

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 13: Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña-Vibhāga-Yoga

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

Prakṛti-Puruṣa-Tattva: The Vision of Reality - Distinguishing the Mutable from the Immutable

The thirteenth chapter of the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā, titled **Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña-Vibhāga-Yoga**, The Yoga of Discrimination between the Field and the Knower of the Field, delves into the profound distinction between the kṣetra (the body-mind complex) and the kṣetrajña (the conscious principle that perceives it). Through this teaching, Bhagavān guides the seeker toward true Self-knowledge and inner awakening.

The discourse commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the Dīpam at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, invoking His divine presence and filling the assembly with an atmosphere of Bhakti and sacred reverence.

Bowing at the revered feet of the Gurudeva, invoking the blessings of Mā Sarasvatī, and seeking the grace and compassion of Jñāneśvar Mahārāj, invoking their divine grace:

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहम् ।

पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दम् ईशमाळन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

यानन्दश्रुतिमन्त्रशक्तिमहती ब्रह्मात्मविद्यावती

यासूत्रोदितशास्त्रपद्धतिरिति प्रद्योतिनान्तरद्युतिः ।

या सत्काव्यगतिप्रसादितर्मतिर्नानागुणालङ्कृतिः

सा प्रत्यक्षसरस्वती भगवती मान्नायतां भारती ॥

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयम्

व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।

अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीम्
अम्ब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥

नमोस्तुते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥

Countless Vandanās at the feet of Mātā Sarasvatī, Bhagavān Vedavyāsa, Śrī Govind Giri Ji Mahārāja, and Sant Jñāneśvara Mahārāja.

Salutations to all seekers devoted to the Bhagavad Gītā. This is indeed a sacred festival of Jñāna (knowledge). Just as during Dīpāvalī we witness lamps illuminating the outer world, so too, the lamp of wisdom kindled by the Gītā illumines the inner world. The Jñāna Dīpa of the Gītā brightens one's antaranga, the inner being.

We have seen how the stream of knowledge flows ceaselessly from the lotus mouth of the revered Gurudeva. No disciple can ever contain within himself the knowledge received from the Guru. True knowledge seeks expression; it demands communication. It cannot remain stagnant. Therefore, any sincere disciple, having received even a particle of this divine wisdom from the Guru, becomes inwardly compelled to share it, to transmit it further.

There is a beautiful line in Marathi:

गुरूने दिला ज्ञानरूपी वसा आम्ही चालवू हा पुढे वारसा

The Guru has bestowed upon us this precious inheritance of knowledge, and it becomes our sacred duty to pass it on to others.

With that very purpose, to convey to you the vasā, the inheritance of knowledge bestowed by Gurudeva, the speaker is present here today.

We have reflected upon the various attributes of knowledge described in this chapter, through which the realisation of the nirguṇa Paramātmā becomes manifest. Those who have attained Ātma-jñāna, whose inner consciousness has been elevated to such a state that they are ever united with the Viśvātma, the Universal Self, how are such realised beings to be recognised?

Can they be identified by their external marks, by whether they wear a tilaka, or don gerua vastra (ochre robes), or wear a rudrākṣa mālā? No, these are but outer symbols. The signs of the realised are not external; they belong to the inner realm. Yet, the inner evolution of such beings reflects outwardly in their conduct, in their speech, and in their very presence.

Bhagavān has described these signs, **twenty qualities** that manifest in the realised jñānī. For, as it is said, the qualities of the siddhas (the perfected) become the means of practice for the sādhakas (the seekers).

We wonder, how does one recognise such a person who has attained Ātma-jñāna? One who has realised the truth of their essential nature, who perceives the reflection of the Divine within themselves, who understands that the Paramātmā operates through all beings, entering into their inner core as the reflection of Consciousness, how does such a one behave, and what are the signs by which they may be known?

To illustrate this, let us recall the metaphor of the iron ball. Previously, we discussed the example of an iron sphere placed within fire in a steel furnace. As it is heated, the iron ball acquires the redness and brilliance of the fire itself. Though originally inert and dark, it now glows with fiery radiance. The

fire imparts its luminosity to the ball, and in turn, the fire seems to have assumed the shape of the ball.

In the same manner, Consciousness (chaitanya tattva) assumes the form of the body (deha). The body, though material, appears radiant with the reflection of Consciousness. The light, awareness, and vitality we experience are not of the body but of the chaitanya tattva that enlivens it. The form belongs to matter; the brilliance belongs to Spirit. Yet, the two have become so intermingled, like fire and iron, that it appears almost impossible to separate them. Thus, the human being mistakes himself for being merely the body.

But for those in whom this **chid-jaḍa granthi**, the knot binding the conscious and the inert, has been untied, who have transcended identification with the body and realised the Self, they ascend to the summit of Jñāna. In Vedāntic language, they have crossed to the advanced steps of the stairway of knowledge, standing firm in realisation.

Just as the fertility of a field is known by the quality of the crop it yields, so too the spiritual elevation of a person is known by the virtues that bloom in their conduct. Hence, Bhagavān, in this section, has described the qualities of such realised beings, not for mere admiration, but for the guidance of every sādhaḥ, that the path of inner refinement may become clear.

Thus, the light of Jñāna kindled by Bhagavān and transmitted through the Guru-paramparā continues to illumine hearts, turning seekers into knowers, and knowers into givers of light.

***amānitvam adambhitvam, ahiṃsā kṣāntirājavam,
ācāryopāsanam(m) śaucam(m), sthairyamātmavinigrahaḥ. 13.7***

Bhagavān continues to describe, in this verse, the qualities that naturally manifest in those who have attained true knowledge, the jñānīs, whose inner being has been illumined by wisdom.

- **Amānitvam** — Freedom from the weight of self-importance. Such a person carries no burden of baḍappan (superiority), no sense of “I am great.” There is no false projection of greatness, no expectation of honour.
- **Adambhitvam** — Absence of dambha, or pretence. There is no display, no show, no need to project an image of virtue or learning. The realised one lives with natural simplicity and genuineness, without seeking recognition.
- **Ahiṃsā** — Complete harmlessness, not only in deed, but also in speech and thought. There is not even a shadow of ill will towards anyone. One’s mind becomes a haven of goodwill and compassion.
- **Kṣāntiḥ** — Forbearance, the gentle disposition of forgiveness. Even when faced with injustice or wrongdoing, such a one responds with serenity and understanding. Forgiveness arises not as effort but as nature.
- **Ājavam** — Straightforwardness, inner and outer alignment. No duplicity, no hidden motives; what is in the heart is reflected in words and actions alike.
- **Ācāryopāsanam** — Reverent devotion towards the Ācārya, the Guru. One who recognises that whatever knowledge has entered his life has done so through the grace and presence of the Guru, naturally bows in humility before him. Upāsanam means “sitting near,” indicating a life of learning, surrender, and receptivity, remaining ever close to the Guru in spirit and in conduct.
- **Śaucam** — Purity, both inner and outer. Cleanliness of body and sanctity of mind; purity in thought, motive, and emotion.
- **Sthairyam** — Steadfastness, firmness of intellect. The mind of the realised remains unmoved amid fluctuations. Their understanding is unwavering, their convictions unshaken.

- **Ātmavinigrahaḥ** — Self-control, mastery over one's own impulses. The senses and desires no longer dictate action; there is restraint born not of suppression but of understanding.

Thus, Bhagavān, in this eighth verse, continues to reveal the shining traits of those established in knowledge. Each quality is not a practice to be externally imposed but a fragrance that naturally arises when the mind has been refined and the ego dissolved. Through these divine attributes, the presence of the Paramātmā within such beings becomes perceptible even in their ordinary conduct.

13.8

indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam, anahaṅkāra eva ca, janmamṛtyujarāvādhi, duḥkhadoṣānudarśanam. 13.8

Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, and also absence of egotism; constant perception of evil and pain and evils inherent in birth, death, old age and disease.

Bhagavān continues describing the ascent of the realised soul, the one who has climbed the higher steps of the ladder of jñāna. Such a person naturally embodies indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam, detachment from the objects of the senses.

