



## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/XWBsBDLJ8YA>

## Inner Evolution through the Guṇas: From Ignorance to Illumination

The 14th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā is titled “Guṇa Traya Vibhāga Yoga” — The Yoga of the Three Modes of Nature.

This chapter offers a profound opportunity for deep introspection. It helps us understand the nature of the self, the workings of the mind, and the bondage caused by material tendencies. In today’s session, we shall explore the middle portion of this enlightening chapter.

The session began with a melodious prayer and the lighting of the sacred lamp. The divine blessings of Bhagavān, Saraswati Mata, Śrī Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, and our revered Guru, Śrī Govind Dev Giriji Maharaj, guided us in this pursuit of eternal wisdom.

### Prayers:

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

नमामि सद्गुरुं शान्तं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहम् ।

पूर्णब्रह्मपरानन्दम् ईशमाळन्दिवल्लभम् ॥

यानन्द श्रुति मंत्र शक्ति महती ब्रह्मात्म विद्यावती  
यासूत्रोदित शास्त्रपद्धतिरीति प्रद्योदिनांतरद्युति ।  
या सत्काव्यगतिप्रसादितर्मतिर्नानागुणालंकृतिः  
सा प्रत्यक्ष सरस्वती भगवती मान्नायतां भारती ॥

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं  
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।  
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीमष्टादशाध्यायिनीं

अम्ब त्वामनुसंदधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीं॥

नमोस्तुते व्यास विशाल बुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्रे ।  
येन त्वयया भारत तैल पूर्णः प्रज्वलितो ज्ञानमय प्रदीपः ॥

Today is **Devashayani Ekadashi**, falling within the sacred period of **Deepawali Parva**. On this auspicious day, we are studying Bhagavān's beloved song — the Bhagavad Gītā — which was spoken more than five thousand years ago. Though addressed to Arjuna, it flowed directly from Bhagavān's divine mouth as the eternal song of truth and remains a ceaseless stream of wisdom that continues to illuminate humanity's path even today.

This sacred flow of knowledge introduces us to our real essence — **Sat-Chit-Ānanda** — the eternal existence, consciousness, and bliss that is our true nature.

Just as every human body has similar biological systems — the nervous, digestive, or reproductive — and yet each person remains unique, so too are our minds and temperaments distinct. As the saying goes,

**व्यक्ती तितक्या प्रकृती**

“Each person has a unique nature.”

Although thousands of years have passed and civilizations have evolved technologically and geographically, the human mind remains the same. Its functioning is still governed by the **three guṇas** — **Sattva**, **Rajas**, and **Tamas**. These three qualities exist in varying proportions in every individual, determining one's temperament and behavior. Unless we understand their workings, we cannot truly understand ourselves or the creation (*śṛṣṭi*) around us.

- **Sattva** represents the light of knowledge and harmony.
- **Rajas** represents activity, restlessness, and desire.
- **Tamas** represents inertia, ignorance, and lack of activity.

The influence of these guṇas is so strong that a person forgets his real divine nature of *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* and becomes bound by *Prakṛti* — the material nature.

Just as a vehicle requires a **steering wheel** for direction, **fuel** for movement, and **brakes** for control, similarly, the three guṇas are the forces that drive and regulate our worldly existence (*saṃsāra*).

To understand this concept, the example of a vehicle is very apt. In the journey of life, all three guṇas are essential. Sattva-guṇa is like the steering wheel—it gives the right direction to life. Rajo-guṇa is like fuel—it provides energy and dynamism for action. Tamo-guṇa is like the brake—it slows down unnecessary speed and allows rest and pause. Each of these is necessary for the smooth running of life's journey, yet none of them represents the destination itself.

The same principle operates even at the subtlest level of creation. In an atom, protons (Sattva) and neutrons (Tamas) remain steady within the nucleus, while electrons (Rajas) move actively around it. This reveals that these three guṇas are present in every particle of the universe.

Although these guṇas are essential for the functioning of creation, they also bind us to *Prakṛti* (material nature) and make us forget our true nature of *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*—pure Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. These guṇas are never static; they are in a constant state of flux, each striving to dominate the others.

During this *Gītā Vivechan*, when we are deeply engaged in learning, **Sattva** is the dominant guṇa in us. After some time, when thoughts of pending work arise, **Rajas** begins to act, pushing us toward action. Later, when fatigue sets in, **Tamas** takes over, urging rest and inactivity. Thus, the guṇas continually

attempt to dominate one another.

Bhagavān explains to Arjuna that at the beginning of the war, **Rajas** — the spirit of action — was dominant in him, but when confusion and dejection arose, **Tamas** began to prevail, making him want to renounce his duty. Through true knowledge and right understanding, one can overcome the influence of *Tamas* and *Rajas* and let *Sattva* lead the way — bringing clarity, balance, and right direction to life.

## 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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes how the three guṇas—**Sattva**, **Rajas**, and **Tamas**—continuously compete for dominance within the mind and nature. Each guṇa overcomes the other two in turn, shaping our behavior, thoughts, and tendencies.

• **rajastamaścābhibhūya sattvaṃ bhavati Bhārata** - When Rajas and Tamas are subdued, Sattva prevails, O Arjuna

Sattva, the quality of purity, harmony, and wisdom, shines forth when passion and ignorance are controlled. In this state, the mind becomes clear and steady, filled with peace, faith, and understanding. A person dominated by Sattva acts selflessly and experiences inner joy and balance.

• **rajaḥ sattvaṃ tamaścaiva** - When Rajas overcomes Sattva and Tamas, Rajas prevails

Rajas signifies activity, passion, and restlessness. When it dominates, the mind becomes driven by desires and ambitions. Though the person appears energetic and capable, the restlessness prevents true contentment. The mind oscillates between enthusiasm and dissatisfaction, always seeking newer goals.

