

# Three Gunas

## Bhagwat Gita

### Three Gunas to Monitor One's Spiritual Progress

In Chapter 14 of Bhagwat Gita, Lord Krishna defines and describes the three gunas: Sattvic, Rajas and Tamas. In subsequent chapters, Lord Krishna classifies many of our daily actions and sadhanas into these three types.

Swami Paramarthananda has translated Bhagwat Gita for use by his students. Many students use these translations, published by chapter in book form, to chant the verses when attending Swamiji's Bhagwat Gita classes. In the introduction to Chapter 14, Swamiji has presented and analyzed the three gunas in a chart form. In subsequent topics, he presented the classifications of some karma and sadhana in chart forms.

Based on Swamiji's teachings of Bhagwat Gita, I somewhat expanded these charts to include teachings from Chapters 16, 17 and 18. The first chart defines the three gunas and the subsequent charts classify actions and sadhanas into these three gunas. I believe these charts give guidance on how to understand the three gunas, classify actions into the three gunas and try to improve the quality of actions. According to the scriptures we can improve the quality of actions by eliminating tamasic actions, reducing rajasic actions and increasing sattvic actions.

Please note that my knowledge of Sanskrit is very limited, and these charts may reflect that limitation.

With Regards

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Bhagwat Gita			
Three Gunas			
Based on Swami Paramarthananda's Teachings			
Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
<p>परिभाषा (Definition)</p>	Chapter 14, Verse 6	Chapter 14, Verse 7	Chapter 14, Verse 8
	Prakasatmakam	Ragatmakam	Mohanatmakam
	Pre-disposed to acquire more knowledge; addicted to introspection	Tend to act more; clings on to possessions and desires for things not yet possessed	Eternal conflict, delusion and procrastination; not sure about the needs
<p>बन्धनप्रकारः (Mode of bondage)</p>	Chapter 14, Verses 6 & 9	Chapter 14, Verses 7 & 9	Chapter 14, Verses 8 & 9
	Causes attachment to knowledge; addicted to knowledge	Causes attachment to activity; addicted to karma (activities)	Causes attachment to indifference; bound to negligence
<p>लक्षणं (Sign of predominance)</p>	Chapter 14, Verse 11	Chapter 14, Verse 12	Chapter 14, Verse 13
	Increase of knowledge	Increase of activity, greed, restlessness and craving	Dullness, inaction, negligence and delusion

<b>पूँज (travel after death)</b>	Chapter 14, Verses 14 & 18	Chapter 14, Verses 15 & 18	Chapter 14, Verses 15 & 18
	To higher lokas	To middle lokas	To lower lokas
<b>पूँज (consequence in this life)</b>	Chapter 14, Verses 16 & 17	Chapter 14, Verses 16 & 17	Chapter 14, Verses 16 & 17
	Punya & Knowledge	Sorrow & greed	Ignorance & delusion
<b>Bhagwat Gita</b>			
<b>Classification of Actions</b>			
<b>Based on Swami Paramarthananda's Teachings</b>			
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Sattva</b>	<b>Rajas</b>	<b>Tamas</b>
<b>पूँज (Faith)</b>	Chapter 17, Verse 4	Chapter 17, Verse 4	Chapter 17, Verse 4
	Worship of satvic deities	Worship of rajasic deities	Worship of tamasic deities
	Mental worship	Verbal and physical worship	Violent worship
	Spiritual motive	Materialistic motive	Destructive motive

<p> <span>आहार</span> <b>(Food)</b> </p>	<p>Chapter 17, Verse 8</p>	<p>Chapter 17, Verse 9</p>	<p>Chapter 17, Verse 10</p>
	<p>That which is delicious, which gives longevity, health, strength and happiness</p>	<p>That which is excessively bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent and which causes pain</p>	<p>That which is improperly cooked, without nutrition, putrid, stale, left over and impure</p>
<p> <span>दान</span> <b>(Sacrifice)</b> </p>	<p>Chapter 17, Verse 11</p>	<p>Chapter 17, Verse 12</p>	<p>Chapter 17, Verse 13</p>
	<p>All activities done sincerely according to the scriptures; without expecting any results; karma yoga is satvic yoga; focus is on what one gives to the society</p>	<p>All activities done for fame, show and money; focus is on what one gets back from the society</p>	<p>All activities done involuntarily; without rules, faith, mantra or dakshina</p>

<div>दान</div> <div>(Charity)</div>	Chapter 17, Verse 20	Chapter 17, Verse 21	Chapter 17, Verse 22
	Given with sincerity to a deserving person at the proper time and place without expecting any return; Charity is the end in itself	Given reluctantly for the sake of return and result	Given without respect to an undeserving person at an improper time and place
<div>व्रत</div> <div>(Austerity)</div>	Chapter 17, Verse 17	Chapter 17, Verse 18	Chapter 17, Verse 19
	Practiced with faith and without expecting any results; any wordily results should only be by-products	Practiced for the sake of show, name and fame; Results will be temporary and uncertain	Practiced with false notions and bodily torture for harming others
Bhagwat Gita			
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Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas

<p>संन्यास (Renunciation)</p>	Chapter 18, Verse 9	Chapter 18, Verse 8	Chapter 18, Verse 7
	Renunciation of the results of Nitya karmas	Renunciation of Nitya karmas due to fear of bodily strain	Renunciation of Nitya karmas due to the ignorance of their value
	Continues to do karma yoga, but renounces the results		Renunciation of dhyānam and tapas
<p>ज्ञान Knowledge</p>	Chapter 18, Verse 20	Chapter 18, Verse 21	Chapter 18 Verse 22
	Sees the undivided Self in and through all the beings	Takes the Self to be distinct from every other being	Takes the body as the self
	I am the conscious principle which enlivens the body mind complex (I am the consciousness)	I am the tenant/owner of the body and am immortal; there are many immortal jivas just as me (I am the mind)	Believes in only what can be sensed by sense organs (I am the body)

कर्म (Karma)	Chapter 18, Verse 23	Chapter 18, Verse 24	Chapter 18, Verse 25
	Duty performed without attachment and expectations	Action done with egoism for the sake of results	Indiscriminate action done without considering the consequences
	Action done to improve my self knowledge	Action done to improve my surroundings	Actions done without any planning
कर्मात्मा (Doer)	Chapter 18, Verse 26	Chapter 18, Verse 27	Chapter 18, Verse 28
	Detached, perseverant, enthusiastic, unassuming and calm in success and failure	Attached, greedy, harmful and subject to elation and depression	Undisciplined, uncultured, arrogant, harmful, dull and procrastinating
	Does not get attached to any success or failure and uses all experiences for inner growth	Gets attached to success and failure and does not use the results for inner growth.	Does not have an integrated personality
Bhagwat Gita			
Classification of Actions			
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Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas

