

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

1/3 (Ślōka 1-6), Saturday, 25 October 2025

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA KAVITA VERMA

YouTube Link: https://youtu.be/8m8ylqN4_Kk

Understanding the Trigunas and how they bind the Ātmā

The session commenced with a concise introduction to Chapter 14 of the Bhagavadgītā, known as *Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga*, which translates to "*The Yoga of Classification of the Three Gunas.*" The concept of "Guna" is a recurring theme throughout the Bhagavadgītā and forms a foundational element for understanding the text's philosophical underpinnings.

Within the Bhagavadgītā, there is frequent reference to the three types of gunas, known collectively as Trigunas. These are:

- **Sattva:** Associated with goodness and purity.
- **Rajas:** Connected with action, activity, attachment, and the experience of sorrow and pain.
- **Tamas:** Relates to inaction, ignorance, and inertia.

The gunas are essential for understanding the broader philosophical context, especially with reference to "Bharat Darshan." Bharat Darshan refers to the six classical schools of Hindu philosophy, also known as the Śaḍdarśanas, which include Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa (Purva Mimamsa), and Vedanta (Uttara Mimamsa). The presence and influence of the three gunas are recognised across these schools of thought. The trigunas are considered to be born of Prakṛti, or material nature, and serve to bind the Ātmā (the soul) much like a rope binds an object. When the Ātmā, due to ignorance, identifies with the workings of material nature, it becomes entangled in these modes of nature, which can affect its experience and actions.

This chapter of the Bhagavadgītā elaborates on the themes of creation (Sṛṣṭi), Purusha (the Supreme Being), Prakṛiti (nature), and the gunas themselves. Bhagavān explains the essential characteristics of each of these modes, their origins, and how they exert influence over living entities affected by them.

14.1

śrībhagavānūvāca

**param(m) bhūyaḥ(ph) praVākṣyāmi, jñānānāṃ(ñ) jñānamuttamam,
yajñātvā munayaḥ(s) sarve, parāṃ(m) siddhimito gatāḥ. 14.1**

Śrī Bhagavān said :I shall expound once more the supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, acquiring which all sages have attained highest perfection, being liberated from this mundane existence.

Bhagavān tells Arjuna that he is about to reveal and explain (pravakṣhyāmi) the greatest of all knowledge once again (bhūyaḥ). This repetition is significant, and it is essential to understand why Bhagavān chooses to reiterate his teachings. In the context of Sahiti literature or poetry, particularly in Hindi and Sanskrit, the concept of Punarāvṛtti refers to the deliberate repetition of a word or phrase for emphasis or effect. This technique, known as "repetition" or "reiteration" in English, highlights the importance of a particular idea.

Bhagavān's reiteration is not merely for emphasis; it addresses the practical difficulty that spiritual aspirants (sādhaks) face in living the teachings. While it may be relatively straightforward to read, memorise, or even teach the Bhagavadgītā, practising its teachings is far more challenging. Param Pujya Swamiji often emphasises this point with the phrase: **“Learn Gītā, Teach Gītā and Live Gītā,”** underscoring the true essence of spiritual practice. The reason for Bhagavān's repetition can also be understood in light of Arjuna's mental and emotional state. During the early moments of the Bhagavadgītā, Arjuna describes his turmoil:

**drīṣṭvemaṃ sva-janaṃ kṛiṣṇa yuyutsuṃ samupasthitam
sīdanti mama gātrāṇi mukhaṃ cha pariśuṣhyati**

Arjuna says: “O Krishna, seeing my own kinsmen arrayed for battle here and intent on killing each other, my limbs are giving away, and my mouth is drying up.”

**vepathuś cha śharire me roma-harṣhaś cha jāyate
gāṇḍīvaṃ sraṃsate hastāt tvak chaiva paridahyate
na cha śhaknomy avasthātuṃ bhramatīva cha me manaḥ
nimittāni cha paśhyāmi viparītāni keśhava
na cha śhreyo 'nupaśhyāmi hatvā sva-janam āhave**

Arjuna says: “My entire body shivers and my hair is standing on end. My bow, the Gāṇḍīv, is slipping from my hand, and my skin is burning all over. My mind is in quandary and whirling in confusion; I am unable to hold myself steady any longer.”