• **tamaḥ sattvaṃ rajas tathā** - When Tamas overpowers Sattva and Rajas, Tamas prevails

Tamas brings inertia, ignorance, confusion, and carelessness. When this guṇa dominates, clarity disappears. The person feels lazy, negligent, and deluded, often mistaking wrong for right. It clouds both reason and motivation, binding one in ignorance.

• **The interplay of the guṇas** - The three qualities are in constant motion

Just as day follows night and seasons change, these guṇas continually alternate in influence. The mind rarely stays in one state. Sometimes clarity (Sattva) dominates, sometimes desire (Rajas), and sometimes lethargy (Tamas). Recognizing this inner play helps us rise beyond it.

The **three time periods of the day** also reflect these guṇas: the **morning** symbolizes **Sattva guṇa**, ideal for studying, meditation, and contemplation; the **afternoon** represents **Rajo guṇa**, when dynamic and worldly activities take place; and the **evening or night** reflects **Tamo guṇa**, bringing rest and inertia. Thus, the rhythm of time itself mirrors the ceaseless movement of the guṇas within nature.

Although **Sattva guṇa** is the most desirable among the three, it too is a form of bondage because it still belongs to *Prakṛti* (nature). The ultimate goal is to transcend all three guṇas—to become **Guṇātita**, one who has risen beyond them.

Let us look at another beautiful example

When a person, influenced by Sattva-guṇa, selflessly serves a sick person admitted in a hospital, he does so without expecting any reward. But after some time, when Rajo-guṇa becomes dominant, a thought may

arise in his mind: “I helped so much, yet he didn’t even thank me once.” This tendency to expect recognition or reward is born of Rajas, and it is this very quality that binds us to the fruits of our actions.

Now, let us understand the distinct characteristics of each guṇa more deeply, so that we can steer our lives in the right direction.

Sattva-guṇa inspires us to do good deeds; however, even it carries a subtle sense of pride born of knowledge. One begins to see oneself as different or superior to others.

As Jñāneśvar Maharaj beautifully said:

‘हा ज्ञानाने माजतो अहंकाराने ताठर होतो।’

Through knowledge, the ego finds satisfaction and grows rigid.

Thus, even Sattva can become a cause of downfall when it leads to self-righteousness.

Therefore, it is essential to understand these three guṇas, to recognize our true nature, and to know that we are distinct from them. Life is governed by the three guṇas—Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. This body is merely the chariot provided for our journey toward the ultimate destination, but we are not this chariot.

The goal of this journey is to use the guṇas wisely, yet remain unbound by them. Those great souls who have realized this secret watch the play of the guṇas within themselves as mere witnesses, and thereby attain the Guṇātīta Avasthā—the state beyond the guṇas.

As Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya beautifully expresses in his verse:

न मे मृत्युशंका न मे जातिभेदः  
पिता नैव मे नैव माता न जन्मः।  
न बन्धुर्न मित्रं गुरुर्नैव शिष्यः  
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम्॥

I am neither afraid of death nor bound by caste distinction. I have neither father nor mother, nor was I ever born. I have no relatives, no friends, no teacher, nor disciple. I am pure consciousness, eternal and infinite — *Śivo’ham Śivo’ham*.

We must understand that the **guṇas themselves are bondage**. Unless we realize this truth, we will never aspire for liberation from them. The **desire for knowledge leading to liberation** arises only when Sattva guṇa becomes dominant. In that clarity, one turns toward scriptures such as the **Bhagavad Gītā**, **Jñāneśvarī**, **Rāmcharitmanas**, or **Dāsbodh**, which illuminate the path toward self-realization and caution against delusion.

In the next verse, Bhagavān explains the **signs of dominance of Sattva guṇa**.

### Key Insight

The guṇas constantly shape our moods, actions, and perceptions. Sattva uplifts, Rajas agitates, and Tamas deludes. Spiritual growth begins by observing these changes, nurturing Sattva through knowledge, discipline, and devotion, and ultimately transcending all three to realize the Self — the state beyond the guṇas, where peace and freedom dwell eternally.

## 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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains the **visible signs of the predominance of Sattva guṇa** in an individual. When Sattva increases, it manifests as brightness, clarity, and wisdom both within and without.

• **sarvadvāreṣu dehe'smin prakāśa upajāyate** - When light arises through all the gates of this body The “gates” (dvāras) refer to the sense organs — eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin — and the mind. When Sattva becomes strong, these senses begin to function with purity and precision. The eyes radiate calmness and glow with inner peace, speech becomes gentle and truthful, and one’s actions are guided by awareness rather than impulse. There is an aura of serenity and clarity in such a person.

• **jñānaṃ yadā tadā vidyāt** - When knowledge arises, know that Sattva is dominant The hallmark of Sattva is **light in the form of knowledge (jñāna)**. The person perceives things as they truly are, without distortion from ego or desire. Understanding becomes clear, discrimination (viveka) sharpens, and the person naturally turns toward righteousness and higher wisdom. Such a person having domination of **Sattva guṇa** acquires the wisdom to differentiate between **desirable and undesirable things** — this refined discernment is called

नीरक्षीर विवेक बुद्धी

(**nīra-kṣīra viveka buddhi**), the intellect that separates milk from water.

The great souls who possess this subtle discrimination are called **Paramahaṃsas**, those who can distinguish the eternal from the transient, truth from illusion. This **viveka buddhi** arises due to the dominance of Sattva guṇa.

