

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

2/3 (Ślōka 6-13), Sunday, 02 November 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/30eJl5ImR5o>

Know to introspect and understand the extent of Satva, Rajas and Tamo Guna in ourselves and importance to increase SATVA GUNA

The 14th chapter of Bhagavadgītā is **Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga - The Yoga of Classification of the Three Guṇas**

The session began with the Auspicious Lighting of the lamp, guiding us towards the path of knowledge and away from the path of Ignorance.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ १ ॥

I bow to Bhagwan Krishna, the son of Vasudev, the Supreme Lord Himself, the destroyer of Kansa and Chanura, and the one who brings supreme bliss to His mother Devaki – the Jagadguru (teacher of the world).

In the 16th chapter, we heard of three gunas: **Sattva, Rajas and Tamas**, the classification of characteristics into these three modes, and the significance of it.

In this chapter, we are further given the understanding to decipher the actual qualities within us and how to recognise them and know ourselves. By knowing this, we will know the effect of each characteristic that we have within us and the shaping of our personality.

14.6

**tatra sattvaṁ(n) nirmalatvāt, prakāśakamanāmayam,
sukhasaṅgena badhnāti, jñānasaṅgena cānagha. 14.6**

Of these, Sattva being immaculate, is illuminating and flawless, Arjuna; it binds through attachment

to happiness and knowledge.

The **sattva guna**, which is the **mode of goodness**, is bound to our soul. **Sattva guna** is considered the quality that brings clarity in our thoughts.

We meet several types of people;

- Some with good clarity of thoughts
- Some others who are always confused
- Some who look nervous all the time and are shrouded in ignorance.

- A Sattvik is the one who is peaceful and calm and happy, endowed with a superior understanding capability and has good clarity of thoughts.
- A Rajasik is very active, but they do not have any clarity in their actions and lack concentration.
- A Tamasik is always confused and stays inactive, lacks energy and does not have the desire to be active.

Persons with increasing Sāttvik guṇa become more understanding, and this quality further grows with sādhana (dedicated spiritual practice) by engaging in Sāttvik activities and spiritual disciplines.

One who gains clarity becomes nirvikāra (unaffected) and pure in mind, with nothing undesirable in their behaviour. We all wish to make good decisions and avoid confusion. As we cultivate Sāttvik qualities, we move towards becoming truly Sāttvik and thus become dear to Bhagavān.

If a person has a dual mind and finds it difficult to make decisions, it indicates that Sattva guṇa is low and Rājasic tendencies are dominant. One must consciously make an effort to increase Sattva guṇa.

- A **Rājasic** person, being driven by desires, is constantly active, working hard to fulfill them and always busy pursuing results.
- A **Tāmasic** person, on the other hand, tends to be lazy, lethargic, and inclined towards sleep and inactivity. Tāmasic qualities pull a person downward.

Understanding these differences, one should strive to engage in Sāttvik activities, worship, singing bhajans, chanting the Gītā, speaking kind words, performing good deeds, helping others, and respecting elders. The constant endeavour should be to increase Sattva guṇa.

All three guṇas, Sāttvik, Rājasic, and Tāmasic, can bring a sense of happiness:

- A Tāmasic person feels happy while lazing around.
- A Rājasic person feels happy by being active and fulfilling desires.
- A Sāttvik person experiences enduring and perpetual happiness.

However, the happiness derived from Tāmasic and Rājasic guṇas is temporary and result-oriented, lasting only for a particular activity.

Examples:

The happiness from long hours of sleep ends when one wakes up.

The joy of cycling ends when one stops cycling.

On the other hand, learning and chanting the Bhagavad Gītā increases Sāttvik tendencies and brings deep, lasting peace and joy. Therefore, our focus should always be on cultivating Sattva guṇa to remain peaceful and truly happy.

Question: How to increase satvik guna as per your understanding?

Answers: Sanjay ji said Sattvik activity is in chanting the shlokas in front of Bhagavān and chanting the Gita and the name of Bhagavān.

Adya said that by worshipping, studying and chanting Gītā.

14.7

rajo rāgātmakaṃ(m) viddhi, tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam, tannibadhnāti kaunteya, karmasaṅgena dehinam. 14.7

Arjuna, know the quality of Rajas, which is of the nature of passion, as born of desire and attachment. It binds the soul through attachment to actions and their fruit.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains that from Rajo Guṇa arise tṛṣṇā (craving or intense desire) and āsakti (attachment).

