



ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 14: Guṇatraya-Vibhāga-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/85iksegB8ao>

“From Tamas to Transcendence: Understanding the Three Guṇas and the Law of Karma”

Chapter 14 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita - **GunaTraya Vibhaga Yoga - The three modes of Prakṛti**

The session begins with the prayer and lighting of the lamp.

Maharshi Veda Vyāsa, the great sage, composed the Mahābhārata, and within it shines the divine jewel — the Bhagavad-Gītā. Through its eighteen chapters, the highest spiritual wisdom is revealed. Let us begin by remembering the Guru:

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Brahmā is Guru, Viṣṇu is Guru, Maheśvara is Guru, but ultimately the Guru is the Supreme Brahman. Salutations to that great Guru. Om, salutations to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Om, salutations to the Guru.

Today we are continuing Chapter 14 of the Bhagavad-Gītā, titled ****Gunatraya Vibhāga-Yoga****, the Yoga of the Division of the Three Guṇas. As the name itself suggests, Bhagavān explains the three qualities of nature — Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Everything around us, the entire universe, is made up of just these three guṇas. All the variety we see in this world comes from their different combinations and permutations.

Structurally, we are all the same. We all have two eyes, one mouth, the same organs, the same systems functioning inside the body. Yet our personalities are different. Our likes and dislikes are different. Even twins living in the same house think differently. Why is that? Because the proportion of these three guṇas within each of us is different. Nature creates this variation through these three qualities.

Think of gold. Pure 24-karat gold is very soft and cannot easily be shaped into ornaments. To make beautiful jewellery, some other metal must be mixed with it. In the same way, pure consciousness alone does not create individuality. For us to take form, to have desires, tendencies, and personality,

these three guṇas must mix. They may appear like impurities, but they are necessary for worldly existence.

Now, are these guṇas bad? No. All three are important. Without tamas, we cannot sleep. Without rajas, we cannot act. Without sattva, we cannot discriminate between right and wrong. Even the most sattvic person needs some rest. Even a peaceful person needs some desire to perform duties. The issue is not their presence. The issue is imbalance. If we want to move forward in life and come closer to Bhagavān, we must learn how to regulate these guṇas.

Sattva brings clarity and knowledge. It helps keep rajas and tamas under control. Bhagavān is teaching us that there must be limits to our urges and impulses. He is not forcing us. He never forces. Even in the battlefield, when Arjuna says, “I will not fight,” Bhagavān does not compel him. Arjuna’s bow slips from his hands, his body trembles, and his mind is confused. Still, Bhagavān only teaches.

At the end of the Gītā, Bhagavān says:

**इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ (18.63)**

“I have given you this most secret knowledge. Reflect on it fully, and then do as you wish.”

HE gives wisdom, but the decision remains ours. Because Arjuna is dear to HIM, HE reveals this deepest knowledge.

In this chapter, Bhagavān will explain what happens when each guṇa becomes dominant. What happens when sattva is strong? What happens when rajas is strong? What happens when tamas is strong? These qualities determine how we think, act, and even what kind of life we move toward.

In Chapter 12, Bhagavān described the qualities of a true devotee. HE did not command anyone to become that way. HE simply explained the qualities. In Chapter 16, HE described divine and demonic traits. Again, no force — only clarity. Now, in Chapter 14, HE explains the root mechanism behind all these traits — the three guṇas.

This chapter is very practical and introspective. It asks us to observe ourselves. What is dominating within me right now? Is my action coming from clarity, from restless desire, or from ignorance? Understanding the guṇas helps us understand ourselves. And when we understand ourselves, we can slowly rise above these influences and move closer to Bhagavān.

As we learn each verse, let us not just read it. Let us ask ourselves: *How does this apply to me? What can I learn from this? How can I practice it? And how can I rise above the guṇas described here?* That should be our mood while studying.