As Jñāneśwar Maharaj beautifully says:

सलिली पय जैसे । एक होऊनि मीनलें असे ।  
परी निवडूनि राजहंसे । वेगळें कीजे ।

Just as milk and water appear completely mixed, yet the royal swan (rājahaṃsa) is said to separate the milk from the water — so too should our discrimination be that subtle and refined.

Jñāneśwar Maharaj further explains the state of such **Paramahaṃsa** beings:

नाइकणें तें कानचि वाळी । न पहाणें तें दिठीचि गाळी ।  
अवाच्य तें टाळी । जीभचि गा ॥

Such realized souls withdraw their senses completely from the outer world. They neither hear worldly talk, nor see worldly sights, nor utter unworthy words. Their entire being is turned inward, absorbed in the experience of the Self.

Swami Vivekananda’s life beautifully illustrates this ideal. Once, when he arrived at a function to which he was invited, he was stopped at the entrance because he was mistaken for a “Negro.” When asked later why he didn’t clarify his identity, Swamiji replied that he did not wish to belittle anyone else. Such humility and broadness of vision reflect the **Sattvic state of a Paramahaṃsa** — one who sees divinity in all.

**Illustration of Daily Life**

When Sattva increases, a person experiences a natural inclination toward truth, self-control, purity, and learning. They feel joy in meditation, study, and service. Their surroundings seem brighter, thoughts more organized, and emotions more balanced. This inner clarity is the light of Sattva shining through all the “doors” of the body.

### Key Insight

The rise of Sattva transforms perception — both physical and spiritual. One begins to see the world as it truly is, illuminated by wisdom and peace. The **Paramahaṃsa** symbolizes this pinnacle of Sattvic evolution — one who perceives only truth, unaffected by worldly distinctions. Yet, even Sattva must ultimately be transcended, for liberation lies beyond all three guṇas, in the pure consciousness of the Self.

## 14.12

### **lobhaḥ(ph) pravṛttirārambhaḥ(kh), karmaṇāmaśamaḥ(s) sprhā, rajasyetānijāyante, vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha. 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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes the **visible signs of the dominance of Rajo guṇa** in an individual. When Rajas increases, it manifests as constant agitation, desire for achievement, and attachment to results. Unlike Sattva, which brings light and balance, Rajas fuels restlessness and unending motion.

- **lobhaḥ** – Greed

When Rajas becomes strong, a person develops greed — an insatiable craving for wealth, power, position, or pleasure. Satisfaction seems distant, and desires multiply endlessly. The mind becomes absorbed in acquisition and competition.

- **pravṛttiḥ ārambhaḥ karmaṇām** – Activity and the initiation of undertakings

The Rājasic person is ever busy, seeking new ventures and engaging in action driven by personal motives. This activity is often restless and lacks inner peace. Even noble actions, when performed under Rajas, are tinged with ego and desire for recognition.

- **aśamaḥ sprhā** – Restlessness and longing

Rajas brings **aśama**, the loss of tranquility. The mind refuses to stay still, leaping from one thought to another. **Sprhā**, or longing, is the constant thirst for sensory and emotional gratification. Together, they create fatigue, anxiety, and frustration.

- **rajasy etāni jāyante** – These arise when Rajas grows strong

When Rajas predominates, one’s life becomes full of activity but devoid of peace. Such a person works tirelessly, but not necessarily wisely, chasing one desire after another, believing that satisfaction lies just ahead.

### The Nature of Rajas

Rajas represents movement, passion, and the drive for accomplishment. It is the force that propels creation and change, yet when unchecked, it binds the soul through attachment to outcomes. The restless energy of Rajas can elevate one through noble action or degrade one through selfish pursuits — its direction depends on one’s wisdom and intention.

Just as the wind never rests, the Rājasic mind is constantly in motion. Even in moments of success, it seeks more. Contentment is fleeting because Rajas feeds on desire itself.

## Key Insight

Rajas ignites the fire of activity but also the flame of restlessness. It is essential for worldly action but dangerous when uncontrolled. Spiritual maturity lies in transforming this kinetic force into **selfless service and disciplined energy**, guided by Sattva. Only then can the seeker transcend all three guṇas and approach the serene state of liberation.

## 14.13

### **aprakāśo'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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes the **manifestations of Tamo guṇa**, the quality of inertia and ignorance. When Tamas becomes dominant, it shrouds the light of knowledge and dulls both intellect and action.

- **aprakāśaḥ** – Lack of illumination or clarity

When Tamas increases, the mind becomes clouded and unable to perceive truth. Discrimination between right and wrong diminishes. The person remains in darkness, unable to think clearly or act wisely. This state is the opposite of Sattva's brightness.

- **apravṛttiḥ** – Inactivity and unwillingness to act

Under the influence of Tamas, enthusiasm and purpose fade away. Duties feel burdensome, and procrastination or lethargy takes over. The person avoids responsibility and becomes indifferent to progress or self-improvement.

- **pramādaḥ** – Carelessness and negligence

Tamas brings heedlessness — a lack of alertness and discipline. Mistakes occur frequently because of inattentiveness, and there is no sense of accountability. Actions become mechanical and devoid of awareness.

- **moha eva ca** – Delusion and confusion

The final effect of Tamas is delusion (*moha*). One loses the ability to perceive truth and becomes attached to false ideas, wrong beliefs, or destructive habits. This delusion traps the person in a cycle of ignorance and suffering.

- **tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe kurunandana** – These qualities arise when Tamas grows strong, O Arjuna

When Tamas predominates, life becomes stagnant. There is no progress — spiritual, moral, or intellectual. The person lives mechanically, disconnected from purpose or awareness.

