

Newsletter on Bhagavad Gita by Dr. P.V. Nath

The following text is a compilation of the single issues of a regular newsletter by e-mail, composed by Dr. Pathikonda Viswambara Nath.
It includes the original slokas of the Gita as well as the transliteration, translation and commentaries by Dr. Nath.

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**OM SAHA NAVAVATU SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU
SAHA VEERYAM KARAVAVAHAI
TEJASWI NAVADHEETAMASTU
MAA VID VISHAVAHAI**

May He protect us both (the teacher and the pupil)

May He cause us both to enjoy (the Supreme)

May we both exert together (to discover the true inner meaning of the scriptures)

May our studies be thorough and fruitful.

May we never misunderstand each other.

The Gita is in the form of dialogue between Krishna, the preceptor and the disciple Arjuna. Sanjaya, the narrator to King Dhritarashtra, intercepts now and then with a comment of his own. There are a total of 18 chapters with 701 verses (slokas.) Each of the chapters has a title and the title ends with the word "Yoga".

The word "**Yoga**" is derived from the word "Yuj" which means "Unite."

Study of every chapter assists the seeker to unite with the Lord and hence the use of the word "Yoga."

The seeker is he/she who is looking for attaining the union with the "Parabrahman" and experience the "Eternal Bliss." In Sanskrit the name for the word "seeker" is "Sadhaka". The efforts of the sadhaka is known as "Sadhana".

To undertake the task, the seeker must have "Faith" and "Devotion" in the subject, the teacher and "Parabrahman."

Chapter 14: GUṆATRAYA-VIBHĀGA-YOGA

INTRODUCTION

“There is no construction without destruction”. The bulldozers dig the earth before the building is constructed.

Gunās are the thought imprints in our mind that are precursors to our various actions which decide our destiny of life.

Good actions are for constructing a safe road to travel on our journey of life.

Whereas bad actions do end in causing tragedy not only for us but also to others including our beloved ones.

With the bulldozer, namely, The Gita we should recognize and destroy the bad gunas in us and encourage sprouting of good gunas that will assist in construction of a lovely safe motorway for our journey to the Land of the Supreme.

This chapter is to give us a knowledge of the gunas we are supposed to nurture and the gunas we have to uproot from our mind.

In our body, the mind is the seat of three types of vasanas/thought imprints which are the precursors to future actions. These vasanas become our qualities which we express at different times, in different situations and in different ways.

Broadly speaking these are: Satva, Rajas and Tamas.

As we proceed with the chapter, we will get a proper understanding of these in relation to the progress we make in our life’s journey.

Satva guna is the guna to nurture. Rajoguna and Tamoguna have to be technically speaking destroyed. Constructive thinking by nurturing the Satva guna should go hand in hand with the efforts in destroying Rajo and Tamo gunas.

This chapter deals with this issue specifically.

The imprints on the mind as a result of exposure to the external world via the five sense organs are the obstacles in the path to attain Liberation. We have discussed about these imprints, also known as “Gunās” several times already.

These “Gunās” which become our individual nature with which we interact with the world we live in throws us incessantly into the whirlpool of samsara.

In the process of living the life this way (satisfying the need to experience happiness), the deeper thirst to experience the Bliss is pushed so far back that most of us do not actually remember it any more. The knowledge and wisdom as discussed in chapter 7 and the knowledge of “Kshetra Kshetrajna” is to remind us to change our direction of thoughts and strive for the “Bliss”.

This chapter gives us an insight into the gunas and means to overcome these to experience the Bliss.

Guna means “quality”. In this context it refers to the “quality of thoughts”.

As discussed before:

Thoughts form words;

Words form actions;

Actions determine the character;

Character leads to destiny.

This takes us to the “The Philosophy concerning the Human Rebirth”.

The Hindu philosophy is based on several cycles of “birth, life and death” for us the humans before we achieve “Moksha” and free ourselves from the process of “re-birth”.

The law of life is “As you think, so you become”. This law is accepted by almost all the philosophers belonging to all other faith groups.

The thoughts therefore determine our destiny in life.

We can, by the process of self-analysis study our own thoughts and make changes in the type of thoughts we entertain and attain “Moksha” and thereby achieve the spiritual goal.

The Atman within us is the source of the inherent divine knowledge in each of us.

The vasanas block the inherent divine knowledge in us. Transcending the vasanas is the means of letting the “Divine Light of Knowledge” shine forth with all its splendour.

We have mythological examples of people like Ravana who was a great philosopher and had a vast knowledge of the Vedas and Upanisads. But his instinct due to tamasic and rajasic gunas blocked entirely the Divine knowledge and made him express the demonic qualities.

The mind is a subtle organ in us and we cannot see it physically. But we can use our intellect and assess the qualities of thoughts in the mind. It is up to us to plan our journey and decide our destiny by changing the texture of our thoughts.

Traya: (three):

The thoughts are broadly divided into three main groups. These are “Satva, Rajas and Tamas”.

The Lord warns us that all the three types of thoughts/gunas do bind the man to this earth and ends the chapter by describing the qualities of that perfectionist seeker who has transcended all the three gunas.

Imagine a person bound by handcuffs that gets him tied down and prevents him from escaping. The gunas are like the handcuffs that tie us down to this world.

The pure Satvaguna is like a gold handcuff.

Rajoguna is compared to a silver handcuff; and

Tamoguna is like an iron handcuff.

All the three tie down and bind the individual to this world.

This process of gradually eliminating the vasanas/guna imprints from the mind and not letting the senses register new vasanas is the way to unity/yoga with the Supreme.

Vibhaga: (division/separation).

A deeper understanding of the contents of this chapter will help the seeker to recognise the inherent vasanas. He would then be able to separate them into three broad groups. He will, by the spiritual practice/sadhana in course of time lift himself from tamas to rajas, rajas to satvic and satvic to suddha-satva state.

The four paths of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Dhyana have one thing in common: Vasanas.

Jnana yoga is to know about the gunas, learn the art of lifting oneself up from tamo guna to satva guna; Karma yoga is putting the satvic gunas to the forefront and not let the rajasic and tamasic gunas show their power;

Bhakti yoga is developing the unalloyed love to the Supreme and thereby bring out satvic gunas to the forefront; and finally

Dhyana yoga is transcending the three gunas and reaching the state of “Suddha Satva” and experiencing the Divine Bliss.

Finally one would be able to achieve his spiritual goal – Yoga - unite with the Supreme.

We have to keep the body in sound and perfect order like a car.
The car, the fuel, the driver and the road are all essential to reach the destination.

By following the sastras (like the Highway Code) we will be able to reach the destination safely. As our mind is the seat of all thoughts/vasana imprints that decide the way we drive the vehicle, we must have a good idea of the working of the gunas stored in the mind.

This chapter guides us in the correct path to attain the Moksha.

As the gunas are the thought imprints stored in the mind, one can say that this chapter is to clear the mental pollution in us. We give importance to physical cleanliness. We tend to forget that mental purity is the pre-requisite for spiritual progress.

Sloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥1॥

śhrī-bhagavān uvācha

param bhūyaḥ pravakṣhyāmi jñānānām jñānam uttamam ।

yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve parāṁ siddhim ito gatāḥ ॥1॥

SHRI BHAGAVAN UVACHA:

**PARAM BHUYAH PRAVAKSHYAMI JNANANAM JNANAM UTTAMAM
YAJ JNATVA MUNAYAH SARVE PARAM SIDDHIM ITO GATAH.**

The Lord said:

I will again declare that Supreme wisdom, the best of all knowledge, which having known, all the sages have attained the Supreme perfection after this life.

param: Supreme;
bhooyaha: again;
pravakshami: I will declare;
jnananaam: of all kinds of knowledge;
jnanam: wisdom;
uttamam: the best/highest;
yat: which;
jnatvaa: having known;
munayaha: the sages;
sarve: all;
param siddhim: highest goal;
ito: from the bondage of samsara;
gataha: attained.

bhooyaha pravakshami: I will tell/declare to you again.

Why does the Lord want to repeat the same doctrine again?

The Lord is our loving parent. We are His beloved children and still very young students in our spiritual studies.

It is the duty of the learned, loving parent to see that the message of advice is given to the beloved children and often re-iterated so that the message gets imprinted strongly in the mind.

What is the benefit of such knowledge?

Param siddhim ito gataha: highest goal (liberation from the bondage of samsara) is attained.

Who has achieved this goal before?

Sarve munayaha: all the sages.

The word used is “Muni”.

Muni is a “mananasheela” meaning, he who contemplates and reflects on all the thoughts and entertains/expresses only pure thoughts. The seeker should similarly contemplate and reflect on all the stored thoughts and also make sure no new thoughts of desire/hatred register on the mind.

Itaha: from the bondage of this life.

The sages, the Lord says are released from bondage of “this life”. It means they have attained the state of “Jivanmuktas”. It amounts to death of ego/total annihilation of all the vasanas and expression of “divine knowledge.”

Sloka 2

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।
सर्गेऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥२॥

idam jñānam upāśhṛitya mama sādharmaṃyama āgatāḥ |
sarge 'pi nopajāyante pralaye na vyathanti cha ||2||

**IDAM JNANAM UPASHRITYA MAMA SADHARMYAM AGATAH
SARGE 'PI NOPAJAYANTE PRALAYE NA VYATHANTI CHA**

Taking refuge in this wisdom, they attain My being, they are neither born at the time of creation, also, nor are they destroyed at the time of dissolution.

idam: this;
jnanam: knowledge;
upashritya: taking refuge;
Mama: My;
sadharmyam: My being;
agataha: attain;
sarge'pi: at the time of creation also;
na upajayante: not born;
pralaye: at the time of dissolution;
na: not;

vyathanti: destroyed;
cha: and.

“Prajnanam Brahma” - Consciousness is Brahman is the Maha Vakya (Great uttering) from the Aittareya Upanisad - Rig Veda.
This sloka reiterates this Mahavakya.

What is the benefit of the spiritual sadhana and attaining perfect wisdom?
Mama Sadharmyam agataha: The seeker by his practice manages to lose his individual identity and absolute divinity shines through him.

What is Lord’s Dharma?
Lord’s Dharma is “Universal welfare, protection of the righteous, destruction of the un-righteous and establishing Dharma”.

The seeker by attaining the knowledge of true identity as “Kshetrajna” and discarding the identity as “Kshetra” is going to be “Divinity on earth.” (Refer to Chapter 7, sloka 18: “jnani tu atmaiva me’ mataha” - I hold the wise verily as Myself).

It is to stress the truth that there cannot be any existence of two Gods. The one and the only God shines through all and keeps them alive. In a man of perfect wisdom the reflection is totally the original and shows divinity in all expressions on a 24/7 basis.