7th shloka:

**रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ (14.7)**

In the previous verse, Bhagavān explained sattva. HE said that when sattva dominates, there is purity, clarity, and illumination. A sattvic person lives in knowledge. The mind is lighted from within. Actions are guided by understanding. Sattva is the quality of goodness and inner brightness.

Now Bhagavān explains rajas.

Rajas is passion. It is energy. It is movement. It is desire. Bhagavān says that rajas is born from **trṣṇā** (craving) and **saṅga** (attachment). When rajas becomes dominant in a person, there is constant

wanting. One desire leads to another. The mind is always running toward something.

The word “guṇa” itself means a rope — something that binds. Whether it is sattva, rajas, or tamas, each guṇa binds the soul in a different way. Here, Bhagavān says that rajas binds through attachment to action and attachment to results.

We can see this very clearly in daily life. For example, a new phone model comes this year. Next year, a newer version arrives. Then another one after that. The previous one feels outdated. Immediately, the mind says, “I want the new one.” The desire does not stop. It keeps moving. That is rajas at work.

To fulfill that desire, we need money. To earn money, we must work more. To work more, we take on more responsibilities. Slowly, we become tied to action. This is how rajas binds — through constant engagement and constant craving.

Rajas is not completely bad. Without rajas, we would not act. We would not get up and perform our duties. But when rajas is uncontrolled, it turns into endless dissatisfaction. Even when we achieve something, the mind immediately runs toward the next goal. There is no rest.

That is why we need sattva. Sattva gives discrimination. It tells us, “Is this desire necessary? Is this attachment helpful?” Without sattva, rajas keeps pushing us outward again and again.

What about tamas?

Bhagavān explains tamas in the next verse. Tamas is darkness. It produces ignorance, delusion, carelessness, laziness, and excessive sleep. When tamas dominates, there is confusion. There is resistance to growth. There is unwillingness to let go.

Sometimes we see this in leadership or positions of authority. A person may be in a respectable position, yet refuses to allow others to contribute. They hold tightly to their chair. They do not welcome new ideas. They do not allow change. That stagnation is tamas.

Tamas resists movement. Rajas runs restlessly. Sattva balances both.

If tamas overpowers us, we become dull and careless. If rajas overpowers us, we become restless and constantly driven by desire. If sattva increases, we gain clarity and inner balance.

Bhagavān is teaching us to observe these tendencies within ourselves. HE is not forcing us. HE is showing us the mechanism of our own mind. When we understand how rajas binds through desire and how tamas binds through ignorance, we can slowly strengthen sattva and rise higher.

The purpose of this chapter is not just to define the guṇas. It is to help us recognize them within ourselves and gradually transcend their control.

8th shloka

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ 14.8 ॥

The Delusion of Tamas: From Ignorance to Inertia

In the eighth śloka, Bhagavān describes the third quality—*Tamas*—which is the darkest of the three ropes. While *Sattva* illuminates and *Rajas* activates, *Tamas* binds the soul through deception. Bhagavān explains that *Tamas* is born of ignorance (*Ajñāna*). It is the “delusion” (*Moham*) of all embodied beings.

Ignorance is ignorance. It simply means not knowing. When there is a complete absence of knowledge, that is ignorance. So when Bhagavān speaks about tamas, HE says it is born out of ignorance. But it does not stop there. It also pushes us toward attachment and delusion. Two important ideas are here — **ignorance and delusion**. Tamas arises from ignorance, and then it drives us deeper into confusion and attachment.

Let us understand this in a simple way. Knowing something means being aware of it. For example, many of us know that waking up early is a good habit. It is good for the body, good for the mind, good for concentration. That is knowledge. But some people genuinely do not know this — that is ignorance. However, there is something even more serious. We know waking up early is good, yet we still choose to sleep late. That is tamas.

So there are two levels. One is not knowing. The other is knowing, but still not acting according to that knowledge. That deliberate ignoring of knowledge is tamas guṇa in action. It is not just absence of knowledge; it is the refusal to move toward knowledge. It is the absence of effort.

