

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

3/3 (Ślōka 17-27), Saturday, 08 November 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/WmLAL0qkLmc>

Rising Above the Three Guṇas: The Nature, Conduct, and Liberation of the Guṇātīta

The 14th Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, The Yoga of Classification of the Three Gunas.

In keeping with the beautiful traditions of the Geeta Pariwar, the session opened with the lighting of the sacred dīpam at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān. The soft glow of the flame, rising upward, seemed to mirror the devotion of every heart present, quietly dispelling darkness and filling the atmosphere with a divine radiance.

Before entering the study of this profound chapter, the gathering humbly bowed to the lineage of teachers with the timeless prayer:

सदाशिव समारम्भाम् शंकराचार्य मध्यमाम्।

अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्ताम् वन्दे गुरु परम्पराम्॥

Beginning with Lord Sadāśiva, carried forward through Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, and continuing through our own revered teachers, I bow in gratitude to the entire Guru-paramparā.

With this spirit of reverence, the discourse unfolded, inviting each listener not just to understand, but to experience the living message of the Gītā.

The 14th Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, The Yoga of Classification of the Three Gunas. The Gunas keep the eternal self bound to the physical body. Sattvaguna binds by attachment to knowledge and joy, Rajoguna by passion and activity due to desires and Tamoguna by laziness attachment and ignorance. Śrī Bhagavān tells Arjuna that the person who has gone beyond the three Gunas is Gunateet and therefore, is unattached and responds equally to sorrow or joy, respect and criticism etc and remains indifferent. The three Gunas are very important parts of one's life. Whatever good or bad situations one faces in life are the result of the Karmas (deeds) that one has done in the past birth as well as what he does in this birth. The relations one has, the people one meets in life all depend on the Karmas one does, hence one needs to be realised in this birth and improve from there. He must continuously balance the three Gunas and increase Satoguna and reduce Rajoguna and Tamoguna. Just like the smell of the essence sticks always moves upwards, similarly a person with Sattvaguna will always move upwards, will always take birth in a higher yoni like the gandharva and

devatas etc. The person borne with high Rajoguna gets a chance to improve oneself by working towards attaining Moksha and the person with Tamoguna may take birth in lower yoni of animals or insects.

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.

There are three types of people:

- Those who see the individual as the doer of actions.
- Those who see the Guṇas as the doers.
- Those who see neither the person nor the Guṇas as the doer, understanding that all unfolds according to Bhagavān's divine play (līlā).

The third category, having transcended (ātīta) the three Guṇas, is called Guṇātīta.

A Śruti in the Upaniṣads states:

“tad aksata bahu syām prajayeya” — Brahman desired to manifest as many, and creation followed in the form of the five great elements (pañca-mahābhūta):

- **Ākāśa (ether)**: associated with śabda (sound), perceived through the ears.
- **Vāyu (air)**: associated with sparśa (touch), perceived through the skin; also possesses śabda.
- **Agni (fire)**: associated with tejas/prakāśa (light/radiance), perceived through the eyes; also possesses sound and touch.
- **Jala (water)**: associated with rasa (taste), perceived through the tongue; also possesses sound, touch, and light.
- **Pṛthvī (earth)**: associated with gandha (smell), perceived through the nose; encompasses all five qualities.

Humans, being composed of all five elements, are influenced and bound by these Guṇas. Those who rise above the Guṇas are free from the pains of birth, old age, disease, and death, ultimately attaining the Supreme (Para Brahman), as stated in Bhagavad Gītā 15.6:

**“na tad bhāsayate sūryo, na śāsāṅko na pāvakaḥ;
yad gatvā na nivartante, taddhāma parāṃ mama.”**

Bhagavān also explains the results of actions under each Guṇa:

- Sattva leads to purity, illumination, and true knowledge (jñāna).
- Rajas leads to desire-driven action, greed (lobha), and restlessness.
- Tamas produces negligence (pramāda), delusion (moha), and ignorance (ajñāna).

Thus, only by transcending all three Guṇas through understanding, detachment, and devotion can one attain the peace and perfection of the Supreme.

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.

Those who remain steadfast on the path of goodness, guided by Sattva-guṇa, ascend towards higher realms or take birth in noble yonis (forms of life). Those who dwell predominantly in Rajo-guṇa, the mode of passion, continue to revolve in the earthly planes, bound within the endless cycle of birth and death, until they ultimately attain Mokṣa. And those dominated by Tamo-guṇa, the mode of ignorance, descend into hellish worlds and are reborn in lower yonis, as worms, insects, and animals.

Vivechak offers a beautiful analogy to explain this. She says that just as innumerable shades of colour can be produced by blending the three primary colours in various proportions, all of which ultimately emerge from one fundamental colour, white, so too, all human beings are composed of three basic guṇas: Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Depending on which guṇa predominates in a person, their nature and actions reflect that quality. When one transcends all three and becomes Guṇātīta, one attains Brahman.