The Lord we have already learnt is “Ajaha” (birth-less) and “Amaraha” (no death). The seeker who attains union with the Brahman automatically will have no births (ajaha) and no deaths (amaraha). He is released from the cycle of births and deaths. “Sarga” is creation and “Pralaya” is dissolution.

It is like the doll made of sugar immersed in an ocean. The doll dissolves totally in the ocean. There will be no trace of the doll any more in the ocean.

The end result of attaining perfect wisdom is “Ayam Atma Brahma” (Mandukya Upanisad, Atharva Veda). This can happen only when the seeker has managed to annihilate the ego. This is achieved by total victory over mind.

We are now going to be lead in detail into the topic of “Gunās” and this is an introduction to the topic.

Sloka 3

मम योनिर्महद् ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥3॥

mama yonir mahad brahma tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham |
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām tato bhavati bhārata ॥3॥

**MAMA YONIR MAHAD BRAHMA TASMIN GARBHAM DADHAMY AHAM
SAMBHAVAH SARVA-BHUTANAM TATO BHAVATI BHARATA**

O Bharata, My womb is the great Brahman (mula prakriti); in it, I place the seed of life from which is the birth of all beings.

mama: My;
yoni: womb (the field of origin);
mahad: great;
tasmin: in it;
garbham: the seed of life (cause of birth);
dadamy: place;
sambhavaha: birth;
sarva bhootani: of all beings;
tato': thence/which;
bhavati: is.

There is life force in each form of life which is alive.
The life force is the spark of Divine Energy/Parabrahman,
The form of life is made up of a combination of the five great elements.

The entire nature is known as the "Prakruti".
We are told in this sloka that: (at a macrocosmic level: meaning the entire life force on this universe.)
The Life force is the seed giving father. Father being "The Parabrahman";
And the entire universe is the womb wherein all forms of life come to life. The entire universe is referred to as "The great womb (mahad yoni)".
In this context, the term "Mahad Brahma" is used to refer to "Moola Prakruti".

"Moola Prakruti":

Brahma, the four headed creator sprouts forth from the naval of Vishnu. With the command and the blessings of Lord Vishnu He brings to life the different subtle bodies which form the body of the Moola Prakriti. (also known as the Adishesha).

If we now look at the individual form of life on a microcosmic level,
The Atman within, spark of Parabrahman is the seed,
The nature made up of five elements is the ovum,
And the entire universe we are born into is the womb.

Let us take the example of:
The seed and the soil.

The seeds are sown in the soil and the saplings sprouts forth from the earth.
Seed has the life force with potential energy in it.
And the soil is that into which the seed is sown.
The seed of life is the Purusha (germ/sentient/Kshetrajna) sown in the soil which is the Prakruti (Kshetra/The field).
The gross universe is the womb and the Parabrahman (life force) is the seed of life.

With this understanding the conclusion would be:
"He", the Parabrahman is the "father" of all - it amounts to the fact that we all have the same father,
The Prakruti is the mother - We all have the same mother.

When the father and mother are the same for all,
Is it not correct then that we should treat all forms of life as siblings and we should be showing love and affection to one and all?

Sloka 4

सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥4॥

sarva-yoniṣhu kaunteya mūrtayaḥ sambhavanti yāḥ ।
tāsāṁ brahma mahad yonir ahaṁ bija-pradaḥ pita ॥4॥

**SARVA-YONISHU KAUNTEYA MURTAYAH SAMBHAVANTI YAH
TASAM BRAHMA MAHAD YONIR AHAM BIJA-PRADAH PITA.**

O Kaunteya, whatsoever forms are born, for them all Mula Prakriti is the womb and I am seed-giving Father.

sarva: all;
yonishu: wombs;
moortayaha: forms;
sambhavanti: are born/produced;
yaaha: which;
tasaam: their;
mahat: great;
yonir: womb;
aham: I;
beeja pradaha: seed-giving;
pita: father.

This sloka is re-iterating the summary of the last sloka. Prakriti, the mother of all forms of life on this earth (as the womb for all to sprout forth) is therefore “The Cosmic Mother” for all. Parabrahman, the seed-giver for all is the “Cosmic Father”.

Sloka 5

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥5॥

sattvaṁ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛiti-sambhavāḥ ।
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehe dehinam avyayam ॥5॥

**SATTVAM RAJAS TAMA ITI GUNAH PRAKRITI-SAMBHAVAH
NIBADHNANTI MAHA-BAHO DEHE DEHINAM AVYAYAM.**

O Arjuna, born of Prakriti, the three gunas, satva, rajas and tamas, bind the imperishable Jivatma in the body.

satva rajas tamas iti gunaha: thus the three gunas satva, rajas and tamas;
sambhavaha: born;
nibhadnanti: bind;
mahabaho: mighty armed;
dehe: in the body;
dehinam: Atma as the Jivatma;
avyayam: imperishable.

Prakruti/nature is an illusion (Maya) and is made up of the three gunas, we have learnt before.
Real/eternal is Parabrahman,
Un-real/non-eternal/transient is the Prakruti.

In the dormant stage of the universe (pralaya) there is the Parabrahman and the un-manifest prakruti.
In the active stage of the universe (creation) Parabrahman lets the un-manifest Prakruti come to life.
The sacred texts use the word “union of Prakruti and Purusha” to express the active stage of the universe and call it as “Creation.”

We then see the buzz of various forms of life and their activities.
These activities are play on the stage called “life” and they express the effect of combination of the three gunas.
Prakruti cannot manifest its qualities without association with the Parabrahman.

The Gunas are qualities. Broadly speaking there are three main types of qualities.
The three gunas are:
Satva – Pure;
Rajas – Active, Passionate;
Tamas - Lazy, Impure, And Indolent.

The thought imprints on the mind are “The Vasanas”. The Gunas are nothing but the thought imprints/vasanas stored in the mind.

The Lord says that these gunas are born of “Prakriti”.
Really speaking prakriti and gunas are not different. They are one and the same.

Just like the sun rays and the rainbow that is formed of the rays of the sun are one and the same (rainbow is an expression of the rays of sun),
Prakriti and gunas are identical. The gunas are outward expression of the prakriti.

These gunas bind the imperishable jivatma in the body:
What does it mean?

Atman is the spark of Parabrahman within the individual form of life.
The Atman is without any form or qualities.
With a desire for play (Leela), it associates with the intellect/mind of the physical body made up of the five gross elements. By associating with the mind (and the inherent gunas stored in the mind) it becomes the jivatma.

Jivatma is the Atman who has apparently forgotten His original nature. As the Atman is imperishable, the Jivatman is also imperishable. As soon as there is realisation of its true nature (Atman), it sheds off the association with “ego” and reverts back to its original state of “Atman”.

There is no death as such to “Jivatman.” Hence the word used “Dehinam avyayam”, meaning the imperishable Jivatman.

Poetically speaking, the Jivatman has the Atman inside and the physical body outside. By association with the qualities it gets associated with the physical world outside and develops likes and dislikes. This is the reason for it to get bound. So the Lord says:
“Bind the imperishable Jivatma in the body.”

The ego-sense becomes so strong and is the main force keeping the Jivatman bound in the body.

Sloka 6

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥6॥

tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśhakam anamayam ।
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena chānagha ॥6॥

**TATRA SATTVAM NIRMALATVAT PRAKASHAKAM ANAMAYAM
SUKHA-SANGENA BADHNATI JNANA-SANGENA CHANAGHA**

O sinless Arjuna, of these, satva is pure, luminous and untroubled. It binds by attachment to joy and by attachment to knowledge.

tatra: of these;
sattvam: satva guna;
nirmalatvat: from its purity (being stainless);
prakashakam: luminous;
anamayam: untroubled;
sukha: happiness;
saṅgena: by attachment to;
badhnati: binds;
jnana saṅgena: attachment to knowledge;
ca: and;
anagha: o sinless one.

Anagha:

The mind of Arjuna was sinless and he was therefore selected to be the most suitable person to receive the message of the Gita from the Lord directly. He had no thought of revenge against the Kauravas. Also, he was a very intimate associate of Krishna for several years and Krishna knew all about his qualities. It is true that he was on the battlefield and ready to fight the Kauravas. The Kauravas (cousins) had behaved atrociously towards their own cousins. Still, Arjuna did not think of revenge. On the other hand he had expressed his fear of impending death of so many innocent soldiers on the battlefield and the death of so many loved and respected family members assembled on the battlefield. He was ready to go to the forest as a mendicant and let his cousins rule the kingdom.

All of these qualities expressed by Arjuna reflect in the word “Anagha” used by the Lord to address him. Krishna considers him to be a sinless person and so fit to receive the Brahma Jnana Upadesha.

Sree Krishna then goes on to explain what “Satva guna” is.

It is not easy to give an exact definition of guna. The thought imprints/vasanas as they get stronger turn out to be the emotions and emotions are expressed in actions. By observing the emotions/actions in a person, it is possible to identify the predominant guna shining forth at that time.

We are given a total of five aspects of the satva guna. They are:

Nirmalam;

Prakashakam;

Avyayam;

Sukha sangena badhnati;

Jnana sangena badhnati.

Nirmala: Pure.

“Mala” is impure and “Nirmala” is without impurity. The mind of the seeker with satva guna is full of thoughts on the Lord, Bhakti on the Lord, Faith in the Lord. His actions express the Divinity.

It is “pure” but not “absolute purity”. Absolute purity is when there is no trace of “ego” (selfishness) in the individual. The seeker who has climbed up to the stage of satva still has the lingering feeling of “I” ness in him. The thought of “I want to attain Moksha” is still strongly rooted in his mind.

There are probably a number of those who have reached this stage in their journey that they feel proud to have reached this level and look down upon those who have not reached this plane of understanding. The knowledge makes them feel superior to the rest and so it is not total purity. (Example: sage Vishwamitra)

Prakashakam:

The light of knowledge shines forth in his thought, speech and actions. As one can see the pure actions in him it is said that “light shines forth” in a man of Satva guna.

Anamayam: He is untroubled.

The events that are happening around in his life and the life around do not disturb the balance of his mind. It is constantly on the thought of “Brahman” and at the same time he is aware of the impermanency of worldly possessions.

Sukha sangena bhadnati: bound to the thought of happiness.

The feeling of “happiness” is also a binding feeling because one feels “I am happy”. This is at the level of the mind. The mind is also the Kshetra (field) and so it is said that feeling of happiness expressed is “Kshetra dharma” and not “Kshetrajna dharma”.

Jnana sangena badhnati: bound to the thought of knowledge.

I have learnt so much about the Parabrahman, I have learnt so much about the sastras and I have managed to climb up from the stage of stone man to that of man-man, makes him feel proud. (of reaching that high level of spiritual knowledge). This feeling of “I know” is at the level of the intellect and so it is again “Kshetra Dharma” expressed.

Sukha and jnana are therefore modifications of the mind and the intellect and so are binding the Jivatman to the physical body.