There is a beautiful Sanskrit saying:

उद्यमेन हि सिद्ध्यन्ति कार्याणि न मनोरथैः ।
न हि सुप्तस्य सिंहस्य प्रविशन्ति मुखे मृगाः ॥

Success comes from effort, not from mere wishes. Even a lion, if it keeps sleeping, will not have deer walk into its mouth. In the same way, simply thinking about improvement will not change anything. Effort is required.

That is where tamas binds us. It binds us through **procrastination, laziness, and excessive sleep**. We know what we are supposed to do. Yet we postpone it. We do everything else except the important thing. That is procrastination.

For example, we know we have an exam next week. Still, we delay studying. We plan to study just one day before the exam. We know no one else will write the exam for us. Still, we postpone. That is tamas.

“Pramāda” - carelessness.

“Ālasya” - laziness.

“Nidrā” - sleep.

These are the ropes of tamas. They make the body dull and the mind inactive.

A person dominated by tamas mainly thinks of eating and sleeping. The perfect example is Kumbhakarṇa from the Rāmāyaṇa. He slept for six months, woke up to eat, and then slept again. That is tamas in its extreme form.

If we look at the three brothers — Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, and Vibhīṣaṇa — we can clearly see the three guṇas. Rāvaṇa represents rajas — ambition, passion, constant craving. He wanted the golden city of Laṅkā, which belonged to Kubera. He thought, “Why should Kubera have it? It should be mine.” That intense wanting is rajas.

Kumbhakarṇa represents tamas — inertia, dullness, indulgence.

Vibhīṣaṇa represents sattva — clarity, righteousness, devotion.

Through these three characters, we easily understand the three guṇas.

Now, when Bhagavān explains tamas to Arjuna, HE addresses him as “Bhārata.” HE calls him by different names — Pārtha, Kaunteya, Anagha, Bhārata. Here, by calling him Bhārata, HE reminds him of his noble lineage.

Sometimes, when someone we respect speaks about bad qualities, we immediately think, “Is this about me?” But Bhagavān reassures Arjuna. “Do not think you are tamasic. You come from the lineage of Bhārata.”

The word “Bhārata” itself is beautiful. “Bha” means light or knowledge. “Rata” means engaged in. So Bhārata means one who is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. This land, this lineage, has always valued knowledge. Bhagavān reminds Arjuna of his heritage — you are born in a tradition of wisdom.

HE is not accusing. HE is guiding. HE is saying, “Be aware of tamas. Recognize it. Rise above it.”

Then Bhagavān summarizes the effects of the three guṇas in the next verse:

9th Shloka:

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥ (14.9)

In the ninth śloka, Bhagavān explains the specific "glue" each quality uses to stick the soul to this material world. Whether the chain is made of iron (Tamas), silver (Rajas), or even pure gold (Sattva), it remains a chain that keeps us from absolute freedom in HIM.

Sattva binds one to happiness.

Rajas binds one to action.

Tamas, covering knowledge, binds one to carelessness and delusion.

This is the mechanism of life.

Sattva gives joy and clarity, but even that can bind through attachment to happiness.

Rajas keeps us constantly active and restless.

Tamas covers knowledge and pushes us into negligence.

Sattva attaches the soul to happiness. A person in sattva feels deep joy in chanting the Name of Bhagavān, in singing bhajans, in reciting ślokas. If we randomly open the Gītā and begin to sing even one śloka, immediately there is happiness in the heart. That joy is real. That peace is real. But still, it is sattva. It is still a chain. It does not matter whether the chain is made of iron, silver, or gold — it is still a chain. Sattva may be a golden chain, but it binds nonetheless.

Then comes **rajo-guṇa**, the mode of passion. Rajas binds through **karma**, through action. A person under rajas cannot sit quietly. One action finishes, another begins. The mind keeps planning, doing, achieving, running. There is constant movement. Bhagavān says rajas binds through attachment to work. The person feels, “I must do. I must achieve. I must act.” That restlessness is the sign of rajas.