Arjuna was deeply anxious and confused when Bhagavān Sri Krishna began his instruction. As Arjuna gradually absorbed the teachings, he regained composure; however, given the depth of his distress, some aspects of the teachings might still be missed. This is why Bhagavān reiterates his knowledge, ensuring that Arjuna receives it thoroughly and from multiple perspectives. Bhagavān Sri Krishna is described as being akin to a mother for all beings. Just as a mother repeatedly feeds her child—knowing how much and when to feed, even in the face of resistance—Sri Krishna reiterates his teachings to Arjuna, adapting his approach to suit Arjuna's troubled state of mind.

Returning to the relevant shloka, Sri Krishna announces that he will reveal the Supreme knowledge to Arjuna. All other forms of knowledge may be temporary, subject to change, or even destroyed. In contrast, the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman is eternal. The knowledge gained from reading or memorizing the Bhagavadgītā is acquired through practice (abhyās) and is retained accordingly. Though spiritual to some extent, such knowledge is still physical. In contrast, the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman is truly spiritual and transcends birth and death. In the Sixth Chapter, Arjuna asks Sri Krishna what happens to a renunciant (sannyāsi) who dies before attaining liberation. If the sannyāsi has not achieved liberation, does he begin again from the start in his next life? Sri Krishna

assures Arjuna that the sannyāsi resumes from where he left off in his previous birth, continuing his journey towards liberation. Thus, spiritual knowledge is never destroyed, and this is what makes it “Uttamam”—the highest. Sri Krishna explains that the knowledge he is about to impart will enable sages to reach the ultimate abode of Paramātmān (tad dhāma paramam).

Key Insight:

Sri Krishna’s core teachings are largely complete by the third chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. From the fourth chapter onwards, additional details are provided, referred to as ancillary teachings (Pariśiṣṭas)—which augment and clarify the foundational principles. The ninth chapter elaborates on three principal yogas: Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jñāna Yoga, while the eighteenth chapter serves as a conclusion.

14.2

idaṃ(ñ) jñānamupāśritya, mama sādharṃyamāgatāḥ, sarge'pi nopajāyante, pralaye na vyathanti ca. 14.2

Those who, by practising this knowledge have entered into My being, are not born again at the cosmic dawn, nor feel disturbed even during the cosmic dissolution (Pralaya).

Bhagavān declares that a seeker who attains this highest knowledge becomes one with the Divine. The affirmation “Aham Brahmasmi” is rooted in Sanskrit—“Aham” meaning “I”, “Brahma” signifying the ultimate, infinite reality or divine consciousness, and “Asmi” meaning “am” or “exist”. This mantra serves as a profound assertion of the true Self and is often employed in meditation to foster a sense of oneness with the universe, inner tranquillity, and self-realisation. Upon reaching this state of realisation, an individual is not subject to rebirth and attains true redemption. Sri Krishna explains that those embodied with this supreme knowledge are never born again, nor are they disturbed during dissolution (Pralaya).

Pralaya, meaning “dissolution” or “melting away”, is a central concept signifying the period of destruction and inactivity preceding the recreation of the universe. There are four distinct types of pralaya:

- **Nitya Pralaya:** This refers to the constant, daily dissolution of all created beings, encompassing the continual cycle of birth and death in nature.
- **Naimittika Pralaya:** Known as occasional dissolution, it takes place at the end of a day of Brahmā, destroying the three planetary systems and absorbing the universe into the divine being Śrī Nārāyaṇa.
- **Prākṛtika Pralaya:** Also called the Great Dissolution, this occurs at the end of Brahmā’s life, resulting in the total annihilation of all material elements and a return to complete non-manifestation.
- **Atyantika Pralaya:** This is the final dissolution, where the ātmā’s illusory false ego is destroyed through knowledge, leading to realisation of the Supreme Ātmān and ultimate liberation (Mukti or Moksh), a state where the ātmā never returns to the cycle of relative existence.