Tṛṣṇā means a deep longing to obtain something, like the desperate urge for water in a desert. It represents the restless craving to possess or experience what one does not have.

Āsakti or attachment is the emotional bonding that develops when we become overly involved with something we like. For instance, after hosting a party, if we keep replaying the events in our mind, thinking about what went right or wrong, or how it could have been better, that lingering involvement is attachment. Ideally, once the event is over, we should move on and not remain mentally entangled with it.

Rajo Guṇa is the quality of activity and restlessness. For example, during a spiritual discourse, if one switches off the camera to eat snacks, listens to music, scrolls through social media, or multitasks, it shows an increase in Rajasik tendencies, even if some Sattva is present.

When Sattva Guṇa increases, clarity arises. We naturally understand what should and should not be done. Hence, it is essential to keep the three guṇas in balance, ensuring that Sattva Guṇa predominates, for it brings peace, purity, and discernment.

14.8

tamastvajñānajaṃ(m) viddhi, mohanaṃ(m) sarvadehinām, pramādālasyanidrābhiḥ(s), tannibadhnāti bhārata. 14.8

And know Tamas, the deluder of all those who look upon the body as their own self, as born of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sleep and sloth, Arjuna.

Tamo Guṇa is highly attractive. It draws the mind towards inactivity, sleep, and indulgent rest. Everyone finds pleasure in sleeping, but when sleep continues even after adequate rest, it becomes an expression of Tamasik nature.

Eg: Alarm rings at 6 AM, but waking up will be at 7 AM. This is because of Tamasik's nature. If sleeping is due to lack of rest, there is some meaning, but if sleep is just to enjoy resting and doing nothing, that is not right.

Tamas arises from ignorance (ajñāna). When a person does not wish to listen to saints, learn, chant

the Bhagavad Gītā, read uplifting books, or engage in noble thoughts, their inner knowledge becomes veiled. Instead, the mind gets drawn to unproductive entertainment or meaningless distractions, which only deepen ignorance.

When Tamo Guṇa takes over, the mind becomes dull and confused. It loses clarity of judgment and struggles to choose the right action, often leading to wrong or fruitless deeds. Such actions yield no true benefit and waste valuable time.

Therefore, one must consciously reduce Tamasik tendencies and strive to increase Sattva Guṇa. This can be done by maintaining discipline and balance in daily life, sleeping only as much as needed, waking up at the right time, studying when it is time to study, and engaging in pure, uplifting activities. Habits like sleeping during the morning and staying awake late at night disturb both physical health and inner harmony.

A Sāttvik life brings clarity, energy, and peace, guiding us steadily towards true happiness and spiritual growth.

Knowing this we can avoid such actions and reduce Tamasik qualities and move towards Sattva guna. Sleep as much required, wake up at the right time, and study at the time meant for studying. Practices like sleeping in the morning time and waking up in the night does affect health.

14.9

**sattvaṃ(m) sukhe sañjayati, rajaḥ(kh) karmaṇi bhārata,
jñānamāvṛtya tu tamaḥ(ph), pramāde sañjayatyuta. 14.9**

Sattva draws one to joy and Rajas to action; while Tamas, clouding wisdom, impels one to error, sleep and sloth Arjuna.

- Sattva guna gives us peace and happiness, and remains with us all the time. It binds us to happiness through yoga, chanting Gītā, eating good sattvik food, worship and such activities. It increases peaceful effects on the mind and makes the mind free from confusion, bringing clarity of thoughts.
- Rajo guna makes us active and busy doing many things at a time, and gets us attached to the activity and results. The desires drive the activity, and the effort is towards getting what is desired. There is no room for lazy time or overeating.
- Tamo guna makes us disturbed and unhappy, and confused. The knowledge level goes down, and the undesirable practices lead the person towards wrongdoings.

Satvik Guna should undoubtedly be given importance. The existence of Rajo guna and Tamo guna cannot be entirely rooted out, as they do exist in some proportion. However, they should be controlled to a minimum level.

- **Question:** Which is the Guna that keeps us peaceful and happy?
Options: a) Tamas, b) Rajas, c) Sattva, d) none of the above.
- **Answer:** Maximum replied correctly as **Sattva**.
- **Question:** If a person looks peaceful and has a pleasant smile on the face, helps others, what would be the nature of this person, satva or Rajas or Tamas or none of these?