The indriyas, the organs of knowledge and action, have been granted to human beings to interact with the outer world. The eyes perceive form (rūpa), the ears perceive sound (śabda), the nose perceives fragrance (gandha), the skin perceives touch (sparśa), and the tongue perceives taste (rasa). These are the jñānendriyas, and each has its corresponding sense-object.

However, due to constant association with these sense-objects, the mind, which is the inner instrument behind the senses, becomes entangled. The indriyas are but instruments of the mind. Just as spectacles are an instrument for the eyes, so too are the senses instruments for the mind. The spectacles do not see; the eyes see through them. Yet even the eyes themselves do not truly see; it is the mind that perceives through the eyes. What the eyes observe is imprinted upon the mind.

Thus, through the senses, the mind runs outward, chasing the world of sense-objects. The repeated contact with these objects breeds attachment. Bhagavān explains that the mark of the jñānī is vairāgyam, a state free from rāga (attachment). In Sanskrit, rāga denotes clinging or attraction; vairāgya therefore means non-attachment, not being entangled or stuck to the sensory world.

Our ordinary mind behaves like a sponge, absorbing every impression it comes across. Whatever it sees or hears, it retains. Just as water is absorbed and held by a sponge, so too the mind holds on to experiences, memories, and impressions. But the antaranga (inner being) of a realised one functions differently.

It may be compared to a Śivaliṅga. Various offerings may be poured upon it, milk, water, bhāṅg, or pañcāmṛta. Yet, none of these enter or stain the liṅga; they simply flow over its surface and pass away. Similarly, the ātma-liṅga, the inner Self of the realised being, remains untouched by experiences. Though the senses may perceive their objects, the impressions do not cling within.

This is the essence of **indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam**, detachment amid perception. The realised soul does not suppress the senses; he simply does not adhere to what they experience. The mind remains nirlepa, unsmearred, unaffected.

In contrast, for most people, every sight, sound, or event leaves an impression. We see something beautiful or disturbing, and it becomes etched upon our memory. Though perception itself is natural

and necessary, the problem arises when reaction turns into attachment, when the experience generates inner agitation or desire.

The jñānī, however, perceives the same world, yet nothing sticks. His awareness remains like the Śivaliṅga, untouched, pure, and serene. This is true vairāgya, not withdrawal from life, but freedom amidst it. Through such detachment, he perceives the fleeting nature of the world and remains ever established in the luminous Self, the Paramātmā within.

Bhagavān, continuing His description of the jñānī's qualities, speaks of **indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam and anahaṅkārah**, detachment from sense-objects and freedom from ego. To illustrate this state of mind, a story is often told in the spiritual tradition.

True Vairāgya: The Guru's Lesson on Detachment and the Vision of the Wise

Once, a Guru instructed His disciples, *"On the path of sādhana, never touch kāmīnī (woman) or kāñcana (gold). Such contact distracts the mind and creates bondage. Remain alert; otherwise, you will be trapped in worldly attachments."*

Some time later, the Guru sent two of His disciples on an errand to another village. On their way, they reached a river. Suddenly, they heard a cry for help, someone was drowning. When they looked closely, they saw that it was a woman struggling in the current.

The first disciple hesitated, saying, *"Our Guru has forbidden us from touching a woman. I must obey His instruction."* But the second disciple, moved by compassion, immediately jumped into the river, rescued her, brought her to the bank, ensured she was safe, and then quietly continued on his way.

That night, however, the first disciple could not sleep. His mind kept repeating, *"My companion has broken the Guru's command. He touched that woman! He disobeyed!"* The thought continued to churn in his mind.

The next day, he went to the Guru and narrated the entire incident, accusing his companion of violating the instruction. The Guru called the second disciple and asked, *"Did something happen yesterday?"*

The disciple replied calmly, *"Yes, Gurudeva. Someone was drowning, perhaps a woman, so I helped her out of the river. Once she was safe, I continued on my way. Honestly, I do not even remember who she was; the event is already forgotten."*

The Guru then turned to the first disciple and said gently, *"He left her on the riverbank, but you have carried her all night in your mind. You are still holding on to that thought."*

This story reveals how the mind records impressions and clings to them. The realised being, however, remains untouched. As the Guru explained, vairāgya does not mean hatred or suppression; it means withdrawing the mind from the inappropriate and engaging it in the appropriate. It is redirection, not rejection. The jñānī turns the mind away from the allure of the senses and fixes it upon the Self, upon Bhagavān.

Bhagavān further says, **anahaṅkāra eva ca**, absence of ego. The jñānī lives without the burden of "I" and "mine." There are two forms of "I." One is the functional I used in daily life, "I took a bath," "I ate food." This is natural and śuddhamaya (pure), required for worldly functioning. The other is the false sense of kartṛtva (doership), "I am the doer," "I accomplished this." From this arises ahaṅkāra, and from it, nyūna-ganda or atimāna, complexes of inferiority or superiority. When this false

identification dissolves, what remains is anahaṅkāra, egolessness.

Bhagavān then adds, **janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam**, the jñānī constantly perceives the inherent defects of worldly existence: birth, death, old age, and disease. He recognises these as consequences of identifying with the perishable and forgetting the eternal Sat-Cit-Ānanda nature of the Self. To see the doṣa (imperfection) in these transient conditions is to free oneself from their grip.

The wise therefore, do not get entangled in the ever-changing saṁsāra. They do not cling to memories, possessions, or experiences. Instead, their remembrance abides in the changeless Paramātmā.

For seekers, the practical message here is simple yet profound: *“Try to live in the present moment.”* Let go of what the mind hoards from the past. Just as a mirror reflects any image that appears before it yet retains none after it departs, the mind too must become like that, pure, transparent, and untainted.

Let the mirror of the inner being reflect not the fleeting pictures of the world, but the radiant image of the Paramātmā. In such a purified heart, the light of jñāna shines naturally.

Thus, O Arjuna, says Bhagavān, the one in whom these qualities dwell, detachment from sensory allure, egolessness, and awareness of the transience of worldly life, such a one is truly a jñānī. And the vision of such a jñānī perceives the world not as fragmented, but as pervaded by the same Paramātmā everywhere.

13.9

asaktiranabhiṣvaṅgaḥ(ph), putradāragṛhādiṣu, nityaṃ(ñ) ca śamacittatvam, iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu. 13.9

Absence of attachment and the sense of mineness in respect of son, wife, home etc., and constant equipoise of mind both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

Bhagavān declares: **putra-dāra-gṛhādiṣu anabhisvaṅgaḥ**, meaning, “one who is free from attachment towards sons, wife, and home.” This does not mean that such a person must be unmarried, or that this teaching applies only to monks or ascetics. Even great householders like Eknāth Mahārāj were realized beings, param-jñānīs, though they lived amidst family and worldly duties. The distinction lies not in their external life, but in their inner state. Their mind remained absorbed in Paramātmā, untouched by worldly entanglement.

Understanding Attachment (Āsakti)

Āsakti or attachment arises when one’s identity gets intertwined with people or possessions. When one says, “my daughter, my house,” the sense of “mine” (mamatā) binds the mind. If anyone praises or criticizes that daughter, the parent feels pleasure or pain as if it were their own. This is the ordinary human tendency, to superimpose the sense of “I” and “mine” upon the relationships and possessions of life.

But a jñānī is different. Bhagavān describes such a person as **anabhisvaṅgaḥ**, free from clinging or possessiveness. This does not mean the absence of love or affection. It means the absence of ownership, the feeling of “this is mine.” True love is free from egoic claim. The world, the family, the wealth, all belong to Paramātmā, not to the individual.

This shift of vision is what Bhagavān taught Arjuna. In the beginning, Arjuna lamented, “How can I fight against my own Guru Droṇa and grandsire Bhīṣma? They are my family!” He was bound by *mamatā*, the illusion of “mine.” Bhagavān lifted his understanding to a higher truth, that this universe is not “mine,” but His.

“Main Mera” to “Tu Tera” A Living Experience

Once, during the early days of distributing the Bhagavad Gītā, the narrator shared an experience. Near her home, there was a small bookstall outside a Gaṇeśa Mandir, from where she often purchased Gītā copies to distribute as gifts. One day, the bookseller asked, “Didi, you often buy this Bhagavad Gītā. What is written in it? Can you explain it in one sentence?”