Nitya-pralaya, the daily dissolution, represents the constant cycle of birth and death for all beings. In daily life, we cycle through various states of existence: “awake”, “dreaming”, and “deep sleep”. In the waking state (Jagruta), Nitya-pralaya manifests as the continuous, subtle process of change—cells die and regenerate, thoughts arise and dissolve, and sensory experiences fluctuate. This ongoing transformation reflects the inherent instability of material existence. During dreams, Nitya-pralaya does not fully manifest, as the mind and senses remain partially active, and mild sleep may allow awareness to persist as dreams or partial consciousness, preventing complete dissolution.

In deep sleep or a dreamless sleep (Susupti), Nitya-pralaya is observed as the temporary merging of the individual's senses and mind into the ātmā during unconscious rest. The physical body remains, but the mind and senses dissolve into a dormant state, symbolising a daily microcosmic dissolution. This mirrors the broader cycles of death and rebirth, representing a brief return to the source. Upon waking, one recalls having existed in peace, affirming the continuity of consciousness beyond the dissolved mind and senses. Thus, Susupti is recognised by Vedantic scholars as a nightly Nitya-pralaya. The fluctuations of the mind (Chitta vritti) tether us to ignorance during the time we are awake, and upon awakening from deep sleep, we are drawn back into this state due to lack of wisdom.

The concept of "Turiyam" ("the fourth") refers to a transcendental state of consciousness that surpasses waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. It is described as pure consciousness, representing the true self (ātmān) and the underlying reality permeating all other states. This is associated with the realisation of non-duality (Advaita), where the individual self (jīva) is understood to be identical with the Supreme Brahman.

Turiya Avastha is attained only after accepting and assimilating the supreme knowledge imparted by Bhagavān. Comprehending Turiya Avastha is extremely challenging due to the limitations of the mind and intellect; it can be truly experienced only in a profound meditative state known as "Nirvikalpa samadhi". In Advaita Vedanta, Nirvikalpa samadhi is synonymous with "Sahaja samadhi"—the effortless, permanent abidance in the knowledge of non-dual reality (Brahman) even while engaging with the world.

In the ninth chapter, Sri Krishna says:

**trai-vidyā mām soma-pāḥ pūta-pāpā
yajñair iṣṭvā svar-gatiṁ prārthayante
te puṇyam āsādyā surendra-lokam
āśnanti divyān divi deva-bhogān|| 20||**

Those who are inclined to the fruitive activity described in the Vedas worship Me through ritualistic sacrifices. Being purified from sin by drinking the Soma juice, which is the remnant of the yajñas, they seek to go to heaven. By virtue of their pious deeds, they go to the abode of Indra, the king of heaven, and enjoy the pleasures of the celestial gods.

**te taṁ bhuktvā swarga-lokaṁ viśhālaṁ
kṣhīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśhanti
evaṁ trayī-dharmam anuprapannā
gatāgataṁ kāma-kāmā labhante|| 21||**

When they have enjoyed the vast pleasures of heaven, the stock of their merits being exhausted, they return to the earthly plane. Thus, those who follow the Vedic rituals, desiring objects of enjoyment, repeatedly come and go in this world.

Sri Krishna explains that attachment to actions driven by the Trigunas and desire for their fruits results in the ongoing cycle of birth and death. True liberation (Moksh) is attained only by gaining supreme knowledge and merging with the Parabrahman. Moksh, or liberation, can be understood in two ways. The first is as defined by the Shastras is an experiential state, which is exceedingly difficult to comprehend. Another perspective is that Moksh signifies "liberation of mind"—a condition in which one practices Nishkam Karm (selfless action), gains mastery over the senses, and cultivates "Samatva" (equanimity). In this state, one remains unaffected by external circumstances, maintaining equanimity in both joy and sorrow. This is described as "Prasanna chetasah": "Prasanna" meaning "happy", "pleased", "gracious", or "pure", and "Chetasah" meaning "in the mind" or "in the heart".

Thus, Moksh also represents liberation from expectations and an untethered existence.