Then there is **tamo-guṇa**, the mode of ignorance. Tamas binds differently. It first **covers knowledge**. We may know what is right. We may know what is good for us. But tamas covers that knowledge. Then comes **pramāda — carelessness**. We act as though we do not know.

On tobacco packets it is clearly written: “This will cause cancer.” The knowledge is there. The warning is clear. Still, people continue. Why? Ignorance. Carelessness. That is tamas. It covers knowledge and pushes a person into negligence.

So how do we come out of tamas?

The only way is through **good company and good scriptures**. By reading sacred texts. By reflecting on noble thoughts. This is what Mahabharata teaches us. And within it shines the Bhagavad Gītā.

Great saints have explained this beautifully. Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, in HIS divine commentary **Jnaneshwari**, describes the Mahābhārata as a vast garden — a garden not of ordinary trees, but of **trees of wisdom, discrimination, and knowledge**. If we walk in that garden daily, slowly the darkness begins to fade.

To overcome tamas we need **viveka — discrimination**. We should take even one śloka and reflect upon it deeply. Think about it. Live with it. That steady reflection purifies the mind. That is how tamas is kept in check.

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.

Now Bhagavān further explains that these three guṇas — sattva, rajas, and tamas — are constantly competing.

These three guṇas keep rotating. Any one of them can rise to the top at any time. And sometimes, that is necessary.

For example, we need **tamo-guṇa** for sleep. If tamas does not come to the top at night, we will not be able to rest peacefully. So tamas is not useless. Rajas is not useless. Even sattva is not the final goal. The real teaching is this — **everything must be balanced**.

But who will maintain that balance?

The monitoring must be done by **sattva-guṇa**. Only sattva has the clarity to observe and regulate the other two. Without sattva, there is no proper control.

In Vivekach classes, children are taught something very simple. If you feel tamas rising inside you — laziness, negativity, dullness — immediately consult your sattva. Ask yourself: *Is this right? Is this helpful? Is this dharmic?* That inner consultation is sattva at work.

Now understand something very important. If **rajas joins hands with tamas**, the result is dangerous. We see this clearly in the world. Terrorism, violence, destruction — these do not happen with tamas alone. Tamas gives darkness, cruelty, inability to see good. But action requires rajas. So when rajas and tamas combine, harmful actions take place.

Rajo-guṇa represents action, movement, execution. Tamo-guṇa represents ignorance and destructive tendency. When these two become friends, adharma increases.

But if you want to do something noble, something uplifting, then let your **rajas become friends with sattva**. When action is guided by purity and clarity, then karma becomes seva. Then work becomes worship.

So the key teaching is this:

If rajas is guided by sattva, good happens.
If rajas is guided by tamas, harm happens.

Therefore, always keep sattva strong within you. Let sattva observe. Let sattva guide. Let sattva regulate

the other two.

14.11

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

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

Bhagavān further explains how the dominance of sattva changes a person completely.

The **Bhagavad Gītā** tells us that this body is like a **city**. A city has gates. In the same way, this body has **nine gates**. Through these nine doors, all our experiences move in and out.

In the fifth chapter, Bhagavān says:

**सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ (5.13)**

The embodied soul lives happily in this city of nine gates when HE renounces actions in the mind and remains self-controlled. Though actions happen through the gates, their results do not cling to HIM.

These nine gates are our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and the other openings of the body. When sattva-guṇa increases within us, light begins to shine through all these gates. Knowledge flows outward. Clarity spreads.

Bhagavān again says in this verse: When light arises in all the gates of the body, know that sattva is increasing.

Have you noticed? When we go to see a saint, there is a natural peace around HIM. When we enter a temple or a holy place, there is a certain positive vibration. That is sattva. **Sattva is light. Sattva is knowledge. Sattva is purity.**

When sattva becomes dominant in a person, it is not only that person who benefits. Everyone around feels that light. Knowledge spreads. Calmness spreads. Joy spreads.