True happiness can only arise from Sattva-guṇa. It manifests when one's thoughts remain fixed upon the Divine Supreme Self, Paramātmā, and one continues to move steadfastly along the spiritual path, regardless of how long or difficult the journey may be.

Once, during a discourse, Govind Giriji Maharaj declared that all beings shall ultimately attain Mokṣa. The listeners were filled with immense joy and relief upon hearing this. Yet, he concluded with a profound truth, that while Mokṣa is the destiny of all, the time of its attainment is indeterminate. It is a journey that must be continuously pursued. One must strive to maintain balance among the three guṇas, steadily increase Sattva-guṇa, and diminish Rajo and Tamo-guṇa.

Only when one transcends the bondage of these guṇas and becomes Guṇātīta does one reach the supreme and eternal destination, Mokṣa, union with Bhagavān.

Those established in Sattva rise upward; those in Rajas remain in the middle; and those of Tamas, engaged in base tendencies, sink downward.

Thus, the entire play of existence unfolds through the dance of these three guṇas, and liberation dawns only when one transcends them, abiding as the pure consciousness of the Paramātmā Himself.

14.19

nānyaṃ(ñ) guṇebhyaḥ(kh) kartāraṃ(m), yadā draṣṭānupaśyati, guṇebhyaśca paraṃ(m) vetti, madbhāvaṃ(m) so'dhigacchati. 14.19

When the discerning person sees no one as doer other than the three Guṇas, and realizes Me, the supreme Spirit standing entirely beyond these Guṇas, he enters into My being.

When one stops seeing any activity being done by someone, starts believing that all that is happening around is a result of Śrī Bhagavān, starts believing that all is beyond these three Gunas, he attains the spiritual state of satchidanand. When there is theft, one feels that the thief stole the money. The thief feels he did so because of the high Tamoguna, but one who worships The Supreme sees this as an activity which is beyond all the Gunas and was a momentary action.

The Compassion of Govind Giriji Maharaj - Seeing the Hand of the Supreme in All Actions

Once, it so happened that someone stole money from the bag of Govind Giriji Maharaj. When the incident was brought to his notice, Maharajji remained entirely unmoved, without a trace of anger or disappointment. Instead, he calmly said, “Perhaps that person needed the money for some purpose.”

Such was his equanimity, a mind rooted beyond the dualities of gain and loss, praise and blame. He did not see the act as a wrongdoing of an individual, but as an occurrence within the divine order of Prabhu. For one who perceives every action as being ultimately directed by Paramātmā, and holds no one personally responsible for anything, there arises a profound inner peace.

When such vision dawns — where all events are seen as expressions of the will of the Supreme, and the individual doer dissolves — the embodied soul (jīvātmā) attains Paramānanda, the supreme bliss.

When one perceives that no one but the guṇas are the doers of all actions, and realizes that which is beyond the guṇas — he attains My state.

Govind Giriji Maharaj, through his serene response, demonstrated this very truth — living as one established in Guṇātīta-bhāva, beyond attachment and aversion, seeing the play of Bhagavān in all that is.

14.20

guṇānetānatītya trīn, dehī dehasamudbhavān, janmamṛtyujarāduḥkhaiḥ(r), vimukto'mṛtamaśnute. 14.20

Having transcended the aforesaid three Guṇas, which have caused the body, and freed from birth, death, old age and all kinds of sorrow, the embodied soul attains supreme bliss.

There are three types of people:

- Those who see the human being as the doer, they feel frustrated, angry, and burdened by the sense of personal responsibility.
- Those who see the Guṇas as the doers, they understand that all actions are the result of past Karmas and the interplay of nature’s qualities.
- Those who see no one as the doer, they perceive that every act unfolds according to the will of Paramātmā.

One who has attained oneness with the Supreme transcends the cycle of birth, old age, and death, and experiences the nectar of eternal bliss.

As mentioned in the Upaniṣads, in the beginning, Brahman desired, “May I become many.” From this divine will, creation unfolded. First arose Ākāśa (ether), from which came Vāyu (air); from Vāyu emerged Agni (fire); from Agni came Āpaḥ (water); and from Āpaḥ arose Pṛthvī (earth).

Each successive element possesses the qualities of the previous ones and adds one more of its own:

- Ākāśa has the quality of sound (śabda).
- Vāyu has sound and touch (sparśa).
- Agni adds form and radiance (rūpa, tejas).
- Āpaḥ adds taste (rasa).
- Pṛthvī includes all, sound, touch, form, taste, and smell (gandha).