### **The Nature of Tamas**

Tamas is the force of **inertia and obscurity**. While Sattva illumines and Rajas activates, Tamas suppresses and dulls. It makes the mind heavy, resistant, and forgetful. A Tamasic person may appear calm outwardly, but within lies confusion, apathy, and ignorance.

Jñāneśvar Maharaj compares the Tamasic state to a **lamp covered with thick soot** — the flame exists but cannot spread light. Similarly, the divine potential within remains hidden under the layers of laziness, ego, and delusion.

It is often said that *“Time is Money”* to emphasize the importance of time — something a Tamasic person fails to understand. **Gurudev says time is even more precious than money**, for money lost can be regained, but **time once lost can never be recovered**. The Tamasic person, bound by inertia, fails to value this most sacred resource.

In the **Rāmāyaṇa**, **Vibhīṣaṇa**, **Rāvaṇa**, and **Kumbhakarna** symbolize **Sāttvic**, **Rājasic**, and **Tāmasic** tendencies respectively.

Rāvaṇa, due to his Rājasic nature and uncontrolled desire, made the fatal mistake of abducting Sītā Mātā. Jñāneśwar Maharaj vividly describes such behavior:

परस्त्री जी दृष्टीस पडली  
ती निषिद्ध कधी न वाटली  
जैसी चरती यथेच्च शेळी  
तैसा करतो व्यभिचार ॥

When a man of uncontrolled desires sees another’s wife, he feels no restraint; just as a goat wanders freely wherever it wishes, such a man indulges recklessly in forbidden pleasures.

It is said that **“Desire is that state of mind that is always empty.”** Desire never ends; it only multiplies, leaving the seeker perpetually dissatisfied.

**Sikandar (Alexander the Great)**, who desired to rule the entire world, failed to realize that his **time and energy were limited**. When death approached, he instructed his people to keep his hands outside the coffin, open and facing upward, saying, *“Let the world see that Sikandar leaves empty-handed.”* What is earned through **Rajo guṇa** cannot be taken after death, while the **spiritual progress** cultivated through **Sāttvic guṇa** continues into the next birth.

In **Chapter 6**, Bhagavān explains that the **knowledge and spiritual merit** gained through Sattva are never lost. They accompany the soul into future lives, ensuring its continued evolution.

**Sant Gulabrao Maharaj** says that cultivating **Sattva** and subduing **Rajas** and **Tamas** is called **Dharma**. The guṇas bind the soul while in the body — and even after leaving it. The *Chaitanya* or *Sūkṣma deha* (subtle body) eventually departs, but the bondage of guṇas continues until liberation.

Bhagavān declares in **Chapter 2, Verse 27**:

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च।

*“Death is certain for one who is born, and rebirth is inevitable for one who has died.”*

At the final moment of life, where the **mind is engaged** matters most. **Swami Vivekananda**, even in his last moments, chanted Bhagavān’s name using prayer beads. On that very day, he remained active, writing four letters, his mind fully focused on the **Paramātmā**.

When someone approaches death, **recitation of the Bhagavad Gītā** is deeply auspicious and beneficial for their onward journey. The recitation may continue even after the person has departed, sanctifying the atmosphere and guiding the soul toward divine realms.

In the next verse, Bhagavān explains the **effect of the dominating guṇa at the time of death** and how it determines one’s future state.

### **Spiritual Perspective**

Tamas is the greatest obstacle to growth because it prevents even the desire to change. Hence, the first step on the spiritual path is to **awaken from Tamas** through effort, discipline, and devotion. Regular study of sacred texts, service, and association with noble persons help dissolve the darkness of ignorance

and invoke Sattva.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches that by understanding how these guṇas influence us, we can gradually transform Tamas into Rajas (action), refine Rajas into Sattva (clarity), and ultimately transcend all three.

### Key Insight

Tamas conceals truth and hinders growth. It manifests as ignorance, laziness, and delusion, leading one away from Dharma and purpose. Awareness and self-effort are the antidotes. The seeker must rise from this inertia, kindling the light of Sattva through knowledge and devotion — for liberation dawns only when the darkness of Tamas is dispelled.

## 14.14

### **yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu, pralayaṃ(m) yāti dehabhṛt, tadottamavidāṃ(m) lokān, amalānpratipadyate. 14.14**

When a man dies during the preponderance of Sattva, he obtains the stainless ethereal worlds (heaven etc.,) attained by men of noble deeds.

Śrī Bhagavān now explains how the **state of guṇas at the time of death** determines the direction of the soul after leaving the body. When **Sattva guṇa** dominates, the mind is serene, pure, and filled with knowledge. The person departs peacefully, rising toward higher realms of light and merit.

• **yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu** - When Sattva has increased

At the time of death, if the mind is calm, pure, and filled with devotion, it indicates the predominance of Sattva. Such a person has cultivated selflessness, knowledge, and faith through noble deeds and pure living.

• **pralayaṃ yāti dehabhṛt** - When the embodied being dies

Death, in this context, is not an end but a transition. For the one imbued with Sattva, it is a gentle release of the soul from the body, without fear or agitation.

• **tadottamavidāṃ lokān amalān pratipadyate** - He attains the pure realms of the virtuous

The soul ascends to **uttamavidāṃ lokān**, the realms of the noble — such as the heavenly worlds or higher planes of consciousness. These realms are called **amalān** (stainless) because they are free from impurity, suffering, and delusion. The Sāttvic person, having lived a life of virtue and wisdom, naturally rises toward purity and divine proximity.

### The Power of Sattvic Death

A mind dominated by Sattva at the time of death is luminous, filled with peace and remembrance of the Divine. Such a death is not a fall into darkness but an ascent toward light. The Sāttvic person departs with clarity, not confusion, and thus reaches higher states of existence.