Key Insights:

The phrase "So'ham" appears in several Upanishads and is interpreted as "I am that" or "It is I," signifying the non-dual identity of the individual self (Ātmān) with the ultimate reality (Brahman). The mantra is also linked to the breath, where "So" corresponds to inhalation and "Ham" to exhalation, symbolizing the natural rhythm of life and the union of the individual ātmā with the universal Self. Another phrase "Ko ham", meaning "Who am I?" or "Who is this?", is the concept of questioning one's identity and is philosophically aligned with the Upanishadic inquiry into the nature of the self. The Upanishads often begin with such existential questions, and the response to "Who am I?" is ultimately "So'ham"—I am that.

14.3

mama yonirmahadbrahma, tasmingarbhaṃ(n) dadhāmyaham, sambhavaḥ(s) sarvabhūtānāṃ(n), tato bhavati bhārata. 14.3

My primordial Nature, known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures; in that womb I place the seed of all life. The creation of all beings follows from that union of Matter and Spirit, O Arjuna.

Sāṃkhya, also referred to as Sāṅkhya, is one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy. It stands out for its dualistic approach, which describes reality through two eternal and independent principles: Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha symbolises pure consciousness, the spirit, or the self. It is characterised as unchanging, passive, infinite, and devoid of all qualities or attributes. Purusha remains the silent observer—pure awareness—untouched by the material world. In contrast, Prakriti represents matter or nature, the dynamic and active substance that underlies all physical and mental phenomena.

Prakriti is composed of three fundamental qualities, or gunas: sattva (purity and harmony), rajas (activity and motion), and tamas (inertia and resistance). These gunas govern the evolution and manifestation of Prakriti. To understand this relationship in practical terms, one can think of a table-fan: the fan, with its blades and motor, symbolises Prakriti, while the electricity or power that drives the fan embodies Purusha. True manifestation is possible only through the co-existence of both Purusha and Prakriti; neither alone is sufficient.

Bhagavān explains that the entire creation, or Prakriti, acts as a womb in which he plants the seeds for evolution. All living beings are thus born from this cosmic process. The Taittiriya Upanishad contains the shloka "tasmadva etasmadātmāna akasah sambhutah" in the Brahmananda Valli (Second Chapter, First Anuvaka), describing the emanation of the universe from Brahman. According to this cosmogonic sequence, space (ākāśa) originates from Brahman, who is the Self (ātman); from space arises air (vāyu); from air, fire (agni); from fire, water (ap); from water, earth (Pṛthvī); from earth, herbs (Oṣadhaya); from herbs, food (annam); and from food, the human being (Puruṣa). As expressed in the shloka "**āścharyavat paśyati kaścit enan, āścharyavad vadati tathaiva cānyaḥ**," this process is a wonder that cannot truly be experienced or seen. If one wishes to draw a simile for "ātman," it is space (ākāśa)—vast and ungraspable. The mention of earth (Pṛthvī) here is not a literal reference to the planet but relates to the concept of "**Gandhavatī Pṛthvī**". "Gandhavatī" means "possessing fragrance" and is used philosophically, especially in the **Vaiśeṣika** school, to describe earth as having the unique property of smell (**Gandha**).

The Purpose of Understanding Creation

A pertinent question arises: if the ultimate aim of every seeker (Sādhak) is supreme knowledge

(**Param Jñāna**), why is it necessary to understand the process of creation? Our quest for knowledge begins with the question “Ko Hum”—Who am I? Why, then, does Paramātmā teach us about creation? Sri Krishna’s teachings emphasise that only by knowing the true nature of creation (**Srṣṭi**) and Purusha can one comprehend the philosophy of Advaita (non-duality). Advaita Vedanta asserts that Brahman, the ultimate reality, is the only true existence, and that the individual self (**jivātman**) is non-different from Brahman. The experience of duality arises from ignorance. Liberation (moksha) is thus attained through the direct knowledge (**vidyā**) of one’s real identity as Brahman. In this view, Brahman alone is ultimately real, while the phenomenal world is not entirely real (**mithya**). Although the earth (Pṛthvī) is created, destroyed, and recreated in each Mahapralaya (cosmic dissolution), the ātmā (self) remains indestructible.

