchabhutas) and is under the cycle of life and death.
- However, the embodied soul is a fragment of HIS supreme soul and hence it's nature is Divine. Hence, the soul is imperishable or eternal.
- All entities in the cosmos emanate from Prakṛti and is under the cycle of birth and death. It is the Puruṣa tattva which provides consciousness to the entity (i.e., the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa results in all the entire creation).
- At the time of death, the soul relinquishes the physical body and adorns a new one.
- It is the soul (Puruṣa tattva) which is the source of consciousness to the body.

Puruṣa tattva here refers to the embodied soul (soul dwelling within a body) and is hence not specific to any gender (This applies to all genders).

Why do we identify ourselves with the physical body and not the soul?

Although the nature of the soul is divine, once it comes in contact with Prakṛti, it is then under the influence of Prakṛti. Let's understand with few examples.

Consider the example of an earthen pot:

- The pot consists of a small capsule of air within it's inner sphere.
- The air in the environment and the air that is encapsulated within the pot is one and the same.
- When the pot breaks, the air within merges with the air in the environment.

In the same manner:

- When the physical body perishes with death, the soul residing within the physical body merges or unites with HIS supreme soul (for those who attain liberation).
- Similar to the layer of the pot which segregates the air capsule within the pot and the air outside the pot, the soul is clouded by ignorance, by virtue of which, we identify ourselves with the physical body.

What causes the delusion of the soul?

- Bhagavān says that the senses are directed outwards towards the material world and hence the soul is disillusioned by the senses and the mind. Such persons are caught in the web of life and death return to the material world lifetime after lifetime.
- Those with positive karmic merits attain the celestial abodes after death. However, once the positive merits deplete, they return to the material world (similar to swiping a credit card until the balance is maintained).
- On the contrary, those who attain liberation, unite with Bhagavān and never return to the material realm.

Another example is that of an ocean wave. When the waves rise, it would eventually fall and merge with the ocean water. In the same manner, for those who attain liberation, the soul unites with HIS supreme soul after death.

What is self realisation?

- This is the state when one attains the realisation that one is the soul and not the physical body.
- One can transcend to this elevated state of self realisation with pure knowledge.

Until one is realised, the soul is bounded by the material nature and is disillusioned by the five senses and the mind.

We shall discuss the forthcoming shlokas in the next session.

The session ends with the prayer and Hanuman Chalisa

Question and Answer

Ashwini Kumar Ji

Question: Since we are in L1, which shloka from Chapter 15 can be applied practically in daily life?

Answer: Shloka 5 can be practically applied. We need to give up the sense of pride and attachment, rise above dualities of life and be free from desires.

Sandeep Ji

Question: How to overcome the delusion of the material world?

Answer : There are two ways:

1. Relinquish the sense of doer-ship and proprietorship and see the presence of the Supreme Divine in one and all. HE is the doer of all actions. When one elevates to higher states or consciousness, one will then realise HIS all pervading form (Nirgun Nirakaar) and hence the material world then turns out to be a Mithya (fallacy).

2. The path to self realisation

This commences with the cleansing of the inner self. The negative states of anger, jealousy, hatred etc are weeded out of one's consciousness in an advanced stage of one's sadhana. One then gives up

attachments towards the fruits of actions and the sense of doer-ship. When one is realised, one is able to transcend the delusions of the material realm.

Constant practice is the key to elevate to higher states of consciousness.

Ashwini Ji

Question: Why is the wisdom imparted by Bhagavān on the battlefield known as Gita?

Answer : Gītā is the song of the Supreme Divine. Since it was sung by Bhagavān, it is known as Srimad Bhagavad Gītā. There are other songs as Gītā as well - Uddhav Gītā, Ashtavakra Gītā etc.

Vikram Ji

Question: What is the difference between Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam?

Answer: The Srimad Bhagavad Gita was spoken by Bhagavān himself on the battlefield to Arjuna. It consists of 700 shlokas.

The Bhagavatam is a Mahapurana written by sage Ved Vyasa which constitutes the pastimes of Bhagavān Śrī Krishna and the descriptions of Dasha avatar. It consists of around 18000 shlokas.

Abhishek Ji

Question: Does the path of Bhakti and the path of Gyana lead to Bhagavān?

Answer: Yes, both lead to the same ultimate goal of liberation. The one who attains realisation (via Bhakti or Gyana) attains liberation.



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write- up. Please invest three minutes of your time to provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/feedback/>

Thank you-For reading the summary

You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/>

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta
|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||