The knowledge at the “Atmic” level is “Sat, Chit” and the happiness experienced is “Ananda”. Hence the designation of Parabrahman is “Sat, Chit, Ananda”.

Because of the nature of binding the Atman to the physical body, satva guna is compared to a golden chain that binds the wrists of a prisoner in the so called jail of life. The chain may be made up of gold but still it binds and does not let the person get released.

The journey of life can be compared to the journey on a motorway during wintry months when there are showers of heavy snow fall. As the snow fall gets lighter, the journey feels smoother. When the heavy fall of snow is minimal, there is still a thin film of mist on the wind screen and it prevents the clear view of the road ahead. The satva guna can be compared to the drive when there is thin mist in the air.

Sloka 7

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥7॥

rajo rāgātmakam viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam |
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam ॥7॥

**RAJO RAGATMAKAM YIDDHI TRISHNA-SANGA-SAMUDBHAVAM
TAN NIBADHNATI KAUNTEYA KARMA-SANGENA DEHINAM.**

O Kaunteya, know that rajo guna is of the nature of passion/thirst for objects arising from desire and attachment. It binds the embodied by attachment to action.

Rajo: rajo guna;
ragatmakam: nature of passion;
viddhi: know;
trishna: passion/thirst;
sanga: attachment;
samudbhavam: arises/source of;
tat: that;
nibhadnati: strongly binds;
karma sangena: by attachment to action;
dehinam: the embodied.

How does the rajo guna aspect of the maya bind the jivatman to the body and distract him from attachment to the Atman?

Being of the nature of passion/thirst for desires arising from contact with the worldly objects it binds the jivatman to the physical illusory world.

Trishna: passion/thirst.

It is thirst for objects not possessed and with a strong desire to possess. The sense organs bring in the impulses from the material world to the mind. The mind reacts with likes and dislikes for the impulses received. Repeated contact with the objects that bring in the sensation of “happiness” makes the mind go for more of the similar objects. It develops the thirst to get more and more of that object/objects which make it experience happiness. The source of attachment is the mind. The mind feels thirsty for the object of desire.

Trishna sanga samudhbhavam: (Rajo guna is) the source of thirst and attachment.

“Sanga” is attachment to that which one possesses/acquires.

Rajoguna is not just thirst for objects but also for attachment/binding to what is acquired.

The impulse to get the object of desire, the efforts of acquiring the objects of desire, makes the mind get attached to what it acquires. The more one likes an object greater will be the feeling of clinging on to it.

The thirst for more is like the fire not satisfied with the fuel added but wanting more and more fuel. (Refer slokas 36-39 chapter 3.)

What will the individual mind do to get the objects it desires and the objects it wants to acquire? Organs of action as we have studied before are the junior ranking officers of the mind. To get the object of desire, it sends commands to the organs of action.

The Lord says “Karma sangena nibhadnati” meaning, “binds by attachment to action”. “I like it, I do not like it, I desperately want it” etc. arise in the mind and this is the source of all actions that ensue.

Thus, the Atman, ever peaceful and contented, through the medium of the intellect/mind gets attached to the physical world and soon forgets its original identity as “Atman” and starts feeling restless.

The Atman then comes to be known as “Jivatman”. The word used in this sloka is “Dehee”. The Atman becomes the embodied Jivatman.

Greed and selfishness makes the individual restless and he is on the go at all times.

To summarise: Rajoguna is expressed as the desire for objects not possessed and attachment to objects possessed. The object could be wealth, territory, sensual and it could also be for fame. The end result of such nature is danger to the person and for the society. For this reason, Rajo guna is depicted in red colour.

Arjuna, Kshatriya (warrior) by birth had expressed rajo guna in his thoughts/actions. Association with Krishna lifted him towards higher state of rajas meaning admixture of satva to rajo guna. This is a step that is nearer to the next step in spiritual progress - “Satva guna”.

Sloka 8

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥८॥

tamas tv ajñāna-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinām |

**TAMAS TU AJNANA-JAM VIDDI MOHANAM SARVA-DEHINAM
PRAMADALASYA-NIDRABHIS TAN NIBADHNATI BHARATA.**

But, tamo guna, O Bharata, is born of ignorance and all beings are deluded by it. It binds fast by heedlessness, laziness and sleep.

tu: but;
ajnanajam: born of ignorance;
mohanaam: by delusion;
sarva: all;
dehinaam: embodied beings;
pramada: heedlessness;
alasya: laziness;
nidra: sleep;
abhi: by;
tat nibhadnati (tannibhadnati): that binds fast;
Bharata: Arjuna.

Three features are given which are the external features of that individual with predominance of tamo guna.

First of all, the Lord says that the quality is born of ignorance. “Ajnanajam viddhi”, He says.

Ignorance of what?

Ignorance of the original nature of Atman as “Sat, Chit and Ananda” - “Truth, Knowledge and Bliss”.

The Jivatman, the embodied being apparently forgets the “Chit” aspect and thereby loses the state of Bliss. Instead of the state of “Absolute Bliss”, the deluded jivatman ends up experiencing the opposites like happiness, sorrow; victory defeat; gain and loss. This is “Ignorance” referred to in this sloka.

The Lord, as Atman is constantly alert and wishes the welfare of the individual embodied being. He gives the opportunity for the individual mind to express its inherent gunas and thereby helps to empty its store house of vasanas. But, alas, we know that actions in turn bring in the reactions. This leads to more input of vasanas in the mind. The mind (storehouse) is cluttered with so many vasanas that prevent the jivatman from association with the Atman.

So, Atman which is the storehouse of “Knowledge” apparently, by becoming the Jivatman forgets the “Knowledge”. This is “Ignorance.”

What are the effects of “Ignorance”?

Laziness, sleep and heedlessness are the three main features of this quality.

Pramada: heedlessness.

When one is not aware of dangers ahead or does not care for the consequences of actions he is said to be heedless. We see many an examples of this in our life. Alcoholic beverages, drugs act this way. He who is under the influence of these forgets his/her status and acts abhorrently. He is not aware of his weakness in this state. Actions that pursue because of this delusion may end in danger for him and/or for others.

For example he thinks he can drive the car in this state of inebriation and we see many cases of serious road traffic accidents. This is “Pramada”, the main feature of tamasic quality.

Alasya: it means “laziness”.

The laziness is reflected in all the activities of the day.

He is lazy both at work and at home. He does not take notice of others. He postpones all important actions/decisions for another time. He shreds off all responsibilities. He is even lazy to take care of his personal needs.

Nidra: sleep.

The individual with tamo guna always appears sleepy. Any amount of sleep is not enough for him. Even when he is up and about his reactions are slow and like when he is asleep. Most importantly, he is sleepy for the call of nature.

Sarva dehinaam: All beings.

The Lord says that all beings are deluded by this nature. Even a man of total satva guna can fall into this trap. The fact that he has achieved to reach the level of satva in his spiritual path, does not guarantee that he will not fall down to tamas.

Bharata:

Sri Krishna has addressed Arjuna so many times as “Bharata.” “Desire for the Light of Knowledge” is Bharata. Arjuna had asked for the knowledge and Sree Krishna is reminding him of the same. “Do not fall under the trap of rajas and tamas but continue your quest for the light of knowledge” is the command by the senior ranking officer, Lord Krishna, the Divine Incarnate.

It is the duty of all sincere seekers to develop thirst and attachment for spiritual knowledge. (trushna and sanga for jnana)

Sloka 9

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥९॥

sattvam sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata |
jñānam āvṛitya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty uta ॥९॥

**SATTVAM SUKHE SANJAYATI RAJAH KARMANI BHARATA
JNANAM AVRITYA TU TAMAH PRAMADE SANJAYATY UTA.**

Satva binds one to happiness and rajas to action. O Bharata, tamas, by covering knowledge attaches one to heedlessness.

satvam: satva;

sukhe: to happiness;
sanjayati: binds;
rajaha: rajas;
karmani: to action;
Bharata: Arjuna;
jnanam avrutya: covering knowledge;
tu: verily;
tamaha: tamas;
premade: to heedlessness;
sanjayati: attaches;
uta: but.

This is the summary of the last three verses.

Sloka 6 is about satva guna and we have learnt how it binds to happiness. One may ask, “What type of happiness”?

The happiness experienced is of fulfilling “a life of pure living” but still is happiness of a worldly nature. In the process of accomplishing the objective, the dreaded “ego” comes into play. There is a feeling of “I achieved to climb up to this level”. This in turn makes the satvic person feel superior to others and look down on others who are rajasic and tamasic in their temperaments.

When he can overcome this feeling of “me”, the aspirant is said to have climbed up to the next level, “Shuddha satva” (purest satvic state). Such a seeker is recognised by the masters as “Jivanmukta”, meaning “Liberated soul” (liberated while still living on this earth).

Sloka 7 was about rajo guna and how it binds the jiva to action.

Sloka 8 was about tamo guna and how it binds jiva to heedlessness, laziness and sleep.

We said that he would be heedless to signs of danger to himself and/or to others. More importantly, we can add that he is heedless to “Higher call of Nature” from the Atman within. He fails to recognise the voice of the inner soul guiding him to higher worlds.

Sloka 10

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।
रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥10॥

rajas tamaśh chābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata ।
rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaśh chaiva tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā ॥10॥

**RAJAS TAMASH CHABHIBHUYA SATTVAM BHAVATI BHARATA
RAJAH SATTVAM TAMASH CHAIVA TAMAH SATTVAM RAJAS TATHA**

O Bharata, satva rises having overpowered rajas and tamas. Rajas functions having overpowered satva and tamas. So also tamas functions having overpowered satva and rajas.

rajas: rajas;
tamas: tamas;
ca: and;
abhibhooya: having overpowered;
bhavati: functions;
Bharata: Arjuna;
rajaha: rajas;
satvam: satva;
tamas: tamas;
cha: and;
eva: verily/even;
tamaha: tamas;
satvam: satva;
rajaha: rajas;
tatha: also.

Each one of us has all these three gunas in varying proportions. We express different gunas at different times of the day. At any one time there is usually one guna prominently exhibited. This idea is brought about in this sloka. At any one time, one of the three gunas shines forth overpowering other two gunas.

For example, a businessman, when he is at his place of work, expresses rajasic nature. He works to make profits for himself. Before going to the place of work when he enters into the prayer room in his house, he is full of satva. When he visits temples, centres of pilgrimage or the ashramas of saints, he is full of pure nature. The same person at the end of the day goes to bed and the effect of falling off to sleep is due to the power of the tamas.

By and large, there is a preponderance of one of the gunas in an individual as a whole and he is said to belong to that type.

What we have been given in these slokas, let me make it clear is to help us to analyse our own qualities and to make the necessary changes in the texture of vasanas in our mind so that we can climb up from tamas to rajas and rajas to satva and finally from satva to shuddha satva.

