

□□ PREAMBLE - Chapter 14 - Yog Through Understanding of Three Modes of Material Nature -
GUN TRAY VIBHAG YOG □□

In the previous chapter, Shree Krishna explained the difference between the material body and the soul in detail. In this chapter, He explains the nature of His material energy, which is the source of the body and its elements. Thus, it is the origin of both mind and matter.

The material nature constitutes of three gunas (modes)—sattva (goodness), rajas (passion), and tamas (ignorance). Since the body, mind, and intellect are material in nature, they too possess these three modes, and a combination of these gunas forms the basis of one's character. Peacefulness, morality, well-being, serenity, etc. are the virtues of those in the mode of goodness. Those driven by passion have endless desires and ambitions; they strive to satiate them and work towards worldly enhancement. However, those in the mode of ignorance; are gripped by laziness, excessive sleep, delusion, intoxication, and other vices. A spiritual seeker needs to deal with all these three immensely powerful forces of material nature. Once the soul is able to transcend above these three modes, it attains illumination.

To break free from the clutches of these gunas, Shree Krishna reveals a simple solution to Arjun, which is to attach his mind to God. He says: since the Supreme Lord is unaffected by these three modes, whosoever attaches their mind to God, also rises from the material to the divine level. Hearing this, Arjun enquires about the characteristics of such beings who have risen above these three gunas.

To answer Arjun's query, Shree Krishna systematically elaborates on the qualities of the liberated souls. He explains that, even when they see the gunas at play in the material world, they are not disturbed and stay equipoised. They can see the effects of the gunas displaying in situations, objects, and persons. They comprehend that everything is a manifestation of God's energy, and finally, everything is under His control. Therefore, they are unaffected by worldly situations; they do not feel miserable in adversities or jubilant in triumph, and without wavering, remain situated in the self. In the end, Shree Krishna reiterates that the power of devotion has the ability; to help us overcome the influence of the gunas or the three modes of material nature.

(Preamble courtesy: The songs of GOD - Swami Mukundanandan ji)

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"Śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
paraṁ bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi,
jñānānām jñānam uttamam..□
yaj jñātvā munayah sarve,
parām siddhim ito gatāḥ" ..□□

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Meaning:

Shree Bhagavaan said:

I shall again speak of that highest knowledge which is superior to any other knowledge. Having known this, all the sages, (liberated) from here, have attained the highest accomplishment.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna described the fundamental ignorance of our true nature in the previous chapter. The supreme self, which is our true nature, mistakenly identifies itself with one body within Prakriti or Maaya and becomes the Purusha. It further gets trapped in Prakriti when it gets enchanted by play of the three gunaas of Prakriti. Shri Krishna uses this chapter to explain the nature of these three gunaas, their characteristics, their effects and their remedy in detail.

Shree Krishna had explained that all life forms are a combination of soul and matter. He had also elucidated that prakṛiti (material nature) is responsible for creating the field of activities for the puruṣ (soul). He added that this does not happen independently, but under the direction of the Supreme Lord, who is also seated within the body of the living being. In this chapter, he goes on to elaborate in detail about the three-fold qualities of material nature (the guṇas). By gaining this knowledge and imbibing it into our consciousness as realized wisdom, we can ascend to the highest perfection.

This shloka is in the form of "anubandha chatushtaya", the four- fold curriculum covered in a text. It systematically lists the subject matter of the chapter, the student who is qualified to study this chapter, the goal of this chapter and the relationship of the subject to the goal.

The subject matter is brahmavidya or the knowledge of brahman. One who is a muni, one who has a contemplative mind, is fit to study this chapter. The highest accomplishment one can aspire to - liberation from sorrow - is the goal of this chapter. When we know brahman as our own self, the goal is attained. This is the prayojanam, the relationship of the subject matter to the goal of this chapter.

Before the topic is begun, however, we notice that Shri Krishna repeats the statement that he has made in earlier chapters about the glory of this knowledge. Lord Krishna knows which deserves repetition. He does so because knowledge for us usually means academic, professional or any other type of worldly knowledge. It is always knowledge about some person, object, substance, concept, technique, something that can be accessed with the senses and mind. However, the knowledge of the self is that knowledge that reveals what the subject is, what the “I” is. In order to remove this hard conditioning, this deep programming within us, Shri Krishna has to repeat the importance of this knowledge. We also read about 4 Ds, Discrimination, Dispassion, Discipline and Desire for mōkṣā. So the one who has got all these qualifications is called Muniḥ, in this context. Muni does not refer to the external qualifications like a flowing beard, etc. munayah means Adhikārinah. All those prepared seekers.

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'idaṁ jñānam upāśritya,
mama sādharmyam āgatāḥ..□
sarge 'pi nopajāyante,
pralaye na vyathanti ca".."□

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Meaning:

Those who have taken refuge in this knowledge, and have attained identity with me, are not born even during creation, and not afflicted during dissolution.

Explanation:

Shree Krishna assures Arjun that those who equip themselves with the knowledge he is about to bestow will no longer have to accept repeated confinement in a mother's womb. They will also not be obliged to stay in a state of suspended animation in the womb of God at the time of the universal dissolution or be reborn along with the next creation. The three guṇas (modes of material nature) are indeed the cause of bondage, and knowledge of them will illumine the path out of bondage.

Life on earth for specific purposes, means for sacrificing for nature and living being. And the supreme knowledge is for liberalisation. What is *jīvanmukti* and what is *vidēhamukti* i.e. liberalisation?

Jivanmukti means by taking recourse to this knowledge; by acquiring this knowledge, the seekers have attained oneness with me. They have also attained īśvara svarūpam, dropping their jīvātman. First indication of jīvanmukti is total inner sense of self-sufficiency. Not missing anything in life.

The second feature or glory of Bhagavān is abhāya svarūpaḥ. Bhagavān is free from the sense of insecurity, whereas Jiva is full of insecurity feeling and by acquiring knowledge, the knowledge (jñānam) will remove the sense of insecurity. Vidēhamuktih means freedom from punarjanma or reincarnation.

Actors who work in the daily soap opera world lead interested lives. If an actor is selected to play a part in a well-established and long running soap, they are overjoyed since their career has just skyrocketed. But once the actor is selected, they are afraid when they read each day's script, since their role can be killed off at any time by the director. The director and actor have two different visions. The director is concerned with moving the story forward, whereas the actor is concerned with preserving his role.

Now, if we identify with the various roles or the various parts that we play each day, we will face a fate similar to that of the actor. We experience birth and death every day, every minute, throughout our lives. When we get a new job, for instance, a new "senior manager of marketing" is born. When we lose that job, that senior manager "dies". If a marriage happens in the family, several new "in-laws" are born. If something goes wrong in that marriage, all those in-laws "die". If something makes us angry, an angry man is born, and

will die in a short while once the anger dissipates. Birth and death are part and parcel of Prakriti's functioning.

Shri Krishna urges us to identify with Ishvara so that we are not disturbed or agitated when any kind of birth or death, even that of our own body, occurs. If the actor has the same vision as the director, he will take the end of his role in good stead and go on to do a wonderful job in his next assignment. If we have removed our ignorance through knowledge, if we have realized our true nature as identical to that of Ishvara, we will see things from Ishvara's perspective and stop identifying with the ups and downs experienced by our body.

How exactly does this creation, this birth take place? Shri Krishna explains next.

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"mama yonir mahad brahma,
tasmin garbham dadhāmy aham..□
sambhavaḥ sarva-bhūtānām,
tato bhavati bhārata" .. □□

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Meaning:

My womb is the great brahman. In it, I place the seed. From that, O Bharaata, is the birth of all beings.

Explanation:

Just recall previous chapter, in which we have learned that Purusha is the conscious element. Prakriti is the unconscious element, the inert element. Purusha is the Nirguna element, without attributes; Prakriti is the Saguna element, with attributes; Purusha is the Nirvikaar element, in which there is no change; while Prakriti is the Saguna element, in which changes are possible. Fourth and last, Purusha is the true element, which has its own independent existence; while Prakriti, matter, has no independent existence. False. So the Nirguna, unchangeable, true, conscious element is Purusha; the Saguna, Saguna, Saguna, False, unconscious element is Prakriti.

Now he is explaining the theory of creation, therefore self- knowledge is required for self-mastery. Anything you want to master, what is the first step, learn to understand. If a disease has to be cured, before finding a remedy for the disease, what is the first step, I have to understand the nature of the disease.

According to the theory of karma, each jeeva or individual soul generates new unfulfilled desires or vaasanaas. These vaasanaas are created as a result of karma phala or fruits of action. Each action of eating a sweet creates a new desire to eat a sweet later, for instance. One lifetime is not enough to exhaust these vaasanaas, causing the jeeva to continuously take birth in the world to fulfill its desires. This is the explanation of birth and rebirth of jeevas. But how does the universe itself begin? Shri Krishna describes this topic in extremely poetic language in two shlokas.

Ishvara, at the beginning of creation, splits himself into his two aspects. One aspect is Prakriti, referred to here as the "great brahman", which comprises three gunaas or qualities. Prakriti has the power to generate an infinite variety of forms through innumerable permutations and combinations of its three gunaas. But it is inert. It cannot create the universe by itself. The awareness aspect of Ishvara, the kshetrajnya, is needed to infuse Prakriti with life. This happens when Ishvara places all of the jeevas into Prakriti, just like seeds are placed into soil.

And then Krishna wants to point out that if this mixture is the cause of the creation; all the products will have the features of both the father and mother. Because the general rule is what; *kāraṇa guṇah, karyē anuvartantē*, the features of the cause will inhere, pervade the effect also. If gold is the cause of the ornament, the ornament is also golden in nature. And if the cause-Gold has a percentage of copper, the ornament also will have a percentage of copper. If the children are born out of the couple, the children will have some features of the father; some features of the mother; both will be there. Only thing is the proportion. One child might have more of the mother and less of the father; another might have more of the father and less of the mother; but the principle you have to note, the causal features will inhere in the effect. And therefore, Krishna wants to extend that principle and say every individual is a mixture of Puruṣa and Prakṛti tatvam. Every individual jīva, whether it is plant

or ant or elephant; whether it is a human being, male or female; every one of us is a mixture of Puruṣa, father principle, as well as prakṛti the mother principle.