Thus, the five great elements (pañca-mahābhūta) form the foundation of all creation, each

progressively embodying more characteristics of the Divine manifestation.

14.21

**arjuna uvāca
kairiṅgaistrīnguṇānetān, atīto bhavati prabho,
kimācāraḥ(kh) kathaṃ(ñ) caitāṃs, trīnguṇānavartate. 14.21**

Arjuna said :What are the marks of him who has risen above the three Guṇas, and what is his conduct? And how, Lord, does he rise above the three Guṇas?

Arjuna enquires of Śrī Bhagavān about the characteristics of those who have transcended the three Guṇas. He wishes to understand how such enlightened beings conduct themselves and how one may rise beyond the influence of the Guṇas to become Guṇātīta, one who is established beyond the play of nature's qualities.

14.22

**śrībhagavānuvāca
prakāśaṃ(ñ) ca pravṛttiṃ(ñ) ca, mohameva ca pāṇḍava,
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni, na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati. 14.22**

Śrī Bhagavān said :Arjuna, he who abhors not illumination (which is born of Sattva) and activity (which is born of Rajas) and even stupor (which is born of Tamas), when prevalent, nor longs for them when they have ceased.

Śrī Bhagavān explains that one who neither hates nor clings to illumination, activity, or delusion, each arising from the three Guṇas, and who remains a witness (dṛṣṭā or sākṣī), serene and unmoved amidst their play, becomes Guṇātīta. Such a person stays steady and impartial in all circumstances and ultimately attains Me.

There is a beautiful story illustrating this state.

Once, the owner of Gita Press was sitting in his office when a visitor came and began praising him profusely for his noble service to society. After the visitor left, an onlooker asked, "You didn't even thank the man for his kind words!"

The owner gently replied, "He was simply expressing the goodness of his own heart. I have done nothing."

Such is the nature of one who has transcended the Guṇas—unaffected by praise or criticism, steady in humility and equanimity. One who attains such inner balance and detachment ultimately reaches the Supreme.

14.23

**Udāsīnavadāsīno, guṇairyo na vicālyate,
guṇā vartanta ityeva, yo'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate. 14.23**

He who, sitting like a witness, is not disturbed by the Guṇas, and who, knowing that the Guṇas alone move among the Guṇas, remains established in identity with God, and never falls off from that state.

14.23 writeup

14.24, 14.25

**ṣamaduḥkhasukhaḥ(s) svasthaḥ(s), ṣamaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ,
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīraḥ(s), tulyanindātmasamstutiḥ. 14.24
mānāpamānayostulyaḥ(s), tulyo mitrāripakṣayoḥ,
sarvārambhaparityāgī, guṇātītaḥ(s) sa ucyate. 14.25**

He who is ever established in the Self, takes pain and pleasure alike, regards a clod of earth, a stone and a piece of gold as equal in value, is possessed of wisdom, accepts the pleasant as well as the unpleasant in the same spirit, and views censure and praise alike.

He who is equipoised in honour or ignominy, is alike towards a friend or an enemy, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, is said to have risen above the three Guṇas.

Bhagavān explains that a person has truly risen above the three Guṇas (Guṇātīta) when he:

- Remains firm and unshaken in all circumstances (yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate), whether favourable or unfavourable (udāsīnavadāsīno).
- Looks upon pleasure and pain with an equal eye (ṣamaduḥkhasukhaḥ).
- Treats all things alike, whether a clod of mud or gold (ṣamaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ).
- Remains unchanged in honour and dishonour (mānāpamānayostulyaḥ).
- Treats friends and foes equally (tulyo mitrāripakṣayoḥ).
- Has renounced the fruits of all actions (sarvārambhaparityāgī).

Such a person is inwardly calm, undisturbed by success or failure, joy or sorrow. The dualities of life—praise and blame, honour and dishonour, friends and foes—lose their power to sway him. Freed from ahaṅkāra (ego) and attachment, he acts without expectation, witnessing the play of Prakṛti while remaining established in the peace of the Supreme.

चाहे करे निन्दा कोई

चाहे कोई गुणगान करे,

फूलों से सत्कार करे

काँटों की चिन्ता न धरे

मान और अपमान ही दोनो

जिसे के लिये समान रे

वो सच्चा इंसान रे, वो सच्चा इंसान

Thus, the Guṇātīta remains neutral to everything, treating praise and humiliation, joy and sorrow alike.

Śrī Krishna affirms the same in Chapter 12, describing his beloved devotee:

**anapekṣaḥ śucirdakṣa, udāsīno gatavyathaḥ,
sarvārambhaparityāgi yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ. (12.16)**

“The devotee who is devoid of desires (anapekṣa), pure (śuci), renounced in all undertakings (sarvārambhaparityāgī), and unaffected by suffering (udāsīno gatavyathaḥ) is especially dear to Me.”