Cosmic Origins in the Nāsadiya Sūkta

The **Nāsadiya Sūkta**, or the "**Hymn of Creation**," is the 129th hymn of the 10th mandala of the **Rigveda** (10:129). It addresses the cosmology and origin of the universe, beginning with the profound statement: "Then, there was neither existence, nor non-existence." This reflects on the primordial state before creation, where neither matter nor space existed, and there was no distinction between day and night, nor between death and immortality. The hymn describes darkness enveloping darkness, an unbroken continuum of fluid, and the emergence of a single entity, born of the power of knowledge, from a state of stillness and absence of wind. This knowledge is the very Supreme Knowledge that Sri Krishna imparts. Only one who possesses such wisdom can truly comprehend the cosmic phenomenon, the process of creation, and the real nature of Prakriti and Purusha. A mere reading of the Bhagavadgītā and an intellectual understanding of its meanings are insufficient to fathom the depth of this knowledge. In fact, the more one reads and interprets, the more one realizes the vastness of the unknown regarding the cosmic order.

The Example of Swami Ramsukhdasji Maharaj

To illustrate the extent and depth of the supreme spiritual knowledge, consider Swami Ramsukhdasji Maharaj—a revered, self-realized saint who lived a life of total renunciation. His spiritual writings, based entirely on direct personal experience rather than scholastic study, include major works such as "**Sadhaka-Sanjivani**" (an unparalleled commentary on the Bhagavad Gītā), "**Gītā-Darpan**", "**Gītā Prabodhani**", "**Sadhan-Sudha-Sindhu**", and "**Gītā Gyan Praveshika**". Despite authoring so many profound texts, Swami Ramsukhdasji humbly acknowledged that knowledge is infinite, and he could continue writing endlessly.

14.4

sarvayoniṣu kaunteya, mūrtayaḥ(s) saṁbhavanti yāḥ, tāsāṁ(m) brahma mahadyoniḥ(r), ahaṁ(m) bijapradāḥ(ph) pitā. 14.4

Of all embodied beings that appear in all the species of various kinds, Arjuna, Prakṛti or Nature is the conceiving Mother, while I am the seed giving Father.

In our scriptures, the notion of 84 lakh yonis (8.4 million life forms) illustrates the immense diversity of species through which the ātmā transmigrates during the ongoing cycle of rebirth, known as samsara. This journey of the soul is intricately governed by the principle of karma, wherein the actions performed in previous lives directly influence the form and circumstances of future existences. The enumeration of 84 lakh yonis is divided into several broad categories, each representing a significant segment of living beings. These include:

- Aquatic life (**Jalchar**): Approximately 900,000 species.
- Plants and trees (**Sthavar**): Around 2 million species.
- Insects and reptiles (**Krimikar**): About 1.1 million species.

- Birds (**Pakshi**): Roughly 1 million species.
- Animals (**Pashu**): Nearly 3 million species.
- Humans (**Manushya**): The final and most rare birth form.

Sri Krishna explains that Prakriti, or nature, serves as the womb for all these life forms, and he is the father who plants the seed of existence—expressed in the words, “ahaṁ bīja-pradaḥ pitā.” This teaching emphasizes the interconnectedness of all forms of life and the role of the divine in the genesis of every species.

The scriptures further describe four principal classifications of birth forms, or yonis:

- **Andaj**: Those born from eggs.
- **Swadaj**: Those born from waste.
- **Udbhijj**: Those born from earth.
- **Jarayuj**: Those born from the womb.

Across all these yonis, Sri Krishna affirms his divine role as the universal father, stating that he is “**Sarvabhūta Maheswaram**”—the Lord of all beings. This highlights the greatness and all-encompassing nature of the Paramātmā, who is present in every form and every aspect of the cycle of life.

14.5

sattvaṁ(m) rajastama iti, guṇāḥ(ph) prakṛtisambhavāḥ, nibadhnanti mahābāho, dehe dehinamavyayam. 14.5

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—these three Guṇas born of Nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body, Arjuna.