<p>बुद्धि (Intellect)</p>	Chapter 18, Verse 30	Chapter 18, Verse 31	Chapter 18, Verse 32
	Clearly knows dharma and adharma, right and wrong as well as bondage and liberation	Has doubts regarding dharma and adharma, right and wrong	Considers adharma as dharma (e.g. Arjuna thought the war was adharma at the beginning of Bhagwat Geeta)
<p>इन्द्रिय (Will)</p>	Chapter 18, Verse 33	Chapter 18, Verse 34	Chapter 18, Verse 35
	Sustains the functions of all organs in the spiritual path; controls sense organs by unswerving practice of yoga	Pursues dharma, artha and kama craving for their benefits	Does not give up sleep, fear, grief and indulgence
	Leads to spiritual success	Leads to material success	Leads to sensory pleasures and attachment





Chapter 2: The Yoga of Analysis (sāṅkhya-yoga)

Chapter 3: The Yoga of Action (karma-yoga)

Chapter 4: The Yoga of Knowledge (jñāna- karma-sannyāsa-yoga)

Chapter 5: The Yoga of Renunciation (sannyāsa-yoga)

Chapter 6: The Yoga of Meditation (dhyana-yoga)

Chapter 7: The Yoga of Wisdom (jñāna-vijnana-yoga)

Chapter 8: The Yoga of Liberating Spirit (akṣāra-brahma-yoga)

Chapter 9: The Yoga of Royal and Hidden Knowledge (rāja-vidyā-rāja-guhya-yoga)

Chapter 10: The Yoga of Excellence (vibhūti-yoga)

Chapter 11: The Yoga of Seeing the Cosmic Form (viśva-rūpa-darśana-yoga)

Chapter 12: The Yoga of Devotion (bhakti-yoga)

Chapter 13: The Yoga of Distinguishing Matter from Spirit (kṣetra-kṣetrajña-vibhāga-yoga)

Chapter 14: The Yoga of the Threefold Modalities (guṇa-traya-vibhāga-yoga)

Chapter 15: The Yoga of the Ultimate Person (puruṣottama-yoga)

Chapter 16: The Yoga of Differentiating Godly and Ungodly Assets (daivāsura-sampad-vibhāga-yoga)

Chapter 17: The Yoga of Differentiating Threefold Faith (śraddhā-traya-vibhāga-yoga)

Chapter 18: The Yoga of Liberation (mokṣa-yoga)

**These are my notes from classes that were given by Swami**

Paramarthananda as summary of Bhagavad Gita at Sanskrit College. These are the same classes that the students of Vedantic Study Group, Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago listened to online, starting in 2021. Please note that these notes are summarized versions based on my reception and recollections. They are not word by word reproduction of the classes. Other students may have different recollections and interpretations. Also, note that Swamiji has not seen, reviewed or blessed these notes.

While this summary of Bhagavad Gita gives a good starting point, one should study Bhagavad Gita in detail. Swamiji recommends listening to his classes on Bhagavad Gita. While it requires significant investment of time, I found it to clarify many concepts and lay a strong foundation for spiritual growth.

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## Chapter 1: The Yoga of Arjuna's Dejection (arjuna-viṣāda-yoga)

Two fundamental truths about happiness and sorrow:

1. Everything becomes a cause of sorrow when it is dependent on somebody else.
2. Everything is happiness if it is dependent on myself.

This is definition of sugam and duḥkam; dependence is sorrow and independence are happiness. Wherever there is dependence, there is expectations. Since other people are not under our control, the expectation may or may not be fulfilled resulting in disappointment and sorrow. Our dependencies are mainly for three purposes:

1. Security, called arthaha in our scriptures.
2. Entertainment, called kamaha.
3. Dharma from ourselves and our children for the sake of paraloka gathi.

As long as these dependences are there, life will be

miserable. We should depend up on ourselves for the sake of security, entertainment and for life after death. The person who depends on himself or herself is jivan muktha, the one who depends on self for these three goals.

Scriptures describes elaborately about this muktha. This freedom alone is the source of joy. The original scripture of this moksha is Vedas. These Vedas are elaborated by secondary scriptures. Primary scriptures are Vedas, whose author is not known to us, and therefore they are known as revelation or Sruthi. The secondary scriptures are smriti written by rishis. Later these smritis were elaborated further by 18 puranas, 18 upa-puranas, most of them attributed to Vyasa. Then came the ithihasa in the form of Ramayana and Mahabharata, the same teachings in the form of stories. All these deal with one topic – freedom.

To attain independence, we have to resort to dependence. In the first stage of life, we depend on world can be called religious life or veda poorva. The second stage of life is veda anta where a person gradually withdraws. Religion prescribes healthy dependence. That is why we have four ashramas – Brahmacharya, grihastha where we depend on family and society. In the later vana prastha and sanyasa we gradually withdraw. Veda poorva and vedanta is complete Vedas and leads a person through life.

This entire Vedic teaching is condensed in Bhagavad Gita. The first 27 verses deal with context. The next 21 verses we get the description of human bondage or human dependence.

In the first part, the context of the war is presented. Adharmic people (as a dhayi) commit one of the following sins:

1. Gnithaha: One who burns the house of another.
2. Grahathaha: One how poison another.
3. Sartha dhani: One who kills with a weapon when the other does not have one.

4. Dhanapathaha: Stealing the wealth of another.
5. Shethradhara atharpatha: Taking away the land or wife of another person.

Duryodhana had committed all these five sins and he is mahā adhadhayī. If an adharmic person does not change sama, dhana bedha then dhanda or punishment can be undertaken. Ahimsa is not an absolute and, in some places, it should be given up.

1. Samadhana behda should be tried.
2. Only shathriya can alone use violence to correct a person.

Any amount of wealth will not give security unless dharma is followed. Samsara's definition:

1. Raga: Attachment, dependence on another person. Attachment is a potential source of sorrow. It does not mean we should not love people. Love is a positive virtue, but there should be no expectation.
2. Soga: Sorrow
3. Moha: Delusion or confusion. Intellect is blunted. Right is seen wrong and wrong is seen as right.

Karpanyam: Helplessness.

When a person discovered the problem and sincerely seeks a solution, then there will be a guru.

## **Chapter 2: The Yoga of Analysis (sāṅkhya-yoga)**

Second and 18<sup>th</sup> chapters give the condensed version of Bhagwat Gita. The topics of second chapter:

1. Arjuna saranakathi
2. Karma yogaha – first stage of spiritual life
3. Jñāna yogaha –
4. Mukthihi

Of these four topics, the first two topics will be discussed in today's class.

If a person should get the full benefit of Bagawad Gita, he should have gone through these three stages:

1. Samsara dharsanam, discovering that I am suffering from samsara, consisting of raga, dwesha and moha.
2. Karpanya Baghava, discovery of helplessness
3. Saranakathi, surrendering at the feet of someone who can life me from samsara.

Arjuna has gone through the first stage, as discussed in the First chapter. In the first ten verses we find Arjuna going through the second and third stages.

Our scriptures say that we need a guru. Guidance we require is consistent teaching. It is not inspiration we require, but we want knowledge. We require a live teacher, who is available for consistent teaching for a length of time.

Gu stands for darkness and ru stands for eliminator; Guru stand for eliminator of darkness or ignorance.

Karma yoga is religious life of independent living. What is karma yoga.