Let's examine this in more detail. How exactly does the jeeva come into contact with Prakriti? It is due to avidya or ignorance. Each jeeva's vaasanaas or unfulfilled desires are caused by its ignorance of its true nature which is infinite. Instead, the jeeva, also known as the Purusha, thinks that it is incomplete, and mistakenly rushes out into Prakriti to make itself complete again. This illusory link between the Purusha and Prakriti becomes the source of its birth and rebirth in the cycle of samsaara.

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"sarva-yoniṣu kaunteya,
mūrtayah sambhavanti yāḥ..□

tāsām brahma mahad yonir,
aham bīja-pradah pitā" ..□□

Meaning:

Of the many forms that are born from all wombs, O Kaunteya, the great brahman is their womb, I their seed-giving father.

Explanation:

We may be wondering, how does Ishvara split himself into his two aspects of awareness and matter or Prakriti? Doesn't it sound farfetched? Something quite similar happens to us every night. When we dream, our minds splits, as it were, into two. One aspect becomes the watcher, and the other aspect projects our dreams. In other words, the mind watches its own show. The Mandukya upanishad provides a detailed comparison of our waking, dreaming and deep sleep states.

Shree Krishna states that prakṛti is like the womb and the souls are like the sperms. He places the souls in the womb of Mother Nature to give birth to multitudes of living beings. Sage Ved Vyāsa also describes it in the same fashion in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam: “In the womb of the material energy the Supreme Lord impregnates the souls. Then, inspired by the karmas of the individual souls, the material nature gets to work to create suitable life forms for them.” He does not cast all souls into the material world, rather only those who are vimukh.

Shri Krishna says that Ishvara, having divided himself into his two aspects, is both the mother and father of everything and every living being in the universe. After he deposits the seeds or the jeevas into Prakriti, he creates the state of Hiranyagarbha. This state contains the potential to generate an entire sequence of creation, sustenance and dissolution of several universes. It is comparable to a DVD that contains within it the potential to create an entire two-hour movie with several characters and locations.

Whatever living being is born; for all of them, father is brahma yoniḥ, māya is the universal mother. And therefore, we are all children of brahman plus māya. All means all male, female, animals, birds, insects, tree and plants etc. etc. Puruṣa plus prakṛti. Consciousness plus matter; nirguṇam plus saṅguṇam. And therefore, we also will have a mixture of both. We can say consciousness plus matter is equal to Īśvara tatvam and Īśvara paramātma is kāraṇam, jīvātma is kāryam. If a kāraṇam is a mixture consciousness plus matter, kāryam is also a mixture of consciousness- principle- plus- matter- principle. We are told brahma Satya Jagat

Mithiya, and in mixture as creation of God, we are both and now it is matter of understanding how we accept ourselves.

Also, the ultimate womb, the ultimate source of the birth of all beings is the great brahman or Prakriti, which is nothing but the three gunaas. If we have to remove the impact and influence that the three gunaas exert upon us, we need to study what they are, how they impact us, how we fall under their sway, and how does one remain unaffected by them. Shri Krishna, having summarized the relevance of the three gunaas, proceeds to analyze the three gunaas in significant detail from the next shloka.

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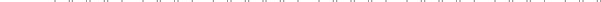
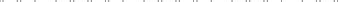
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The image shows four identical groups of four empty square boxes arranged horizontally. Each group is intended for a child to draw a picture of something that starts with the corresponding letter.

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A grid of 20 empty square boxes arranged in two rows of ten. The top row contains ten boxes, and the bottom row contains ten boxes, separated by a thin horizontal line.

"sattvaṁ rajas tama iti,
guṇāḥ prakṛti- sambhavāḥ..□
nibadhnanti mahā- bāho,
dehe dehinam avyayam"..□□

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Meaning:

Sattva, rajas, tamas, these gunaas born of Prakriti, O mighty-armed warrior, bind the imperishable body dweller to the body.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna brings the detailed analysis of Prakriti with two points. First, he breaks down Prakriti into its three components: the gunas which are sattva, rajas and tamas. We have to note that the phrase “born of” in the shloka does not mean that Prakriti creates the three gunas. It means that Prakriti itself is nothing but the three gunas. Next, Shri Krishna states the effect of Prakriti on the Purusha, also known as the jeeva, the individual soul. He says

that Prakriti binds or ties down the imperishable body dweller, the "dehi", the jeeva, to the body.

Let us begin by understanding what the term "gunaa" means. From our point of view, gunaa is a state of mind. In just one day, we experience calmness, passion and lethargy, which are roughly equal to sattva, rajas and tamas respectively. From a broader point of view, gunaas refer to building blocks of the universe. Inert matter is tamas, action or dynamism is rajas, and harmony is sattva. Since we are primarily interested in liberation from our sorrow, we shall focus on the impact of the gunaas on our mind rather than their impact on the universe.

Now, if we have repeatedly heard that our self is imperishable and can never be bound, then how can the perishable gunaas bind the self? The answer is: the gunaas by themselves do not bind us. Ignorance of our true nature, followed by our misidentification with the body, puts us in a situation where we ourselves allow the gunaas to take over control of our life.

Imagine that you have parked your car on the left side of road. A car that looks just like your car is also parked on the same road, but on the right side of the road. After you come out of the building and absent-mindedly think that the other car is yours, you are trapped. You see a new scratch on the car and get upset, you get a parking ticket and have to pay the fine, and so on. The other car has not "bound" you, but your incorrect knowledge has done so. We can also go back to the example of the child watching the boxing match. He is as though glued to the screen, while his grandmother is not. The TV does not bind him since it is nothing but millions of red, blue and green dots of light. It is the child's strong identification with the boxer that binds him.

Similarly, the individual soul which has mis-identified itself with the body, gets entrapped in the play of the three gunaas. In the next three shlokas, Shri Krishna takes up each gunaa one by one, and explains its power to bind the body in detail.

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A horizontal row of 18 small square icons, each with a unique pattern or color scheme, representing various file types or applications. From left to right, the icons include: a solid blue square, a solid red square, a solid green square, a solid orange square, a solid purple square, a solid yellow square, a solid pink square, a solid grey square, a solid white square, a solid black square, a solid light blue square, a solid light red square, a solid light green square, a solid light orange square, a solid light purple square, a solid light yellow square, a solid light pink square, a solid light grey square, and a solid light black square.

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Meaning:

Of these, sattva is pure, bright and healthy. It binds through attachment to joy and attachment to knowledge, O sinless one.

Explanation:

In simple terms, our mind is in a state of sattva whenever we experience joy, peace and calmness. We are alert, our mind is able to think very logically, we are able to grasp the most complex statements that we read or hear, and we don't feel the need to rush out into the world.

The word prakāśhakam means "illuminating." The word anāmayam means "healthy and full of well-being." By extension, it also means "of peaceful quality," devoid of any inherent cause for pain, discomfort, or misery. The mode of goodness is serene and illuminating. Thus, sattva guṇa engenders virtue in one's personality and illuminates the intellect with knowledge. It makes a person become calm, satisfied, charitable, compassionate, helpful, serene, and tranquil. It also nurtures good health and freedom from sickness. While the mode of goodness creates an effect of serenity and happiness, attachment to them itself binds the soul to material nature.

Shri Krishna says that sattva refers to purity, brightness and health. Our mind can be compared to the water in a glass cup. When the pond is free from agitation, and all the dirt has settled down, it is crystal clear and is able to reflect light beautifully. Similarly, when our mind is in a state of sattva, there is absence of dirt in the form of selfish desires. There is brightness because it is able to reflect the light of the self, the awareness of the self, without any hinderance. There is health because it enables us to get as close to our natural state of joy as is possible in the human body.

Now, no matter how enjoyable or pleasant this state is, Shri Krishna reminds us that sattva has the ability to bind us, to trap us, because anyone would like to remain in a state of joy

and calmness. Furthermore, if we foresee that this state will go away, we would like to hold on to this state of joy tightly and not let it go. Sattva can also bind us through attachment to knowledge. Since sattva enables our mind to accumulate more and more worldly knowledge, read more books, attain more academic qualifications, and ultimately pump up our ego, we get attached to it even more.

Why is sattva able to bind us to joy and knowledge? We mistake the joy provided by sattva because we have not experienced what real joy is. That can only happen in meditation when we are able to access the joy that is inherent in the “I”, in the self. All other joys are in the realm of Prakriti - temporary, perishable, and illusory. True joy is in the subject, the “I”, not in the object. Sattva, though preferable to rajas and tamas, is to be used for getting us closer to the goal of liberation, and has to be ultimately discarded, just like the fire is turned off after we cook our meal.

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A horizontal row of ten empty square boxes, each containing a black number from 1 to 10 in sequence. These boxes are intended for the respondent to mark with an X or a similar indicator.

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A grid of 40 empty square boxes arranged in two rows of 20. The top row contains 20 boxes, and the bottom row contains 20 boxes, creating a total of 40 boxes for labeling.

"rajo rāgātmakam viddhi,
trṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam..□
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Meaning:

Know rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of thirst and attachment. It binds the body dweller by attachment to action, O Kaunteya.

Explanation:

It is of the nature of attachment and passion; a rājasic mind is highly extrovert; and it always wants to relate with things and people. The nature of rajō guṇa is that the mind is always extrovert, and it always wants to have relationship with things and people. If satva is nivṛttiḥ pradhāna, seclusion and withdrawal; rajas make a person pravṛtti pradhāna; interested in companionship; in people, in relationship, in interaction. And it never loves quietitude; all the time it wants to talk to someone or the other.

Rāgā means relationship, attachment, passion. Since it is an extrovert mind, a restless mind, a dynamic mind, it has got lot of ambitions and wants to achieve; always wants to achieve

something or the other. It is an ambitious mind and therefore it has trṣṇa; trṣṇa means desire for external thing; Lot of possession and lot of people.