Triguna denotes the three intrinsic qualities or gunas—Sattva (purity and balance), Rajas (activity and desire), and Tamas (inertia and darkness)—that permeate every aspect of creation. According to Sri Krishna, these gunas form the essential constituents of Prakriti, the primal matter or natural essence from which all material and psychological states originate. The universe itself is perceived as the harmonious union of Purusha (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (nature). While Purusha remains constant and passive, Prakriti is ever active, undergoing continuous transformation driven by the dynamic interplay of the three gunas.

Prakriti manifests in all forms of existence, both living and non-living, and in both gross and subtle manifestations. It is recognized as the source of all material creation. The gunas are present in every stratum of existence—shaping the physical world, the mind, and the individual personality. Their influence extends to the very core of human experience, affecting thoughts, actions, and states of consciousness.

A helpful analogy is that of a colour printer, which utilizes just three basic colours—Red, Green, and Blue (RGB). Through various combinations of these three, it is possible to produce millions of distinct colour variations. Similarly, the predominance of one guna over the others determines the nature of a person's mind and behaviour, thereby influencing their thoughts, actions, and consciousness. These qualities are not inherently virtuous or immoral; rather, they are fundamental forces that govern the journey of spiritual evolution.

The trigunas act as binding agents, attaching the eternal and indestructible Ātmā (soul) to the perishable physical body—much like a rope binds objects together. The Ātmā is eternal, is

encapsulated in the phrase, "**mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ**" meaning "The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts." This verse affirms that the ātmā is an eternal, indivisible fragment of Bhagavān (the Supreme Being). While the ātmā itself remains unchanged from body to body, its attachment within the physical realm leads to further attachments with other physical entities. These attachments, in turn, give rise to emotional characteristics such as friendship, enmity, joy, and sorrow, tying the soul to the cycles of worldly experience.

14.6

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

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

Sri Krishna presents a nuanced perspective on Sattva guna, the mode of goodness. Although Sattva is characterised by purity (**nirmalatvāt**), illumination (**prakāśhakam**), and well-being (**anāmayam**), it still possesses the power to bind the Ātmā. This binding does not occur through negativity, but rather through the creation of attachment to happiness and knowledge.

To illustrate this, consider the example of ornamental metallic chains. Among them, a gold chain shines the brightest, carries significant value, and is highly prized. However, this very desirability can create a material attachment for the individual who longs for it. Similarly, while Sri Krishna affirms that knowledge arises from Sattva guna (**sattvātsañjāyate jñānam**), this knowledge, though illuminating, remains at a physical level and does not necessarily lead to liberation. True purification comes from supreme knowledge, as expressed in the statement, "**na hi jñānena sadṛśhaṁ pavitramiha vidyate**," meaning that nothing in this world is as purifying as knowledge. Yet only the highest form of knowledge (Supreme) can liberate, not the physical or worldly knowledge alone.

By virtue of Sattva guna, individuals can experience a certain degree of happiness. However, this happiness is fleeting. Once someone experiences this bliss, it is natural to desire its continuation or to seek even greater happiness. This desire leads to attachment (sukha-saṅgena badhnāti), and the happiness derived from Sattva is ultimately temporary. Lasting and true happiness lies in realising the Paramātmān and breaking free from all attachments. Achieving this state requires transcending the happiness afforded by the three gunas.

A similar pattern is seen with knowledge. Individuals may gain wisdom by studying scriptures, associating with the wise, and engaging in contemplation. Over time, however, they become attached to the company they keep and the knowledge they have acquired (**jñāna-saṅgena chā**). Even this happiness is ephemeral. For example, one may study the Bhagavadgītā and even interpret it for others, deriving pride and happiness from this accomplishment. This sense of pride and happiness is also a manifestation of Sattvic guna, leading to attachment and the associated feelings.

The Dangers of Pride and the Importance of Humility

Travelling the spiritual path with the aim of liberation calls for vigilance against such attachments. Practitioners must strive to remain humble, as pride and ego can gradually creep in and obscure judgement. It is important to recognise that anyone can fall into this trap, and the only way to correct oneself is through acceptance and seeking the blessings of Bhagavān. This underscores the importance of daily worship and the practice of Dhyan (meditation) for seekers.