Yogaha: Yoga has several meanings; in the context of karma yoga, it means we obtain samatvam or equanimity of mind, healthy response to different situations of life. How can a person maintain samatvam? For that we should know and remember certain facts:

1. Life is a mixture of sugam and duḥkam; it is neither uniform sugam or duḥkam. Nobody can avoid pain and get only pleasure. Scriptures do not teach an avoiding pain; they only teach a way to manage the pain intelligently.
2. Our future is not predictable.
3. There are many situations which are beyond our control.

Being prepared for unavoidable situation for the future and accepting unavoidable present are the two features of maintaining samatvam.

Strengthen the mind not when an unpleasant situation arises but before it arises.

How to prepare mind? This is in the form of strengthening the mind. This can be done by:

1. Tapping one's own higher nature. We all have infinite strength in ourselves. That is sangalpa or auto suggestions stating that I am prepared for any situations.
2. Easier method is to symbolize the higher nature as the lord outside. We can choose lord in any form as ishta devata. This is bhakti.

If one maintains samatvam, it is yoga.

Second part of karma yoga is karma. Here karma refers to action. This karma can be classified into:

1. Action for material benefit, called sagama karma. Scriptures point out, and Krishna points out in Chapter 2 that one should reduce sagama karma as much as possible.
  1. Sagama karma involves many defects:
    1. Acquisition involves pain. All material benefits are mixed with pain and sorrow. Acquiring them requires lot of pains.
    2. Preservation involves pain. Maintenance is difficult.
    3. When they leave us, we have pain.
  2. Athirupthi; we are never satisfied with worldly possession.
  3. Bandham: We become slave to those material possessions.
2. Action for spiritual purity, called niṣkāma karma.

Scriptures have prescribed certain compulsory karmas or panca mahā yagya. Everyone should do this in the first part of spiritual growth:

1. Deva Yagya: Worship of the lord for purity of mind. This can be in any manner.
2. Pithur Yagya: Seeking the grace of our forefathers.
3. Brahma Yagya or Rishi Yagya: Expression of our gratitude towards our rishis. Here Brahma stands for Vedas. Propagation of scriptures.
4. Manusha Yagya or social service: Service to humanity. Every moment of life is many people working and as an expression some contribution to the society.
5. Bootha Yagya: Worship of lower beings; feeding animals, maintaining trees. Respect for animals or plants.

Aim of a person is to reduce sakama karma and increase niṣkāma karma. We need sūkṣma karma, but we should realize that they will not make us liberated.

Four topics of Chapter 2

- Arjuna Saranakathi
- Karma Yoga
- Jñāna Yoga
- Mukti

The word yoga in karma yoga means samatvam or maintenance of equanimity. Our anxiety about future disturbs equanimity and this can be solved by mentally being prepared for any situation. This mental strength can be derived by devotion to the lord. The choiceless situations can be managed only by mental strength.

Past often disturbs equanimity. Past is also a choiceless situation, because we have no control over past and there is



no way to change past. Past and present require acceptance and future requires preparedness.

Samadhi yoga means ashtanga yoga and this is also karma yoga. The object of ashtanga yoga is to balance the extrovertedness of mind. This will be an obstacle to Jñānam yoga. The mind should learn to be with and without people, with and without action. This mental discipline is needed for self-inquiry.

What is the final benefit expected through karma yoga? How long should I remain in karma yoga? Karma yoga makes a person fit for Jñānam yoga or self-inquiry. What is this fitness? Sadhana sadushta sampatti or fourfold qualifications:

1. Discrimination: The ability to differentiate between bondage and freedom; dependence and independence. Without this capacity, we will go on from one dependence to another.
2. Dispassion: Not leaning on things; Giving up dependence; not hatred just dependence.
3. Discipline: Since we use the body as instrument, we should keep body in good condition. Body must be disciplined; I should not be overpowered by emotions. Intelligent discipline is the ability to understand scriptures.
  1. Emotional
  2. Physical
  3. Intelligent
4. Desire for freedom; independence.

Once a person has these fourfold qualifications, then that person is ready for Jñānam yoga.

Jñāna yoga is discovery of independence without artha, kama or dharma from outside. We have a lower nature (apara prakriti), and we have a higher nature (para prakriti). Discovering our higher nature or para prakriti which will result we do not need poornativam from outside. This is discovering SELF. How

to do this?

First principle: I, experiencer of the life and conscious being is different from whatever I experience. Subject is different from object. Example: Eye can see everything, but it can't see itself. Subject is never subject to objectification. Subject can't become object. Subject is ever subject, and object is ever object. With this principle, we can deduce the following:

1. I am not the world because it is an experienced.
2. I am not the body as it is experienced similar to the world. I am different from the body which I experience. Body is born out of objective world, supported by objective world and at the end dissolves into the world. If the world is an experienceable object, then body is also an experienced object.
3. The mind is also something that I experience.

Body is a medium just like a spectacle and a medium for perception; body is rented object used for a few years. Mind is also another medium temporarily used.

The second principle is what is my nature? All experienced attributes belong to experienced object and never belong to the experience, subject. When you see a color, you never say I am the color because it is an experience. Any property you know is experience. Then it belongs to an experienced object. The experiencer does not have any property. Experiencer is free from all property. I the subject is free from all guna. All experiences belong to the body, mind or another object never to me the nirguna I. Properties of object:

1. Property of location and time; all objects exist in time and space. If I am free from all properties, then I am free from time and space. Here "I" refers to consciousness – sat chit.
2. Any object is located in time is either cause or effect.

3. Just as every object has time location as its property, it also has space object. Since I am free from all properties, I am free from space property also.

Your sorrow is not for the arrival or departure of body, it is because of the attachment to the body. Death is not the problem; I am mortal is the problem. Once you know I am not the body, I won't have insecurity. Arrival and departure are for the mind body complex not for atma. This is Jñāna yoga. To grasp this knowledge, there are three sadhanas:

1. Sravanam: Listening to a guru, applying the two laws (I am the experience, I am different from the experiencer object). Every Upanishad discuss this knowledge. Krishna discusses this briefly in the second chapter.
2. Mananam: Removal of any doubt that can rise in our mind because of refusal to accept the knowledge that I am atma. Vedanta is not of faith but for understanding. In ritualistic karma all is matter of faith and belief.
3. Nidhithyasanam: Assimilation of this teaching and making it part of my life. This knowledge must be available at all times.

Gita promises freedom here and now; many other systems of philosophies promise freedom only after death.

How will a jivan muktha look like? Arjuna thinks a jivan muktha will undergo physical change. There will be no physical change; it is only symbolic. No change in the world. Everything will be the same, but his response will be different. There will be no change in experiences, but there will be a change in the response to change. This change is sthira pragya:

1. Gyani is happy with himself. Let things be there, I am happy; let things not be there I am happy. Because of this poornatvam, he enjoys freedom from raga (attachment). Attachment results in constant fear of

losing. This results in krōdha (anger). Attachment and anger are the two sides of the same coins.