Look at the life of **Tukaram**. In the saint tradition of Maharashtra, which began with Dnyaneshwar ji, Tukaram Maharaj stands at a very high peak. It is said that he never formally studied the Vedas. He was not a scholar in the conventional sense. Yet he composed thousands of abhangas filled with devotion and wisdom.

There is a famous incident. Some people, out of jealousy, threw his collection of abhangas into the Indrayani River. They even tied stones to it so it would sink. But that sacred collection floated. It rose above the water.

Why? Because it was filled with **sattva**. When something is full of purity and truth, even heavy stones cannot drown it.

This teaches us the importance of **good company**. Even if a stone is heavy, in the company of something pure, it can float — just like the stones of Rāma Setu floated by the power of Bhagavān's Name.

Tukaram Maharaj used to go daily to a small hill near his village — Bhandara hill. There he would sit and

chant, “Vitthal, Vitthal, Vitthal,” absorbed in bhajan and meditation. At first, when he went there, birds and animals would run away from him. Just as birds fly away when we approach them, they were afraid. He felt deep sorrow. He thought, “Even though I chant so much, even though I love Bhagavān, still these creatures do not feel safe near me. That means something is lacking in my purity.”

See his humility. He did not blame the birds. He blamed himself. He examined his own heart. He thought, “If true goodness were present in me, they would feel it. They would feel no fear.” That was his way of measuring his spiritual progress — not by praise, not by followers, but by the **fearlessness others felt in his presence**.

After some time, things changed. When he would sit for kirtan and chant “Vitthal, Vitthal,” birds began to come near him. They would sit close to him, even on his shoulders. Animals no longer ran away. Then he felt, “Now Bhagavān is closer. Now my heart is becoming pure.”

This is the true sign of **sattva**. Not just personal happiness. Not just private meditation. But a presence that gives safety, peace, and comfort to others.

That is the transformation sattva brings. It changes your face. It changes your aura. It changes the environment around you.

The takeaway is very simple:

**If sattva grows within us,
light shines through all our nine gates.
Knowledge increases.
And everyone around us feels peace.**

Now Bhagavān will explain what happens when rajas and tamas become dominant — how greed, restless desire, negligence, and confusion begin to shape the personality.

But before that, remember this one truth:

**Goodness is not only for your own upliftment.
True sattva makes the whole world around you feel safe.**

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 the 12th and 13th ślokas, Bhagavān vividly describes the inner turmoil of Rajas and the heavy darkness of Tamas. These are the forces that keep us searching for happiness in all the wrong places. When rajas increases, greed (lobha) arises. There is constant activity, constant starting of new actions, restlessness, and intense longing.

Lobha: the urge to keep accumulating.

Pravṛtti: the urge to constantly engage.

Ārambha: starting many works.

Aśama: lack of control over the senses.

Sprhā: craving.

The mind keeps running outward. But understand this clearly — rajas is not always bad. We are human beings. We are in the cycle of karma. We cannot sit idle all the time. Action is natural for us. The key is this: **rajas must be guided by sattva.**

For example, all of you received the link for the Bhagavad Gītā classes. That connection was Bhagavān's grace. But continuing the classes — that is your effort. You chose to invest forty minutes daily in learning instead of spending that time elsewhere. That is rajas guided by sattva. Some people learn one chapter — maybe the twelfth chapter — and feel, "Now I know enough." Some stop there. Some move to the next level. Some go deeper. Very few memorize and master the ślokas. What makes the difference? The direction of rajas.

When rajas joins sattva, it becomes disciplined effort.

When rajas joins tamas, it becomes restless distraction.

Too much rajas without sattva creates another problem — starting many things but finishing none. In Marathi, there is a saying: trying to carry many loads but dropping everything halfway. That is uncontrolled rajas. The mind becomes impatient. Desires multiply. Control weakens. Look at today's world. Social media constantly shows us how others are living. Even if we cannot afford that lifestyle, desire arises. We start wanting someone else's life. We begin chasing images, not reality. The mind keeps looking outward. Always outward. And that outward chase never ends. But if we turn inward, something changes. Instead of chasing endless desires, we begin to experience inner completeness. Instead of comparison, there is contentment. Instead of craving, there is awareness. We are moving toward Mahāśivarātri. The state of **"Shivoham" — I am pure consciousness** — cannot be experienced while running behind endless desires. Rajas keeps the mind in motion. Peace requires stillness.