She reflected, how could one summarize this ocean of wisdom in a single line? She said, “I cannot.” The bookseller smiled and replied, “I can, Didi.” Curious, she asked him to explain. He said, “It means only this: ‘Main mera nahin, Tu tera’, there is no ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in this world. Only ‘You’ and ‘Yours,’ O Paramātma.”

That simple line revealed the essence of *tattva-jñāna*, the realization that nothing belongs to the individual; everything belongs to the Divine.

True Renunciation Is Inner, Not Outer

Therefore, one should not assume that a *jñānī* must wear ochre robes or live apart from society. The true measure lies in the inner detachment, whether the mind is freed from *āśakti*. Even ordinary-looking people, living amidst worldly life, can attain that state of supreme knowledge and surrender.

Bhagavān continues, ***asaktir anabhisvaṅgaḥ putra-dāra-grhādiṣu***, meaning, “freedom from attachment to son, wife, home, and wealth.”

Such attachments are categorized as ***eṣaṇās***, deep cravings that bind the soul:

- **Putreṣaṇā** – craving for one’s children and family.
- **Vitteṣaṇā** – craving for wealth, prosperity, and status.
- **Kāmeṣaṇā** – craving for fulfillment of desires and sensual pleasures.
- **Lokeṣaṇā** – craving for social recognition, fame, and influence.

Among these, *lokeṣaṇā*, the desire to be seen, to be appreciated, to hold influence, is said to be the most difficult to overcome, for it lingers even when the others fade away.

Bhagavān declares that when these cravings vanish from one’s life, such a person is truly *jñānī*.

Equanimity – The Mark of Wisdom

Then HE describes their inner state: ***nityaṁ ca sama-cittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu***, “Ever established in equanimity, whether facing the pleasant or the unpleasant.”

Life always presents both *anukūlatā* (favourable situations) and *pratikūlatā* (unfavourable ones). In *anukūla* times, people often forget Bhagavān or merely thank HIM superficially; in *pratikūla* times, they seek HIM desperately, praying for relief. Most are attached to the pleasant and repelled by the unpleasant.

But for the wise, both are accepted with equal grace. *Sukha* and *duḥkha*, *anukūla* and *pratikūla*, these are two sides of the same coin. To live fully, one must accept both.

The *jñānī* remains *sama-citta*, his mind unshaken by either. In fact, Bhagavān often uses the word

samatva, equanimity, as one of HIS most beloved teachings. HE declares:

samatvaṁ yoga ucyate, “Equanimity itself is called Yoga.” (Gītā 2.48)

And Patañjali Muni too describes Yoga as **citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ**, the stilling of the mind’s modifications. Bhagavān defines the same ideal in experiential terms: the spontaneous return of the mind to balance, to samatva, amidst all dualities of life.

Samatva, Instantly Returning to the Divine Center

What is samatva? It is the ability to return instantly to the Divine center within, to regain inner stillness despite the rise and fall of external situations. The jñānī’s mind remains anchored in that changeless center, aware that all phenomena, pleasant or unpleasant, are waves upon the ocean of Paramātma.

Thus, the one who lives free from attachment, who sees the world not as “mine” but as “His,” and who rests in constant equanimity amidst life’s ups and downs, that person truly abides in wisdom.

Just as a skilled musician sings classical music, moving effortlessly through the octaves, sometimes into the tāra-saptaka (higher scale), sometimes into the mandra-saptaka (lower scale), yet always returning to the sam, the central note of balance, so too must life find its sam.

In the same way, one who learns to return swiftly to samatva amidst both anukūlatā (favourable situations) and pratikūlatā (unfavourable situations) makes the music of life melodious. This balance, this samatva, is what Bhagavān calls nityam sama-cittatvam, the state of constant equanimity.

When life brings anukūla moments, such a person does not soar into euphoria or pride; and when pratikūla situations arise, he does not fall into despair or depression. Joy and sorrow are natural responses of the human heart, but the wise quickly restore their inner harmony. They neither remain lost in happiness nor crushed in grief; they rise above both by returning to that inner sam.

That samatva, that equilibrium, is nothing other than the essence of Paramātma Himself. Bhagavān calls it nityam, eternal, unchanging.

And in such a being, what kind of devotion (bhakti) towards Paramātma arises? It is no longer driven by fear or desire, gain or loss. It is nitya-bhakti, the spontaneous, unbroken flow of love that springs from the soul established in samatva, the silent music of oneness with the Divine.

13.10

**mayi cānanyayogena, bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī,
viviktadeśasevitvam, aratirjanasaṁsadi. 13.10**

Unflinching devotion in Me through exclusive attachment, living in secluded and holy places, and finding no delight in the company of worldly people;

Ananya-Yogena Bhakti: The Steady, Undivided Devotion to the Supreme

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that one who has set out on the path of Jñāna, even before fully attaining Knowledge, must first cultivate ananya-yogena mayi avyabhicāriṇī bhakti: an unadulterated, exclusive devotion directed toward HIM alone.

The Meaning of “Ananya”

The term ananya does not mean sectarian exclusivity, that my chosen form of the Divine alone is true, while others are false. Whether one adores Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāma, Śiva, or Jagadambā; or worships the formless **nirguṇa-nirākāra** Paramātmā as done in other traditions, all such worship ultimately leads to the same Supreme Reality. There is no anya (other); there is only ONE, **Ekam eva advitīyam**.

Bhakti Free from Selfish Ends

This avyabhicāriṇī bhakti is not devotion for the sake of worldly desires, not for position, wealth, or fulfillment of ambitions. Such sakāma bhakti is valid at the level of practice, but here Bhagavān describes the devotion of the jñānī, where devotion is for the sake of Paramātmā alone. The devotee does not approach HIM as a means (sādhana) to attain something else (sādhya). For the jñānī, both the means and the end are the same, Bhagavān Himself.

The Teaching of Jñāneśvar Mahārāj

Sant Jñāneśvar beautifully explains:

ऐसेनि मातें जाणिजे । ते अव्यभिचारी भक्ति म्हणिजे ।

येथ भेदु कांहीं देखिजे । तरी व्यभिचारु तो ॥ ३८१ ॥

“Know that as avyabhicāri bhakti in which no sense of difference is seen; wherever a trace of duality is perceived, there is deviation.”

True devotion (abhēda-bhakti) flows as a single, unbroken stream of love toward Paramātmā, seeing no distinction between forms or names.

Nirguṇa and Saguṇa: Two Faces of the Same Truth

This chapter predominantly describes nirguṇa-bhakti, devotion toward the formless Absolute. Yet the saguṇa-sākāra worship, of the visible, embodied form, is the great strength of Sanātana Dharma. Since humans live in the realm of embodiment (deha-bandha), the mind finds anchorage in visible form. Saints have therefore urged devotees to begin with saguṇa upāsana; for only after bowing before the form does one come to realize the formless.

Neither saguṇa (with attributes) is inferior nor nirguṇa (beyond attributes) superior, both are expressions of the same Divine Reality.

The Teaching of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa

Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa beautifully resolved the dispute between his two disciples, one a worshipper of saguṇa, the other of nirguṇa.

He asked the first, “Can your Bhagavan with form not become formless?”

He said, “Of course He can.”

Then to the other he asked, “Can your formless Bhagavan not assume form?”

He replied, “Certainly, He can.”

Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa smiled, “Then where is the quarrel?”

Just as air is everywhere yet becomes perceptible when the fan moves, the nirguṇa-nirākāra becomes perceivable through mūrti-pūjā (worship of form). The form is a focus, a means of concentration, where the Infinite becomes tangible to the finite mind.

The Nature of Avyabhicāriṇī Bhakti

Sant Jñāneśvar further likens this devotion to an unbroken stream of rain descending from the clouds:

परि तेचि भक्ति ऐसी । पर्जन्याची सुटिका जैसी ।

धरावांचूनि अनारिसी । गतीचि नेणें ॥ ६८६ ॥

“This bhakti is like the rain that, once fallen, can rest only upon the earth; it knows no other destination.”