On no account, these should be used to judge others and make comments on them as tamasic, rajasic etc. We have no business to make judgement on others. We can certainly learn from observing qualities, actions and reaction in others and see if we can improve on the texture of our qualities.

Self-improvement and self-perfection is the duty of the seekers. Self-examination of our own gunas will go a long way in helping us to mature spiritually.

Sloka 11

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते |
ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ||11||

sarva-dvāreṣhu dehe 'smin prakāśha upajāyate |
jñānam yadā tadā vidyād vivṛiddham sattvam ity uta ||11||

SARVA-DVARESHU DEHE 'SMIN PRAKASHA UPAJAYATE

JNANAM YADA TADA VIDYAD VIVRIDDHAM SATTVAM ITY UTA

When, through the gateways of all the senses in the body the light of knowledge shines, then it may be known indeed that satva guna is predominant.

Sarva dwareshu: through all the gates;
dehe: in the body;
asmin: in this;
Prakasha: Light;
Upajayate: shines;
Jnanam: Knowledge;
Yada: when;
Tada: then;
Vidwat: may be known;
Vivrudham: predominant;
Satvam: Satva guna;
Iti: thus;
Uta: indeed.

Gateways: (ref: sloka 13, chapter 5 and sloka 15, chapter 10).

The Atman within each one of us is a spark of the Supreme and is said to be within the nine-gated city called "Pura". Hence the individuals are known as "Purushas".

The best among the purushas is "Purushottama" and this is the "Lord" Himself. The Lord is the source of spiritual knowledge and He resides as Atman within each of us. His knowledge reflecting on to the intellect should be taken notice of and it is the tool for discrimination between dharmic/adharmic thoughts/actions.

The intellect clouded by the maya fails to recognise the light of knowledge and this leads to ignorance. What is "The Knowledge of Parabrahman"? It is "Spiritual knowledge" and it is "Truth, Righteousness". (Satya, Dharma). It is "Nitya anitya viveka vicharana" (capacity to reflect on which is permanent and which is transient)

The light of knowledge when reflected from the intellect on to the mind and from the mind on to the senses is like that of the message from Commander-in-Chief of the army sending commands to the junior ranking officers. The juniors are expected to follow the command received.

This is the meaning of the sentence: "when through the gateways of all the senses in the body, the light of knowledge shines through".

The sense organs are the windows to the objective knowledge.

The Atman within is the source of subjective knowledge, the subject being "Paramatman".

The objective knowledge gained by the eyes is "Power of vision".

This knowledge/information about the objective world has to be analysed by the intellect, first. The intellect in turn has to reflect the subjective knowledge of Atman. If this procedure is followed, the individual is said to be reflecting "Satya and Dharma".

It is said that in such an individual the "Satva" is shining through.

The beam of light from the conscience to each window illumines one aspect of the world outside.

When satva guna is predominating in the individual, the light of knowledge is said to shine through that window.

The speech of a satvic person is then soft and gentle,

He will eat pure food,
Read the books that do not excite him and that reflect Truth and Dharma,
Hear the speech that is gentle, truthful and dharmic and
These in turn reflect as actions that are satvic.
The eyes then do not see evil,
Ears do not hear evil,
The tongue does not speak evil.
(Try to recollect the picture of the three monkeys one covering eyes, the other closing the ears and the last one closing the mouth).

Sloka 12

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।
रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥12॥

lobhaḥ pravṛittir ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśhamaḥ sprīhā ।
rajasy etāni jāyante vivṛiddhe bharatarṣhabha ॥12॥

**LOBHAH PRAVRITTIR ARAMBHAH KARMANAM ASHAMAH SPRIHA
RAJASY ETANI JAYANTE VIVRIDDHE BHARATARSHABHA**

O Arjuna, from rajo guna predominating: greed, activity, undertaking of all (desire fulfilling) actions, restlessness and longing arise.

lobhaha: greed;
pravrutti: activity/attachment to objects;
arambha: undertaking, starting;
karmanam: of actions;
ashamaha: restlessness;
spruha: longing;
rajasi: in rajo guna;
etani: these;
jayante: arise;
vivrudhe: become predominant;
Bharatarshabha: best of Bharatas, (Arjuna).

Sloka 7 of this chapter says “Trushna (thirst) and sanga (attachment)” are the predominant features of rajasic person. When rajas is predominating, the individual expresses the related tendencies such as greed, activity in pursuit of fulfilling desires, restlessness and longing to fulfil desires (and undertaking activities because of hatred/vengeance).

Greed is unlimited desires. Instead of sharing what one has, the Rajasic acts to snatch objects from others. Satya and Dharma are not to be seen in their actions. By hook or crook they would like to fulfil wishes.

The mind which is store house of so many thought imprints is jumping up and down from one desire/hatred to the other. Rajasic have no time to enjoy what they have but ready to go for getting more objects to fulfil some other desires. They are restless and not able to have single-pointed

concentration. They show greed wanting to possess so many objects of desire. Their mind is longing for fulfilment of desires.

They conduct actions to fulfil “Karma karmas” (karmas to fulfil desires), and also actions that are contrary to Dharma (nishiddha karmas). Such a vision is said to be objective (towards worldly objects) and not subjective. (Related to Atman)

Their speech will be harsh, they show restlessness in their action and their eyes express the mad desire in them. They long for varieties of food that excite and raise passion in them. These in turn lead him to restlessness, conduct of evil actions and finally towards self-destruction.

Ravana, Kamsa, Duryodhana from Ramayana, Bhagawatham, Mahabharata bring out the qualities of rajo Guna.

Sloka 13

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।
तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥13॥

aprakāśho 'pravṛittiśh cha pramādo moha eva cha |
tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛiddhe kuru-nandana ॥13॥

**APRAKASHO 'PRAVRITTISH CHA PRAMADO MOHA EVA CHA
TAMASY ETANI JAYANTE VIVRIDDHE KURU-NANDANA**

Darkness, laziness, heedlessness and delusion arise when Tamas is dominating, O descendant of Kuru.

aprakasho: darkness;
appravrutti: laziness;
cha: and;
pramado: heedlessness;
moha: delusion;
eva: and these;
tamasi: in tamas/inertia;
etani: these;
jayante: arise;
vivrudhe: predominant;
Kurunandana: descendant of Kuru dynasty.

In sloka 8 we studied the main features of tamoguna: “ignorance, heedlessness and laziness”. In this sloka we are given a picture of how such a person acts when in the grip of tamo guna.

We were told that tamas is born of ignorance and all beings are deluded by it. “It binds fast by heedlessness, laziness and sleep”, the Lord said.

In our scriptures knowledge is represented as light and ignorance as darkness.

Aprakasha:

Prakasha is brightness and aprakasha is opposite of brightness – namely darkness. (Prakasha also means “illuminated” and aprakasha means “not illuminated.”)

The word “ignorance” used in sloka 8 and “darkness” in this sloka portray the same meaning.

In general when there is light one is active and when there is darkness one is not so active. “Tamasic person is inactive even in day light”.

Let us briefly analyse the state of a person when he is asleep. The individual in deep sleep is said to be “dead to the world” meaning the sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin) are not carrying any impulses to the mind. The mind is not able to take any information from the sense organs. In such a state the individual is not aware of any dangers around him. When awake the eyes would have said like: “There is a spider, there is fire etc.”; the ears would have said “there is an explosion nearby”; the skin would have said “there is excessive heat from the fire” etc. but the tamasic person is not aware of these. The robbers could have gone away with the loot and he would not know about it.

Even though the tamasic person is awake his senses and mind are totally dulled and he is unable to perceive the world and of any possible dangers for him/for others. There is no light shining through his mind and the senses.

Apravrutti: laziness.

In spiritual terms, “Pravrutti” is living and moving about in the physical world; and “Nivrutti” is moving towards the Spiritual world. Majority of us men/women are living and moving around in the physical world. We are said to be following the path of “Pravrutti”. There are few selected great souls who while living in this world are making efforts to move towards the spiritual world and these are said to be following the path of Nivrutti.

Tamasic person is definitely not following the path of “Nivrutti” but while living in this world, he is not following the path of Pravrutti also. He is like a wooden log on the floor. He is idle to the calls of the higher in him and forgets his daily duties.

Pramada: heedless

This was discussed in sloka 8. Because of lack of light shining through his mind, he is said to be heedless. He is awake but not awake. All his actions are careless. He is oblivious to dangers to him or to others. He shreds of all his responsibilities and does not show any enthusiasm in whatever he is doing. Because his capacity of reasoning is dulled he becomes heedless in whatever he does. He is not aware of dangers to him, his beloved ones or to the society.

Moha: Delusion.

We have discussed this quality also in sloka 8. While awake he is living in a dream world. He is not aware that his life is in stagnation. He is not making any progress at work, at home and in his life. He considers himself to be self-sufficient, capable of taking challenges for which he is not ready.

By giving us the picture of the three gunas, we are expected to make a self-analysis of ourselves. If we are interested in our future we should be making changes in the texture of our thoughts. The next few slokas give us a picture of what happens after death to the individual and how his gunas at the time of death dictate his future.

Sloka 14

यदा सत्त्वे प्रवृद्धे तु प्रलयं याति देहभृत् ।
तदोत्तमविदां लोकानमलान्प्रतिपद्यते ॥14॥

yadā sattve pravṛiddhe tu pralayam yāti deha-bhṛit
tadottama-vidāṁ lokān amalān pratipadyate ॥14॥

**YADA SATTVE PRAVRIDDHE TU PRALAYAM YATI DEHA-BHRIT
TADOTTAMA-VIDAM LOKAN AMALAN PRATIPADYATE**

When satvic guna is predominating, if the jiva meets death, he will attain the pure worlds of “knowers of the highest.”

yada: when;
satve’: satvic guna;
pravruddhe: is predominating;
tu: verily;
pralayam: death;
yaati: meets;
dehabhrut: jiva;
tadaa: then;
uttamavidam: knowers of the highest;
amalaan: of the pure;
lokan: worlds;
pratipadyate: attains.

This and the next sloka are about what happens if the jiva meets death with a preponderance of a particular guna at that time.

One assumes death as departure from this physical world shredding off the gross physical body. There is another way to look at death.

It is death from one state of existence to another state.

The present state of existence is “living”.

The next state of existence is next birth.

The gap between the present state and the future states of existence is death.

The period between deep sleep of today and awakening tomorrow is technically speaking the period of “death”.

The future life depends upon the texture of thought imprints at the time of death.

What we are going to be tomorrow is dependent on our present and the past. We all look for a brighter tomorrow. We can make it better by our own efforts. The Lord cannot and will not bless with a good life if we do not have satvic texture of thoughts in our mind at the time of death.

He who meets death when satvic is predominating:

“Will attain pure worlds of the knowers of the highest.”