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 the thirteenth śloka, Bhagavān provides a stark contrast between the stillness of wisdom and the stillness of ignorance.

What does **tamo-guṇa** really do?

It creates a kind of illusion — like wearing a virtual reality headset. Today we all understand this example. You put on a headset, and suddenly a different world appears. For half an hour or one hour, you feel that world is real. You react to it. You forget the actual surroundings. In the same way, tamas makes us forget our true Self. It covers reality. It makes the unreal feel real. We are already inside one level of illusion — identifying with body and mind — and then we add another layer through ignorance. That covering disconnects us from our own inner light. Tamas is the inability to distinguish between right and wrong. It is a kind of stillness — but not the stillness of sattva. Understand the difference carefully.

Sattva is stillness filled with contentment. It is peaceful. It is luminous. It needs nothing external to feel complete.

Tamas is stillness filled with emptiness. It is dull. It is heavy. It is inactive in the wrong way.

In sattva, the mind is quiet because it is fulfilled.

In tamas, the mind is inactive because it is clouded.

Tamas shows itself as laziness. We know what is right, yet we do not act. We know what should be done, yet we postpone. That negligence — that carelessness — is *tamas*. It is like wearing fogged glasses. Knowledge is present, but we cannot see clearly. Judgment becomes clouded. Discernment weakens.

Bhagavān says: When *tamas* increases, there is darkness, inactivity, carelessness, and delusion. And notice how Bhagavān addresses Arjuna — *Kuru-nandana*, son of the noble Kuru dynasty. HE reminds him of his lineage. “You belong to a great dynasty. You are not born for ignorance. You are not born for weakness.” Arjuna’s confusion in the first chapter — “I will not fight. I will renounce everything. I will live on alms.” — appears compassionate, but it is actually clouded by *tamas*. It is important to understand this background.

Before the war, when the Pāṇḍavas were in exile, Dhṛtarāṣṭra sent Sanjaya as a messenger. Through him, he tried to influence the Pāṇḍavas emotionally. “You are the elder brothers. It is your duty to forgive the younger ones. Whatever mistakes they made, overlook them.” This was subtle manipulation. Arjuna’s arguments in the first chapter — about destruction of family traditions, future generations becoming corrupt, social chaos — all sound logical. But behind that logic was emotional disturbance planted earlier. *Tamas* often hides behind seemingly noble arguments. All the Pāṇḍavas were shaken. “Let us not fight. Let us live in the forest. We do not need a kingdom.” Only Sahadeva and Kuntī Mātā remained firm that *dharma* must be protected. So Bhagavān reminds Arjuna: “Remember who you are. Remember your duty. Do not let *tamas* disguise itself as compassion.”

Avoiding one’s *dharma* out of confusion is *tamas*. Performing one’s *dharma* with clarity is *sattva*. Running away from rightful action leads downward. Standing firm in *dharma* purifies. Now Bhagavān takes the teaching even deeper. HE explains what happens at the time of death. We have had many births before. We will have future births. What role do these three *guṇas* play in determining our next birth?

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.

In these concluding ślokas, Bhagavān reveals a profound secret: our state of mind at the moment of departure determines our next destination. HE says: When *sattva* is strong at the time of death, the embodied soul attains the pure realms of the wise. Now understand what is meant by *pralaya* — destruction. Our scriptures speak of different kinds of destruction. One is the **constant destruction**, and the other is the **cyclical destruction**.

Constant destruction happens every night. When we go to sleep, our world disappears for us. We are not aware of our surroundings. Our relationships, our responsibilities — everything collapses for that time. Then we wake up, and the world begins again. That is a daily, small dissolution. But death is the larger dissolution — the cyclical destruction. When this body falls, that phase of life ends. Yet the journey does not end. The soul continues. Forms change. Experiences change. And what determines the next form?