14.26

**māṃ(ñ) ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa, bhaktiyogena sevate,
sa guṇānṣamatītyaitān, brahmabhūyāya kalpate. 14.26**

He too who, constantly worships Me through the Yoga of exclusive devotion-transcending these three

Guṇas, he becomes eligible for attaining Brahma.

One who offers unwavering devotion to the Divine, remaining steadfast in all circumstances and rising above the influence of the three Guṇas, ultimately attains the state of Brahman itself. Such devotion is pure, undivided, and exclusive—directed only toward the Supreme.

There is a simple story that beautifully illustrates this truth.

Once, a wife was angrily arguing with her husband, saying, “Even after ten years of marriage, you haven’t bought me a single sari!” A kind neighbor who overheard the quarrel immediately offered her a new sari. But the wife refused to accept it, insisting, “I don’t want a sari from anyone else. I want it only from my husband.”

In the same way, the devotee who seeks only the Lord—refusing to turn to any other source for fulfillment—reaches the Supreme. When one’s love and faith are fixed solely on Bhagavān, all else fades away, and such single-pointed devotion (ananya-bhakti) leads directly to union with Brahman.

14.27

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham, amṛtasyāvyayasya ca, śāśvatasya ca dharmasya, sukhasyaikāntikasya ca. 14.27

For, I am the substratum of the imperishable Brahma, of immortality, of the eternal Dharma and of unending immutable bliss.

Śrī Bhagavān explains that the Guṇātīta state is none other than realization of the impersonal, eternal Brahman—the state of pure being that is the very essence of supreme bliss. It is the soul’s constitutional position, beyond the influence of the three Guṇas and untouched by the dualities of the world.

He further declares, mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja—“Surrender unto Me alone”—with complete devotion and unwavering faith. Through such single-pointed Bhakti, one transcends all limitations and attains the Supreme.

This total surrender to Bhagavān, rooted in love and knowledge, is the ultimate goal of human life—the culmination of all spiritual paths and the doorway to eternal peace and liberation.

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

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

Neha ji

Q: I would like you to share some more light on Amṛtasya Avyayas mentioned in the last śloka, verse 27. I could not understand it.”

A: The phrase Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhānam amṛtasya ca amṛtasya avyayas ca refers to the immortal and indestructible nature of Brahman. Here:

- Amṛtasya means “immortal,” that which cannot die.
- Avyayas means “indestructible” or “inexhaustible.”

So, Bhagavān is saying: “I am that Brahman (Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhānam aham), the foundation and

support of the entire universe.”

This Brahman is eternal, immortal, and indestructible. It cannot be destroyed, and it remains ever-present. Śāśvatasya also emphasizes its everlasting nature—Brahman is beyond time, permanent, and unchanging.

In essence, Bhagavān is describing the characteristics of Brahman:

- Immortal (Amṛta)
- Indestructible (Avyaya)
- Eternal and everlasting (Śāśvata)
- The foundational support of all creation

This is the deeper meaning of this part of verse 27.

Lata Bhaiya

Q: Suppose someone is studying the Bhagavad Gītā but is unable to complete it. For example, if someone passes away before finishing all 700 ślokas, what happens then?

A: You’re asking whether something specific happens if a person dies while still in the process of studying or chanting the Gītā, right? It’s not exactly about completing all 700 verse, the result depends on the entire life one has lived.

The Gītā indeed has great spiritual power, and studying it daily brings positive effects. But the final outcome at the time of death is influenced by the totality of one’s karma, all thoughts, actions, and intentions accumulated from birth.

However, regular study of the Gītā definitely purifies the mind and helps the soul attain a higher path after death. The impressions (saṁskāras) created by such study never go to waste.

Q: Suppose I get angry and shout at someone older, for example, my grandmother. Would that be considered adharma?

A: Yes, it would. In the section on Daivī (divine) and Āsurī (demoniac) qualities, Bhagavān clearly states that one should never use harsh words, this is part of ahimsa in speech. Speaking harshly, especially to elders, goes against daivī pravṛtti and falls under āsurī pravṛtti. We should always speak gently, whether to someone younger or older.

Q: You mentioned that there are 700 ślokas in the Bhagavad Gītā. Will you be teaching all of them in the vivechan (exposition) sessions, like, the main meaning of each?

A: Yes, the goal is to cover all 700 ślokas, explaining their main meanings and the essence behind each one.

Q: How long will it take to complete the entire Gītā study?

A: Approximately one year.

The session concluded with a heartfelt prayer and the recitation of the Hanumān Chālīsā, marking the end of a spiritually enriching discourse.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṁ(m) yogaśāstre śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde
Guṇatrayavibhāgayogo nāma caturdaśo'dhyāyaḥ.**



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

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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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