1. A wise and free man vs an ignorant man is diagonally opposite to each other. Both of them may look similar.

## **Chapter 3: The Yoga of Action (karma-yoga)**

Resistance sorry, resistance is fear. Once resistance is gone, tranquility prevails. Proper karma and proper attitude towards the results of action is karma yoga. The same karma yoga can be seen from four different angles:

1. Vidhi: Take these compulsory actions as Bagawan command. As a citizen of cosmos, we are required to follow certain rules.
2. Yagya: Karma yoga is yagya or worship of the lord as an expression of gratitude towards lord.
3. Dharmaha: That which maintains the harmony of the creation. Karma Yoga is giving more than what you receive.
4. Samskara Karma: A refining action is samskara. It refines the mind. Karma yoga asks that you remove asuri sampat and increase daivi sampat.

Shrestha Ajara is the second topic. Karma yoga is required to purify the mind and gain the knowledge. Suppose a person has attained siddha chuthi and obtained gyanam. Should he follow karma yoga? Technically, it is not required because karma yoga is for siddha sudhi. But a gyani has already have chitha sudhi. Krishna says yes. One must continue the karma as long as he is in the society.

1. Dharma is a very subtle thing, which can't be verbally communicated. They can only be learned by observing.
2. When the elders follow a dharmic lifestyle, it is an audio-visual teaching which is more powerful.

3. Humans always need some hero to follow. Gyani should become a model for others.
4. Values are not absolute; it varies from situation to situation; person to person; ashrama to ashrama. Dharma must be interpreted according to the situation of the society. When there is a conflict, follow those who are gyani. Sruthi, smriti and elders are the sources of dharma

Third topic is kama krōdha jayaha. How to manage kama and krōdha? Krishna deals with kama directly. He doesn't deal with krōdha directly as it is only a modified form kama. Krōdha is the other side of the same coin. Steps to control kama and krōdha

1. Indriya nigraha or handling sense organs. Physically avoiding situations which can disturb the mind.
2. Mano nighraha. Mind has the capacity is maintain vasana; it can get into a groove and later get addicted to an action. Asura vasanas should be discouraged and suba vasanas should be encouraged.
3. Vivēka: Analyzing what is reliable and what is not reliable. What is permanent and what is not permanent.

## **Chapter 4: The Yoga of Knowledge (jñāna-karma-sannyāsa-yoga)**

Three topics of Chapter 4:

1. Nature of avatars: Vedas are primary scriptures, and all others are secondary scriptures based on Vedas. Vedas are not a product of human intellect, but they come from the lord himself. Brahma is first disciple of the lord. Bagawan has given certain duties to maintain vaideha dharma. Brahmanas maintain the vaidhiha dharma by living and propagating Vedas. Kshatriyas maintain the vaidheha dharma by punishing those who do not live by vaidhiha dharma. When humans do not perpetuate and maintain

vaidheha dharma, Bagawan himself appears as an avatara to protect dharma. Difference between avatara of the lord and rebirth of humans:

1. Cause: Jiva is because of his own punya pavams. Avatara is chosen by the Lord. Jivas rebirth is controlled by karma; the Lord takes body according to the necessity.
  2. Nature: Jiva is bound by karma, ajñānam, moha etc. Eeswara is born as muktha Swaroopa.
  3. Mode or method of assuming the body: For jiva the body is created by panca bodha; For Bagawan, the five elements are not required. With the help of Maya, he can assume any body.
  4. Function: In the case of jiva, the function is the exhaustion of punya pavam. In the case of Eeswara, the function is to protect dharmic people, punish adharmic people and uplift dharma.
2. Jñāna yogaha: Karma yoga is incomplete without Jñāna yoga; Jñāna yoga is impossible without karma yoga. We consider the body or mind as ourselves. Scriptures refute this notion that we are body and mind complex. Body and mind are temporary medium with which we transact in this world.
1. In the waking stage we are transacting with the physical body and the physical world. Once we go into dream stage, our body is no longer available and therefore we interact the dream world, which is a projection of the mind, with mind. In deep sleep I do not function with body or mind and therefore I do not interact with the world. Therefore, scriptures point out whatever is incidental, is not my real nature, and whatever is permanent is my real nature. E.g., heat is not permanent nature of water; but heat is the permanent nature of fire. My physical nature is temporary in waking stage; my psychological nature is temporary in dream stage. My real nature

throughout is the consciousness. If that is my nature, what is the size of this atma? Krishna points out whatever size we talk about is the size. Size of the atma is poornaha, limitless, anadhaha. Since atma is limitless, it is akartha – doesn't do any action. Poornatvam and akartatvam are the two features of atma. All human struggles are born out of this fact. Ignorance leads apoornatvam; apoornatvam leads to kama. Kama leads to karma; karma leads to punya pavam; punya pavam leads to suga duḥkam and to next jenma; and the cycle continues. This is samsara; As long as I don't myself, samsara will continue. Wise man is one whose heart is ever full. Jñānis are full and complete whether they are grihastha or sanyasi. Once poornatvam comes, ignorance, kama, punya pavam and suga duḥkam goes away along with puranabi jananm puranabi manam.

### 3. Preparatory steps for getting self-knowledge.

1. Guru who can teach the scriptures. World can't teach because we interpret the teaching from the world based on our background.
2. Shradha or faith in the teacher. Don't put the blame on teacher and scriptures; but on yourself for not understanding fully. A compassionate teacher will be willing to teach many times. Approach the teacher with humility.
3. Tatparatvam: Commitment; a half-hearted attempt will not give success in any field.
4. Samya tendryah: Self-mastery; spiritual pursuit is with the same body and mind. Ashtanga yoga is meant for self-integration.

## Chapter 5: The Yoga of Renunciation

## (sannyāsa-yoga)

Fourth and fifth chapters have the same content – Jñāna yoga. Three topics of Chapter 5:

1. Nishtadhwaime: Two types of lifestyles. Every seeker must go through karma yoga and Jñāna yoga to attain moksha. Karma yoga is necessary for mental purification; Jñāna yoga necessary because that alone gives moksha. If a person can go directly to Jñāna yoga that means he has gone through karma yoga in earlier life. Two types of lifestyles:
  1. A lifestyle of activity; pravṛthi marga
  2. Nivṛthi marga: A lifestyle of withdrawal in seclusion sankhya nishta as called by Lord Krishna.

Based on these two lifestyles, a person can design his lifestyle in three different ways:

1. Brahmacharyam: Lifestyle of student; Along with the general leaning, a person can also learn about his occupation. After this, a person can take three different routes
  1. A life of activities or grihastha. He can remain in grihastha forever, skipping sanyasa ashram. This grihastha must follow karma yoga and Jñāna yoga. When he takes to Jñāna yoga, he may find the setup is not that ideal to follow Jñāna yoga in grāhasthrama.
  2. Directly entering Sanyasa Ashram. This ashrama is not ideal for purification of mind, because there are no opportunities for any types of service. For Jñāna yoga, sanyasa ashrama is ideal.
  3. Enters grāhasthrama, and from grāhasthrama he enters sanyasa ashram. This seems ideal. But it is very difficult to get out of grāhasthrama.

Whether an activity binds you or not depends on the attitude



and not the activity. It is not the action that binds, it is the attitude that binds.