It is often said that **the last thought determines the next birth**. When the mind is pure and absorbed in Bhagavān, it becomes the bridge toward liberation. The soul follows the vibration of its final state — a calm, devoted, and enlightened mind leads toward divine realms.

The **Bhagavad Gītā (8.6)** also confirms:

यं यं वाऽपि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम्।  
तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तद्भावभावितः॥

*Whatever one remembers at the time of death, having been absorbed in that state of being, that one attains thereafter.*

### **Story of Jada Bharata**

The story of **Jada Bharata** from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* beautifully illustrates the importance of one's thoughts at the final moment. King Bharata, after renouncing his kingdom to pursue spiritual life, lived as an ascetic absorbed in meditation on Bhagavān. One day, he found an abandoned fawn and began caring for it. Gradually, his attachment grew so strong that even during meditation, his mind constantly dwelt on the deer.

When death approached, his thoughts were filled not with the remembrance of God but with concern for the deer. As a result, though his life had been noble, he was **reborn as a deer** in his next life, illustrating how the **final thought determines the next birth**.

However, due to the purity of his earlier austerities, Jada Bharata retained memory of his past life. He lived in solitude, detached from worldly affairs, and finally attained liberation in his subsequent birth as a realized sage.

This story serves as a profound reminder that even a great seeker can be diverted if the mind is not guarded at the last moment. Hence, the spiritual disciplines of devotion, detachment, and remembrance of the Divine are meant to prepare the soul for that decisive transition.

Hence, an apt example is often given, just as, at the end of a financial year, the closing balance in a person's account is carried forward to the next year, in the same way, the impressions (saṃskāras) of a jīva are also carried forward to its next birth.

Śrī Bhagavān now explains the outcomes that arise when Rajo-guṇa becomes predominant.

That is why we must continuously keep learning and dwell in the light of knowledge. We should cultivate the habit of acquiring noble knowledge and studying elevating scriptures. It is often observed that in other nations, such as the United Kingdom or the United States of America, people make it a point to keep learning something new throughout their lives. This lifelong learning is indeed a deeply significant practice.

Emphasizing the importance of this very learning process, Śrī Bhagavān continues to explain in the next verse

### **Key Insight**

Death under the influence of Sattva leads to higher worlds because the mind is pure and luminous. The remembrance of Bhagavān at the final moment lifts the soul toward liberation. The story of Jada Bharata reminds us that the mind's final direction defines our journey ahead. Therefore, the true purpose of spiritual life is to live each moment in awareness and devotion so that the final thought is naturally of Bhagavān — leading the soul to the realm of eternal peace.

## **14.15**

**rajasi pralayaṃ(ñ) gatvā, karmasaṅgiṣu jāyate,  
tathā pralīnastamasi, mūḍhayoniṣu jāyate. 14.15**

Dying when Rajas predominates, he is born among those attached to action; even so, the man who has expired during the preponderance of Tamas is reborn in the species of the deluded creatures such as insects and beasts etc.

Śrī Bhagavān continues to explain how the **dominant guṇa at the moment of death** determines the soul's next birth. After describing in the previous verse that death in Sattva leads to higher realms, He now explains the consequences of death under Rajas and Tamas.

• **rajasi pralayaṃ gatvā karma-saṅgiṣu jāyate** -

When death comes during the dominance of Rajas, the soul is drawn toward **karma-saṅgiṣu**, those who are deeply attached to activity and results. The Rājasic person, whose mind is filled with desire, ambition, and restlessness, is reborn among people who live by and for action — traders, warriors, administrators, or those constantly pursuing achievement and recognition.

The vibration of restlessness and craving carries the soul to an environment where similar tendencies prevail. Even in a new birth, such a soul feels compelled to act, to compete, and to seek fulfillment through work and possession.

• **tathā praliṅg tamasi mūḍha-yoniṣu jāyate** -

When one dies in a state of Tamas, with the mind clouded by ignorance, negligence, or delusion, one is born among **mūḍha-yoniṣu** — the wombs of the deluded and inert. Such births may occur among lower species — animals, birds, insects, or even as humans of dull intellect, dominated by ignorance and instinct. This condition arises because the mind, heavy with Tamas, seeks a matching environment of darkness and unconsciousness. Just as a seed takes root in soil suited to its nature, the soul finds a birth corresponding to its inner tendencies (*guṇa-sāmya*).

### **Only Human Birth — The Yog Yoni**

It is said that among the 84 lakh forms of existence, **only human birth (manuṣya yoni)** is the **Yog Yoni**, the one that grants the opportunity to unite with Bhagavān. All other yonis — from plants to animals, celestial beings, or spirits — are **Bhog Yonis**, meant for the experience and exhaustion of karmic fruits (*bhoga*). After this enjoyment or suffering, the soul must eventually return to the human form to continue its journey toward realization.

Thus, this human life is not merely a chance for pleasure or survival but a sacred opportunity for **Yoga — union with the Supreme**. One must value it as the bridge between bondage and liberation.

### **Preparation through Remembrance**

Wise elders, aware of the law of guṇas and rebirth, consciously prepare their minds for the final transition. Many develop the habit of **chanting or writing Rāma Nāma continuously**, keeping their minds engaged in remembrance of Bhagavān. By doing so, they train their consciousness to rest in divinity even in the final moments.

When remembrance becomes effortless, it ensures that at the moment of departure, the last thought — as Bhagavān declared in Chapter 8 — will be of Him alone, leading the soul to the higher path.