The mode of passion fuels the lust for sensual enjoyment. It inflames desires for mental and physical pleasures. It also promotes attachment to worldly things. Persons influenced by rajo guṇa get engrossed in worldly pursuits of status, prestige, career, family, and home. They look on these as sources of pleasure and are motivated to undertake intense activity for the sake of these. In this way, the mode of passion increases desires, and these desires further fuel an increase of the mode of passion. They both nourish each other and trap the soul in worldly life.

Rajas is our state of mind when it is agitated, like a glass of water that is being stirred. Imagine that we have to attend an extremely important meeting at 5 PM. It is 4:50 PM and the taxi is stuck in a traffic jam. Our mind will be in a state of rajas. A series of thoughts will suggest that we wait in the car, while another series of thoughts will suggest that we leave the taxi and start walking. Whenever our mind is agitated by a thought that propel us to act, we are in a state of rajas.

Shri Krishna says that rajas create trishnaa or thirst for what we do not possess, and sanga or attachment towards what we already possess. Furthermore, rajas create a vicious cycle. It fuels our desires, creates thoughts that compel us to act so that we can acquire objects, then it creates attachment to those objects which further increases rajas. Typically, rajas dominate our mind from sunrise until sunset.

To understand how rajas can bind, consider the case of a multi- millionaire who has recently married his young girlfriend. The millionaire is self-sufficient and does not need to work to support himself. But his wife's brothers, relatives, friends and acquaintances slowly approach him for capital to start their business, connections to get them jobs, advice on their career and so on. Soon, the millionaire ends up working all day, every day. Even though the millionaire does not need to move a finger, he gets bound by his relationship to his wife.

Similarly, even though the self, the "I" does not act, rajas bind the self through attachment to action and its results. It makes us say "I am the doer" and "I am the enjoyer" whereas it is actually Prakriti that is acting and providing the results. Karma yoga helps us come out of this bondage and entrapment. It teaches us to continue to act in this world but do it in a way that removes our identification with Prakriti. We slowly start submitting the results of our actions to Ishvara, then we slowly start letting Ishvara take over the doership of our actions as well.

The way to break out of this is to engage in karm yog, i.e. to begin offering the results of one's activities to God. This creates detachment from the world and pacifies the effect of rajo guṇa.

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*"tamas tv ajñāna-jam viddhi,
mohanaṁ sarva- dehinām..□
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Meaning:

And know tamas to be born of ignorance, deluding all the body dwellers. It binds them through heedlessness, laziness and sloth, O Bhaarata.

Explanation:

Tamas is our state of mind when it is dull and inert. Like a glass of dirty water cannot let light shine through, tamas prevents our mind from thinking clearly. Our mind starts to operate in moha, which means confusion or error, mistaking one thing for another. Tamas can be triggered by an overpowering emotional situation like Arjuna seeing his family members and loved ones on the opposite side of the battlefield. A tamasic state can also be triggered by abusing our sense organs through excessive drinking, smoking, watching TV and so on.

Tamo guṇa is the antithesis of sattva guṇa. Persons influenced by it get pleasure through sleep, laziness, intoxication, violence, and gambling. They lose their discrimination of what is right and what is wrong, and do not hesitate in resorting to immoral behavior for fulfilling their self-will. Doing their duty becomes burdensome to them and they neglect it, becoming

more inclined to sloth and sleep. In this way, the mode of ignorance leads the soul deeper into the darkness of ignorance. It becomes totally oblivious of its spiritual identity, its goal in life, and the opportunity for progress that the human form provides.

Tamo guna means there is no clear thinking and also often there is no goal in life; it is just moving along with the current. Since there is no goal and even if goals are there, the priorities are not clear i.e. how much money is important, how much health is important, how much knowledge is important, with regard to all these, there is no clarity and therefore Mōhanam sarvadēhinām; it causes delusion for all those people, and therefore what is the definition of tamō guṇa; mōhanātmakam of the nature of delusion.

After a long and tiring day, when we want to rush to get a good night's sleep, we get a call from a friend who wants to catch up. Try as we might, we will not be able to understand what he is saying because the mind has switched to a tamasic state due to exhaustion. Our memory does not work properly, and our intellect's logic is flawed. All we want to do is to rest our head on the pillow. When tamas reaches the height of its potency, we fall asleep.

Shri Krishna says that tamas is born out of ignorance. At its core, tamas keeps the Purusha, the jeeva, body dweller under the delusion that he is the body and not the self. When we forget our true nature as the self, the eternal essence, we assume that our body is who we are. This erroneous notion, this ignorance enables tamas to bind us, to trap us.

Tamas binds us in three ways, through heedlessness, laziness and sloth. Heedlessness is the performance of actions without intellectual focus or awareness. We either perform actions carelessly, such as dialing the wrong phone number, or perform actions that are futile, such as gambling or excessive alcohol consumption. Laziness is postponing or abstaining from our duties. Sloth is lying around in a state of stupor or sleep. Now, there is a place for resting and sleeping in our life, which is at the end of every day. But some of us derive joy from futile actions, from procrastination, from lazing around and so on. It is this joy through which tamas binds us.

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"sattvaṁ sukhe sañjayati
rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamah
pramāde sañjayaty uta"

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Meaning:

Sattva binds through joy, rajas through action, O Bhaarata, while tamas cloaks knowledge and binds through heedlessness.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna recaps the characteristics of the three gunaas in this shloka. Sattva binds by making us hold on to joy experienced after attaining a sense object. Rajas binds us by giving us joy in performing actions and obtaining their results. Tamas binds us by giving us joy in holding on to laziness and heedlessness. Satva Guna is luminous, Rajo Guna is passionate, and Tamo Guna is captivating. We now begin to look into how these three are interrelated.

In the mode of goodness, the miseries of material existence reduce, and worldly desires become subdued. This gives rise to a feeling of contentment with one's condition. This is a good thing, but it can have a negative side too. For instance, those who experience pain in the world and are disturbed by the desires in their mind feel impelled to look for a solution to their problems, and this impetus sometimes brings them to the spiritual path. However, those in goodness can easily become complacent and feel no urge to progress to the transcendental platform. Also, sattva guna illuminates the intellect with knowledge. If this is not accompanied by spiritual wisdom, then knowledge results in pride and that pride comes in the way of devotion to God. This is often seen in the case of scientists, academicians, scholars, etc. The mode of goodness usually predominates in them, since they spend their time and energy cultivating knowledge. And yet, the knowledge they possess often makes them proud, and they begin to feel that there can be no truth beyond the grasp of their intellect. Thus, they find it difficult to develop faith toward either the scriptures or the God-realized Saints.

On other side, in the mode of passion, the souls are impelled toward intense activity. Their attachment to the world and preference for pleasure, prestige, wealth, and bodily comforts,

propels them to work hard in the world for achieving these goals, which they consider to be the most important in life. Rajo guṇa increases the attraction between man and woman, and generates kām (lust). To satiate that lust, man and woman enter into the relationship of marriage and have a home. The upkeep of the home creates the need for wealth, so they begin to work hard for economic development. They engage in intense activity, but each action creates karmas, which further bind them in material existence.

The mode of ignorance clouds the intellect of the living being. The desire for happiness now manifests in perverse manners. For example, everyone knows that cigarette smoking is injurious to health. Every cigarette pack carries a warning to that extent issued by the government authorities. Cigarette smokers read this, and yet do not refrain from smoking. This happens because the intellect loses its discriminative power and does not hesitate to inflict self- injury to get the pleasure of smoking. As someone jokingly said, "A cigarette is a pipe with a fire at one end and a fool at the other." That is the influence of tamo guṇa, which binds the soul in the darkness of ignorance.

Conversely, we can go from tamas to rajas to sattva, but it may take a little longer. For someone steeped in tamas, immersing themselves in action will raise them to the level of rajas. When action becomes focused and directed towards the pursuit of a selfless goal, rajas is elevated to the level of sattva. Swami Vivekananda always used to say "awake, arise, stop not till the goal is reached". When India was under British rule, many had become accustomed to this slavery and had fallen into a tamasic state. They could not find a way out of their predicament and were clouded in ignorance. Swami Vivekananda's message urged citizens to engage in action towards independence. That was the only way to get them out of the tamasic state of laziness.

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॥१३॥

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॥१६॥ – 14.09॥

॥१७॥ 14.10॥

॥१८॥

"rajas tamaś cābhībhūya,
sattvam̄ bhavati bhārata..॥
rajaḥ sattvam̄ tamaś caiva,
tamaḥ sattvam̄ rajas tathā"..॥॥

॥१९॥ :

॥२०॥

Meaning:

Sattva rises, O Bhaarata, when it overpowers rajas and tamas, so does rajas overpower sattva and tamas, and also tamas overpowers sattva and rajas.

Explanation:

Now Bhagwan Shri Krishna says that everything and being is made up of three guṇas; because everything and being is born of prakṛti. From an inert object to the most intelligent human being, every blessed thing in the creation is the product of prakṛti and therefore, everyone has got all the three guṇas. But there is only one difference, and that difference is even though everything is made up of three guṇas, the proportion is not uniform. The proportion was uniform before the creation; during the pralaya avastha, the three guṇas were in equilibrium. In saṅkya philosophy, they called it guṇānām sāmya avastha pralaya.

Once the creation has started, there is no more equilibrium; there is viṣamya avastha, viṣamya means in equilibrium.

These three guṇas are present in the material energy, and our mind is made from the same energy. Hence, all the three guṇas are present in our mind as well. They can be compared to three wrestlers competing with each other. Each keeps throwing the others down, and so, sometimes the first is on top, sometimes the second, and sometimes the third. In the same manner, the three guṇas keep gaining dominance over the individual's temperament, which oscillates amongst the three modes. Depending upon the external environment, the internal contemplation, and the sanskārs (tendencies) of past lives, one or the other guṇa begins to dominate. There is no rule for how long it stays—one guṇa may dominate the mind and intellect for as short as a moment or for as long as an hour.