1. Yogadwayam: Two types of yoga: Karma yoga and Jñāna yoga.
2. Sadhanani: Preparatory discipline. Four important sadhanas are shown by Krishna in the fourth chapter.
3. Kama Krōdha jayaha (management). Krishan talks about management of kama not much about krōdha:
  1. Indriya nigraha: Physically avoid temptation.
  2. Mano nigraha: Never allow mind to wander into temptation. Develop only noble addiction.
  3. Vivekaha: Proper judgement; discrimination. Krishna does not discuss this in the Third Chapter; Krishna deals with this in the fifth chapter. Proper judgement is understanding the nature of the objects of the world and pleasures derived from them. Sensory pleasures have so many side effects. Three main defects:
    1. Dhukka mistrutvam: They are mixed with pain; in the middle, in the beginning or in the end or throughout. This pain is directly proportionate to the pleasure I derived.
    2. Athrupthi Karatvam: Any amount we enjoy, we are not satisfied.
    3. Bondage: The more we enjoy, the more we need.

The more we understand these, the better we will be. Krōdha is a modified form of kama. Kama and krōdha are different sides of same coin. If I know how to handle kama, I have handled krōdha. Anger is of two types:

1. Violent anger expressed outside in the form of verbal and physical expression.
2. Non-violent anger not expressed outside.

First, we should learn to manage these two types of angers.

First learn to manage the anger that is already here. Then manage not to have anger. Get away from the place. Do not expect anything from the external world. Any expectation is kama and when the expectation is not met, it results in krōdha.

Andharanga sadhana:

1. Sravanam: Systematic study of scriptures under the guidance of a competent guru. Seven topics:
  1. Nature of jiva
  2. Questions about world,
  3. Questions about God.
  4. What is the cause of bondage?
  5. What is the way out of bondage?
  6. What is moksha
  7. What is the way of moksha?
2. Mananam: After initial study, raise the questions and remove all doubts. Doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance.
3. Nidhithyasanam: Assimilating the knowledge. There should be no difference between what I know and how I live.

## **Chapter 6 The Yoga of Meditation (dhyana-yoga)**

What is the central teaching of the Vedas? According to Kathoupanishad, moksha is the essential teaching of Vedas. Bagawad Gita is the essence of Vedas, so its essential teaching is also moksha. Vedas say the primary sadhanas for moksha is gyanam. Attachment, grief and conflict are the samsara that Arjuna faces in the battlefield. All his material accomplishments are not helpful in solving this problem.

Gyanam ca be gained only through guru shishya samvadha – teacher student discussion. Do not try to gain self-knowledge independently. Bondage is only self-misconception. Moksha is not an event that has to take place in time, but it is

discovery – similar to waking up from a dream. All the problems are due to Jñānam and delusion and so the solution is to gain the knowledge and remove the delusion and discover the fact that I am free from samsara.

Meditation or dhyānam is an important aspect of seeking moksha. It is an integral part along with other disciplines. Six parts of dhyānam:

1. Qualifications for meditation: Krishna emphasizes three:

1. Samatvam: Maintenance of equanimity in day-to-day interaction or samatvam. If the mind is not balanced it has violent reactions and that will occupy the mind. Equanimity can only be maintained by reducing raga and dwesha. One method is to learn to accept all situations, all arrival and departure as the will of the Lord.
2. Vairāgyam: Whatever top priority you give, will occupy your mind. If Eeswara pradhāna becomes top priority, that will occupy the mind. Vairāgyam is being clear about the priorities of life.
3. Self-confidence: Never look down upon yourself. It is not arrogance; in arrogance I think that by my effort alone I will achieve my goal. This self-confidence comes because of my faith in lord.

2. Preparations for meditation: Two types:

1. Physical: Choosing the place and fixing the asanam for meditation. Chose a secluded place or a quiet place; Asanam or seat should not be too soft or too hard. Body is kept straight; breathing is observed and make sure it is even and smooth; Other sense organs like eyes should be taken care of.
2. Mental: Even when the sense organs are withdrawn, mind is capable of projecting its own world. Withdraw the mind from all external objects. Temporarily to surrendering all our interests at

the feet of the lord.

3. Process of meditation: Meditation is defined as the constant flow of similar thoughts, undistracted by dissimilar thoughts. Meditation is not making the mind blank, but it is a mental function. Example: The flame will flicker because of wind; but when protected, the flame will stand without flickering; Three stages of process of meditation:

1. Dharana: Focusing the mind on the object of mediation.
2. Dhyānam: Retention of the mind within the focus of the object.
3. Samadhi: Because of this effort, the mind gets absorbed in the object of meditation.

4. Object of meditation: Meditation can be on any chosen object: Saguna Eeswara (Upasana) or Nirguna Eeswara (nidhithyasanam); When the object is nirguna Eeswara, the object becomes subject also; nirguna dhyānam becomes atma dhyānam. Subject, object division goes away. To do nirguna Eeswara dhyānam, then you should have clear understanding of atma. This is possible only through guru shishya samvadha.

5. Obstacles in meditation and remedies:

1. Nidrā or Layaḥ or mind resolving; remedies are removal of the cause of sleep.
  1. Give enough sleep to the body.
  2. Avoid overeating.
  3. Exertion of body; tiredness of the body; after exertion do not do meditation.
2. Abyāsaḥ: Practice; withdraw from all activities; We do this before sleeping; practice so that it doesn't happen when meditating.
3. Sangalpa or auto suggestion; tell mind not to sleep but to meditate.
4. Wandering mind is the second obstacle (vikshebaha): Don't feel guilty; Remedies are abyāsaḥ (practice with auto suggestion that this

is the time for meditation and let Lord take care of everything). Second remedy is vairāgyam.

6. Benefits of meditation: The mind is occupied by the object of meditation. Saguna dhyānam converts body into temple and Eeswara is in my heart all the time; I get the strength that I am not worried about anything. If it is nirguna dhyānam, the benefit is poornatvam – I am full and complete; nothing in the world can add to my poornatvam; any presence or absence change the poornatvam.

One more topic is covered in the sixth chapter, that is, what will happen if we don't succeed. There may be stagnation, but there is no going back. Don't bother if the moksha is in this jenma or next jenma.

## **Chapter 7 The Yoga of Wisdom (jñāna-vijnana-yoga)**

First Shatkam highlights:

1. Jiva Swaroopam
2. Importance of karma yoga
3. The role of individual efforts to obtain purshartham

Second shatkam emphasizes:

1. Eeswara swaroopam or nature of God.
2. Upasana or meditation to integrate the mind
3. The role of Eeswara anugraha or grace of lord.

In the seventh chapter, two topics are discussed: Eeswara swaroopam and bhakti. In the sixth Chapter Lord Krishna put all the responsibilities to sadhakas or humans but in the seventh chapter he indicates that everything happens because of his grace. Sixth chapter emphasizes prayarthanam or our efforts and in the seventh chapter Lord's grace is emphasized; this indicates both are equally important.

What is the definition of God? God is defined as the cause of the universe. What type of cause is God? Two types of causes are required: The raw material or upathana karanam or material cause. But mere raw material itself is not sufficient. An intelligent designed is required. An intelligent cause who has knowledge and skill is required. This is called nimitha karanam. Both material and maker are required. If Eeswara is the karanam for the world, what type is he? If he is the intelligent cause what is the raw material? If he is the raw material, then who is the maker? Is he maker or material?