Many people, especially in the later years of life, **leave their well-established homes and go to Kashi (Varanasi)**, seeking to spend their final days in the sacred presence of Lord Viśveśvara. It is believed that **those who die in Kashi attain liberation**, as Bhagavān Himself whispers the **Tāraka Mantra** into their ears, granting them release from the cycle of birth and death. This sacred tradition reflects the deep understanding that **the place, the state of mind, and the remembrance of God** at the time of death together shape one's ultimate destiny.

### **Key Insight**

The direction of the soul after death depends entirely on the inner state of the mind. Death in **Rajas** leads to rebirth in activity; death in **Tamas** leads to delusion and bondage; but only **human birth** — the **Yog Yoni** — offers the door to liberation. Therefore, a life of purity, discipline, pilgrimage, and divine remembrance — such as seeking the blessed atmosphere of Kashi — is the highest preparation, ensuring that the soul departs in Sattva and merges in Bhagavān.

## 14.16

### **karmaṇaḥ(s) sukṛtasyāhuḥ(s), sāttvikam(n) nirmalam(m) phalam, rajasastu phalam(n) duḥkham, ajñānam(n) tamasaḥ(ph) phalam. 14.16**

The reward of a righteous act, they say, is Sāttvika i.e., faultless in the form of joy, wisdom and dispassion etc., sorrow is declared to be the fruit of a Rājasikā act and ignorance, the fruit of a Tāmasika act.

Śrī Bhagavān now explains how the **nature of one's action**, governed by the guṇas, determines the **quality of its result**. Every action performed under a certain guṇa produces a corresponding outcome — Sattva yields purity, Rajas yields restlessness and sorrow, and Tamas yields ignorance and darkness.

#### • **karmaṇaḥ sukṛtasya āhuḥ sāttvikam nirmalam phalam -**

Actions done with a pure heart, free from selfish desire and attachment, are called **Sāttvika karma**. Their fruits are **nirmala (stainless)** — peace, contentment, and wisdom. Such deeds elevate the mind, purify the intellect, and bring lasting joy. The person performing them experiences inner growth and spiritual clarity rather than worldly reward.

#### • **rajasas tu phalam duḥkham -**

The fruit of **Rājasik action**, driven by ambition, ego, or desire for results, is ultimately **sorrow**. Though such action may appear dynamic and successful, it leads to exhaustion, anxiety, and dissatisfaction. Desire breeds effort, and effort breeds fatigue; when desires are unfulfilled, sorrow follows, and when fulfilled, new desires arise — binding the soul further in the cycle of craving.

#### • **ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam -**

The fruit of **Tāmasik action** is **ignorance**. Such actions are performed carelessly, without proper understanding or moral awareness. They bring confusion, laziness, and delusion, leading the person away from Dharma and light. Instead of elevating consciousness, they degrade it, increasing bondage.

### **Threefold Results of Action**

Each guṇa produces its own distinct result:

- **Sattva** brings *śānti* (peace), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *prasāda* (contentment).
- **Rajas** brings *duḥkha* (sorrow) born of unending desire.
- **Tamas** brings *ajñāna* (ignorance) and degradation of consciousness.

Thus, the same act — say, giving charity — can yield different results depending on the guṇa behind it:

If given selflessly for a noble cause, it is **Sāttvika**;

if given with pride or expectation, it is **Rājasik**;

and if given carelessly or to an unworthy cause, it is **Tāmasik**.

### **Philosophical Understanding**

Sāttvika karma uplifts because it aligns with Dharma and purity of intention. Rājasik karma binds because it strengthens the ego and attachment to results. Tāmasik karma degrades because it denies the light of knowledge.

Hence, the true goal of life is not merely to act, but to **purify the quality of action** — transforming it from Tamas to Rajas, from Rajas to Sattva, and finally transcending even Sattva to reach freedom (*Guṇātīta* state).

Swami Vivekananda beautifully illustrated this principle. He said that **India once possessed a vast storehouse of divine knowledge**, built by the wisdom of ancient Ṛṣis and Munis. However, over time, people lost the capacity to receive and apply this knowledge. **Tāmasic inertia** took over, leading to the nation's decline. Swamiji declared that it is better to have **Rājasic energy** than Tamas, for Rajas at least brings action, courage, and initiative.

The best state, he said, is **Rajo guṇa guided and controlled by Sattva guṇa** — where energy is balanced by purity, and power is directed by wisdom.

Swami Vivekananda himself embodied Rajas — dynamic, fearless, and full of vigour — but he was under the spiritual guidance of **Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahaṃsa**, who was the personification of Sattva or even **Guṇātīta** (beyond all guṇas). In the same way, **Bhagavān Śrī Rāma** was guided by **Guru Maharṣi Vasiṣṭha**, and the **Pāṇḍavas** were guided by **Śrī Kṛṣṇa**. This divine balance between action and wisdom, Rajas and Sattva, creates harmony and leads humanity toward perfection.

### Key Insight

The **outer act** may appear similar, but the **inner attitude** defines its guṇa and result. Actions done in Sattva lead to peace and wisdom, those in Rajas to sorrow and fatigue, and those in Tamas to ignorance and downfall. The wise, therefore, act selflessly, surrendering all fruits to Bhagavān — making even their actions a form of worship that purifies the heart and leads to liberation.

## 14.17

### **sattvātsañjāyate jñānaṃ(m), rajaso lobha eva ca, pramādamohau tamaso, bhavato'jñānameva ca. 14.17**

Wisdom follows from Sattva, and greed, undoubtedly, from Rajas; likewise, obstinate error, stupor and also ignorance follow from Tamas.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains how the **three guṇas influence the intellect** and give rise to distinct mental states. Our knowledge, desires, and ignorance are all products of these guṇas, and the dominance of each shapes our perception and behavior.