1) Will attain pure worlds;

2) That world will be full of “knowers of the highest”.

Pure world is with reference to the worlds where Satya and Dharma are predominating.

There is a difference between the individual satvic natured person leaving the world and large number of individuals/society leaving the world.

In the case of the individual:

He will be born in an atmosphere where there is truth and purity. The family and the circle he is going to live will be pure. (Ref: slokas 40-44 chapter 6)

If majority of people die with satvic gunas, the world they are going to be born will be vibrating with purity, truth and dharma.

“Knowers of the highest” refers to the knowers of “Scriptural texts like the Vedas, Upanisads, Gita etc.” With the blessings of the presence of the knowers of the highest in the new birth, he will get a chance to climb up in his spiritual journey. “Satvic” guna on its own merit does not guarantee “Liberation” after death. The seeker has to climb from satvic to shuddha satva state and finally to state of “no more vasanas” in the mind to attain Liberation.

We have discussed about the word “Jiva” several times. This refers to the “embodied being”. The state of the Atman associating with the physical body and forgetting the original state of Atman is “Jivahood”.

Jivatman can be looked upon as the tenant and the body as the house the tenant lives. The tenant cannot be the house. He can change his residence from one house to another. The jiva which is the subtle body, at the time of death moves to another world ready to take new birth. This will be birth in good environment in the next birth for the satvic seekers.

Let me finish explanation on this sloka by stating that the seeker with predominant satva guna can climb up to the abode of Brahman, “Brahma Loka” but he cannot become “Brahma Jnani.” By getting birth in the world of “Knowers of the highest” he is given the opportunity to attain “Brahma Jnana” which is culmination in the spiritual journey.

Sloka 15

रजसि प्रलयं गत्वा कर्मसङ्गिषु जायते |
तथा प्रलीनस्तमसि मूढयोनिषु जायते ||15||

rajasi pralayam gatvā karma-saṅgiṣhu jāyate |
tathā pralīnas tamasi mūḍha-yoniṣhu jāyate ||15||

**RAJASI PRALAYAM GATVA KARMA-SANGISHU JAYATE
TATHA PRALINAS TAMASI MUDHA-YONISHU JAYATE**

Meeting death in rajas, he is born among those attached to action. Dying in tamas, he is born in the wombs of the senseless.

rajasi: in rajas;

pralayam: death;
gatva: meeting;
karma: action;
sangishu: among those attached to;
jayate: born;
tatha: so;
praleenam: dying;
tamas: in tamas;
mooda: senseless;
yonishu: wombs of.

He whose mind is predominantly filled with rajasic vasanas at the time of death is said to take birth among those attached to action. We should understand this clearly. It does not mean that those dying with predominance of satva will not be born among those attached to action.

“Attached to action”: should be read as attached to the fruits of action and working with a desire for fruits of action. This is because he would have so many un-fulfilled desires/hatreds at the time of death. This ends up in him being always on the “go”. He is constantly restless.

The Lord would have given him a chance to fulfil the desires. The Lord would wish for him not to accumulate any more new vasanas but alas, this does not happen in majority of cases.

Have we not read in chapter 7, sloka 3:

“Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection and of those who strive and succeed scarcely one knows Me in essence”.

Those who leave the mortal body with predominance of tamas, will be born in the worlds of senseless: We have learnt that heedlessness, laziness and sleep are predominant in tamas. These three constitute “senseless living”. This is only to clear those types of vasanas such a birth takes place. This may involve many births in such situations and one fine day the truth will dawn and he will change the texture of thoughts and start climbing up in an upward direction in his spiritual journey.

What is the lesson to learn for us from these slokas?

The lesson to learn is simple and straight forward.

If we want to know what our future is, we simply have to study the thoughts we have stored in our mind.

If we have stored pure thoughts we will be born in a pure environment that is conducive to spiritual progress.

If we have stored rajasic thoughts we will be born as those who have so many desires and are on the go. It will be birth as selfish, egoistic men.

If we have stored tamasic thoughts, we will be born as senseless animals or as a senseless animal with a human body.

The Gita has given us the means to make changes in our life for the better, not just for us but for our family and the society we live in.

It is up to us to make plans for our future.

Sloka 16

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।
रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥16॥

karmanah sukṛitasyāhuḥ sāttvikam nirmalam phalamb |
rajasas tu phalam duḥkham ajñānam tamasaḥ phalam ॥16॥

**KARMANAH SUKRITASYAHUH SATTVIKAM NIRMALAM PHALAMB
RAJASAS TU PHALAM DUHKHAM AJNANAM TAMASAH PHALAM**

The fruit of good actions of satvika is pure; the fruit of rajas is sorrow/suffering and the fruit of tamas is ignorance.

karmanaha: of actions;
sukrutas: good;
ahuhu: said;
sattvikam: of satvic nature;
nirmalam: pure;
phalam: fruit;
rajasastu: of rajas;
dukham: sorrow/suffering;
ajnanam: ignorance;
tamasaha: of tamas;
phalam: fruit.

The summary of the results of actions conducted due to the three types of vasanas are given in brief. There is a great lesson to learn from this and as far as possible I will try to make it clear.

Please note that the special word used in this sloka is “Fruit”.

To get the fruits we have to plant the seeds and the seeds have to grow into trees, mature and then yield fruits. The fruits are the results of efforts from the stage of planting the seeds to the stage of fully grown trees. The fruits do not just fall down from the sky.

Different types of fruits give enjoyment to different groups of people depending upon their taste buds and the fruits are the end result of efforts put in.

The fruits referred to in this sloka are the “Fruits of actions”. We have studied that thoughts are converted into actions and that the thoughts are the vasana imprints on our minds.

Vasanas are the seeds for the fruits of actions we experience.

Some vasanas yield fruits within a short period and some others take a long time. It could be even in the next birth. Many a time we may not even remember that we have sown those seeds. We tend to blame others for some of the bad results we experience and forget they were from the seeds we have planted in our minds.

Good fruits are due to the good seeds/vasanas (satva guna) entertained and stored,

The sour fruits come from the rajasic gunas,
Bitter fruits come from the tamasic gunas,

So, it is up to us to study/analyse the seeds of thoughts that we have stored in the field – kshetra - mind.

The scriptures, The Bhagawad Gita and the guru will guide us in the right path.
On our part it needs swadhyaya (self-study), faith and bhakti in the scriptures and the guru.

We should have the knowledge of the Kshetrajna, (chapter 13);
We should not let the senses bring in rajasic and tamasic impulses from the world around;
Learn to de-weed the bad thoughts imprints already stored;
Keep a constant vigil and do not let the bad weed of thoughts sprout forth;
Give a time gap between thought and action;
And all of these steps contribute in getting us the good results.
The result being “Peace and Tranquillity.”

One final point to note:
Even with all this efforts,
Sometimes we may experience results that are painful.

This, we have to accept as the results of the past which we have forgotten and the Lord out of mercy has decided to help us in getting rid of them. He is kindly lifting us towards Him.

The purpose of religion is to make us better individuals, make the world we live in a safe and better for us, our loved ones and to the society in general.

The philosophy of Gita is to make us study ourselves and make the changes in our present life.

We are the so called children of our seers. The seers have given us the sacred texts which are like the guides to guide us in this world. They would want us to instil respect towards one and all, be truthful, morally correct, not to harm others etc.

As parents it is up to us, the so called elders to show the right path to our children by our own actions. Let us not forget that the children are the best copycats. We should practice Gita and help our children to practice the same. Constant practice in disciplining the mind will bring out good fruits.

Sloka 17

सत्वात्सञ्जायते ज्ञानं रजसो लोभ एव च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेव च ॥17॥

sattvāt sañjāyate jñānam rajaso lobha eva cha |
pramāda-mohau tamaso bhavato 'jñānam eva cha ॥17॥

**SATTVAT SANJAYATE JNANAM RAJASO LOBHA EVA CHA
PRAMADA-MOHAN TAMASO BHAVATO 'JNANAM EVA CHA**

**From Satva arises knowledge, greed from Rajas,
heedlessness, moha and ignorance arise from Tamas.**

satvat: from Satva;
sanjayate: arises;
jnanam: knowledge;
rajaso: from Rajas;
lobham: greed;
eva: even;
cha: and;
pramada: heedlessness;
moha: delusion;
tamaso: from Tamas;
bhavato: arises;
ajnanam: ignorance;
eve: even;
cha: and.

Sri Krishna is stressing on the gunas. After all, He has the welfare of us, His children at heart. From so many angles He takes up the same theme so that He hopes that the point has sunk in well and good. Let us remember that these are fundamental truths and it is up to us to follow the path of Truth. If we want “Moksha” (release from bondage) we must conduct the actions that give us the result we are aiming for. By having proper thought imprints, our actions will turn out to be good and we will be on the path for Liberation.

Sloka 18

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥18॥

ūrdhvam̐ gachchhanti sattva-sthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ ।
jaghanya-guṇa-vṛitti-sthā adho gachchhanti tāmasāḥ ॥18॥

**URDHVAM GACHCHHANTI SATTVA-STHA MADHYE TISHTHANTI RAJASAH
JAGHANYA-GUNA-VRITTI-STHA ADHO GACHCHHANTI TAMASAH**

Those who are satvika go up-wards; the rajasika dwell in the middle and the tamasika, abiding in the function of the lowest guna, go downwards.

urdhvam: upwards;
gachanti: go;
satvastha: seated in Satva;
madhye: in the middle;
tishtanti: dwell;
jaghanya guna vruthishta: abiding in the function of the lowest guna;
adho: downwards;
gacchanti: go;
tamsaha: Tamasic.

We can understand this sloka let us take the example of climbing up a mountain.
The peak of the spiritual mountain which is the centre of “Sat, Chit and Ananda” is the destination for the seeker.

There are a total of 14 lokas and the loka we are in is “Bhooloka” (earth).
(ref: introduction).

We are residents of bhooloka and have the birth-right to conduct actions. The actions yield points of merit or de-merit.

Making use of merit points we can climb up to higher worlds.

In the process of enjoyment in the higher worlds, we make use of merit points, exhaust them and come back to earth where we need to start afresh again in collecting points.

If we do not want to make use of merit points to enjoy life, we will be exhausting the stored vasanas and can become eligible to attain Liberation from where we do not come down to earth any more.

We can move, as a result of our actions from being:

Man-man on earth to,
God man on earth,
And attain Liberation.

Or

We fall down to the level of stone man,
and
Have to climb up again to animal man,
Animal man to man-man and
Man-man to God man and
Finally unite with Brahman.

This idea is described as:

Satvic go upwards,
Rajasic stay in the middle and
Tamasic go downwards.

This rule does not apply only for life after physical death.

It also includes death from one stage of life to another.

From teenage to middle age, from middle age to old age and old age to physical death.