The state of mind at the final moment:

If *sattva* is dominant — if the mind is pure, calm, filled with noble thoughts — then the soul moves upward. Such a person attains higher realms, pure worlds, luminous states of existence. The transition is smooth. There is no struggle. The scriptures say that such souls may take birth among divine beings, among sages, or in highly evolved circumstances where spiritual growth continues naturally.

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.

Now Bhagavān explains what happens if rajas dominates.

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते ॥

If one dies while rajas is strong, one is born among those attached to action. What does that mean?

If at the time of death the mind is filled with anxiety about work, money, property, unfinished projects — “What will happen to my factory? What will happen to my business? How will my children manage?” — then that restless attachment carries forward. Rajas keeps the soul bound to action. The person takes birth again in circumstances where activity, ambition, and responsibility dominate. The cycle of doing continues. And then comes tamas.

तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ॥

If one dies in tamas, one is born in deluded wombs. When ignorance, confusion, negativity, or darkness dominate at the final moment, the next birth reflects that state. Awareness becomes more limited. Clarity becomes dimmer. This teaching is not meant to frighten us. It is meant to awaken us. Every day we are strengthening one of these three guṇas.

- If we live in sattva — clarity, devotion, discrimination — then at the final moment sattva will naturally arise.
- If we live in constant greed and restlessness, rajas will dominate at the end.
- If we live in negligence and ignorance, tamas will surface at the end.

The last thought is not random. It is the summary of a lifetime. So the message is very practical: Do not wait for the final moment to prepare. Live in awareness now. Strengthen sattva now. Because the guṇa you nourish daily will quietly shape your destiny — in this life and beyond.

14.16

**karmaṇaḥ(s) sukṛtasyāhuḥ(s), sāttvikaṃ(n) nirmalaṃ(m) phalam,
rajasastu phalaṃ(n) duḥkham, ajñānaṃ(n) tamaśaḥ(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.

In this concluding part of the discourse, the speaker emphasizes the absolute justice of Paramātmā. HE has set in motion a law that no one can bypass: the law of *Karma*.

The principle is very clear. Whatever I have not done, I will never receive the result of it. There is no

mistake in that. And whatever I have done — no one in this entire universe, not even Bhagavān, can stop me from receiving the result of that action. That is the law of karma.

If you are doing good deeds, no force in creation can block the good result from reaching you. And if you are doing wrong deeds, nothing can prevent the consequences from coming back to you. So we must live very consciously.

Every good action is like making a deposit. That is the only currency we carry forward. We cannot take wealth, position, property, or relationships with us. The only thing that travels with the soul is karma — the subtle impressions of what we have done. That is our real investment. That is why awareness is important. If we understand this, we can steer our life in the right direction. Now the Lord explains the fruits of the three guṇas in this verse.

- **Actions done in sattva produce pure results — clarity, joy, inner satisfaction.**
- **Actions done in rajas ultimately produce sorrow. They create restlessness, desire, and when those desires are not fulfilled, pain follows.**
- **Actions done in tamas produce ignorance — deeper confusion, deeper darkness, deeper attachment.**

Rajas is like a flame that burns with longing.

Tamas is like a fog that blocks light.

And that is why, even in daily life, we must deliberately create space for sattvic activities. Yes, we are human beings. We must perform rajasic tasks — work, earn, manage responsibilities. Sometimes tamasic activities are unavoidable — sleep, rest, physical inertia. But we must consciously include sattva in our lifestyle. Chanting. Meditation. Reading the Bhagavad Gītā. Even reciting one chapter a day can slowly purify the mind. Listening to saints. Listening to spiritual stories. If we don't have time to read the entire Mahābhārata, at least we can listen while driving, while walking, while doing daily chores.