The Story of Svetaketu: An Illustration of Sattvic Ego

The teachings of this shloka are well illustrated by the story of Svetaketu. Svetaketu, son of the sage Uddalaka, was sent to a guru at the age of twelve to study the Vedas. His education continued until he was twenty-four years old. Upon returning home, Svetaketu was filled with pride, convinced that he had mastered all knowledge. Observing his son's arrogance, Uddalaka decided to impart a deeper lesson. He asked Svetaketu whether he had learned the knowledge that enables one to hear the unheard, see the unseen, and know the unknown (Brahmavidyā). Svetaketu was silent, admitting his ignorance, he suggested that perhaps his teachers were unaware of this knowledge, as they had not taught it to him. Rather than accepting his own limitations, Svetaketu attributed his lack of knowledge to his gurus. This story aptly demonstrates the notion of Sattvic ego (Ahaṁkāra).

Question and Answers

Radha ji

Q: How do you defeat ego and self-pride?

A: Continuous practice is important. It is possible to develop pride in one's skills and abilities, but it is useful to recognize that there are always individuals with more experience or knowledge. Developing self-awareness can enable us to see others who may have varying skill levels without forming an inferiority or superiority complex. This perspective allows for a balanced understanding that everyone has their place and that differences do not make anyone inherently better or worse than others.

Q: Sometimes it happens that we are insulted or looked upon for no reason. How do we react to this?

A: We may sometimes receive more honor than we deserve, and at other times face undeserved criticism. The Bhagavad Gītā uses the phrase "**tulya-nindā-stutir**" to describe a devotee who remains unaffected by both praise and blame, showing equanimity regardless of others' judgments. While reading these teachings is straightforward, consistently applying them in life is the real challenge.

Deva ji

Q: Why do we study chapters out of order instead of following the original sequence?

A: We begin with the easiest chapter (Chapter 12) and progress as Sadhaks' understanding deepens, since some chapters are complex. The 18th chapter, being the longest and a conclusion, is studied last. Its 66th shloka is especially challenging; Sri Ādi Śaṅkarācārya ji devoted 10 pages to explaining it, as it contains deep, interconnected concepts requiring further clarification.

Q: Please suggest a simple translation or commentary on Bhagavat Gītā for beginners

A: The English version of Shrimad Bhagavadgītā Sadhak Sanjeevani by Swami Ramsukhdas ji Maharaj is likely the top choice.

Q: I regularly consume alcohol, and recently I have noticed an increase in procrastination and reduced motivation. What steps can I take to address this?

A: Habits and traits take time and effort to change. Sri Krishna teaches that mastering the mind requires consistent practice (**abhyāsa**) and detachment (**vairāgya**). Progress comes through steady, disciplined effort. To break habits, distract yourself from triggers, set manageable goals—like gradually reducing alcohol—and focus on spiritual learning or service, such as studying the Bhagavadgītā or engaging in seva. Over time, these actions can help shift away from unwanted habits.

Suyansh ji

Q: Can you please explain Trigūṇas through a real-world example?

A: Triguna refers to three fundamental qualities or gunas—Sattva (purity and balance), Rajas (activity and desire), and Tamas (inertia and darkness). For example, when a student studies for an exam with focus and motivation, Sattva guna is present. If the student is strongly invested in the outcome or

experiences emotional reactions after the exam, Rajas guna is dominant. If there is a lack of interest or effort toward studying, Tamas guna is evident. In the Ramayana, Vibhīṣaṇa is associated with Sattva guna, Rāvaṇa with Rajas, and Kumbakarna with Tamas.

Manne Srimannarayana Ji

Q: We are in the clutches of Trigunas, and Atma is bound by it. Is there a higher state by which we can be freed from the Trigunas and attain Moksha?

A: Yes, there is. Such a state is called “**Guṇātīta**”. The one who is guṇātīta, or the one who is attribute less will be able to find liberation or Moksha. Sri Krishna explains how to transcend the effects of the Trigunas in the succeeding shlokas, in response to Arjuna’s query.



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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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