Shri Krishna says that our mind can only be under the impact of one gunaa at a time. This happens when one gunaa assumes dominance, and consequently, asserts its authority over the others. If sattva guna dominates, one becomes peaceful, content, generous, kind, helpful, serene, and tranquil. When rajo guna gains prominence, one becomes passionate, agitated, ambitious, envious of others success, and develops a gusto for sense pleasures. When tamo guna becomes prominent, one is overcome by sleep, laziness, hatred, anger, resentment, violence, and doubt.

Having known this, we now would like to know which gunaa within us dominates more than others. This is not an easy question to answer, because we have to analyze ourselves and not anyone else. We need to look within. We need to understand what thoughts, feelings and emotions we should watch out for so that we can tie them back to a specific gunaa. If we conduct this analysis for a while, we will know which gunaa predominates. Shri Krishna expands on the topic of the marks or signs of each gunaa in the next shloka.

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"sarva- dvāreṣu dehe 'smin,
prakāśa upajāyate..॥
jñānaṁ yadā tadā vidyād,
vivṛddham sattvam ity uta"..॥

॥१४.११॥ :

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Meaning:

When luminous knowledge radiates through all gates of this body, then one should know that sattva has increased greatly.

Explanation:

What are the marks of sattva? Shri Krishna says that when we see radiance, or when we see knowledge radiating from a person, we should know that we are in the presence of a highly sattvic person. **The word “dvaara” usually means door or gate, but here it refers to the sense organs, our doors to the world. Even though the sense organs are meant from receiving stimuli from the world, they can also convey our internal state to the world.** Our eyes, especially, can give away our thoughts. If our mind is wandering, our eyes will also wander, for instance. In a sattvic person, radiance shines through the sense organs, especially the eyes.

With our sense organs, we gather the knowledge of the external world and when the sense organs are bright means active, we can acquire more knowledge accurate and properly and can do our sadhana.

Sādhanā means to fight with the flow of the three guṇas in the mind and force it to maintain the devotional feelings toward God and Guru. If our consciousness remained at the highest consciousness all day, there would be no need for sādhanā. Though the mind's natural sentiments may be inclined toward the world, yet with the intellect, we must force it into the spiritual realm. Initially, this may seem difficult, but with practice it becomes easy. This is just as driving a car is difficult initially, but with practice it becomes natural.

Now, we should not think that a highly sattvic person will radiate beams of light from their body. But they do radiate calmness and peace. We can sense peace if we are near them or pick up on their calmness if we are watching them on a screen. Watch Dr. Jane Goodall speak about her efforts to save gorillas in Africa, and you will be drawn to the serenity on her face instantly. Such people harbour few, if any, selfish desires in their mind. This lack of dirt in the form of selfishness lets their inner radiance, the light of their eternal essence, shine through.

From our perspective, whenever we notice an increase in clear thinking, we should know that sattva is predominant in our mind. If we see fried food but the intellect prevents our hand from reaching to pick up that food, we are in a sattvic state. If our thoughts are towards the well-being of the family, our city or our nation, instead of just our narrow well-being, we are in a sattvic state. If our mind is sharp and alert, if we don't let anything drop in our personal and professional lives, we are in a sattvic state.

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"lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhah,
karmaṇām aśamaḥ sprhā..
rajasy etāni jāyante,
vivrddhe bharatarsabha"..

10 of 10

Meaning:

Greed, activity, commencement of actions, unrest, desire. These arise when rajas is predominant. foremost among the Bharataas.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna addressed Arjuna as “bharatarshabha”, the foremost scion of the Bharata dynasty, and enumerates the marks of a person who is under the influence of rajas. He says that whenever our mind generates thoughts of greed, selfish activity, commencement of action, unrest or uneasiness, and desire for even trivial things, we should realize that we are under the sway of rajas. In fact, we consider this to be our natural state of mind, especially during the waking hours of the day.

Most of us start our day with Pray to GOD, to give us strength, but what for? It is for success and for earning. Because when the mode of passion becomes prominent, we may think, "I must surely progress on the spiritual path, but what is the hurry? At present, I have many responsibilities to discharge, and they are more important." Success moves us to workaholic and we want our sub ordinate also gives result as per our desire. This creates stage, where we become selfmade person, egoist and starts saying our story of success to next generation. If they do not listen, we fight with them or disappointed. Though the mind's

natural sentiments may be inclined toward the world, yet with the intellect, we have to force it into the spiritual realm. Initially, this may seem difficult, but with practice it becomes easy. This is just as driving a car is difficult initially, but with practice it becomes natural.

If we look at the first half of the shloka in reverse order, we start with spruha, which is a selfish desire for objects that have nothing to do with our duties, like a gold watch. Frequent thoughts for acquiring the gold watch led to ashama or restlessness, where we are not satisfied with our present situation and want to do something else. We then begin to act, karmanaam aarambha, so that we can acquire this gold watch. Our plans may lead us to do another part time job or withdraw from our savings, which is pravritti, engaging in selfish action. Even after we acquire the gold watch, we are not satisfied and want another one. That is lobha, greed, the height of rajasic influence on our mind.

It is not easy to detect whether our actions are prompted by selfishness or not. Only a pure mind that has been cleansed of selfishness through karma yoga, with the aid of a guru, can recognize the subtle difference between sattvic and rajasic actions. Karma yoga teaches us to analyze our qualification and proclivity for selecting an appropriate vocation. If we are trained to become an actor, and are also passionately interested in acting, then that becomes our vocation. There is a baseline level of rajas needed to perform actions towards fulfilling the duties of our vocation, which is perfectly fine. Shri Krishna says that we need to watch for signs where rajas increase beyond that baseline level, where selfishness creeps into our actions.

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A horizontal row of ten empty square boxes, intended for children to draw or write in.

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A horizontal bar composed of 20 small squares, followed by a space, then 5 small squares, then a space, then 3 small squares, then a space, then 2 small squares, then a space, then 1 small square.

"aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca,
pramādo moha eva ca..□
tamasy etāni jāyante,
vivrddhe kuru- nandana.."□□

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Meaning:

Darkness, inaction, heedlessness and also error. These arise when tamas is predominant, O descendant of the Kurus.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna addressed Arjuna as "kurunandana" when explaining the marks of tamas but addressed him as "bharatarshabha" when explaining the marks of rajas. He was probably hinting that some members of the Kuru dynasty, the Kauravas, were under the influence of tamas. When we are under the influence of tamas, we make erroneous decisions. We become inert like a stone, resorting to inaction. Even when we act, it is out of heedlessness. Our knowledge is covered by tamas, creating darkness within us.

Let us go deeper into what inaction really means. When we have a lack of drive to achieve anything in the world, when we want to escape all sense of responsibilities, when all ambitions go away, that is inaction. Moha, error or delusion is even worse. We cannot accurately judge our relationship with the world, with other people, with our family, our friends, our job and so on. We become a "good for nothing" and will remain in that state unless someone wakes us up.

Since, in the tamo aprakāśah, indicates the absence of satva means all the jñānāndriyas are dull and apravṛttiḥ indicates the absence of rajas means karmāndriyas are dull, neither ambitious nor contemplative. So, when the mode of ignorance dominates, one could think, "I am not really sure if there is any God or not, for no one has ever seen him. So why waste time in sādhanā?" Notice how the person's thoughts have oscillated due to lack of knowledge and improper exercise of activities from such heights to the depths of devotion.

So therefore pramādaḥ, negligence; all the time oversight problem is there; mistakes are many; therefore pramādaḥ, carelessness, mōhahā, delusion, conflict; life-long he does not know what he wants to do. You just ask that person what do you want? there is no proper answer. He is slippery. He is not very clear about what he wants. At least if we decide, he will not listen. He will not know himself and he will not listen. Neither he can decide, nor he will follow what I ask him to do.

Nature has its own scale of tamas, rajas and sattva. It is better to crawl like an insect than lie around like a stone, better to work like an ant rather than crawl like an ant, better to pollinate flowers like a bird than simply work like an ant, better to give milk to others like a

cow than pollinate flowers like a bird, and it is better to work with one's intellect like a human than to give milk to others like a cow. So, one who is steeped in tamas, should start to act, even if the actions are without any planning or thinking, just to get into a higher mental state.

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"yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu,
pralayaṁ yāti deha- bhṛt..॥
tadottama- vidām̄ lokān,
amalān pratipadyate"..॥

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गुण गुण गुणान्वय गुणान्वय इ गुण इ गुण इ गुण इ गुणान्वय इ गुण इ गुण, इ गुण गुण गुण गुण गुण गुण इ गुण इ गुण इ गुण इ गुणान्वय इ गुण इ गुण इ गुण (॥)

Meaning:

When sattva is predominant, and the body dweller reaches his end, then he attains the immaculate worlds of the knowers of the highest.

Explanation:

Let us recall, the earlier chapters for law of karma and fate of yogi who has not completed his devotion and corrupted. We get what we deserve is God's law, the law of karma. Those who cultivated virtues, knowledge, and a service attitude toward others are born in families of pious people, scholars, social workers, etc. Or else, they go to the higher celestial abodes. Those who permitted themselves to be overcome by greed, avarice, and worldly ambitions are born in families focused on intense material activity, very often the business class. Those who were inclined to intoxication, violence, laziness, and dereliction of duty are born amongst families of drunks and illiterate people. Otherwise, they are made to descend down the evolutionary ladder and are born into the animal species.

Now, Shri Krishna explains the effects of each gunaa from the perspective of reincarnation. He says that one whose mind is in a sattvic state during the time of death travels to realms that are subtler than the human world. These realms are termed as "Brahmaloka", the abode of Lord Brahma. Jñāni does not travel at all; all the three śarīrams are dissolved here and now; he is ONE with the all-pervading Brahman. It is said that there is no room for any desire, sorrow or disease in such realms, given the complete absence of rajas or tamas. Such people, however, are still subject to the bondages caused by sattva, as discussed previously.