Generally, material and maker are different. Sometimes material and maker are both one and same. The example is spider. Spider is the intelligent cause of the web. Spider takes the substance out of its own body and creates the web. Spider is both maker and material. Similarly, Eeswara is intelligent and material cause of creation.

What is the nature of this Eeswara? Lord consist of two parts:

- Para prakriti: Higher nature
- Apara prakriti: Lower nature

Lower nature plus higher nature is Eeswara. What are the differences between these two? Four main differences:

1. Para prakriti is conscious principle; apara prakriti is inert principles; Chethana and achethana
2. Para prakriti is nirgunam or attribute-less; apara prakriti is sagunam or with properties.
3. Para prakriti is nirvikaram or does not go through any changes, beyond time and space. Apara prakriti is vikaram or subject to modification.
4. Para prakriti is Sathyam or absolute reality or independent reality; apara prakriti is mithya tatvam or it depends on para prakriti for existence.

How did the creation come? Krishna gives details in the 13<sup>th</sup>

chapter. Apara prakriti manifests or modifies itself to become creation. Whatever is inert, is Begawan's apara prakriti. The changing universe is a product is changing apara prakriti.

This para prakriti, which is enclosed in every body mind complex is called jivatma. Example: Pot and Space; space was there when the pot was clay; space continues inside the pot when the clay is converted to pot. Jivatma and Paramatma are one and the same: Para Prakriti.

Any product essentially is not different from its cause. When clay is the cause, pot is the effect, we can easily say pots are not different than clay. Pot is a name given to a particular form of clay. There is no substance called pot, substance is clay; there is no substance called ornament. Substance is gold. Water has many names like cloud, river, lake, ocean etc. Products are not substances; they are only nama roopani. Substance is always karanam or cause. If the entire creation is product, then creation is non substantial; it has only verbal existence like ornament. Solidity of the universe and world belongs to Eeswara. What you need is not a new dharsanam just a new attitude. Whatever you experience is Eeswara, divinization of the universe. In a body, the matter part is apara prakriti and sentient part is para prakriti.

Next topic is bhakti. People commit a mistake that they are so attached to para prakriti because it is full of gunas; therefore, apara prakriti attracts our attention. Attached to apara prakriti, we lose sight of para prakriti. Should I throw away apara prakriti? No, but hold on to para prakriti but don't depend on them.

How to come to para prakriti? Krishna presents bhakti as a method. Bhakti means love of the lord. If flag can be used to represent a country, anything in creation can be used to represent Eeswara. We do not have many gods, but one god is represented many forms or alamabana. We do not have many gods; we have god only. We may invoke God in any limited form, but

the invoked god is limitless. Worship of Eeswara in totality – para prakriti plus apara prakriti – is bhakti.

Three stages or levels of bhakti:

1. Sakama bhakti: I worship to get many things in my life. To get something or to get rid of something. Lord is not end, but I am using lord as a means to worldly ends. Sakama bhakti is not pavam and is allowed. Two types of Sakama Bhakti:
  1. Artha:
  2. Artharthi
2. Abekshigaa nişkāma bhakti: Partially free from desire. He wants to attain Eeswara. Krishna calls this as jigyasu.
3. Athyinthiya nişkāma bhakti: Discovers himself as not different from himself. Sathyam, the goal is already accomplished. He has no desire to accomplish God because lord is not separate from me. Krishna calls this gyani or poornatvam or moksha.

Moksha is reached through these three stages. Gyani is alone is the greatest bhakta.

## **Chapter 8 The Yoga of Liberating Spirit (akṣāra-brahma-yoga)**

Essential features of vedic teaching:

The entire Vedas are broadly classified into three portions:

1. Karma kanda: Deals with karmas or rituals. These karmas can be broadly classified:
  1. Sakama Karma: Meant for fulfilling worldly or material desires. These are not compulsory
  2. Nişkāma karma: Niyatha karma or compulsory karma; benefits are not material but spiritual growth and refinement.



1. Deva Yagya
2. Pitur Yagya
3. Manusha Yagya
4. Rishi yagya
5. bodha yagya service to animals to plants.

A person with daily life will maximum effort to sakama karma and scriptures allow that. But a time should come to desire something superior.

Karma kanda gives material benefits for immature people; for others it gives reduction of raga and dwesha and spiritual progress. Karma kanda will give only Jñāna yogyadha and not gyanam. Karma is not directly useful but indirectly useful for spiritual progress.

1. Upasana Kanda: Primarily a mental activity and physical body does not play a role. Upasana is saguna Eeswara dhyānam as described in Chapter 6.
  1. Sakama Upasana: Desire based for worldly benefits like curing a disease.
  2. Nishkama Upasana: Will give Jñāna yogyadha. Gives fitness for Jñāna by making mind sharp, subtle and non-extrovert.
2. Jñāna Kanda for attaining gyanam.

In Brahmacharyam, a person studies Vedas and understands the route to gyanam; in Grihastha follow karma; in vanaprastashram follow Upasana and in sanyasa ashram get gyanam.

Suppose a person does not get an opportunity to get gyanam, let him continue Eeswara Upasana. He will not get moksha, but he will go to Brahma Loka and get ideal conditions for Jñānam prabham. Brahmaji will give him knowledge or gyanam. This is called vidheha or krama Mukti. Sathya Mukti is getting knowledge here and now.

The eighth chapter primarily deals with krama Mukti. The three

topics are:

1. Bhakti or devotion to the lord. This can be sakama bhakti for material and worldly benefits. Niṣkāma bhakti where lord is an end itself. Moksha icha is defined as bhakti. Bagawan and Moksha are synonymous. This bhakti can be obtained only by discrimination or viveka. Discrimination of superiority of Eeswara and inferiority of jagat, world. Delusion alone is the reason for our wrong choice of goal.
2. Niṣkāma Upasana: Eeswara Upasana can be done in different ways with a symbol or alamabanam. One Upasana is omkara Upasana. This upasaka has two routes: come to Jñāna kanda and attain freedom in this life itself. As we get older, our conscious mind gets weaker and weaker. Then all our minds will be governed by subconscious mind which will be governed by our vasanas which are not spiritual. Upasaka practices yoga to control body and mind. Practice Upasana throughout one's life up to death.
3. Krama Mukti: Both sakama and niṣkāma bakthas travel after death. The travel is for sūkṣma śarīram consisting of punya pava and subtle body. Two types of jivas: sakama jiva and niṣkāma upasaka jiva. The two take different routes:
  1. Krishna gathi: Sakama jiva goes through this route, determined by punya pava or karmas. But he will come back.
  2. Shukla gathi: Niṣkāma upsaka goes through this route. In Brahma loka he will gain knowledge and obtain gyanam. He will not come back but attain krama Mukti.