Similarly, the current of love arising from the devotee’s heart flows ceaselessly toward Paramātma and nowhere else.

Jñāneśvar offers another example, that of a child and its mother. The mother may offer toys to please the child, but the child soon grows weary and throws them aside, saying, “*I do not want toys, I want you.*”

Such is ananya-bhakti: when worldly desires fade, and the heart longs only for the Divine.

Solitude and Detachment

Bhagavān then speaks of **vivikta-deśa-sevitvam**, the love of solitude.

The jñānī naturally seeks moments of aloneness, for the impressions of the world (saṁsāra-citra) constantly play upon the mind. In solitude, the seeker turns inward and reposes in the Self.

But solitude, too, requires purity. As Sant Gulābarāo Mahārāj warned, if the mind is impure, solitude may intensify its disturbances. For such a one, satsaṅga, the company of the wise, is preferable. Sant Rāmadās Swāmī also advised alternating wisely between solitude (ekānta) and holy company (lokānta):

जयास येकांत मानला। अवघ्या आधी कळे त्याला।

“He who truly understands solitude, understands all else.”

When a seeker learns to dwell in inner solitude< even amidst people, he attains profound peace.

Finally, **aratir jana-saṁsadi**, “disinterest in worldly gatherings.”

When the heart is full of Paramātma, the mind withdraws naturally from idle social engagement. For such a one, knowledge (jñāna) dawns effortlessly, for he has already withdrawn from the noise of the world into the silence of the Self.

Thus, Bhagavān describes the qualities that blossom in the seeker of true Knowledge: steady, undivided devotion (ananya-bhakti), love for solitude, and detachment from worldly clamour, the signs of one whose heart has begun to awaken to the Supreme.

The Inner Steadfastness of the Jñānī: Lokmanya Tilak in Mandalay

The life of such realised beings beautifully illustrates the qualities of the true Jñānī described by Bhagavān. A well-known example is that of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was imprisoned in Mandalay, Burma.

The prison cell in which Tilak was confined was dreadful; its walls were infested with countless mosquitoes, and the environment was suffocating. Later, when Subhash Chandra Bose happened to visit the same place, he remarked that he could not bear to remain in that cell even for an hour. Yet, Lokmanya Tilak could sleep peacefully in that very place.

Such was the śānti, the inner equipoise, born of spiritual steadiness. In that state of mind, Tilak wrote his monumental work, the Bhagavad Gītā Rahasya, a profound exposition on Karma Yoga. That inner spiritual elevation, **antaranga uṇṇayana avasthā**, enabled him to transform even a prison cell into a place of sādhanā and revelation.

It is said that when he completed the manuscript, the jailor destroyed the pages. But Tilak, undisturbed, simply said, "All that is within my intellect. I shall write it again." And indeed, he rewrote it, word for word, after his release.

Such serenity and strength arise only from one who is nitya-sthita in **adhyātma-jñāna**, constantly established in spiritual wisdom.

Bhagavān says that for such a soul, external conditions, whether comfort or suffering, cease to disturb the mind. The body may be imprisoned, but the consciousness remains ever free, ever luminous.

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.

Bhagavān declares to Arjuna that the true seeker of wisdom is one who remains nitya, ever established in **adhyātma-jñāna**, the knowledge of the Self. He adds, **tattva-jñānārthadarśanam**, to perceive, to contemplate deeply on the reality of the Self, the tattva.

The term tattva, "that-ness", is like saying bālatva (the nature of a child) or vṛddhatva (the nature of an elder). When we hear these, their natural dispositions instantly arise in our minds. Similarly, tattva means the essential nature of Tat, that Supreme, the Paramātmā, the ultimate Reality, and tva means "its very essence." To see this Reality through the eyes of wisdom (jñāna-cakṣu) and to long for the direct experience of that Truth is tattva-jñānārthadarśanam.

Bhagavān concludes, **etaj-jñānam iti proktam**, this alone is called true knowledge; ajñānam yad ato 'nyathā, whatever is other than this is ignorance.

He thus redefines jñāna itself, not as the accumulation of worldly or professional learning, but as the inner knowing of the Self. All other forms of learning, law, commerce, engineering, or medicine, though necessary for livelihood, are still considered ajñāna because they do not lead one to Self-recognition. Such knowledge keeps the mind entangled in the body-consciousness (deha-buddhi) and compels one to live as if one were merely the body.

Bhagavān distinguishes between buddhi-vikāśa (development of intellect) and chaitanya-jñāna (awakening to consciousness). Just as an electrical engineer may study the working of electricity without understanding the consciousness or sentiency within himself, so too most learning remains external. Only when awareness turns inward toward that luminous principle, the chaitanya-tattva, does it become adhyātma-jñāna.

The word adhyātma itself reveals its secret: adhī, to enter within, and ātman, the Self. Thus, adhyātma-jñāna means the inward journey, the pilgrimage into one's own being. Outer tīrtha-yātrā (pilgrimage) may grant merit (puṇya), but the antar-yātrā (inner pilgrimage) brings peace (śānti).

Until one truly understands "Who am I?", sorrow and confusion cannot end. The identification with the body inevitably brings division: "my family," "my society," "my caste," "my nation." Where there is division, there will always be conflict. Hence, the Gītā points toward abheda-bhāva, the vision of

oneness.

Sant Jñāneśvar Mahārāj describes this unity beautifully:

मग अभिन्ना इया सेवा । चित्त मियांचि भरेल जेधवां ।

माझा प्रसादु जाण तेधवां । संपूर्ण जाहला ॥ १२६९ ॥

When the mind becomes completely filled with the sense of oneness with the immutable Paramātma, that fullness itself becomes the inner grace—the prasāda of contentment and completeness.

Such abhinna-sevā (service performed in oneness) brings ānanda, an unbroken serenity of the heart. And for that, the condition is adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvam—the constant remembrance that “I am not merely this body; I am that conscious Self.”

Even if one has not fully realised it, the effort to never forget this truth is itself nitya-sādhana. This steady remembrance of one’s subtle inner identity is what Bhagavān calls true knowledge.

To illustrate, the philosopher Immanuel Kant once reflected endlessly on the question, “Who am I?” One day, while walking, he accidentally collided with someone and grew irritated, asking, “Can you not see where you’re going?” The man retorted, “Who are you?” Kant paused and said softly, “That is what I am still trying to understand.”

Our ordinary identity, our name, family, and occupation, is tied to the perishable body. Yet this identification must one day dissolve, for the body is transient. Our real identity is nitya because we are chaitanya-svarūpa, consciousness itself.

Energy, as science admits, can neither be created nor destroyed; it merely transforms. Similarly, the conscious energy within, the Self, is indestructible (avināśi tattva). The misery of life arises when we mistake the perishable body for the Self and forget our imperishable essence.

To know this indestructible essence is adhyātma-jñāna. To turn within and recognise, “I am that consciousness, not merely the body,” is the beginning of liberation.

Bhagavān, therefore, declares that this alone is jñāna; all else, however vast, remains ajñāna. One may master the sciences of the world, but without knowing the Self, the essential question remains unanswered.

It is like a student in an examination who answers all the optional questions but leaves the one compulsory question blank. When the bell rings and the paper is taken away, what use is it that all optional answers were attempted? Similarly, we spend our lives answering the questions of career, family, and society but forget the one essential question, “Who am I?”

Bhagavān calls this the vedam, to truly know. And that, He says, is nitya-jñāna, the eternal knowledge.

Śrī Rāmadāsa Svāmī expresses it simply:

ऐक ज्ञानार्चें लक्षण । ज्ञान म्हणजे आत्मज्ञान ।

पाहार्चें आपणासि आपण । या नांव ज्ञान ॥ १ ॥

The mark of true knowledge is Self-knowledge. To behold oneself as one truly is—that is knowledge.

And Sant Jñāneśvar adds:

आपला आपणपेयां । विसरु जो धनंजया ।

तेचि रूप यया । अज्ञानासी ॥ ७१ ॥

O Dhanañjaya (Arjuna), to forget one's own true Self—that itself is ignorance.