Let us revisit the example of the young child who has developed a strong identification with a television character played by the actor "ABC". ABC's run as an action hero in a popular TV show has ended. He has decided to play the role of a serious professor in his new TV series. The young child now has a choice. He can either continue to identify with ABC in his new role as a professor or find another TV show with an action hero to identify with. The choice depends on the young child's mental state. If it is heavily rajasic, he will find another action hero. If it has some sattva, he will follow ABC as a professor.

Similarly, our desires and thoughts, which are driven by the gunaas that influence us, will determine our fate after this physical body drops. The subtle body, which is nothing but our desires and thoughts, will attract another physical body that enables it to carry out those desires. It is almost similar to DNA shaping a body based on the programming it contains. Therefore, if our subtle body harbours sattvic thoughts, it will gain entry into a highly sattvic body after death. But if it continues to harbour rajasic or tamasic thoughts, it will obtain a different destination.

Many people wonder whether having once attained the human form, it is possible to slip back into the lower species. This verse reveals that the human form does not remain permanently reserved for the soul. Those who do not put it to good use are subject to the terrible danger of moving downward into the animal forms again. Thus, all the paths are open at all times. The soul can climb upward in its spiritual evolution, remain at the same level, or even slide down, based upon the intensity and frequency of the gunas it adopts.

All this is explained in the next shloka.

1 一九四九年十月一日，毛泽东主席在天安门城楼上庄严宣告：「中华人民共和国中央人民政府今天成立了！」

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"rajasi pralayaर्म gatvā,
karma-saṅgiśu jāyate..□
tathā pralīnaś tamasi,
mūḍha-yoniśu jāyate"..□□

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Meaning:

One who has reached his end in rajas is born among those attached to action, and one who is dying in tamas is born in the wombs of the ignorant.

Explanation:

Previously, Shri Krishna explained the fate of one whose mental state is sattvic at the end of his life. Here, he says that one whose mental state is rajasic while dying is reborn in a family of action-oriented individuals. Also, one whose mental state is tamasic while dying is reborn in the wombs of the ignorant and the inert. This includes plants, trees, creepers, birds, insects and other animals.

Tamōguṇa predominance when a person dies, then mūḍhayōniṣu jāyatē; then that person is reborn in lower janmas, or lower planes of existence. The lower planes can be defined as the lower lōkās, satpa lōkās are talked about; during Avani Avittam they will say: athala, vithala, suthala, rasatala, mahatala, talatala, pathalaakyēṣu; seven lower lōkas are there; either the people will go to the lower lōkas, or even if they are born in Bhu lōkā, they will not get manusya janma where free will and buddhi are there; but they will be born as animals. They will be born as plants; where also they will never have a freewill to acquire fresh karmas and that is why they are called mūḍhayōni; mūḍhayōni means Buddhi does not evolve.

It is not just the mental state that determines one's fate in the next life. Every action we perform leaves impressions in our mind, which also impacts our fate. One who has performed selfless actions throughout their life is born in a virtuous family. One who has performed selfish actions is born with a tendency to get attached to material objects. And one who has performed harmful actions is born with devilish tendencies. Such a person will not stop at anything to get their way, including physically harming others. In their current life and in their next life, it is totally up to each individual to cultivate their discrimination through selfless service, devotion and company of devotees so that they can counteract the effect of excessive rajas.

The Srimad Bhagavatam tells the story of the illustrious king Bharata who was one of the most sattvic individuals of his time. Through extreme attachment to his pet deer, he became steeped in tamas, and was born as a deer in his next life. But due to the selfless actions performed in his life as a king, he developed a degree of renunciation not even found in humans. He was finally born as a highly sattvic human who ultimately achieved liberation. Shri Krishna repeatedly urges us to employ rajas to perform selfless service and cultivate sattva through reducing selfish activities.

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жизни. Их можно назвать «живыми миражами», так как они не являются реальностью, а лишь иллюзиями, созданными нашим мозгом в ответ на различные стимулы. К таким иллюзиям относятся:

 • Иллюзии видения: зрительные иллюзии, такие как оптические иллюзии, иллюзии цвета и глубины.
 • Иллюзии слуха: звуковые иллюзии, такие как иллюзии звука, иллюзии тембра и иллюзии ритма.
 • Иллюзии ощущения: тактильные иллюзии, такие как иллюзии формы, иллюзии веса и иллюзии температуры.

Иллюзии являются важной частью нашего опыта и помогают нам адаптироваться к окружающей среде. Они помогают нам различать реальность от иллюзии, а также помогают нам предсказывать будущее на основе прошлого опыта. Однако, иногда иллюзии могут привести к ошибкам или опасным действиям. Поэтому важно быть осознанным и критически относиться к своим иллюзиям.

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"karmaṇah sukr̥tasyāhuḥ,

sāttvikam̄ nirmalam̄ phalam..□
rajasas tu phalam̄ duḥkham,
ajñānam̄ tamasah phalam".."□□

Meaning:

The result of good action is sattvik and pure, it is said, while the result of rajas is sorrow, and the result of tamas is ignorance.

Explanation:

In this verse, Lord Krishna comes to the next topic; and that is the phalam (result) for the predominance of each guṇa; so the previous two slōkās talked about gathi, now this slōka talk about phalam and the difference between Gathi and Phalam; Gathi is the consequence after death; whereas Phalam is the consequence in this life itself.

The word prakāshakam means “illuminating.” The word anāmayam means “healthy and full of well-being.” By extension, it also means “of peaceful quality,” devoid of any inherent cause for pain, discomfort, or misery. The mode of goodness is serene and illuminating. Thus, sattva guṇa engenders virtue in one’s personality and illuminates the intellect with knowledge. It makes a person become calm, satisfied, charitable, compassionate, helpful, serene, and tranquil. It also nurtures good health and freedom from sickness. While the mode of goodness creates an effect of serenity and happiness, attachment to them itself binds the soul to material nature.

Rajo guna, the mode of passion, which excites the passions of the living being, and binds the soul in innumerable worldly desires and tamo guna, the mode of ignorance, which literally wants to kill the soul, by degrading it into sloth, languor, and nascence.

When new year comes around, many people make new year resolutions to lose weight. Many take a gym membership, but most end up using it only for a few days. The ones that consciously develop a habit of going to the gym everyday are the most likely to lose weight. Even if they go to the gym for ten minutes every day, they will lose weight. This is because habits are self-reinforcing. A behaviour creates a habit, which pushes us to repeat the behaviour, which strengthens the habit, and so on.

Similarly, we can shape our mental states by choosing our actions consciously. Shri Krishna says that sattvic or selfless actions generate a sattvic state, rajasic or selfish actions generate a rajasic state, and tamasic or ignorant actions generate a tamasic state. If we are predominantly rajasic by nature, we can improve our state by emphasizing the performance

of sattvic actions. If we are predominantly tamasic by nature, we can change it by emphasizing the performance of rajasic actions.

The law of karma holds true in every situation, including this one. If we perform rajasic actions, we will attain temporary joy, which will eventually generate sorrow. It does not take a large amount of raaga dvesha, likes or dislikes, to make us act selfishly. And if we perform tamasic actions, we will continue to live our lives in inertness and ignorance. Only through sattvic actions will we create a state of purity and serenity in our mind.

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The diagram consists of four horizontal rows of small squares. The first row contains 10 squares. The second row contains 9 squares. The third row contains 10 squares. The fourth row contains 10 squares. This visual representation corresponds to the numerical sequence: 10, 9, 10, 10.

"sattvāt sañjāyate jñānaṁ,
rajaso lobha eva ca..□
pramāda-mohau tamaso,
bhavato 'jñānam eva ca".."□□

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Meaning:

From sattva arises wisdom, and rajas from greed. Headlessness, error as well as ignorance arise from tamas.

Explanation:

Previously, we took the example of people who make it a habit to go to the gym every day, and eventually make it into an integral part of their lives. If we fast forward that example a few months further, we find that these people have lost weight, they are taking care of their body, they are eating healthy, avoiding smoking and so on. Their persistence in getting over the initial pain of going to the gym has paid off. They enjoy the state being healthy and being fit. Intelligent action has shaped their physical state, and consequently, the physical state gives its result.

Similarly, mental states that were shaped by intelligent actions give results as well. Shri Krishna says that sattvic mental state gives us access to material and spiritual knowledge, since our intellect improves its ability to think clearly and grasp information quickly. Sattva guṇa gives rise to wisdom, which confers the ability to discriminate between right and wrong. It also pacifies the desires of the senses for gratification and creates a concurrent feeling of happiness and contentment. People influenced by it are inclined toward intellectual pursuits and virtuous ideas. Thus, the mode of goodness promotes wise actions.

A rajasic mental state makes us act in the world to rush after objects. Rajo guṇa inflames the senses, and puts the mind out of control, sending it into a spin of ambitious desires. The living being is trapped by it and over-endeavours for wealth and pleasures that are meaningless from the perspective of the soul. We want objects we do not have and want more of objects that we already have.

Tamo guṇa covers the living being with inertia and nonscience. Shrouded in ignorance, a person performs wicked and impious deeds and bears consequent results. A tamasic mental state has the worst possible outcome. It keeps us steeped in ignorance of the material world, and of our true nature. We do not want to act at all, and even if we do, we perform furtive actions, or perform careless actions.

This shloka and the prior shloka point out the self-reinforcing nature of actions and gunas. If we consciously perform sattvic actions day after day, we will generate a greater proportion of sattva in our mind, which will further spur sattvic actions. This is the logic behind karma yoga. By urging us to perform selfless actions, Shri Krishna wants us to rise from our rajasic and tamasic existence to one of greater sattva.

A horizontal row of 15 empty rectangular boxes, intended for children to write their names in, likely as part of a classroom activity.