#### • **sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam** -

When **Sattva** predominates, the light of **jñāna (knowledge)** arises. The mind becomes calm, discriminative, and receptive to truth. Such a person perceives things as they are, free from the distortion of likes and dislikes. Sattva purifies the intellect, leading to clarity, humility, and self-realization.

True knowledge is not merely intellectual but intuitive — it reveals the unity of all existence and brings one closer to Bhagavān.

#### • **rajaso lobha eva ca** -

From **Rajas** arises **lobha (greed)**. When Rajas dominates, the mind becomes restless and outward-looking, driven by desires and attachment to possessions, power, or fame. Even success in fulfilling desires only fuels further craving. This unending thirst creates anxiety and dissatisfaction.

A Rājasic mind, therefore, may be active and capable but lacks peace and contentment. It constantly seeks fulfillment through external means rather than inner balance.

#### • **pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavataḥ ajñānam eva ca** -

From **Tamas** arise **pramāda (negligence)**, **moha (delusion)**, and **ajñāna (ignorance)**.

Tamas veils knowledge and clouds discernment. The person becomes careless, indifferent, and deluded — unable to distinguish right from wrong. In such a state, life becomes mechanical, reactive, and devoid of purpose. The intellect loses its luminosity, and consciousness descends into darkness.

## The Parable of the Three Dacoits and the Wayfarer

Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa beautifully explained the nature of the guṇas through a simple yet profound story:

Once, a traveler was passing through a dense forest when three dacoits attacked him.

- The **first dacoit**, cruel and ignorant, wanted to kill the man outright — he represents **Tamas**, the destructive darkness that annihilates discernment.
- The **second dacoit**, impulsive and energetic, suggested tying the man to a tree and leaving him — he represents **Rajas**, the binding force of action and desire that entangles one in restlessness.
- The **third dacoit**, gentle and compassionate, returned later to untie the man and guide him safely toward the edge of the forest — he represents **Sattva**, the quality of clarity and goodness that liberates and leads toward light.  
Yet, even the Sāttvic dacoit could not accompany him all the way home, showing that even Sattva, though pure, must ultimately be transcended to reach the Supreme.

This story beautifully captures how **Tamas destroys, Rajas binds, and Sattva liberates**. It also teaches that human evolution involves moving progressively from darkness to activity, and from activity to illumination.

### Practical Understanding

To progress spiritually, one must constantly **observe the influence of these guṇas** in daily life.

- Cultivate **Sattva** through study of the scriptures, meditation, purity of diet, and selfless service.
- Regulate **Rajas** by channeling its energy into constructive work guided by discipline and devotion.
- Overcome **Tamas** by avoiding laziness, ignorance, and indulgence in harmful habits.

Swami Vivekananda advised: “Energy is good, but it must be guided by light.” Rajas gives power, but without the wisdom of Sattva, it can become destructive. Only when Sattva directs Rajas, and both subdue Tamas, can the mind shine with divine understanding.

### Key Insight

Knowledge and ignorance are not external gifts or punishments but outcomes of the guṇas operating within us. **Sattva is the light of wisdom, Rajas is the fire of desire, and Tamas is the shadow of delusion**. By cultivating Sattva and transcending all three, one discovers the Self beyond nature — the eternal consciousness untouched by the play of the guṇas.

14.18

**ūrdhvaṃ(ñ) gacchanti sattvasthā, madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ,**

## **jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā, adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ. 14.18**

Those who abide in the quality of Sattva wend their way upwards; while those of a Rājasikā disposition stay in the middle. And those of a Tāmasika temperament, enveloped as they are in the effects of Tamoguṇa, sink down.

Śrī Bhagavān here reveals the **destinies governed by the guṇas**. Our conduct, thoughts, and aspirations determine whether we ascend toward purity, remain entangled in worldliness, or fall into ignorance. These guṇas — Sattva (purity), Rajas (activity), and Tamas (inertia) — form the subtle ladder of human evolution.

### • **ūrdhvaṃ gacchanti sattvasthāḥ** -

Those who dwell in **Sattva** ascend upward — spiritually, morally, and intellectually. Such individuals cultivate humility, purity, and devotion. Their minds are light and clear, and their actions uplift others. After death, they move toward higher realms of divine experience or take birth in environments that promote spiritual growth.

### • **madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ** -

Those dominated by **Rajas** remain in the middle — constantly engaged in worldly pursuits. Ambitious and energetic, they are bound by desire and attachment. Their activities are productive but self-centered, keeping them in the realm of human struggle and striving.

### • **jaghanya-guṇa-vṛtti-sthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ** -

Those steeped in **Tamas** fall downward. Their behavior is marked by ignorance, laziness, indulgence, or moral degradation. They lose awareness of higher purpose and descend into confusion or lower states of existence. This downward pull is symbolic of **spiritual regression**, where the soul becomes more bound by material nature and loses awareness of its divine origin.

### **Illustrations of the Guṇas in Daily Life**

The play of the three guṇas can be easily observed in daily situations. For instance, imagine **three people finding a ₹500 note on the road**:

- A **Sāttvic person** would neither keep it for personal use nor ignore it. He would try to find the rightful owner or donate it for a noble cause.
- A **Rājasic person** would quickly use it for his own needs or enjoyment, thinking of its utility and gain.
- A **Tāmasic person** would use it for harmful indulgences — drinking, gambling, or other base entertainment — reflecting moral darkness and ignorance.