A university student,

By satvic studies will be able to get good grades and enjoy life,

By rajasic studies, probably not make a great progress in his life,

By tamasic studies unlikely to become a graduate. His life will be like having fallen down to lower levels of human existence.

There has to be a change in the person for the better to enjoy ever-lasting happiness. If not, he will stay where he is without making any progress or will fall down to lower planes of existence.

The changes come only when we change the texture of our thought imprints.

Sloka 19

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति |
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेत्ति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ||19||

nānyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāram yadā draṣṭānupaśhyati |
guṇebhyaśh cha param vetti mad-bhāvam so 'dhigachchhati ||19||

**NANYAM GUNEBHYAH KARTARAM YADA DRASHTANUPASHYATI
GUNEBHYASH CHA PARAM VETTI MAD-BHAVAM SO 'DHIGACHCHHATI**

**The seer who sees no agent other than the gunas and knows that which is higher than the gunas,
he attains to My being.**

na'nya (na anya): not other;
gunebhyaha: than the gunas;
kartaram: the agent;
yadaa: when;
drashta: seer;
anupashyati: sees (clearly);
gunebhyaha: than the qualities;
cha: and;
Param: Supreme/higher;
vetti: knows;
mad bhavam: my being;
so'dhigachati (sa adhigachati): he attains to.

Let us analyse the word “Seer”:

The word “seer” is applicable when there is something to be “seen”.
Unless there is something to be “seen”,
There is no “seer”
and unless there is “seer”
there is nothing to be “seen”.
The two statements go hand in hand.
The “seer” is the “subject”,
and the seen is the “object.”

Let us now move step by step to understand the word “seer” used in the context of this sloka.

Step 1:

Let us start with the statement that the sense organs in our body are the seers.

The eyes that see, ears that hear, nose that smells, tongue that tastes and the skin that feels the touch
are the seers in our body.

The seen: the objective world.

Unless we have these five organs/seers, we cannot see, hear, smell, taste and feel the world of objects.

The word “seer” does not fit with this explanation.

Step 2:

The seer: the mind,

The seen: the objective world.

The five senses then become medium for the seer to see.

Unless there is a functioning mind, the objective world is not seen and the medium (senses) has no role in seeing.

The word “seer” does not apply to the mind also.
The mind is the seat of the thought imprints/gunas.

Step 3:

The seer: the intellect,

The seen: objective world.

The seer, the intellect, sees the objective world through the medium of the thought imprints/gunas in the mind.

The baby might see a number of objects around but cannot associate with them because there are no gunas/thought imprints active in that mind. As the baby grows, the vasanas become more active and also new vasanas get imprinted on the mind and it then develops the capacity to see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

The word “seer” referred to in this sloka applies to the intellect.

The intellect is the real seer when it recognises that it is the inherent gunas which make it associate with the physical world.

That individual who with the intellect understands that the gunas are the agents to see the world around then only it is the true “seer”.

But,

There is an additional point to note in this sloka. It is:

“Knows that which is higher than the gunas.”

“That” refers to the Consciousness within.

There is the intellect, reasoning capacity on one side that sees the gunas in the mind, and also knows/aware, that it is the Atman (Chaitanya) which makes it possible for it to see.

Between “seeing” and “knowing” “knowing” is superior.

By knowing one has an idea of what is good and not good, what is real and what is not real. By “seeing” this differentiation is not possible.

“He attains My being”: (last quarter of the sloka),

“He” who knows which is “Higher” attains “My being”, the Lord implies.

The Lord has used the word “He” with reference to the intellect. It implies that there is still an element of individuality left in that individual.

But, it is a “Purer intellect” which knows “Higher Atman” and recognises and respects “The Atman”.

This level of maturity on the part of the intellect will take the seeker nearer to the Supreme. In course of time the seeker will be able to attain the being of “Sat, Chit and Ananda.”

This sloka is a picture of the method for transcendental meditation.

The seeker has to put the following questions to himself in relation to the information of the objective world brought in by the senses:

Who am I?

What am I doing?

Why am I doing?

What is my destination/goal of life?

When he can come up with the answers:
I am not the agent (karta),
I am not the enjoyer (bhokta),
I am only the witness (sakshi),
The seeker has reached the level of maturity to attain “His being.”

What is “His being”?
“His being” is the status of “Narayana”.

We, are the “Naras” (human beings),
We should drop the individuality, ego sense,
Realise the role of gunas with relation to the objective world,
Overcome the illusion (maya-gunas) and
Then only can attain the being of “Narayana”.

“Narayana” is only a concept for us to understand in terms of subject and object. Really speaking, “Narayana” is without form and qualities. We associate “Sat, Chit and Ananda” with “Narayana.” One can give any name of his choice to this Chaitanya which is “Sat, Chit, Ananda.”

This is possible by transcending the senses, mind and the intellect.
There is only “One” and no more subject and object. This is the highest philosophy.
This is transcendental meditation.
This is to achieve “The Absolute state of perfection” where there is no karta (doer) and no bhokta (enjoyer).
There is no action and no agency in actions.
This highest goal to be achieved cannot be defined in words.

The mind and the intellect bind us to this world and are also the medium for Liberation.
It means, “Jnana” Liberates us from bondage.

Madbhava: My being.

This can come only when the ego is dropped and this can come by transcending the mind/intellect. We can rediscover our real, original status of “Tat Tvam Asi.”

Sloka 20

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्रुते ॥20॥

guṇān etān atītya trīn dehī deha-samudbhavān |
janma-mṛityu-jarā-duḥkhair vimukto 'mṛitam aśhnute ॥20॥

**GUNAN ETAN ATITYA TRIN DEHI DEHA-SAMUDBHAVAN
JANMA-MRITYU-JARA-DUHKHAIR VIMUKTO 'MRITAM ASHNUTE**

Having transcended these three gunas which are the cause for the birth of the body, the jiva is freed from birth, death, old age and pain.

gunan: gunas;
etaan: these;
ateetya: transcended;
treen: three;
dehi: the embodied being;
deha samudbhavan: cause of the body (for the birth of the body);
janma: birth;
mrutyu: death;
jara: old age;
dukhair: pain;
vimuktaha: freed;
amrutam: immortality;
ashnute: attains.

The gunas are the cause for birth into this world of ours, says the Lord.

We have had a detailed study of the gunas/vasanas so far in this chapter which explained why they are the cause of birth into this world.

The life is full of various actions and reactions as a result of desires/hatred we develop and attachments we form to the objects in the physical world.

We also get attached deeply to our bodies.

The birth in turn leads to disease, old age, and death. These can come at any time in one's life and no one can escape from them.

No one would really love to get old, get diseases or to die.

The Lord whose wish is for us to go back to His abode wants us to develop "detachment to attachment" for the physical body and the objects of the world.

The state of "body-consciousness" has to go.

Through this birth He has given us an opportunity to learn the art of emptying the minds which is the store house of the thoughts of desires/hatreds; realise that nothing in this world including our own body is permanently ours.

Only on recognising this truth and acting with the art of detachment in attachment, we become eligible to reach His abode.

Attachment to the body, the objects around us is the causes of births and re-births into this world.

The sloka states that the three gunas are the cause of birth.

Satva is really a stronger power for re-birth than the rajas and tamas. The desire to attain Liberation, the ego of having climbed up to the level of satva, is really a strong force for re-birth.

Remembering this clearly, understanding the significance of this statement, the seeker has to learn the art of transcendental meditation and win over the three gunas. Only then there is an opportunity to exhaust the vasanas which is the pre-requisite for Liberation. Freedom from birth and all the modifications of birth is in our hands only and this is called as victory over "maya" (illusion)."

Sloka 21

अर्जुन उवाच ।
कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो ।
किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥21॥

arjuna uvācha
kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān atīto bhavati prabho ।
kim āchārah katham chaitāns trīn guṇān ativartate ॥21॥

**ARJUNA UVACHA:
KAIR LINGAIS TRIN GUNAN ETAN ATITO BHAVATI PRABHO
KIM ACHARAH KATHAM CHAITANS TRIN GUNAN ATIVARTATE**

Arjuna said:

O Lord, what are the marks of him who has crossed the three gunas? What is his conduct and how does he go beyond these three gunas?

kair: what;
lingais: (identifying) marks;
treen: three;
gunan: gunas;
etan: these;
ateeto: crossed;
bhavati: becomes;
prabho: O Lord;
kim: what;
achara: conduct;
katham: how;
cha: and; etan: these; (chaitaan: and these);
treen gunan: three gunas;
ativartate: crosses over.

Arjuna wants to know how to recognise the person who has managed to transcend the three gunas. The phrase used for “transcending the gunas” is “Gunitita.”

Arjuna had asked Krishna similar question in relation to “Sthitaprajna”. (chapter 2, slokas 55-72).

This shows the inquisitiveness on the part of a good and clever student. When there is a strong need for clarity it is not wrong to put a direct question to the master and get the doubt cleared.

The Lord said that the seeker has to transcend the three gunas. Arjuna wonders if there was anyone in the past or is present who was known to have crossed the three gunas? If there is one, how did he do it? It is such a daunting task.

There might have been a doubt in the mind of Arjuna if all that is said is only a glorified theory and no practical example of individual/individuals who have/had crossed the gunas.

The answers to these questions would help seekers to overcome obstacles in their spiritual path.

Kair lingair: what are the distinguishing marks of such an individual?

Kim acharaha? how does he relate to the physical world?

Katham chaitams treen ativartate: how does he transcend the three guans?

The Lord is going to give the qualities of “Gunatita” through slokas 22-25.

Sloka 22

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्ति सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥22॥

śhrī-bhagavān uvācha

prakāśham cha pravṛttim cha moham eva cha pāṇḍava ।

na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣhati ॥22॥

SHRI-BHAGAVAN UVACHA:

**PRAKASHAM CHA PRAVRITTIM CHA MOHAM EVA PANDAVA
NA DVESHTI SAMPRAVRITTANI NA NIVRITTANI KANKSHATI**

The Lord said.

When light, activity and delusion present themselves, O Pandava, he does not hate and he does not long for them when they are absent.

Prakasham: light;

cha: and;

Pravruttim: activity;

Moham: delusion;

eva: even;

cha: and;

Pandava: Arjuna;

Na dweshti: does not hate;

Sam pravruttni: (when) they occur/present themselves;

Na nivruttni: when they are absent;

Kankshati: longs for.

Prakasha: light - represents “Satva”;

Pravrutti: activity - represents “Rajas” and

Moha: delusion - represents “Tamas”.

When the Lord says: “when light, activity and delusion present themselves”, He means, “when Satva, Rajas and Tamas” present themselves (along with the other qualities of these three gunas).

We all exhibit one of the three gunas at some time or other in any day. It applies to every individual and the Gunatita is no exception.

How does a Gunatita relate to the way the gunas express themselves?