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'ürdhvar्म gacchanti sattva- sthā,
madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ..वा
jaghanya- guṇa- vṛtti- sthā,
adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ".."वा

विद्युतात् :

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विद्युत् वा (वा)

Meaning:

Those established in sattva go upwards, those in rajas stay in the middle. Those under the influence of the lowest guna, established in tamas, go downwards.

Explanation:

The Bhāgavatam says:

"Those who are in sattva guṇa reach the higher celestial abodes; those who are in rajo guṇa return to the earth planet; and those who are in tamō guṇa go to the nether worlds; while those who are transcendental to the three modes attain Me." Therefore, the reincarnation of the souls in their next birth is linked to the guṇas that predominates their personality. Upon completion of their sojourn in the present life, the souls reach the kind of place that corresponds to their guṇas.

Parents are always watchful of their children's behaviour, because the values that are inculcated in childhood stay with us throughout our life. If parents notice that their child is lazy and remains idle all the time, they will first motivate him through selfish desires. They will teach him that if he studies hard and works hard, he will be able to buy fast cars, electronic gadgets, a big house and so on. Once he has risen from a tamasic state to a rajasic state, and has made enough money, his parents will encourage him to slowly start transitioning from rajasic action to selfless, sattvic actions like donating money to charity, volunteering and so on.

Shri Krishna gives us a similar roadmap for our evolution in this shloka. He says that once we have determined our degree of rajas and tamas, we should consciously perform the actions necessary to uplift our mental state. If we are primarily tamasic in nature, we should perform rajasic actions. If we are primarily sattvic in nature, we should perform sattvic actions. He also puts the responsibility of self-improvement squarely on our shoulders. No other person can make this happen. The will to self-improve must come from within.

Let us imagine for a moment that we are able to uplift ourselves to the level of sattva, where we are able to remain in a sattvic state for a majority of the day, as a consequence of performing sattvic, selfless actions. Is this our goal, or is this yet another milestone in our spiritual journey? The thirteenth chapter taught us that we have become the individual soul, the jeeva, the Purusha, by forgetting our true nature as the eternal essence. We have further become entangled in Prakriti by identifying with a mind and body that are under the influence of the gunas. Once we are able to stay in sattva, and minimize the effects of rajas and tamas, how do we then disentangle ourselves from Prakriti? Shri Krishna picks up this topic next.

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"nānyām guṇebhyāḥ kartāram,
yadā draṣṭānupaśyati..□
guṇebhyaś ca paraṁ vetti,
mad-bhāvam so 'dhigacchati"..□□

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Meaning:

When the beholders view no other doer than the gunaas, and knows himself as transcending the gunaas, he attains my nature.

Explanation:

Having revealed the complex workings of the three guṇas, Shree Krishna now shows the simple solution for breaking out of their bondage. All the living entities in the world are under the grip of the three guṇas, and hence the guṇas are the active agents in all the works being done in the world. But the Supreme Lord is beyond them. Therefore, he is called tri-guṇātīt (transcendental to the modes of material nature). Similarly, all the attributes of God—his names, forms, virtues, pastimes, abodes, saints—are also tri-guṇātīt.

Let us now introduce a new character into our recurring example, a CEO of a television channel. He is the father of the young child who, as we have seen earlier, is addicted to watching boxing matches. These matches are broadcast on the very same channel that the CEO owns. What is the difference between the child and the CEO? The CEO has set up the machinery of the television channel. He knows how the shows are recorded, edited and broadcast. When he comes home, he watches the channel as a detached observer. But the child, due to his addiction, gets affected by the blows received by the boxer in the boxing match.

The CEO keeps reminding his son to not get so attached to the boxing match since it is not real, it is just a television program. Once the child has identified himself as the boxer, he will have to accept all the consequences of that character in that particular TV show. In the same way, Shri Krishna urges us to not get trapped in the machine called Prakriti. If we identify with Prakriti, which is nothing but the three gunas, then we have to accept all its laws

including birth, death, rebirth, joy, sorrow and so on. We have to understand that we neither do anything, nor do we experience the result of our actions. All action and reaction is within the realm of Prakriti. Once we establish ourselves as a witness, we understand that we have incorrectly taken on action and reaction upon ourselves.

Knowing this reality, however, does not mean that Prakriti will go away. Even if the child has stopped identifying with the boxer, the boxing match will be broadcast every day at 8 PM. Similarly, even if we are not bound by it, Prakriti will be tangible and visible to us during our waking hours. The entire universe, including the body that we are identified with, is made up of the three gunas of Prakriti. But despite it appearing to us as an apparent reality, Prakriti will be unable to bind us with its laws once we recognize it as an illusion, and not as reality. Once we are able to rise beyond identification with the three gunas, we will see Prakriti the way Ishvara sees Prakriti, as a detached observer. In this manner, when we realize our identity with Ishvara, we will attain the state of liberation, of self-realization.

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私は、この悲劇の歴史を、あなたに語りたい。この悲劇は、人々の命を奪うほどの大災害によって引き起こされた。この災害は、何らかの自然災害によるものだ。しかし、その原因は、まだ明確には分かっていない。この悲劇の歴史を、あなたに語りたい。

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A grid of 100 empty square boxes arranged in two rows of 50. The top row contains 50 boxes, and the bottom row contains 50 boxes, creating a total of 100 boxes in a 2x50 grid.

"guṇān etān atītya trīn,
dehī deha-
samudbhavān..□
janma- mṛtyu- jarā- duḥkhair,
vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute"..□

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Meaning:

Having gone beyond these three gunaas, the creators of the body, the body dweller is freed from sorrow of birth, death and old age, and attains immortality.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna now conveys the gist of the fourteenth chapter in this shloka. He says that Prakriti, which is comprised of the three gunaas, creates this entire universe, including our body. As long as the individual soul, the jeeva, the body dweller identifies with this body and gives reality to it, he experiences sorrows throughout his life. Once the jeeva stops identifying with the body which is the product of the three gunaas, he attains liberation and becomes immortal.

If we drink water from a dirty well, we are bound to get a stomach upset. Similarly, if we are influenced by the three modes, we are bound to experience their consequences, which are

repeated birth within the material realm, disease, old age, and death. These four are the primary miseries of material life. It was by seeing these that the Buddha first realized that the world is a place of misery, and then searched for the way out of misery.

This shloka also connects the main theme of the prior chapter to this chapter. In the thirteenth chapter, we learnt that ignorance of our true nature creates an entity called the Purusha, which in essence is nothing but a bundle of unfulfilled desires. Now here, we learn that these unfulfilled desires, also known as avidya, ignorance or maaya, attract a combination of sattva, rajas and tamas that becomes the physical body. Only when the Purusha severs his connection with this body by rising above the three gunaas, he realizes his true nature as the eternal essence.

Immortality in this context does not mean physical immortality. The body follows the laws of nature. Everything in nature has to perish, including our physical body. From the perspective of Prakriti, the body will die. But the dehi, the body dweller, having gone beyond the three gunas, having stopped identifying with the three gunas, knows that he is untouched and unaffected by the laws of Prakriti. For him, the modifications of the body such as old age and disease are as if they are happening to some third party. This ultimate freedom from the influence of the Prakriti is what makes him immortal.

We must understand how our culture is developed in ancient era. The Vedas prescribe a number of codes of conduct, social duties, rituals, and regulations for human beings. These prescribed duties and codes of conduct are together called karm dharma, or varṇāśram dharma, or śārīrik dharma. They help elevate us from tamo guṇa and rajo guṇa to sattva guṇa. However, to reach sattva guṇa is not enough; it is also a form of bondage. The mode of goodness can be equated to being fettered with chains of gold. Our goal lies even beyond it—to get out of the prison house of material existence.

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Он сидел на скамейке, смотря в окно. Вокруг было пусто и тихо. Он слышал только шум ветра и скрип деревьев.

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"arjuna uvāca,
kair liṅgais trīṇi gunān etān,
atīto bhavati prabho..□
kim ācāraḥ kathaṁ caitāmś,
trīṇi gunān ativartate" ..□□

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Meaning:

Arjuna said:

By which signs is the one who has gone beyond the three gunas known, O Lord? What is his behaviour, and how does he transcend these three gunas?

Explanation:

We hear Arjuna speak after a long time in this shloka. Arjuna usually speaks when he needs to clarify a doubt, or when he thinks that he needs a more practical version of what he has just heard. We have seen this happen several times. In the second chapter, Arjuna wanted to know the marks of the person who is established in knowledge, stitha prajnya. Arjuna also asked the signs of a perfected devotee in the chapter on bhakti yoga. Every time he has asked a question, we as listeners have benefitted tremendously. Now he asks three questions in relation to the gunas. The word liṅgais means “symptoms.” His first question is: “What are the symptoms of those who have transcended the three gunas?” The word āchāraḥ means “conduct.” Arjun’s second question is: “In what manner do such transcendentalists conduct themselves?” The word ativartate means “transcend.” The third question he asks is: “How does one transcend the three gunas?”

Having heard a detailed explanation around the three gunas, but only a couple of shlokas on the person who transcends those gunas and attains immortality, Arjuna found it appropriate to ask a question at this juncture. He wanted to know three things. First, how does one know that a person has transcended the three gunas. Second, how does such a person behave in the world. Third, how does he actually transcend the three gunas.

We have to constantly remind ourselves that everything we learn from this chapter is purely for self- analysis, not for judging or evaluating someone else. The only person that can accurately determine whether our mental state is sattvic, rajasic or tamasic is none other than ourselves. There is another aspect to learning about the signs of one who has gone

beyond the influence of the gunas. Until we reach the state of liberation, these signs are attributes that we should aspire to cultivate in our lives.

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"śrī-bhagavān uvāca,

prakāśarí ca pravṛttiṁ ca,
moham eva ca pāṇḍava..
na dveṣṭi sampravṛttāni,
na nivṛttāni kāńkṣati"..□□

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प्रकाशं प्रवृत्तिं च पाण्डव - न द्वेष्टि समप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काञ्क्षति (प्रकाशरी) मोहं
प्रवृत्तानि काञ्क्षति (प्रवृत्तानि) न द्वेष्टि समप्रवृत्तानि (प्रवृत्तानि) न निवृत्तानि
काञ्क्षति (प्रवृत्तानि) न द्वेष्टि समप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काञ्क्षति (प्रवृत्तानि) न निवृत्तानि
(प्रवृत्तानि) (प्रवृत्तानि)

Meaning:

Shree Bhagavaan said:

When light, activity and delusion are present, O Paandava, he does not hate them, nor does he yearn for them when they are absent.