In this same spirit, the saints realised that saṅuṅa and nirṅuṅa are not two.

सगुण निर्गुण जयाचीये अंगे । तोचि आम्हां संगे क्रीडा करी ॥ २ ॥

The One who is both with form and beyond form plays with us in every aspect of existence.

Our sages and saints perceived that the nirṅuṅa (formless) and saṅuṅa (with form) are the same Reality, seen differently according to one's inner maturity. There is no confusion, no conflict.

For the sake of devotion (upāsanā), we worship the saṅuṅa, the manifest form in the temple, the deity before us. Yet the same Paramātmā pervades all.

As Gurudeva beautifully said: *“When you sit before the deity in your shrine and worship, see the whole universe within that image. And when you rise from your seat and move into the world, see that same Divine everywhere.”*

Such vision, the ability to behold the One in all and all in the One, is the essence of adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvam. It is to remain ever established in the awareness of the Self, the eternal light shining within all beings.

And Bhagavān concludes, He who knows this truly, knows what is worth knowing.

13.12

**jñeyam(m) yattatpraVākṣyāmi, yajjñātvāmṛtamaśnute,
anādimatparam(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)

Bhagavān begins to describe that which is to be known, neyam, the supreme reality which one must know and can indeed know. The term neyam refers to something both knowable and worthy of knowing. It is not an abstract, unreachable mystery reserved for rare beings; it is accessible and realizable to anyone who sincerely strives for inner understanding.

Bhagavān declares: **yat pravakṣyāmi**, “That which I shall now explain thoroughly.” The prefix pra- in pravakṣyāmi signifies not merely telling, but explaining in depth, with clarity and completeness.

And what happens when one knows it? Bhagavān reveals: **yaj jñātvā amṛtam aśnute**, “By knowing this, one attains immortality (amṛtatva).” This realization bestows freedom from mortality, sorrow, and limitation; it is the experience of paramānanda, supreme bliss.

The Journey from Mortality to Immortality

The ancient prayer from the Upaniṣads echoes this movement of consciousness:

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

“Om, Lead me from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality.”

Death, says the seer, is the experience of limitation, bondage, and pain. Amṛtatva is the recognition

of that which never dies — one's own essential Self (Ātma-svarūpa), which is beyond decay or destruction. Knowing this, one transcends sorrow forever.

Anādi and Param Brahman

Bhagavān further declares: anādi mat param brahma, that Brahman is without beginning, anādi, and supreme, param.

Whatever has a beginning must inevitably have an end; hence, that which is truly eternal can have neither. Brahman has no origin, no birth, and no cessation.

It is param, supreme, because nothing exists beyond or apart from it. Everything arises from it, abides in it, and dissolves back into it, as waves arise, play, and merge in the ocean.

Beyond Sat and Asat

Bhagavān continues: **na sat tan nāsad ucyate**, "It cannot be called either sat (being) or asat (non-being)."

In worldly understanding, sat refers to what can be perceived by the senses, what seems tangibly real. Asat refers to what appears unreal or imperceptible. But Brahman, being the very ground of both perception and non-perception, transcends both categories.

It is not sat in the empirical sense, because it cannot be grasped through the senses; nor is it asat, for it is the substratum that enables all experience. It is avāñ-manasa-gocharam, beyond the reach of words and mind.

The eyes see forms, but the power that enables the eyes to see, that very Consciousness, is Brahman. The ears hear sounds, but the awareness that illumines hearing is Brahman. Hence, Brahman cannot be objectified by the senses, for it is the Seer behind all seeing, the Hearer behind all hearing.

The Saint's Realisation

Sant Jñāneśvar beautifully expresses this truth:

जी तूं त्रिजगतिये वोलावा । अक्षर तूं सदाशिवा ।

तूचि सदसत् देवा । तयाही अतीत तें तूं ॥ (11.513)

"O Divine One! Thou art the refuge of all the three worlds.

Thou art the Imperishable, the Sadāśiva.

Thou art both Sat and Asat, and beyond even these two."

Jñāneśvar calls Brahman akṣara, imperishable; Sadāśiva, ever-auspicious, beyond decay. This Reality is the support of all creation, yet untouched by creation itself. It transcends dualities, defies description, and exists beyond all thought and language.

Bhagavān's Intention

Bhagavān now prepares Arjuna, and through him, all seekers, to receive the highest truth:

He will describe that Nirguṇa Tattva, the attributeless, formless Reality, the knowing of which brings amṛtatva, immortality, completeness, and the end of sorrow.

That Reality, says Bhagavān, has hands and feet everywhere, moves through all things, and pervades all beings. It is both within and without, near and far, subtle and all-encompassing.

sarvataḥ(ph) pāṇipādaṃ(n) tat, sarvato'kṣīromukham, 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.

Śrī Bhagavān describes the Supreme Reality as **sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat**, That which has hands and feet everywhere, eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere, and ears everywhere in the universe. Though all-pervasive and all-supporting, That still transcends all that it pervades.

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj, in his Jñāneśvarī, elaborates this sublime truth with great poetic clarity:

ज्याचे होताक्षणी ज्ञान। मुक्त होतो संसारातून।

आणि नित्यानंदात निमग्न। साधक होतो।।

“One who attains that moment of realization becomes free from worldly bondage and is immersed forever in eternal bliss. Such a seeker becomes one with the Supreme.”

When this knowledge dawns, that I am but a reflection of That Supreme Reality, the seeker becomes liberated while living, established in nityānanda, the undying bliss of the Self.

The Nature of That Supreme Principle

Bhagavān explains that this Reality has hands and feet everywhere, sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam. “Hands” and “feet” here signify action and movement. Every act performed in creation is in fact His action. Similarly, sarvato 'kṣī-śiro-mukham means that all eyes that see, all heads that think, and all mouths that speak are His alone. In the Eleventh Chapter, this is revealed in the Viśvarūpa Darśana, where Arjuna beholds innumerable faces, eyes, and arms, all belonging to that one Infinite Being.

In this universe, wherever one sees activity, a craftsman’s hand, a mother’s caring touch, a bird’s flight, or a river’s flow, it is all That moving through all forms.

The hands and feet we call “ours” are, in truth, His instruments.

Likewise, all eyes that perceive beauty or sorrow, all intellects that imagine or design, all mouths that praise or condemn, are His eyes, His intellect, His mouths. The countless heads visible in creation are the many projections of the same universal consciousness.

As the scriptures declare: **“brahmāṇḍite piṇḍī”**, whatever exists in the vast cosmos exists equally in the individual body. Thus, the microcosm reflects the macrocosm.

Hearing Without Ears: The Divine Awareness

Bhagavān adds, **sarvataḥ śrutimalloke**, He has ears everywhere. This means that no sound, no whisper, no prayer or insult escapes His awareness. Even the walls, it is said, have ears, because that Consciousness pervades all.

As Gurudev beautifully explains, this creation is under a vast, subtle “CCTV” of divine awareness. Every thought, word, or action is recorded by that Conscious Presence. We may believe no one hears our words, but He hears, not through physical ears, but through pure consciousness.

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj writes:

आघवांचि देशीं काळीं । नव्हतां देशकाळांवेगळीं ।

जे क्रिया स्थूळास्थूळीं । तेचि हात जयाचे ॥ ८७४ ॥

“Whatever gross or subtle actions take place, they are all performed by His hands alone. He needs no separate limbs, for all limbs belong to Him.”

This shows that He performs all actions in the universe without possessing distinct physical organs. All movements of life, seen and unseen, arise from His energy.

The Example of the Sculpted Mountain

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj offers a vivid metaphor:

Just as in Ajantā or Ellora, the sculptor carves divine forms, Śiva, Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa, and others, from a single mountain rock, so too, this universe is a divine sculpture hewn out of the same Conscious Reality. The stone itself becomes Deva and Devī, form and family. Similarly, the one Chaitanya (Consciousness) manifests as all forms, deities, beings, and worlds, yet remains unchanged, untouched, and indivisible.

That Consciousness pervades everything, every particle, every motion, every life. It is within all and yet beyond all.

The Example of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa

Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa reached this same state of non-difference (abheda-avasthā).