Similarly, the **dominant guṇa in a child** can be discerned by observing behavior at home:

- A **Sāttvic child** is calm, self-disciplined, and naturally obedient.
- A **Rājasic child** needs encouragement or reward — a promise, praise, or incentive — to perform duties like eating on time or completing homework.
- A **Tāmasic child** displays stubbornness, laziness, and tantrums; even lures or punishments fail to inspire consistent action.

These simple observations show how the guṇas govern human tendencies right from childhood.

### **The Role of the Guru in Upward Ascent**

Jñāneśwar Maharaj says that the **journey upward** — from Tamas to Rajas, from Rajas to Sattva, and finally beyond all guṇas — is made possible **only through the grace of a Guru**. When the Guru enters one's life, the spiritual ascent becomes assured.

Śrī Ramakrishna Paramahansa illustrated this truth with a touching parable — **the story of the lion and the sheep**:

Once, a lioness gave birth to a cub while chasing a herd of sheep and died soon after. The cub grew up among the sheep, bleating and eating grass like them. One day, an old lion attacked the herd and was astonished to see a young lion behaving like a sheep. The old lion dragged him to a pond and showed him his reflection — “Look, you are not a sheep, you are a lion like me!” The young lion trembled in disbelief but gradually recognized his true nature. When asked to roar, he finally did — and realized his real identity.

**Moral:**

The Guru, like the elder lion, awakens the disciple to his divine identity. We too, lost in the world of illusion, consider ourselves weak and insignificant. The Guru reminds us that we are not this perishable body but the immortal Self — the divine fragment of Bhagavān Himself.

Bhagavān declares in **Chapter 15, Verse 7**:

**ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।**

*“An eternal portion of Myself, having become the living being in this world, draws to itself the senses and mind.”*

Thus, the Guru opens our eyes to this truth, enabling the upward ascent — from ignorance to wisdom, from bondage to freedom.

**Key Insight**

The path of evolution depends on our inner quality: **Sattva uplifts, Rajas entangles, and Tamas degrades**. Cultivating Sattva through discipline, devotion, and service prepares the ground for the Guru’s grace, which then helps transcend all guṇas. Realizing our divine nature — as part of Bhagavān Himself — is the true *ūrdhva gati* (upward movement) that leads to liberation.

The session concluded with heartfelt prayers offered at the **lotus feet of Gurudev and Sant Jñāneśwar Maharaj**, expressing gratitude for the divine guidance received through the study of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This was followed by a deeply insightful **Question and Answer session**, where participants shared their reflections and doubts with genuine curiosity and devotion.

**Question and Answer**

**Hanumanprasad Bagadiya Ji**

**Q:** Please explain *aprakāśo’pravṛttiśca* as mentioned in verse 14.13.

**A:** *Tamogūṇa* clouds and deludes the *Viveka Buddhi* — the faculty of clear discrimination between right and wrong. The *Bhagavad Gītā*’s central purpose is to awaken this very *Viveka Buddhi*, leading the seeker from confusion toward clarity, from darkness toward light.

• **aprakāśaḥ — Lack of illumination or clarity:**

When *Tamas* predominates, the mind becomes veiled and unable to perceive truth. The inner light of awareness fades, and the person loses discernment. Thoughts become heavy and clouded, and one remains in mental darkness, unable to act wisely or understand what is righteous.

• **apravṛttiḥ — Inactivity and unwillingness to act:**

Under the influence of *Tamas*, enthusiasm diminishes, and a sense of inertia takes hold. Duties feel burdensome, procrastination prevails, and a person avoids responsibility. This results in spiritual

stagnation and indifference to self-improvement.

Thus, *Tamoguṇa* traps the individual in ignorance and inaction, whereas the *Gītā* teaches how to rise above these veils through self-awareness, discipline, and devotion.

### Meenakshi Patil Ji

**Q:** We call ourselves followers of *Sanātana Dharma*. What does *Sanātana* truly mean?

**A:** The word *Sanātana* means **eternal**, that which has neither beginning nor end. It is that timeless principle which existed even before the creation of the universe — *Ajanma* (unborn) and *Avināśī* (indestructible). *Sanātana Dharma* connects the *Jīva* (individual soul) to that eternal truth which sustains all existence.

Unlike sects or faiths that begin and end in time, *Sanātana Dharma* has **no founder, no boundaries, and no origin**, because it is rooted in the very law that upholds the universe. It is the eternal rhythm of creation — the cosmic order (*ṛta*) — that governs harmony among all beings.

To live by *Sanātana Dharma* is to live in alignment with that eternal principle of truth, compassion, and righteousness which pervades the entire cosmos.

### Pushpa Tiwari Ji

**Q:** My elderly mother chants different mantras on her *japa mālā*:

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय हरये परमात्मने  
हरे राम हरे राम राम हरे हरे  
हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे  
ओम् नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

Is it alright to chant different mantras?

**A:** It is indeed beautiful that your mother spends her time immersed in chanting the divine names of Bhagavān. Each of these sacred mantras invokes His presence, purifies the heart, and uplifts the mind. By repeating the holy names, she aligns her inner being with divine vibrations and paves the way toward serenity and spiritual elevation.

However, saints and scriptures alike remind us of the **power of one-pointed devotion**. Just as a well is reached by digging deeply at one spot rather than scratching the surface at many, the mind finds divine depth through focus on one mantra. Though all names of Bhagavān are equally sacred, the spiritual progress becomes profound when one mantra — the *Iṣṭa Mantra* — is chosen with faith and repeated with constancy and love.

The session concluded on a note of serenity and introspection. The collective dialogue — blending scriptural wisdom, spiritual curiosity, and practical understanding — left every heart enriched and inspired to tread the path of *Sattva*, knowledge, and unwavering devotion to Bhagavān.



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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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