Explanation:

In the first two verses, that is 22 and 23, Krishna answers the first question guṇāthitha liṅgam, then in the next two verses, 24 and 25, Krishna talks about the guṇāthitha ācāraḥ, the conduct, and then in the 26th verse, Krishna answers, the last question guṇāthithatva sādhanā. So, two verses to answer the first question, two verses to answer the 2nd question and one verse the answer the last question.

Shree Krishna now clarifies the traits of those who have transcended the three guṇas. They are not disturbed when they see the guṇas functioning in the world, and their effects manifesting in persons, objects, and situations around them. Illumined persons do not hate ignorance when they see it, nor get implicated in it. Worldly-minded become overly concerned with the condition of the world. They spend their time and energy brooding about the state of things in the world. The enlightened souls also strive for human welfare, but they do so because it is their nature to help others. At the same time, they realize that the world is ultimately in the hands of God. They simply have to do their duty to the best of their ability and leave the rest in the hands of God.

Shri Krishna answers Arjuna's question - what are the marks of one who has transcended the gunas - in this shloka. Light, activity and delusion refer to sattva, rajas and tamas respectively. One who is indifferent to the rise and fall of each guna, one who has a high degree of detachment and discrimination, one who lets the gunas come and go with ease, such a person has transcended the gunas. It is the difference between one who observes suitcases on an airport conveyor belt versus one who holds on to a suitcase and doesn't let go. The one who insists on holding on gets pulled away.

When we are on vacation, our mind feels peaceful and relaxed. But when we come back from vacation, our mind becomes agitated since it has to get back to the nine to five routines of life. We want to hold on to that state of mind we had experienced when we were on vacation. In other words, we have an insistence, also known as aagraha, to hold on to a sattvic state when rajas come in. Or when the alarm bell rings in the morning, we want to hold on to that sleepy tamasic state as long as possible, and not leave the bed. This aagraha, this insistence on holding on to one guna and not accepting the arrival of another guna, enables the gunas to control us. One who has transcended the gunas has given up this insistence through extreme vairagya or detachment.

Let's look at it in another way. When we read comics, we can see what the characters are thinking through thought bubbles. For example, if Veronica insulted Archie, Archie would have a thought bubble that says, "I feel so bad". We temporarily feel sorry for Archie and move on to the next frame in the comic. But if someone insults us in real life, we don't usually move on that quickly. We hold on to that thought, as well as the tamasic or rajasic state of mind created by that thought, for weeks, months, or years to come. And that is not all. We bring up that mental state each time we meet the person who insulted us.

When we are able to treat our thoughts with the same detachment that we do when we are reading other people's thoughts in comic books, we will know that we have gone beyond the gunas.

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"अदासीना वा असीनो गुणैर्यो न विचालयते गुणां वर्तन्ता इति एवम् यो 'वतिष्ठति नेर्गते"

"अदासीना वा असीनो गुणैर्यो न विचालयते गुणां वर्तन्ता इति एवम् यो 'वतिष्ठति नेर्गते"

गुणं वर्तन्ता इति एवम् यो 'वतिष्ठति नेर्गते

"*udāśīna-vad āśīno
guṇair yo na vicālyate
guṇā vartanta ity evam
yo 'vatiṣṭhati neṛgate*"

गुणं वर्तन्ता :

गुणं वर्तन्ता इति एवम् यो 'वतिष्ठति नेर्गते

Meaning:

One who sits like an indifferent person, is not agitated by the gunas, who, knowing that the gunas interact with each other, is firmly situated and does not move.

Explanation:

Previously, Shri Krishna indicated the mental state of one who has transcended the gunas. He now addresses the second question - how does one who has gone beyond the gunas behave in this world. He says that such a person lives life with ease and grace. He is a person of illumination, who knows himself to be transcendental to the functioning of the modes,

are neither miserable nor jubilant when the modes of nature perform their natural functions in the world. In fact, even when they perceive these guṇas in his mind, he does not feel disturbed. He is like the graceful elephant who walks on the road, unaffected by the horde of dogs that is barking at him. We have come across such people ourselves, who remain calm and unperturbed even when facing their darkest personal challenges.

What makes a person so calm? There are two factors. First, even though such a person may not look like a monk from the outside, he has a great deal of detachment towards the world. Second, such a person is seated on an unshakeable platform, his own self. Both factors are possible through the conviction and constant awareness that the entire world, including one's own body, is a play of the three gunas. It is the difference between getting swept away by the waves or sitting calmly on the beach. It is the difference between participating in a street fight or observing the fight from a second-floor balcony.

Shree Krishna further explains that The mind is made from the material energy, and thus contains the three modes of Maya. So it is natural for the mind to be subjected to the influence of the gunas, and their corresponding thoughts. The problem is that in bodily consciousness we do not see the mind as different from ourselves. And so, when the mind presents a disturbing thought, we feel, "Oh! I am thinking in this negative manner." We begin to associate with the poisonous thoughts, allowing them to reside in us and damage us spiritually. To the extent that even if the mind presents a thought against God and Guru, we accept the thought as ours. If, at that time, we could see the mind as separate from us, we would be able to dissociate ourselves from negative thoughts. We would then reject the thoughts of the mind, "I will have nothing to do with any thought that is not conducive to my devotion." Persons on the transcendental platform have mastered the art of distancing themselves from all negative thoughts arising in the mind from the flow of the gunas.

What does all this mean in practice? It means when our mind is agitated, we will not crave for a peaceful state. We will accept that a certain level of agitation, a certain level of rajas is part and parcel of daily life. We will simply watch that mental state arise, persist, and go away, only to be replaced by another state. We will view the whole world as the gunas interacting with the gunas. The "I" within us will be firmly seated in itself, with a healthy level of distance and detachment from the movement of those gunas. It will stop identifying, giving importance, giving reality to the play of gunas. The gunas will move, but the "I" within us will not.

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"sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ sva-sthāḥ,
sama- loṣṭāśma- kāñcanah..□
tulya- priyāpriyo dhīras,
tulya- nindātma- saṁstutih" ..□□

Meaning:

He to whom sorrow and joy are same, he who is established in his self, who regards mud, stone and gold as same, he who treats the dear and the detested as alike, he who is wise, he who treats insult and praise as alike.

Explanation:

Now Krishna answers the second question in these two verses. The second question is: How does he respond to the worldly situation? Just as the body-mind-complex is made up of the three fluctuating guṇas, the entire world is also made up of the three guṇas only and therefore you will have to interact with people who have all the gunas in different measurements. But those who are established on the transcendental platform of the self-do not identify either with the happiness or the distress of the body. Such self-realized mystics do perceive the dualities of the world but remain unaffected by them. Thus, they become nirguna (beyond the influence of the gunas).

Shri Krishna continues to explain the conduct of one who has gone beyond the gunas. He says that such a person maintains a state of balance, a state of equanimity in his dealing with objects of the world and with people. Right from the second chapter, Shri Krishna has repeatedly emphasized the importance of maintaining samatva or equanimity in our lives.

and does so again in this shloka. Only he who has transcended the gunas can maintain this level of equanimity. Such a person is termed "dhira" or wise, and "svastha" meaning self-established or healthy by Shri Krishna.

Three types of objects are mentioned in this shloka: a lump of clay, a stone, and a piece of gold. The person who has transcended the gunas will understand the real-world, practical difference in value of all these three objects. He will also know that at some times, some of these objects will bring joy, and some of these objects will bring sorrow. When he has to rush to the hospital to deal with a medical emergency, no piece of gold can bring him joy. He will continually maintain the awareness that clay, stone and gold, and the subsequent joy and sorrow that they bring, are nothing but the gunas playing with themselves. With this knowledge, he will maintain his balance and equanimity.

Now we look at how such a person deals with people. When people praise us or act in our interest, they become dear to us. When they insult us or trouble us in any way, we begin to detest them. Just like objects, different types of people can generate different reactions in different circumstances. Friends can become rivals, relatives can become enemies, even families can fall apart within minutes. One who has learned to transcend the gunas will transact with people appropriate to the situation, but will never hold on to one person, or run away from them. Praise, insult, friend, foe, all these are interactions between gunas. His "I", his self, has nothing to do with any of these.

A horizontal row of twelve empty rectangular boxes, likely intended for students to draw or write in.

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A horizontal row of 20 empty square boxes, intended for children to write their names in, likely as part of a classroom activity or name recognition exercise.

"mānāpamānayos tulyas,
tulyo mitrāri- pakṣayoh..□
sarvārambha- parityāgī,
guṇātītah sa ucyate" ..□□

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Meaning:

Alike in honour and in dishonour, alike towards friend or foe, abandoning all activities, such a person is called one who has transcended the gunas.

Explanation:

Imagine that you are watching a stage production of Shakespeare's King Lear. Suddenly, in the middle of the play, the actor playing King Lear starts speaking his own dialogue instead of following the script. After a few minutes of commotion, the curtain is lowered. Later, when asked as to why he spoke his own lines, the actor asserted that he thought his own lines were better than Shakespeare's. It will be quite difficult for such an actor to get any more roles, or keep his existing roles, if he were to force his own views onto the script.

Shri Krishna says that the one who has truly renounced all activities, given all up notions such as "I am doing this, I am doing that", such a person can be called the one who has gone beyond the three gunas. Like actors in a play, all activities in the world are nothing but the gunas interacting with the gunas. If we harbour the notion that our "I" is somehow involved in these activities, we have identified ourselves with our body, which is nothing but a product of the gunas. Through discrimination and detachment, we can see ourselves as distinct and separate from the gunas.