When afflicted with throat cancer, he could no longer eat sweets, once his beloved offering to the Divine. Seeing this, his disciple Naren (later Swami Vivekānanda) felt deep sorrow.

Rāmakṛṣṇa gently smiled and said,

“Ah! How many mouths are there eating! Do you think only this mouth was tasting the sweetness? All who eat are but My mouths.”

Such is the state of oneness where the entire universe is experienced as one’s own body, where every hand that serves, every eye that sees, and every mouth that eats is recognized as His.

The Truth of All-Pervasive Consciousness

Bhagavān thus reveals:

This Reality pervades all, supports all, yet remains beyond all, as gold pervades ornaments but is not exhausted in them; as clay forms pots but is not confined to them.

All forms are sustained by That, but That is not limited by form.

Hence, though He pervades the entire universe (sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati), He remains parātpara, beyond all pervasion.

This is the profound secret of the Self, the Eternal Witness, acting without organs, seeing without eyes, hearing without ears, moving without feet, and pervading without limit.

That, indeed, is the Ātman, the Paramātmā, the Chaitanya-tattva, the one Reality shining through all names and forms.

13.14

**sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṃ(m), sarvendriyavivarjitam,
asaktaṃ(m) sarvabhṛccaiva, nirguṇaṃ(ñ) guṇabhokṭṛ 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.

Bhagavān declares in this profound verse:

HE is the one who appears as the knower of all sense objects (sarvendriya-guṇābhāsam), yet remains untouched by the senses themselves (sarvendriya-vivarjitam). HE knows everything, but not through the physical organs of perception. HE is asaktaḥ, unattached, unbound by any relation of like or dislike; sarvabhṛt, the sustainer of all beings; nirguṇaḥ, beyond all qualities, and yet **guṇa-bhokṭṛ**, the experiencer of all qualities through His own reflection within them.

This teaching reveals a subtle paradox: though Paramātmā is nirguṇa (without attributes), HE appears as the guṇa-bhoktā (enjoyer of attributes) only because the world, which manifests through the guṇas of Prakṛti, reflects His light of Consciousness. Just as the sun appears to move across the sky though it never truly moves, the Paramātmā seems to act through all beings though HE remains ever still and detached.

Jñāneśvar Mahārāj, in his Jñāneśvarī, gives a beautiful and tangible description of how this all-pervading Consciousness is present everywhere:

तरि ते अवकाश जैसे । नोहिजतीचि कां आकाशें ।

जें विकार होऊनि तैसें । विकारी नोहे ॥ ८९९ ॥

Just as the sky (ākāśa) pervades everything and yet remains untouched by what happens within it, the Paramātmā pervades all beings and remains unaltered by their changes.

He further illustrates:

घटाकारें वेंटाळें । तेथ नभ गमे वाटोळें ।

मठीं तरी चौफळें । आये दिसे ॥ ८९८ ॥

The space within a pot appears round, while the space within a monastery appears square. The same space seems to take different forms depending on the container — yet in truth, the space is ever the same, formless and infinite.

Likewise, the all-pervading Chaitanya, the Conscious Self, appears as though it assumes the form of each living being, small or large, beautiful or plain, intelligent or dull. But just as space is not bound by the shape of the vessel, Paramātmā is not confined by any name or form.

Thus, when Bhagavān says nirguṇam guṇa-bhokṭṛ ca, HE reveals that the same Absolute, while being beyond all guṇas, experiences them through the beings in whom His reflection dwells. The one Consciousness, the one Ātma-tattva, is shining in every heart, in every “ghaṭa,” every living form.

To recognise this is to see that all distinctions are mere appearances in the vast sky of Consciousness. One who realises this truth perceives unity amidst diversity, calm amidst movement, and the eternal amidst the transient, for such a one abides in the Paramātmā who is truly sarvavyāpi (all-pervading), asakta (unattached), and nirguṇa (beyond qualities), yet manifest through all.

13.15

**bahirantaśca bhūtānām, acaram(ñ) carameva ca,
sūkṣmatvāttadavijñeyam(n), dūrastham(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.

Bhagavān reveals another profound truth of the Paramātmā-tattva in the verse:

HE is both within and without all beings (bahir antaś ca bhūtānām). HE is present in the moving (caram) as well as the unmoving (acaram). Because HE is supremely subtle (sūkṣmatvāt), HE cannot

be perceived by ordinary senses (avijñeyam). HE is at once far away (dūrastham) and yet very near (āntike ca tat).

This verse expands the earlier idea of all-pervasiveness by giving vivid metaphors of the Paramātma's subtle presence. Bhagavān is everywhere, in the gross and in the subtle, in motion and in stillness. Just as space exists within and outside every pot, the same Consciousness pervades within and outside every being.

When a pot is broken, the space inside it merges effortlessly with the space outside. In reality, there was never any separation, the space was one and continuous. Similarly, Paramātma pervades both the inner and outer realms, the seen and the unseen, the animate and the inanimate.

Even in what appears inert, such as a table, the Divine presence abides. Within that table are atoms; within the atoms, electrons move in precise harmony. That very movement is the reflection of Chaitanya, Consciousness itself. Every particle of existence vibrates with the touch of that Conscious Energy. It may not appear so to our senses, yet that does not make it absent, only unseen.

Because HE is sūkṣma, infinitely subtle, HE cannot be grasped by the eyes or mind. This avijñeyatā (unperceivability) is not absence, but transcendence. The Paramātma is nearer than the nearest, abiding in one's very heart, yet seems distant because of the impurities that veil perception.

The saints illustrate this beautifully. Imagine a pond into which a diamond ring has fallen. If the water is muddy, covered with algae, one cannot see the ring, though it lies right there. But if the water is pure, still, and transparent, as in a clear swimming pool, the ring immediately becomes visible.

In the same way, the Paramātma dwells within everyone, nearer than breath itself, yet remains unseen because the inner lake of consciousness is disturbed by worldly impressions, desires, attachments, fears, and restlessness. When the mind becomes still, pure, and translucent through sādhanā (spiritual discipline), that Divine presence becomes self-evident.

Thus, Bhagavān declares that HE is both near and far, near to the one who has attained purity and clarity, far from the one whose inner vision is clouded. This dual description is not contradiction, but completeness, it shows that the Infinite can be both intimate and immeasurable at once.

As Jñāneśvar Mahārāj beautifully explains, the same Paramātma who fills all existence remains untouched, ever serene, and ever radiant, the one Reality that pervades every being, every atom, and every space, yet eludes the grasp of all who seek Him outwardly.

13.16

avibhaktaṃ(ñ) ca bhūteṣu, vibhaktamiva ca sthitam, bhūtabharṭṛ 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).

Bhagavān continues to describe the nature of the Chaitanya-tattva, the Supreme Consciousness, which the self-realised sage recognises as his own true Self.

HE is **avibhaktaṃ**, undivided and indivisible, **yet vibhaktam iva sthitam**, appearing as though

divided among beings. HE is bhūtabhartṛ, the supporter and sustainer of all beings; grasiṣṇu, the absorber at the time of dissolution; and prabhaviṣṇu, the generator or creator at the beginning of creation.

Bhagavān here reveals the secret of how the One manifests as the many, yet remains ever One.

The Paramātmā is indivisible, but appears divided because of the limitations of the body and mind. Just as water placed in many pots appears to be many different bodies of water, though in reality it is one and the same, so too the One Consciousness appears as many individual beings.

Imagine a pond filled with water and several pots immersed in it, each pot also filled with water. The water in the pots and the water in the pond are not different, yet due to the walls of the pots, they seem separate. In truth, when the pots break, the same water merges into oneness again.

Similarly, the Paramātmā, though one and undivided, seems divided because HE appears to dwell separately within each body, each bhūta (living or non-living being). This is the meaning of **avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam**, undivided in reality, yet seemingly divided in appearance.

This Paramātmā is also the one who nourishes and sustains all beings, bhūtabhartṛ. Through HIS aspect as Viṣṇu, HE preserves life; through HIS aspect as Brahmā, HE creates life; and through HIS aspect as Rudra, HE dissolves it. These three, creation, sustenance, and dissolution, are not three separate powers but three expressions of the same Reality.