When we experience joy (on achieving success, getting to hear of good news etc.) we get attached to that feeling of joy. During moments of joy we forget ourselves and to an extent we forget our duties during that period. Concentration on work is not 100% when we are experiencing joy.

Gunatita does not let this happen. He knows that every experience has a birth and death. He has mastered the art of being at peace with himself at all times.

Also he is not looking for results that would make him feel happy and does not hate the periods when he has nothing to celebrate and feel happy about.

This is with respect to satvic experiences in life.

“Rajas binds to actions.” The nature is passion for objects which will lead up to thirst (trishna) to fulfil desires. Gunatita does not let the mind dwell on desires and actions needed to fulfil the desires. He does not long for objects that would bring happiness.

Also, he is aware that for being a member of the society, he has to perform his Nitya and Naimittika karmas. (chapters 3 and 4) He discharges those duties but not with a desire for fruits of actions. He takes all duties as discharge of duties to the Lord. As such actions are not to fulfil the desires the results of actions do not bind him.

He does not hate the feeling of having to discharge his duties.

When there is nothing to do (when rajas is not presenting), he remains contented and diverts his mind on the divinity.

With regards to Tamas: Sleep, indolence, delusion are tamasic. Sleep is a natural requirement for efficient working of the physical body. Gunatita does not indulge in either excessive sleep or sleepless states. He does not hate himself for feeling like going to bed at the end of the day. If he has to perform spiritual duties like “jagarana” (constant vigil and not falling off to sleep as required on certain special days) he does not long for sleep.

Gunatita has this frame of mind at all times. He is a man of perfection at all times. He continues to live as being a member of the society he belongs to.

Sloka 23

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।
गुणा वर्तन्त इत्येवं योऽवतिष्ठति नेङ्गते ॥23॥

udāsīna-vad āsīno guṇair yo na vichālyate
guṇā vartanta ity evaṁ yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṅgate ॥23॥

UDASINA-VAD ASINO GUNAIR YO NA VICHALYATE GUNA VARTANA ITY YO 'VATISHTATI NENGATE

He sits like one unconcerned, unaffected by the gunas; knowing that the gunas are functioning and is not moved.

udaseenaha: unconcerned;
aseeno: seated;
gunairyo: (yaha gunaha): who, by the gunas;
na vichalyate: is not agitated/unaffected;
gunaha vartante: gunas are functioning;
iti eva: thus only;
yaha: who;
avatishtati: self-seated;
nengate: unmoved.

Like that of a Sthita-Prajna, (chapter 2, slokas 55-72), nothing disturbs the balanced frame of mind in a Gunatita.

It is natural to experience obstacles in life. Some are serious and some are not serious obstacles.

Let us imagine a big rock near the shore of a sea. (Vivekananda rock in Kanyakumari, Kerala, India). The waves of the ocean when fierce bombard the rock. When calm the sea gently caresses the rock. But the rock remains rock steady.

This is the state of a Gunatita who like everybody else has to face periods of turmoil/torments in his life and periods of extreme joy in his life. He is not perturbed - "udaseeno". He knows that in the ocean of samasara, waves of adversities affect each and every one at different periods in life. He is an embodiment of courage which comes from not the bodily physical or mental strength but by the power of "Brahma Jnana" to face the adversities.

Avasthitaha: Self-seated.

This points to the centre from where activities arise. Having reached the pinnacle of perfection, established in the Atman, (Self-seated), all his actions start from the level of the Atman within, meaning, actions reflect divinity. The intellect, the mind, senses are all subordinate to the Atman. It is like the commander-in-chief of the army taking total responsibility and guiding all the junior ranking officers towards perfection in action.

Nengate: does not move.

The commander-in-chief remains in his seat and let the junior officers know that he is present at his desk at all times. The actions that ensue from a Gunatita therefore reflect divinity at all times. There is no room for any other types of self-centred actions reflecting dominance of the ego.

Sloka 24

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥24॥

sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ sva-sthaḥ sama-loṣṭāśhma-kāñchanaḥ |
tulya-priyāpriyo dhīras tulya-nindātma-sanstutiḥ ||24||

SAMA-DUKHA-SUKHAH SVA-STHAH SAMA-LOSHTASHMA-KANCHANAH TULYA-PRIYAPRIYO DHIRAS TULYA-NINDATMA-SANSTUTIH

He is equal minded in pleasures and sorrows, dwells in the Self, regards a clod of earth, a stone and gold alike, the same in pleasant and un-pleasant things, firm and equal in censure and praise.

sama: equal (minded);
dukha: sorrow;
sukha: pleasure;
swasthaha: established in Atma;
sama loshtashma kanchanaha: regarding a clod of earth, a stone and gold alike;
tulya priya apriyaha: equal to the dear and not dear/pleasant and unpleasant;
dheeraha: firm;
tulya nindatma samstutuhi: equal in censure and praise.

Sama dukha sukha swasthaha:

He is equal in happiness and sorrows in life, (perfect balance of the state of the mind) and constantly established in the Self.

It is like the waves that come and go in the ocean but the ocean remains firm underneath at all times. The waves of happiness and sorrow do not affect the balance of the mind which is established in “Sat, Chit, Ananda.” The bodily actions continue but he is not attached to the results of any actions. He is a Jivanmukta, a Liberated soul while still living. He is aware of the basic truth that every situation has a birth and death. He does not let happiness make him forget his duties and sorrow prevent him from undertaking his responsibilities.

Having followed the path of Karma, Jnana and Bhakti, his mind is established in the Atman. He has heard about the Atman, (Sravana), he has reflected on the Atman (Manana) and is established in the Atman (Nidhi dhyasa). His efforts have taken him into the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi state. In the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi he has entered into the mad external world but continues to keep his mind absorbed in the Atman. He continues to conduct all the duties but with a sense of detachment in attachment.

Sama loshtashma kanchanaha:

Equal to a clod of earth, a stone and gold.

This is to reflect the state of his mind wherein no material possessions affect him. Gold can bring innumerable riches and is considered as highly precious possession. Even gold does not get him elated. He does not long for any riches in life. The earth and stone are the building blocks for construction of houses. Gunatita is not affected by the riches of the land, building he may possess.

Not just getting these, but he does not work with a desire to get these even.

His possession (Atman) if we can say a possession (because he is already established in the Self) is more precious than any other possessions. No one can steal or snatch away his Atman. He does not need to have an insurance to protect this possession. He is ever contented. As he has transcended the mind and intellect, he is no more under the clutches of the desires.

If he is presented with gold, stone or mud, he does not consider any of them as precious and does not get longing to possess any of them.

Tulya priya apriyaha:

He has no feeling of “dear and not so dear to me”.

This is because he sees the same Atman abiding in all. For him, everything is an expression of divinity.

Dheera:

Because of the above qualities, he remains firm at all times.

One can say that he shows “heroic” tendency under all situations. Nothing disturbs his balance of mind. Nothing disturbs the “Nirvikalpa state” he has reached. He may not be physically strong but has a strong will power.

Tulya nindatma samstuthi:

“Equal in censure and praise”.

It does not matter if people shower praises (atma samstuti) at him or criticise (ninda) him. After all he has managed to unite with the Atman, the most precious possession, nothing else matters/affects him. He continues to fulfil all his Nitya and Naimittika karmas and is not bothered about praise or censure from others. As he acts according to his inner consciousness (Divine) he considers that he is answerable only to his Consciousness (his Lord).

Sloka 25

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥25॥

mānāpamānayos tulyas tulyo mitrāri-pakṣhayoḥ |
sarvārambha-parityāgī guṇātītaḥ sa uchyate ॥25॥

**MANAPAMANAYOS TULYAS TULYO MITRARI-PAKSHAYOH
SARVARAMBHA-PARITYAGI GUNATITAH SA UCHYATE**

He is the same in honour and dishonour, the same towards friends and enemies. He abandons all actions/undertakings. He is said to be Gunatita.

maana: honour;

apamaana: dishonour;

tulya: the same;

mitra: friend;

aripakshayo: enemy;

sarva: all;

arambha: beginning/undertakings;

parityagee: abandoning;

Gunateeta: Gunatita;
sah: he;
uchyate: is said.

It is the way of the world that when someone manages to achieve something great in his life, there is always someone else who tries to find faults and bring dishonour to him. When such a situation arises, he does not entertain the thought that he has been dishonoured. He has always been truthful to his inner Self and carries on his duties with a sense of “work is worship”.

He is also not elated from getting honoured for his services.

It is the enemies who try to dishonour and friends who try to honour the person. Gunatita does not entertain the thoughts of enemy/friend when he encounters others and treats them all equally. For him, everyone is “Atma swarupa” (Form of God) and he recognises the divinity in all.

We have the great example of Christ for whom a crown of thorns was not dishonour. Even if he was crowned with a golden crown, he would not have considered it as an honour either. He would have continued to serve the mankind.

Sarvambha parityagee:
It is an important statement to analyse and understand clearly.

Arambha is beginning.
Sarvambha is beginning for all.
Parityagee is abandoning.

A quick glance would probably make one read it as: “abandons all undertakings”. It is not certainly the meaning. It simply means he has no sense of doership.

Sarvambha parityagee is therefore abandoning the feeling of “I” and replacing it as “the duty for the divine, duty for the Lord”. Gunatita is he who conducts all actions but has no feeling of “I” (doership) in it. He has given up all desire-prompted actions. Such an individual (yah) is a Gunatita.

To summarise,
The qualities of a Gunatita are:

- 1) Does not hate when the three gunas bring happiness, action and delusion;
- 2) Does not long for the gunas when they are not functioning;
- 3) Sits like one unconcerned, unaffected by the gunas knowing that the gunas are functioning and is not moved;
- 4) Equal minded in happiness/sorrow;
- 5) Established in Self;
- 6) Regards a clod of earth, a stone and gold alike;
- 7) Same for pleasant and unpleasant;
- 8) Firm/heroic;
- 9) Equal in censure and praise;
- 10) Same in honour and dis-honour;
- 11) Same towards friends and enemies;
- 12) No feeling of doership in actions.

This is the state of perfection achieved by transcendental meditation. It is not just meditation but an art in self-perfection by self-analysis.

Sloka 26

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते |
स गुणान्समतीत्यैतान्ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ||26||

mām cha yo 'vyabhichāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate |
sa guṇān samatītyaitān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate ||26||

**MAM CHA YO 'VYABHICHARENA BHAKTI-YOGENA SEVATE
SA GUNAN SAMATITYAITAN BRAHMA-BHUYAYA KALPATE**

**He who serves Me, with unswerving devotion, having crossed the gunas, he is fit to become
Brahman.**

maam: Me;
cha: and;
yaha: who;
avyabhicharena: unswerving;
bhaktiyogena: with Devotion;
sevate: serves;
saha: he;
gunan: gunas;
samateetya: crossing/beyond;
etan: these;
Brahma bhooyaya: becoming Brahman;
kalpate: is fit.