Such a person who can maintain this detachment from the gunas is indifferent to what the world thinks of him. Honour and dishonour are the same to him. If a friend helps him, he does not get elated. If a foe troubles him, he sees it as an opportunity to further increase his vairagya or dispassion towards the world. Any time the thought that "I did this" or "I earned this" enters his mind, he immediately discards it and brings back the awareness that everything is happening in Prakriti, the three gunas.

sarvārambhaparityāgī. ārambhaha means all the binding activities; ārambhaḥ means bandhaka karmāni and parityāgī means the one who has given up. What do you mean by binding activity? A binding activity is that by the fulfilment of which I consider that will become pūrnahā. When I expect pūrṇatvam through an activity, it is a binding activity, because there are expectations.

So, with this shloka and the previous one, Shri Krishna answers the question, what is the conduct of one who has transcended the gunas.

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"mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa,

bhakti-yogena sevate..□
sa guṇān samatītyaitān,
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate"..□□

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Meaning:

And he who worships me with the unwavering yoga of devotion, having gone beyond these gunas, becomes fit for attaining brahman.

Explanation:

Since this chapter is coming to an end, let us do a quick recap. We learned that this entire universe, including our mind and body, is nothing but the play of the three gunas of Prakriti - sattva, rajas and tamas. Only when we learn to stand apart from the gunas, when we separate ourselves from the gunas, can we attain liberation from the endless cycle of sorrow known as samsaara. For most of us, such a high degree of discrimination is extremely difficult. Moreover, such discrimination needs to be combined with dispassion as well as total control of the mind and the sense organs.

Knowing the impediments of fulfilling all these requirements, Arjuna wanted to know whether there was a straightforward way of releasing oneself from the influence of the gunas. Shri Krishna says that yes, it is possible. The answer is the yoga of unwavering devotion, which was the topic of chapters seven to twelve. In a nutshell, we detach ourselves from the gunas by attaching ourselves to something higher, which is Ishvara. It is like the child who gives up his toys because he loves poetry now that he is a teenager.

This yoga of devotion is not completely without effort, however. Shri Krishna adds an adjective that we need to bear in mind - avyabhichaarena or unwavering. We have learned about four types of devotees i.e. The curious, the seeker, the scholar and the knowledgeable. We cannot keep Ishvara as our goal from 7 am to 8 am and then start thinking about how to demolish our competitors from 8 am to 11 am. The one and only goal should be Ishvara. If all our goals are within the scope of our svadharma, our prescribed role in this world, they very naturally are part and parcel of our devotion towards Ishvara.

Many people are of the view that if the mind is fixed upon the personal form of God, it will not rise to the transcendental platform. Only when it is attached to the formless Brahman, will the mind become transcendental to the modes of material nature. However, this verse refutes such a view. Although the personal form of God possesses infinite guṇas (qualities), these are all divine and beyond the modes of material nature. Hence, the personal form of God is also nirguna (beyond the three material modes). Sage Ved Vyāsa explains how the

personal form of God is nirguna: "Wherever the scriptures refer to God as nirguna (without attributes), they mean that he is without material attributes. Nevertheless, his divine personality is not devoid of qualities—he possesses infinite divine attributes."

This verse also reveals the proper object of meditation. Transcendental meditation does not mean to meditate upon nothingness. The entity transcendental to the three modes of material nature is God. And so, only when the object of our meditation is God can it truly be called transcendental meditation.

Having made Ishvara our only goal, and having maintained such an awareness throughout our life, we become fit to attain brahman. How does that happen? The next and last shloka of this chapter addresses this topic.

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"brahmaṇo hi pratīṣṭhāham,
amṛtasyāvyayasya ca..□
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya,
sukhasyaikāntikasya ca" ..□□

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Meaning:

For, I am the abode of brahman, the immortal, the imperishable, the eternal constitution, and of absolute joy.

Explanation:

Shree Krishna now defines braham and says: Arjuna, that Brahman which you want to attain which is gunāthitham is none other than I. So, I am the embodiment of that Brahman. So, I am Amruthasya; which is immortal, avyayasya, which is decay free; which is free from jarā, avyaya means which is free from declensions or decay or jarā, etc. and śāsvathasya, which is ever changeless. so, all the three words put together means I am free from all forms of modifications and also, I am beyond the time. I am Dharmasya means the one who is reached through dharma. One who is the goal of dharma. And the word dharma means the vedic teaching. So dharmasya means vaidika dharma i.e. the one who is the destination of all the scriptural teachings and sādhanās. And which is unmixed with sorrow or unalloyed happiness. Unlike the worldly pleasures which are mixed with pain, I am with changeless pleasure that you will reach by following this sādhanā or spiritual practice by going beyond the nature or gunatit.

The thirteenth chapter of the Gita explained the topic of jnyaana yoga or the yoga of knowledge. One of the topics in that chapter was the description of nirguna brahman, which is the eternal essence in its purest state. Shri Krishna described the technique of mentally removing the upaadhis - the veiling of the organs, the senses and so on - to get to the eternal essence that is at the core all of us. One who attained this eternal essence through jnyaana yoga achieved liberation or moksha. Arjuna recollected this teaching, and a doubt arose in his mind. What was that doubt?

In the previous shloka of this chapter, Shri Krishna asserted that liberation would be attained by the one who has undivided devotion towards Ishvara. But in the previous chapter, Shri Krishna had said that the fruit of knowing the eternal essence in its purest state, nirguna brahman, also resulted in liberation. To address Arjuna's doubt about the difference between the two approaches, Shri Krishna says here that he, as Ishvara, is the abode of the pure eternal essence, of nirguna brahman. In other words, undivided devotion to Ishvara results in the same outcome as does the yoga of knowledge. He also describes this pure eternal essence as immortal, imperishable, eternal and full of joy, just like he did in the thirteenth chapter. Furthermore, he says that the eternal essence is attained through the dharma or constitution of devotion and knowledge.

Shri Shankaraachaarya provides further nuances to this explanation in his commentary. He says that Prakriti or maaya is a power of nirguna brahman. Just like the strength of a strong person is inseparable from the person itself, maaya is inseparable from nirguna brahman. Therefore, it is nirguna brahman, with the power of maaya, that is speaking to Arjuna as Ishvara. This is the connection between nirguna brahman - brahman without maaya - and saguna brahman - brahman with maaya. Saguna brahman is the abode, and the power, of nirguna brahman. And the methods to attain brahman - devotion and knowledge - are two sides of the same coin.

Shree Krishna reveals that the Brahman which the jñānīs worship is the light from the personal form of God. Padma Purāṇ states: "The light that emanates from the toe nails of

the feet of the Lord of Vrindavan, Shree Krishna, is the transcendental Brahman that the jñānīs and even the celestial gods meditate upon.”

Similarly, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said: “The effulgence emanating from the divine body of God is described by the Upaniṣads as Brahman.” Thus, in this verse, Shree Krishna unequivocally confirms that the panacea for the disease of the three guṇas is to engage in unwavering devotion to the personal form of the Supreme Lord.

With this message, Shri Krishna concludes the fourteenth chapter.

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॥ गुणात्रया विभागः, गुणात्रयाविभागः ॥ गुणात्रयाविभागः गुणात्रयाविभागः-गुणात्रयाविभागः ॥ गुणात्रयाविभागः-गुणात्रयाविभागः ॥

Meaning:

Thus is concluded the 14th chapter of the Gītā, which is happily titled guṇathraya vibhāga, the classification of the three guṇas, satva, rajas and tamas, and also guṇa athitham brahma. Guṇa thraya, guṇa athitha vibhāga yōgaḥ

॥ गुणः ॥ गुणः गुणः ॥

Summary of Bhagavad Gita Chapter 14:

In the thirteenth chapter, we learned that our existence in this world is the result of a two-step problem. First, ignorance of our real nature creates this illusory but distinct entity called the Purusha or the jeeva. The jeeva gets trapped as a result of its attachment to the three gunas of Prakriti. In order to provide the means by which we can detach ourselves from the three gunas, Shri Krishna reveals this teaching in the fourteenth chapter.

He begins by glorifying this knowledge, and by revealing its fruit as fruit as liberation or moksha. He reiterates that the combination of the awareness aspect and the material aspect of Ishvara gives rise to this entire universe. The jeeva, the awareness aspect of Ishvara present in each of us, identifies with Prakriti, the material aspect. This identification, a product of ignorance, ensnares us in the endless cycle of birth and death in various kinds of wombs.

Next, we are led through a detailed analysis of Prakriti. Like the driver who erroneously identifies with someone else's car and bears the consequences of that identification, we identify with the three gunas erroneously and are bound by their characteristics. Sattva binds through attachment to joy and knowledge. Rajas binds through attachment to action. Tamas binds through attachment to heedlessness, laziness and sloth. Only one guna dominates at one time. When one guna is strong, it overpowers the others.

Shri Krishna gives us the effects of each guna so that we can look within to understand the proportion of gunas within us. If we are full of radiance and knowledge, sattva prevails. If we are greedy all the time, and it results in desire and action, rajas prevail. If we are full of ignorance, heedlessness and error - tamas prevails.

Our fate after death is also determined by our predominant mental state at the time of death. A sattvic state leads a jeeva to come into a family of knowledge and improve its chance of liberation. A rajasic state leads it into a materialistic and action-oriented family. A tamasic state leads a jeeva to take birth as animals or plants, hurting its chances of liberation. But to achieve liberation, we need to transcend all the three gunas.

Arjuna asks the question - what are signs of one who has transcended the three gunas? Shri Krishna replies - it is one who is not impacted, affected or attached to any of the gunas. Such a person views the entire universe, including his body, as gunas acting upon gunas. How does such a person behave in the world? He shows complete and utter equanimity towards objects, situations and people at all times. And how does one transcend the gunas in practice? Only through single pointed devotion to Ishvara, since Ishvara is the abode of nirguna brahman, the unconditioned and pure eternal essence. We need to detach from Prakriti and attach ourselves to Ishvara.

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