For example, the life of **Shivaji Maharaj** — such courage, such devotion, such clarity of purpose. He never fought to lose; he fought to protect dharma. His life itself becomes a lesson in determination and righteousness. Or take the Yaksha Prashna episode from the Mahābhārata — where the Yaksha questions Yudhishtira. The wisdom in those answers is timeless. Each question reveals deep insight into dharma, humility, and the nature of life. When we expose our minds to such stories, sattvic thoughts begin to take root. And those thoughts slowly purify us. Even simple remembrance of God — sitting quietly and remembering Bhagavān — is powerful. These sattvic activities protect us. Even if we are engaged in rajasic and tamasic work during the day, sattva keeps cleansing the inner instrument. That is why sattvic impressions are different. They stay with us. They purify us over time. But remember — even sattva is still a guṇa. Even a golden chain is still a chain. The goal is not merely to stay in tamas, nor only in rajas, nor even permanently in sattva. The natural progression is:

- **From tamas, rise to rajas.**
- **From rajas, rise to sattva.**
- **From sattva, go beyond all three.**

We cannot jump directly from tamas to sattva. First there must be activity. Then refinement. Then transcendence. Bhagavān is beyond the three guṇas. To truly realize Him, we must become guṇātīta — beyond the qualities. How should we live then? Like the lotus. The lotus grows in mud. It lives in water. Yet neither mud nor water sticks to it. The leaf remains untouched. Water droplets simply roll off. That is the state we must aim for. Live in the world — but do not let the world cling to you. Act within the three guṇas —

but do not be bound by them. And that becomes possible only when we consciously move —
from tamas to rajas,
from rajas to sattva,

and from sattva to transcendence.

Question and Answers

Santosh Bhaiya ji

Q Is the 2nd chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā the complete summary? Or is it the 15th or 18th chapter?

A: The 2nd chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā is like deciding the destination before beginning a journey. Before we start traveling, we must know where we want to go. Chapter 2 gives that direction — the essence of the teaching. The 15th chapter is also considered very important because it beautifully summarizes the main philosophical message of the Gita. The 18th chapter is the grand conclusion — the final consolidation of everything discussed.

- Chapter 2 shows the destination.
- Chapter 15 summarizes the core teaching.
- Chapter 18 concludes and seals the message.

SriPriya ji

Q: After sattva, what comes next? Is that the state of being guṇātīta?

A: Yes. After sattva comes transcendence — being beyond the guṇas. Great saints like Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa lived in this world but were not bound by it. They were in the guṇas but untouched by them — like a lotus in water. Their birth is not to exhaust karma. Their balance sheet is already clear. They take birth to uplift others. That is the state of guṇātīta.

Q: Is Moksha Really Possible?

A. Yes. Absolutely. All saints who attained liberation were once ordinary seekers. Swami Ramsukhdas Ji Maharaj once said in a discourse that everyone sitting in front of him will attain moksha — maybe not immediately, maybe not in this birth, but definitely. Moksha is certain for all souls. The only question is: how fast do we want to reach? If you want to go from Nagpur to Delhi, you can walk or take a flight. It depends on your effort and faith. Look at Valmiki. He was once a robber. He could not even say “Rama” properly — he said “Mara.” Yet through faith and repetition, he transformed completely. If such transformation is possible for him, why not for us? Have faith in your practice. Even one mantra, done with complete sincerity, can lead you forward.

SriVidya Ji

Q: Why do we see good people suffering? If karma returns, why don't we see immediate results?

A: Think of a pipe filled with dirt from the past. That dirt is accumulated bad karma. When you start pouring clean water — good karma — what comes out first? The dirt. Only after the old impurities are flushed out does clear water begin to flow. Similarly, when someone starts doing good deeds, they may first experience the exhaustion of past karmas. The good results will definitely come — but after cleansing. There is a story from the Vijayanagara Empire. A priest worshipped Goddess Lakshmi with full sincerity but saw no results. Only after renouncing his desires and exhausting past karmas did blessings flow — and by then he no longer desired them. The lesson is simple: No good action is ever wasted. Cleansing happens first. Blessings follow.



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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