## **Chapter 9 The Yoga of Royal and Hidden Knowledge (rāja-vidyā-rāja-gushya-yoga)**

Full name of Baghwat Gita is Baghwat Gitoupanishad because it

contains the essence of all Upanishads. The central theme of Baghwat Gita is same as the theme of Upanishads, tat twam asi or Jivatma and Paramatma Aikyam or the essential oneness of jivatma and Paramatma. We can broadly classify Baghwat Gita into three portions of six chapters or śatakam. Prathama, madhyama and Charama śatakam. In the first śatakam is about jivatma or twam part of tatwamasi. Madhyama śatakam is about Paramatma or tat part of tatwamasi. Charama śatakam is about jivatma Paramatma aikyam or asi part of tatwamasi.

Seventh and ninth chapters are close to each other.

Raja vidhya is Eeswara Swaroopa Jñānam or para vidhya. All other Jñānams are apara vidhya or inferior knowledge. Lord is jagat karanam or cause of the universe. Then what does he consist of? Lord is a mixture of para prakriti (Brahman) or higher nature and apara prakriti (Maya) or lower nature. What is their nature?

Common nature is that both are anadhi or beginningless. That makes Eeswara also anadhi. The uncommon features of para and apara prakriti:

1. Para prakriti is Chethana tatwam or spirit; Apara prakriti is basic matter principle or achethanam.
2. Para prakriti is nirgunam, free from all attributes; Apara Prakriti is sagunam endowed with all attributes.
3. Para prakriti is free from all changes and stays same; Apara Prakriti will always change, or eternal change and it is savikara tatwam.
4. Para prakriti can exist independently and therefore it is Sathyam with an existence of its own. Apara Prakriti can never exist independent of para prakriti and therefore, it is inferior.

This mixture together is Eeswara and is responsible for the origin, existence and resolution of the world. The manifest Apara Prakriti is the prabañca or universe. After certain

time, it folds back into unmanifest para prakriti.

1. First feature of Eeswara is shrusti laya karanam.
2. Second feature of Eeswara is that just as the space is not affected whatever happens in the universe para prakriti is asangaha.
3. Third feature is Eeswara is aboktha and akartha.
4. Fourth feature is the whole world exist in Eeswara and the whole world does not exist. This means that the world has an apparent existence but not a factual existence, similar to dream.

Every human face a grave a problem in recognizing the Apra Prakriti but not recognizing the para pariah nature. When a person does not recognize para prutah that person ends up holding on to Apra Prakriti for security. But Apra Prakriti never remains the same and hence we never get the security. This eternal insecurity is called samsara. Krishna presents the solution as Bhakti.

Bhakti does not refer to any particular sadhanas but a series of sadhanas done in devotion to the lord. This will ultimately take one to para prakriti. Three phase sadhanas:

1. Dharma Lakshana Bhakti, performance of one's duty towards family, world etc. Everyone must go through this bhakti. This is important to purify and refine mind
2. Upasana Lakshna Bhakti, in the form of meditation upon God. First in ishta devata form or eka roopa dhyānam. Next is viśva roopa upasanam, taking the entire world is lord. The ishta devata does not have to change but take the ishta devata as viśvarūpa. This will lead to expansion of mind.
3. Jñāna lakshna bhakti, inquiry into para prakriti form of the Lord.

These three sadhanas will lead to moksha or liberation. Why should all these three be compulsory? Because the fundamental

problem is the ignorance of para prakriti. Ignorance can only be removed by Jñānam. Karma can't remove ignorance. Any amount of meditation cannot remove ignorance. If Jñānam alone can remove ignorance, why not go directly to Jñānam. Because dharma lakshana and Upasana lakshana bhaktis are steppingstones.

This group is called bhakti because devotion is the common denominator in all these three.

Third part of the ninth chapter is niṣkāma bhakti and not sakama bhakti.

Bhakti is two-edged weapon; we can use it for two types of benefits:

1. Material benefit or artha and kama. This is sakama bhakti. This is meant for worldly benefits.
2. Lord as the benefit. This is niṣkāma bhakti. In Vedantic language this is mumukṣutvaṁ.

The only way to develop niṣkāma bhakti is by developing vyragyam or transcending raga and dwesha. I neither hate nor go after anything.

Glory of niṣkāma bhakti:

Once a person dedicated to spiritual pursuit, all other life goals become secondary.

Really speaking, security is not coming from external possession. Security and insecurity are mental conditions. One glory of niṣkāma bhakti is that I will feel secure.

Second glory of niṣkāma bhakti is there are no rules and regulations. Offer anything, but the bhakti should be niṣkāma bhakti. This will lead to Jñāna yogadha and moksha.

Anybody can start bhakti, according to one's own level and gradually convert into niṣkāma bhakti. Even the worst sinner

can start and get liberation.

## **Chapter 10 The Yoga of Excellence (vibhūti-yoga)**

In the previous chapter Krishna introduced the Lord as the cause of the universe. What type of cause is the lord? We need two causes: one who has the knowledge and skill, and this cause is called intelligent cause or nimitha karanam. We also need material cause or upathana karanam. Any product requires both karanam. For an ornament, we need both goldsmith (nimitha karanam) and gold (upadhana karanam). Lord is the cause of the karanam, but what cause is Bhagavan?

Before creation Lord alone was there and no other material was available. If lord is nimitham, then he doesn't have upathanam. If lord is upathanam, then he can't be nimitham. Lord is both nimitham and upathana karanam. But we see nimitham and upathanam as different in all cases we observe. This is the general rule. But every rule has an exception. The exception in certain cases both the nimitham and upathana karanam can be one and the same. The example is spider. It produces web from itself. Spider is both intelligent and material cause.

When we refer to gold, we don't say gold itself has created ornament, but we say gold appears as ornament. This is the rule for nimitha karanam. This rule should be applied to creation. We should not say lord created the universe, but say lord appears as the universe. To appreciate the Lord, we do not need to go anywhere. We only have to change our attitude based on wisdom. Learning to appreciate the world as the manifestation of the Lord is Vibhūti yoga. Learning to see all the glories of the universe as the special manifestation of God.

1. Ordinary manifestation of God.
2. Special manifestation of God.

The entire creation is the buddhi of God. Buddhi means manifestation of the Lord. Vi means vishesha. Vibudhi is special manifestation of the lord. Krishna elaborates this Vibudhi in Chapter 19. Regular meaning of vibudhi is abundance or ashes. We call ashes as vibudhi, because it is supposed to be made of cow dung; cow is the bode of Laxmi; Laxmi is aiswaryam. Therefore, vibudhi is aiswaryam. The second reason, vibudhi represent the glory of the lord. Ashes can be defined as that which remains when everything is destroyed. When everything is destroyed or negated in Vedanta, what is left is Brahman. Therefore, ash is the ultimate reminder of the Lord. Lord's manifestations are many, and Swamiji mentioned six:

1. Veda: Vedanam sama vedosmi. Vedas are great manifestation of the Lord, especially Sama Veda. Veda is source of knowledge. Rig Veda consist of verses with metrical mantras. Yajur Vedas consists of verses of prose composition. Sama Veda consists of mantra set to music. Atharvana Veda consists of mantras predominantly revealed by Atharva rishi and Angira Rishi. Krishna says he is Sama Veda.
2. Veda vidhya: Veda is broadly divided into two Veda Poorva and Veda Anta. Veda Poorva talks about how to manipulate the world to be happy, improving external factors. This is material sciences. Veda Anta is to change myself in such a way that I am not subject to any change in the world. Similar to wearing sandals; this is like covering the entire earth is covered with carpet. Once I have insulated the mind, let any situation happen, I can handle it. I change myself to deal with the world. This is self-knowledge.
3. Veda yagya: Disciplines of spiritual sadhanas are manifestation of the lord. Japa Yagya or repetition of the name of the lord is the most effective. First glory of Veda Yagya is it is available to everyone. The second glory is it is not expensive. Third glory is it doesn't involve any himsa.