Thus, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśa are not independent deities but divine manifestations of the One Paramātmā functioning as Prabhu Viṣṇu, Grasiṣṇu Rudra, and Bhūtabhartṛ Brahmā. In modern analogy, this truth is reflected in the very word “GOD”:

G – Generator (Brahmā),
O – Operator (Viṣṇu),
D – Destroyer (Rudra).

HE is simultaneously the source, the sustainer, and the dissolver of all beings. Through these functions, the universe remains ever dynamic and ever renewed — nitya-nūtanatā.

Bhagavān then hints at a still deeper truth, beyond these cycles of creation and dissolution. The seeker who undertakes the inner journey (antara-yātrā) begins to wash away the impurities of the heart (citta-mala) through constant remembrance of that unchanging, imperishable Paramātmā. As the inner being is purified, the mind becomes calm and transparent, allowing the reflection of the Divine to shine clearly within.

The Paramātmā then reveals Himself as the jyotiḥ, the Light beyond all lights, the radiance surpassing every other radiance. HE is the source from which all light arises, the very essence that illumines the sun, the moon, and the fire.

Thus, Bhagavān guides the aspirant from perception of division to the experience of indivisible unity, from the external universe of names and forms to the inner universe of pure Consciousness, where the seeker realises that the One who creates, sustains, and dissolves all, is none other than the Self within.

**jyotiṣāmapī tajjyotiḥ(s), tamaṣaḥ(ph) paramucyate,
jñānaṃ(ñ) jñeyamaṃ(ñ) jñānagamyam(m), hr̥di 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.

Bhagavān describes the supreme, self-luminous Reality in one of the most profound verses of the Bhagavad Gītā:

HE is jyotiṣāmapī jyotiḥ, the Light of all lights, the radiance that enables every other source of light to shine. All forms of external light, whether the sun, the moon, fire, or electricity, borrow their power from this inner, eternal Light of Consciousness.

This Paramātmā is **tamaṣaḥ param ucyate**, beyond tamas, beyond ignorance and the veil of māyā. Tamas here represents the darkness of unawareness, the delusion that makes one identify with the body and the world, forgetting the eternal Self. That ignorance is dispelled only by the Light of Knowledge that emanates from the Divine.

Bhagavān declares elsewhere:

**“jñānena tu tad ajñānaṃ yeṣāṃ nāśitam ātmanaḥ
teṣāṃ ādityavaj jñānaṃ prakāśayati tat param.” (Gītā 5.16)**

And in the tenth chapter:

“aham jñānam jñānam tamaḥ nāśayāmy ātma-bhāvastho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā.”

HE Himself kindles the lamp of wisdom (jñāna-dīpa) within the heart, dispelling the darkness of ignorance.

This supreme Light is not merely to be worshipped from afar, it is to be realised within. Bhagavān says that this jyotiḥ is jñānam—it is pure Knowledge itself. It is also jñeyam—that which is to be known, the ultimate object of true knowledge. And it is **jñānagamyam**, that which can be attained through knowledge alone.

Thus, the Self is both the Knower and the Known, the Light and the means to perceive that Light.

Why can this Supreme Reality be known by every individual? Bhagavān gives the answer:

“hr̥di sarvasya viṣṭhitam” — because HE dwells within the heart of all beings. The Paramātmā is not distant or inaccessible; HE is the innermost Self of everyone, ever-present as one’s own consciousness.

This is why the śāstras declare: **“mamaivāṃśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ”**, every individual soul is a fragment of that Eternal Whole. Like Ganga-jala taken in a small vessel, the water within is limited in quantity but not in quality; it retains the very essence of the sacred river. Similarly, the jīva is a limited reflection of the Infinite Paramātmā, yet of the same nature.

Hence, this Light is knowable, for it is none other than the one closest to us, our very Self. But deluded by māyā, we seek HIM in outer temples and distant pilgrimages, forgetting that HE resides within. The saints have therefore sung:

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

Kabīr and other realised souls experienced this truth directly: the Divine need not be sought outside; HE is eternally seated within one's own heart.

The great sage Ramana Maharshi pointed to the same truth through the simple inquiry "Ko'ham?", "Who am I?" The answer to that question leads one to So'ham—"I am That." Each inhalation and exhalation silently repeats this divine affirmation: So'ham, "I am He."

This realisation of the inner Light alone brings true resolution to all human struggles.

Bhagavān's teaching reveals that external light helps us perceive the world, but the light within, the Antar-jyotiḥ, is self-effulgent. When external lamps are extinguished, when there is no electricity, sun, or fire, one still knows: "I exist." That awareness of one's own being requires no outer illumination.

The Antar-jyotiḥ, the light of consciousness, is self-revealing. It does not need another light to be seen. This is why Bhagavān is called jyotiṣām api jyotiḥ—the Light even of all lights. Through that inner Light, we know not only the world but also our own existence.

And this Light, HE says, is *hṛdi sarvasya viṣṭhitam*, seated in the hearts of all beings.

Thus ends Bhagavān's sublime revelation of the Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña, the field and the knower of the field. Arjuna is reminded that he is not merely the body or the field of action, but the Kṣetrajña, the knower, the witnessing consciousness, and that very consciousness within him is none other than the Paramātmā Himself.

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.

Having thus expounded upon Kṣetra (the field) and Jñāna (knowledge), Bhagavān concludes this section saying:

“Iti kṣetraṁ tathā jñānam neyaṁ ca samāsataḥ uktam” , “Thus have the field, knowledge, and that which is to be known been briefly declared.”

Here, Kṣetra refers to the physical body and material nature, the field of experience; Jñāna refers to the knowledge of this field; and Neyam refers to that subtle, imperceptible essence that is beyond the senses, the nirākāra tattva, which cannot be grasped by the organs of perception. Bhagavān reveals that HE has explained all of these in essence, the seen, the knower, and the supreme to be known.

“Etad vijñāya mad-bhakta mad-bhāvopapadyate”, “He who truly knows this becomes established in My Being.”

Those who realise this truth become HIS devotees, not as a separate entity divided from HIM (vibhakta na bhaktaḥ), but one who inwardly unites with the Paramātmā, remaining ever established in spiritual knowledge. Such a devotee, who dwells continuously in the consciousness of the Divine, attains Mad-bhāva — the very nature and essence of the Supreme.

Bhagavān reveals a profound truth here: the mind naturally takes on the qualities of that with which it associates. The citta (consciousness) acquires the form, qualities, and disposition of what it contemplates upon. As the saying goes:

पानी रे पानी तेरा रंग कैसा जिसमें मिला दो लगे उस जैसा

“O water, what is your colour? Whichever it merges with, it becomes like that.”

In the same way, when the mind merges with the Imperishable Being, how can it not take on the qualities of the Sat-Cit-Ānanda Svarūpa — Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss? When the consciousness becomes one with the unchanging Paramātmā, its impurities gradually dissolve.

Saint Tulasīdāsa expresses this truth beautifully in his prayer:

इति वदति तुलसीदास शंकर शेष मुनि मन रंजनम्।

मम हृदय कुंज निवास कुरु कामादि खल दल गंजनम्।।

Tulasīdāsa prays:

*“O Rāma! O Prabhu! O Supreme Delight of Śaṅkara, Śeṣa, and the sages,
Reside in the lotus of my heart, and destroy the hosts of passions and evils within.”*

Tulasīdāsa here speaks not merely as a poet but as a seeker expressing the essence of bhakti. He prays that the Avikārī Paramātmā (the unchanging Divine) may reside in his heart, for the world of prakṛti is vikārī, filled with constant change, agitation, and impurities. The Kṣetrajña, the Knower within, remains untouched and untainted by these. Thus, when the heart unites with the Avikārī, the impurities (vikāras) of the mind naturally dissolve.

This is the essence of Bhakti. Why should one engage in Bhakti?

For the aspirant seeking worldly fulfilment, sākāma bhakti (devotion with desire) has its place.

But the higher, niṣkāma bhakti, devotion without desire, directed toward the formless Paramātmā, is meant for inner purification.