We must understand clearly every word in this sloka.

Maam sevate: “serves Me”:

“Me” as we have discussed before does not refer just simply to a named God, (Krishna in this instance) but to the “Krishna Tatva” (spiritual essence) and this is “Absolute Truth and Righteousness” (Satya, Dharma. Dharma being righteousness at the level of spiritual, moral and social planes of one’s existence.) This is the message to be understood for the word “Me” used in this sloka.

Sevate: serves:

True servant is he who with love, dedication and total faith undertakes all the services to his master without expecting any returns for his services but in the heart of heart knows that his master will take care of him totally at all times and in all circumstances. The service he conducts with this spirit is “Seva”. Seva is not a business transaction between two individuals.

A dedicated servant conducts only such actions that the master commands and feels happy to do what is needed to fulfil the command. Or he conducts actions which he knows will please the master. He does not do anything that hurts his master either mentally or physically.

It is worship and service to the God within and to divinity all around.

Has He not said so several times that He resides as the Atman within every individual form of life?

Serving the God within oneself:

Be truthful to oneself.

Remembering that He is a constant witness for all of our thoughts and actions, showing purity in speech, thought and actions.

Overcome the tamasic tendency.

Overcome the rajas by not being selfish and egoistic in actions.

Letting the inner conscience rule over the mind and the sense organs in whatever one does.

Serving the God all around:

Do not hurt anybody in speech, thought or actions.

Discharge all obligatory duties with truth and honesty.

Work for loka kalyana.

Even though prayers do help in developing purity of thought, true prayer is the expression in thoughts and actions that contribute towards the welfare of all.

When we cannot see our master how can we serve Him?

In a factory, all the employees work for the boss who gives them the wages. The production will be great when the workers do their duty with the feeling of love to the master who gives them the wages. The presence of the boss is not essential but the feeling that he exists and is watching them should be present.

So, even though we do not see Him physically, we must conduct all our ordained duties.

a) Serving the community is serving the Lord.

b) Not harming nature and protecting the environment is service to the Lord.

c) Not harming other forms of life is serving the Lord.

d) Being part of the team that works for Peace, prosperity, victory over evil, maintain law and order, bring joy to one and all is service to the Lord.

e) Conducting duties pertaining to one's profession and duties pertaining to the stage of life one belongs to.

Two conditions are attached to the seva:

Bhakti Yogena: Yoga of Devotion,

Avyabhicharena: unswerving (devotion).

There should be a sense of unswerving devotion to the master in all actions we conduct. (The subject of bhakti has been discussed in detail in chapter 12). To unite with the God by Karma, (action), Jnana (knowledge) or Dhyana (meditation) need the common factor in all - "Bhakti".

We have also studied that it has to be "ananyas chintayanto maam ye jana paryupasate" (sloka 22, chapter 9) - "worship Me without letting your mind thinking of anything/anybody else" He has said.

"Vyabhichara" is a special word used by the Hindus to refer to those who go for sensual pleasures from source which are contrary to the dharma.

Avyabhicharena means, the devotion shown should be only towards dharma and truth and nothing else.

With this condition attached, the seeker is asked to cross over the three gunas and not let them drag him down from his spiritual path.

By keeping this awareness of God and by dedicated service we will be able to cross over the gunas including satvic guna.

Then only, the seeker is fit to become Brahman, meaning, he will be a personification of “Satya and Dharma” on earth. It is permanent bliss of God-hood. This is Brahma Jnana.

Arjuna did put forward the question (sloka 21): How does he go beyond the three gunas? (katham cai'tams treen gunan ativartate). The answer is in this sloka:

By,
Devotion,
Service,
Acquiring knowledge of the Brahman.

Sloka 27

ब्रह्मणो हि प्रतिष्ठाहममृतस्याव्ययस्य च ।
शाश्वतस्य च धर्मस्य सुखस्यैकान्तिकस्य च ॥27॥

brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛitasyāvyaṃyasya cha ।
śhāśhvatasya cha dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya cha ॥27॥

**BRAHMANO HI PRATISHTHAHAM AMRITASYAVYAYASYA CHA
SHASHVATASYA CHA DHARMASYA SUKHASYAIAKANTIKASYA CHA**

For, I am indeed the abode of Brahman, the immortal and immutable, of everlasting Dharma and of Absolute Bliss.

Brahmano: the Brahman;
hi: indeed;
aham: Me;
pratishta: abode (pratishtaham split into pratishta and aham);
amrutasya: of the immortal;
avyayasya: of the immutable;
cha: and;
shasvatasya: everlasting/eternal;
dhamasya: of dharma;
ekantikasya sukha (sukhasyaikantika split into ekantikasya and sukha): of the Absolute Bliss.

What is Brahman?

Brahman is:
The Immortal and Immutable,
Everlasting Dharma and
The Absolute Bliss.

The immortal and immutable (referred to in this sloka) are the attributes for Brahman without form and qualities. We have studied this in Bhakti Yoga. (Slokas 3-4).

Everlasting Dharma:

Spiritual Knowledge converted into action is Dharma. Karma following the path of (Vedic) Knowledge is Dharma.

The Vedas are the treasure house of knowledge for the Hindus. The Vedas advocate “Loka Kalyana” and it is the Dharma to follow. To be constantly established in knowledge and thereby propagating it through truth and righteousness in action is the message from the Vedas. This is divinity in action.

Brahman is absolute divinity and exhibits the divinity by constantly established in welfare of all. It is the Dharma of Brahman. He has converted the knowledge of the Vedas into actions. Hence Brahman is said to be “Everlasting dharma.” (Refer sloka 15, chapter 3: Dharma chakra)

Ekantikasya sukha (sukhasyaikantika split into ekantikasya and sukha): of the Absolute Bliss.

Absolute Bliss is that state which is neither happiness nor sorrow. Constant equilibrium (balance of the mind) is attainable by annihilating the “ego” and transcending the three gunas.

In this sloka we get the insight into “Sat, Chit, Ananda” which is the designation for Brahman.

“He” is birth-less and deathless (immortal and immutable) and this is “Sat” - Eternal Truth. The knowledge that He is the Eternal Dharma is “Chit”. This is the “Light of Knowledge”. Meditating on this Truth and constantly established in it is “Ananda.”

This knowledge, once established in it will not culminate in happiness or sorrow. The feeling one gets on knowing one’s own true nature and living in that state is beyond description and it is “Ananda”.

The last two slokas in this chapter also remind us of the four paths of yoga.

Sloka 26 is on Bhakti.

In the present sloka:

“Immortal and immutable” is the Jnana to acquire. It is “Jnana Yoga.”

The action to follow the eternal dharma, uphold dharma is “Karma Yoga.”

Meditating on this, overcoming the ego and uniting with the Supreme to experience “Ananda” is “Dhyana Yoga.”

The seeker who puts these four paths into practice will transcend the three gunas.

Dharma we have discussed several times is:

“Law of the being” It is the essential quality without which being has no existence. (sloka 1, chapter 1)

This Brahman is the constant dweller as the Atman within each one of us. We have no existence without the Atman within. We are the Atman within with a physical body. The real being in all is the Atman which is imperishable and the body is the perishable suit over the Atman. The law to follow is therefore the “Law of the being” which is “Brahman”.

What is Krishna?

Krishna is the personification of Brahman with the above attributes.

There is a saying: “yad bhavam tad bhavati” - “one becomes that which he contemplates”.

This applies to the sincere, honest spiritual seeker who conducts spiritual practice and manages to cross over the three gunas.

There is another popular saying - “getting into the father’s shoes”. When the child grows into a responsible adult and takes over the duties of his father with all sincerity he/she is said to have entered into the father’s shoes.

It simply means that the child, now an adult has taken over the duties of the father and fulfils them efficiently.

Similarly, we the children of God, should be able to grow spiritually and conduct the actions that fulfil the criterion of “Loka Kalyana”. On taking this role the results should reflect the everlasting Dharma.

Let us be clear that we are not really taking over the role of “Brahman” but are becoming one with the Brahman who continues to work for “Loka Kalyana.”

Dwaita philosophy of the dualists, accept the “Sat, Chit, Ananda” designation of Brahman but emphasise on “Ananda”. They get immense satisfaction on singing the glory of the Lord with a form and qualities. They are said to follow the path of Bhakti.

Advaita philosophy of the non-dualists also accepts the “Sat, Cit, Ananda” but emphasise on “Cit” aspect of the Brahman. They are expected to light the light of knowledge and see the Atman residing in all.

This is a beautiful prelude for the 15th chapter, Purushottama Prapti Yoga.

So far in the chapters we have covered:

The idea about us by the information received from the sense organs is the “Roopa”. We associate ourselves with a name and form. This is “Jnana”.

The essence from the preceding chapters should have given the sincere seeker an idea of his true self. He should have developed a vision of clarity. This is “Atma Swaroopa” which is his essential divine nature: “Atman which is a spark of Paramatman.”

This is “Vijnana” (wisdom).

What should the seeker learn from this wisdom?

The intellect which was covered with “Ahamkara” and clouded the brain had lost its clarity and the vision was distorted.

The clarity of the intellect should have paved the way for actions to remove the dirt (impure vasanas) from the mind.

The seeker would have strived to control all the agitations in the mind due to the effect of the vasanas. This would have brought about quietude of the mind.

The true samskara/application of this knowledge which came about because of Atma Swaroopa flows from the pure mind to all the sense organs.

Such a seeker is said to have reached the state of attaining the qualifications to reach Purushottama (Purushottama Prapti).

I would like to end this with a beautiful example quoted by “Sree Ramakrishna”.

Sree Ramakrishna gives the example of three robbers catching a person passing through a dense forest. The traveller falls a prey to the robbers.

The first robber advocates that the victim should be killed and to take the loot away.

The second robber advocates tying the victim to a tree and letting fate take care of him.

They tied him to the tree and went away.

After a while the third robber came and released the victim and showed him the way back home. The victim requested the robber to go along with and accept his gratitude and hospitality. But, the robber expressed his inability to go beyond his bounds and disappeared into the forest.

Swamy says that the first robber represents Tamo guna which is bent upon destroying the individual.

The second robber, is Rajo guna that binds the individual to samsara.

The third robber is Satva guna which does not give Moksha but shows the way back to Moksha.

**Iti Śrīmadbhagavadgītasūpaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṃ yogaśāstre
Śrīkṛṣṇārjuna-saṃvāde guṇatrayavibhāgayogo nāma caturdaśo'dhyāyaḥ**

Thus ends the fourteenth chapter, “GUṆATRAYA-VIBHĀGA-YOGA“, from Srimad Bhagavadgita, which is Upanishad, Brahma Vidya and Yoga Shastra, in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.