Options: a) Tamas, b) Rajas, c) Sattva, d) none of the above.

• **Answer:** Most of them replied correctly as **Sattva**.

• **Question:** Which is the guna that makes a person busy always and keeps the desire to always gain something?

Options: a) Tamas, b) Rajas, c) Sattva, d) none of the above.

• **Answer:** Most replied correctly as **Rajas**

• **Question:** If a person becomes very lazy and is always sleepy and does not want to study or eat, and just wants to sleep?

Options: a) Tamas, b) Rajas, c) Sattva, d) none of the above.

• **Answer:** Most have answered correctly as **Tamas**.

14.10

**rajastamaścābhibhūya, sattvaṃ(m) bhavati bhārata,
rajaḥ(s) sattvaṃ(n) tamaścaiva, tamaḥ(s) sattvaṃ(m) rajastathā. 14.10**

Overpowering Rajas and Tamas, Arjuna, Sattva prevails; overpowering Sattva and Tamas, Rajas prevails; even so, overpowering Sattva and Rajas, Tamas prevails.

- By suppressing Rajo guna and Tamo Guna, the Satva guna will be predominant.
- When Rajas and Satva gunas are suppressed, the Tamo Guna will increase.
- If any 2 Guna are suppressed, the other one will improve.

These three are connected to each other like friends. When three friends tease each other, one of them gets better at it and the other 2 get suppressed. **However, this is just an example and not good to practice.**

If we increase our **sattvik guna**, automatically, the **rajas** and **tamo guna** will increase, as our mind does not show interest towards these two.

Eg: If we want to do work, we may forget to sleep

If we want to study, we may intend to study an hour extra and sleep an hour less. If we are sleeping more and eating more, this only increases Tamasik and as a result, the **Sattva and Rajo Guna** will decrease.

Whichever two gunas are suppressed, the other will increase. **The happiness that is gained by increasing satva guna is 'ananda' or the purest form of happiness and delight.** A word that does not even have an opposite expression, like happiness, which has sadness as its opposite.

Further, we understand what is the guna that is prominent in us.

14.11

**sarvadvāreṣu dehe'smin, prakāśa upajāyate,
jñānaṃ(m) yadā tadā vidyād, vivṛddhaṃ(m) sattvamityuta. 14.11**

When light and discernment dawn in this body, as well as in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattva is predominant.

The human body functions through five senses

Eyes, Ears, Nostrils, Tongue, and Skin which are supported and guided by four inner instruments:

- **Mana (Mind)** – the faculty that feels and desires
- **Buddhi (Intellect)** – the faculty that reasons and decides
- **Chitta (Conscience or Memory)** – the storehouse of impressions
- **Ahankāra (Ego)** – the sense of “I” and identity

Together, these perceive and process information from the external world.

Each sense has a rightful purpose:

The eyes should see what is meant to be seen; the ears should hear what is good and uplifting.

When we control our senses and direct them toward their rightful functions, Sāttvik Guṇa naturally increases, while Rajo Guṇa and Tamo Guṇa diminish in influence.

For example, the eyes are meant to look at books for study, not at the television. We must know when to eat, instead of eating out of craving at any random time, even while studying. During worship, our concentration should remain on the chanting of bhajans and ślokas, not on the sound of a TV or other distractions.

This is where sense control guided by the mind becomes essential. The mind must decide how to use the senses, whether to study, play, chat with friends, or watch television.

A person with predominantly Sāttvik qualities chooses wisely and acts without hesitation. For instance, such a student will immediately decide to complete homework, knowing the consequences of neglect, such as facing punishment in school.

When Sattva Guṇa prevails, clarity and right decision-making come naturally and effortlessly, leading to discipline, peace, and harmony within.

- **Question:** Having understood how decisions can be taken when **satva guna** increases, whether to study, see TV, social media, or play video game, how will you all decide? Share your experience.
- **Answer:** Parth ji said that he had more **Sattva guna** and did not get confused.

14.12

lobhaḥ(ph) pravṛttirārambhaḥ(kh), karmaṇāmaśamaḥ(s) spṛhā, rajasyetānijāyante, vivṛddhe bharaṭarṣabha. 14.12

With the preponderance of Rajas, Arjuna, greed, activity, undertaking of action with an interested motive, restlessness and a thirst for enjoyment make their appearance.