Through such devotion, all inner impurities are gradually destroyed. The dissolution of these vikāras is itself the realisation of ānanda, the true bliss of the Self. The more the mind turns towards the world, the more it absorbs its impurities; the more it turns towards the unchanging Paramātmā, the more those impurities get diluted, until the heart becomes pure and luminous.

That is why the great saints and sages have extolled Bhakti as the highest path, not as mere emotion, but as the power that unites Jñāna (knowledge) and Ānanda (bliss). It is this niṣkāma bhakti, free from all desires, that leads the seeker to become established in the Divine nature itself, Madbhāvopapadyate.

Thus ends Bhagavān's sublime teaching on the knowledge of the Field and the Knower, where Jñāna culminates in Bhakti, and Bhakti blossoms into union with the Supreme.

13.19

prakṛtiṃ(m) puruṣaṃ(ñ) caiva, vidyanādi ubhāvapi, vikārāṃśca guṇāṃścaiva, viddhi prakṛtiṣambhavān. 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.

Both Prakṛti (Nature) and Puruṣa (the Conscious Principle) are described by Bhagavān as anādi, without beginning. Prakṛti is the dynamic, creative power through which all manifestations arise, while Puruṣa is the conscious witness, the eternal spirit that animates existence.

Even though Prakṛti is inert (jaḍa), it still moves, vibrates, and pulsates with latent consciousness. Within it operates the subtlest level of motion—what in modern terms may be compared to electrons, ceaselessly revolving as expressions of the underlying intelligence of the cosmos. Both Prakṛti (matter) and Puruṣa (spirit) are the subtle foundations of the seen (sthūla) and unseen (sūkṣma) realities, the inert and the sentient, the kṣetra and the kṣetrajña.

Bhagavān declares that though both are beginningless, the vikāras (modifications) and guṇas (qualities, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas) arise from Prakṛti. Puruṣa remains untouched, free, and unaffected. Yet, when this Puruṣa, the pure consciousness, identifies Himself with Prakṛti, with the body, with the non-self, He appears to become subject to change and suffering.

In truth, Puruṣa is avikārī, immutable. He is like the Ātmaliṅga, the emblem of the Self, untouched by whatever is superimposed upon it. Just as the Ātmaliṅga remains unaffected by any offerings placed upon it, so too does the Self remain unsullied by the actions, thoughts, and experiences of Prakṛti. Only when one reaches this realization of the nirlepa tattva, the stainless essence, can one truly know one's own nature.

Bhagavān further illustrates this through a metaphor. Pure gold (śuddha svarṇa) by itself is too soft to be shaped into ornaments. Only when an alloy or impurity is added does it become suitable for formation into various forms. Similarly, pure consciousness (śuddha caitanya) by itself is beyond creation or modification. When certain limiting adjuncts (upādhis) and impurities (vikāras) are introduced through Prakṛti, the vast and manifold universe of names and forms (nāma-rūpa) comes into being.

Thus, Prakṛti and Puruṣa function together, one as the field of change, the other as the changeless witness. Prakṛti expresses motion, transformation, and creation; Puruṣa lends awareness, light, and being. Though inseparably intertwined in the play of existence, they remain distinct in essence, the mutable and the immutable, the dynamic and the still, the seen and the seer.

When this distinction is truly understood, not intellectually but experientially, one perceives that all movement, all phenomena, belong to Prakṛti, while the silent awareness witnessing it all is Puruṣa,

the eternal Paramātmā. It is only through such realization that the Self is known in its purest form, ever untouched, ever radiant, ever free.

13.20

kāryakaraṇakartṛtve, hetuḥ(ph) prakṛtirucyate, puruṣaḥ(s) sukhaduḥkhānāṃ(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.

Bhagavān explains that all actions in creation are performed by Prakṛti (Nature). Yet the Puruṣa, the Conscious Principle within, mistakenly identifies Himself with Prakṛti and believes, “I am the doer.” In reality, He is ever free, untouched, and beyond action.

Prakṛti is called the **kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛ hetuḥ**, the cause behind the instruments and acts of creation. The body, the senses, and the mind—all belong to Prakṛti. Puruṣa, on the other hand, is the **sukha-duḥkha-bhoga hetuḥ**, the experiencer of pleasure and pain, due to His association with Prakṛti.

In truth, the Puruṣa, the Caitanya Tattva or principle of pure consciousness, does not act. But when He associates with Prakṛti, He appears to act. The entire drama of worldly activity unfolds from this union of the inert (jaḍa) and the conscious (cetana).

Bhagavān gives a subtle illustration:

Electricity by itself does nothing. Only when it is connected to various instruments does its power manifest. When joined to a microphone, it amplifies sound; when linked to an air-conditioner, it cools; when connected to a bulb, it gives light; and when attached to a refrigerator, it preserves food. Similarly, Caitanya by itself does not act, and the body by itself cannot act. Action arises only when the conscious principle (Puruṣa) associates with the physical and subtle instruments of Prakṛti.

Thus, all activity belongs to Prakṛti, though it is enlivened and sustained by Caitanya. However, this conscious principle, having forgotten its own pure identity, mirrors itself in Prakṛti and begins to believe, “I am the doer, I am the enjoyer.” Therefore, He becomes the bhoktā, the experiencer of pleasure and pain, of joy and sorrow.

How does this experience occur? What is the precise role of this Puruṣa in creation, as the Upadraṣṭā (Witness), Anumantā (Permitter), Bhartā (Supporter), Bhoktā (Enjoyer)? Bhagavān will beautifully reveal these secrets in the 21st and 22nd verses of this chapter. There, He will unfold how the Paramātmā, though detached, appears to assume different roles within the cosmic play.

Today's reflection flows entirely by the grace of the Gurudeva and the blessings of Jñāneśvar Mahārāj. Whatever drops of this sacred jñāna-dhārā (stream of knowledge) could be gathered are offered at their divine feet. With gratitude at the lotus feet of the revered Gurudev, the discourse was concluded.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Ramprasad ji

Question: In your background, I see an image of Swamiji and some horses. A few months ago, during my Char Dham Yatra, especially on the mountain paths to Yamunotri and

Kedarnath, I saw the suffering of the horses carrying pilgrims. I felt deep sorrow. Could you please tell me what kind of sin falls upon those who ride or make those horses carry heavy loads?

Answer: See, when we study the Bhagavad Gītā, our focus is on antaranga śuddhi, the purification of our inner self. If we dwell too much on worldly suffering, we start reflecting those same impurities within. The world indeed holds much pain; there are those who harm even innocent beings. However, instead of brooding on others' sins, our path is to purify our citta and rise inwardly. Bhagavān's law of karma is just; whoever causes harm will naturally face its consequence according to divine order. Those who inflict suffering upon any being will surely receive their due results. But our immediate duty in this study is not to judge their sin, but to turn inward and work on cleansing our own hearts. That is where true transformation begins.

Meena Kumari ji

Question: In your previous discourse, you mentioned that Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Gītā is called the Garbha-gr̥ha (sanctum) and the final resting chapter. Why is it described so?

Answer: Chapter 12 is called the Garbha-gr̥ha because it leads the seeker into the innermost sanctum of Bhakti, the heart of the temple of devotion. In this chapter, Bhagavān reveals the qualities of a true devotee and the essence of pure love for the Divine.

After understanding the impersonal (nirguṇa-nirākāra) nature of the Supreme, one must not think that Bhagavān exists only in form or only without form. This chapter helps the seeker realise His all-pervasiveness and then gently brings the consciousness inward, to the very core where the Divine presence shines within.

It is called the final resting chapter because, ultimately, no matter how much jñāna one gains, as long as the body and ego-sense remain, one's heart finds rest only in loving devotion to the personal form of Bhagavān. Even great sages like Ramana Maharshi said, "*Worship continues as long as the sense of 'I' and hunger remain.*"

Thus, Chapter 12 is both the sanctum, where the seeker meets the Divine within, and the final rest, where the soul, after all striving, surrenders in serene devotion to the personal form of the Supreme.

Finally, the session concluded with the recitation of **Hanuman Chalisa** and a prayer, invoking strength, devotion, and divine grace.



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Thank you-For reading the summary

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

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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