When Rajo Guṇa increases, greed (lobhaḥ) and desire (spṛhā) also increase.

For example, when gifts are being distributed, a person influenced by Rajas may hope to receive a larger or better share. Such expectations arise from greed, which keeps the mind constantly occupied with thoughts of what we can get rather than what we can give.

Greed is never healthy because it binds the mind to endless wants. We must train our thoughts to focus on giving, serving, and contributing. When expectations are removed, the heart feels light, content, and truly happy.

Rajo Guṇa is also characterised by pravṛtti, constant activity and restlessness. The desire to remain busy all the time, to chase results, or to achieve something significant arises from this Rājasic impulse.

For instance, the desire to score the highest marks can motivate action, but when it turns into attachment to the result, the mind becomes disturbed. If the expected outcome is not achieved, it leads to disappointment and sorrow.

Thus, whenever such restless activity, greed, or result-oriented desire dominates our thoughts, it indicates that Rajo Guṇa is increasing.

- **Question:** Which of you feels that Rajo Guṇa is increasing?
- **Answer:** Silence means all of you are Sāttvik!

14.13

aparakāśo'pravṛttiśca, pramādo moha eva ca, tamasyetāni jāyante, vivṛddhe kurunandana. 14.13

With the growth of Tamas, Arjuna, obtuseness of the mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties, frivolity and stupor—all these appear.

When Tamo Guṇa increases, the desire to act diminishes. The mind becomes lethargic, dull, and confused, making decision-making difficult. Such a person lacks the motivation to begin anything and fails to recognise that poor decisions, or indecision itself, can lead to harm.

Because of lapses in judgment, the chances of making mistakes increase. A Tamasik person often becomes stubborn, refusing to listen to reason or accept guidance. They remain rigid in their opinions and justify their behaviour by thinking, “It’s my life; I can do whatever I want.”

This state of mind blocks growth, clouds wisdom, and keeps the person trapped in ignorance and inactivity.

Panchatantra Story: The Monkey and the Crocodile

Once, a monkey and a crocodile became friends. They lived near a river, the crocodile in the water and the monkey on a nearby tree laden with jamun (purple plum) fruits. Every day, the monkey would pluck the juicy fruits and share them with the crocodile, who in turn would take some home for his wife.

One day, the crocodile’s wife had a strange thought. She reasoned that since the monkey ate the sweet jamun fruits every day, his heart must also be sweet and delicious. She demanded that her husband bring her the monkey’s heart to eat.

The crocodile, blinded by attachment and eager to please his wife, foolishly agreed. He went to his friend, the monkey, and told him that his wife wished to meet him, and asked for his heart to take home. The monkey, being wise and quick-witted, instantly understood the crocodile’s intentions. He calmly said, “Oh, my dear friend, I have left my heart on the tree! Let me go and bring it.” Once he reached the tree, he quickly climbed up and never came down again.

From this story, we see that the crocodile acted under the influence of Tamo Guṇa, ignorance and delusion. His decision lacked understanding, for he not only believed that the monkey’s heart could

be kept on a tree but also lost a true friend who had been feeding him daily. His Tamasik nature led to the loss of both wisdom and friendship.

The Story of the Goose That Laid Golden Eggs

Once, a farmer owned a goose that laid one golden egg each day. Greedy for more, he thought that if one egg came daily, there must be many more inside. In his impatience, he decided to cut the goose open to get all the eggs at once. But when he did, he found none, and thus, lost the very source of his wealth.

This story too reflects Tamasik's behaviour, acting without knowledge or reasoning. The farmer's ignorance and greed led him to make a foolish decision that destroyed his fortune.

The one dominated by Tamo Guṇa always ends up harming themselves. A confused, lazy, or deluded mind cannot see clearly and often makes wrong choices. Therefore, our constant effort should be to increase Sattva Guṇa, for it brings clarity, calmness, and right understanding, making life peaceful and beautiful.

When the mind is clouded by confusion, we fail to grasp the truth. But when Sattva rises, knowledge shines, guiding us to act wisely and live joyfully.

The winner of Kon Banega Jnanapati is Malhar Girpunje bhaiya

The session ended with **Hari Sankirthan**.



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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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