4. Veda Mantra: Gayatri is the greatest mantra of all mantras. One gayatri is equal to the entire padas. Gayatri has three padas or lines; each line is the essence of each Vedas. Atharvana veda is not mentioned here because it primarily deals with lowkiga Vedas. The essence of gayatri is jivatma paramata aikyam. The truth between me, the microcosm and the sun, Brahman or the macrocosm. They are one and the same.
5. Vedic Words: Among the words, omkara is the best word. Omkara is the last condensed version of Vedas. Brahmaji took the words buhu, buvaha and suvaha from gayatri. These three mantras put together is vyakrithi. Taking the essence of three words is omkara. Both omkara and gayatri protects one person. The letter "AA" represents jagradh prabañca, the letter "U" represents Swapna prabañca and "M" represents sushukthi. Therefore, the word omkara represents the entire universe.
6. Veda Aksharani or vedic letters: Among letters, "Aa" is the greatest letter. It is effortless sound that is naturally produced when one opens mouth. All other letters are modification based on this letter.

This list is endless. In any field, whatever is the greatest is the Lord. That should remind you of the lord. You can take any of those symbols as Lord and worship those symbols as representative of the Lord.

## **Chapter 11 The Yoga of Seeing the Cosmic Form (viśva-rūpa-darśana-yoga)**

Vedic teaching presents the lord in three different ways and each form is valid based on the stage of seeker:

1. Personal god, with clear form. Appropriate for beginning stage; ishta devatas. Personal gods are useful for having a relationship with someone when no one else is available.



2. From personal god, grow to Viswa roopa or seeing everything as God. Graduate ourselves to viśva roopa dhristi.
3. Viśvarūpa dhristi is not the final culmination. As long as you are appreciating form, it is in time and space and subject to change; therefore, you have to go beyond roopam. This is Aroopa dharshanam.

In Baghwat Gita, ishta devata dhristi is not emphasized. Only the second and third dhristi are emphasized. Seventh, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> chapters lay the groundwork for this. Akasa and Vayu, Mind and Buddhi are formless elements; Agni, water and prithvi, sūkṣma and sthūla śarīram are formed element. Bagawan expresses in the form of world; we should train ourselves to appreciate the lord as creation. But we have divided the world in two – good and bad. So, it is difficult for us to appreciate Lord in the ugly forms. So, Krishna says he will present the world in two stages: Positive things as creation as described in the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter. In the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, good and bad are presented as the Lord. We usually are not sure about what is good and what is bad; as long as we have selfish intent, we cannot appreciate viśvarūpa. To appreciate totality, we should drop individuality.

If the whole universe is the Lord, then I should see divinity everywhere. Krishna blesses Arjuna with divya dhristi. Arjuna then describes the viśvarūpa dhristi. Generally, it is assumed that this is a particular form of God that Krishna temporarily presented to Arjuna. But such an interpretation is not correct. Viśvarūpa implies universal and presenting it in time and space is wrong.

Viśvarūpa is defined in Vedas themselves. In Mundaka Upanishad, there is Virat dharshanam. We do not have the attitude and reverence to look at the world as Bagawan. We look at the world, but we do not have the vision to look at the world as Bagawan. When we get the vision, we start to look

at the world as Bagawan. This change in attitude is Divya Sakthi; this enables us to appreciate everything as the lord. Learn to appreciate everybody's face as the face of the Lord.

Lord is not in space; lord is space; Lord is not in Vayu; Lord is Vayu. Learning to look at the creation objectively is divya sakthi.

When Arjuna gets this divya sakthi, he goes through three sets of emotions:

1. Acharyam; wonder; Anything you see in nature, it is wonder. Time has three aspects: Srishti, sthithi and laya. Death alone paves way for creation; example: death of a plant is the fertilizer for the next plant.
2. Fear: Krishna appears to be swallowing the world, including humans as the form of laya; Krishna says I am time principle, so learn to appreciate lord as Eeswara mahima; learn to appreciate everything. Krishna says to Arjuna, that the prarbtha karma of the enemies (gowrawas) is incomplete and it is Arjuna's job is to complete his duty and defeat them. This doesn't mean we do not have freewill. Scriptures do not accept fatalism and our actions are based on freewill. We are responsible our growth and our action. Lord's job is not to implement our freewill but to create the environment and bless our freewill. If we say we are only instruments and Bagawan alone is the cause, that will lead to many fallacies:
  1. All the karma palam will go to Bhagavan. That will make Bagawan a samsāri.
  2. All the differences will be determined by Bhagavan, making Him a partial Bagawan.
  3. All conflicts in life will be eliminated; all conflicts are caused by choice. But we have conflicts everywhere and every day. That is because we have freewill to choose. Human conflict is the proof for freewill

4. If we don't have freewill then we don't need dharma sasthanam. Dharmic way of life is the will of God. My raga dwesha is my personal will; I can either lead my life according to my raga dwesha or according to dharma. If I lead my life according to my raga dwesha then it will be adharmic.

3. Surrender, saranakathi or bhakti.

Fear of death can't be eliminated as long as there is any attachment. Arjuna's attachment to Bhishma and Dhrona is so intense that he was overcome by fear. He asks Krishna to remove the viśvarūpa and divya dhristi.

Surrendering to the Lord or having bhakti will lead the spiritual seeker from eka roopa to aneka roopa to Aroopa.

## **Chapter 12: The Yoga of Devotion (bhakti-yoga)**

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter is the last chapter of madhyama śatakam. Main theme of madhyama śatakam is Eeswara Swaroopa. Eeswara is defined as the cause of the universe. This definition is defined in three different ways based on the student's stage in spiritual progress:

1. God creates universe or the world. (Dvaidam)
2. Once a person has made progress, we refine this jagat karanatvam and say God becomes the universe. Then everything in creation should be respected as Eeswara's manifestation. (vishishtadvaidam)
3. God doesn't become the world, because becoming is change and samsara. God appears as the universe without undergoing any change. At this level advaidam is appreciated.

One must go through all these three stages.

Krishna concentrated on the second level in chapters 7 to 11.

Krishna also emphasized surrender or saranakathi, implying god's grace in spiritual progression. One should recognize both god's grace and one's own effort are needed for spiritual progression.

The third topic of madhyama śatakam is bhakti. Bhakti can be seen in two different ways:

1. Love of God or attitude towards God. This was also discussed in 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, dividing bhakti in three different types:

1. Bhakti for material ends. This is sakama bhakti or manda bhakti.
2. Bhakti for spiritual progress, desire for moksha. This is madhyama bhakti
3. Bhakti in which a person has no motive; does not seek moksha or Jñānam because he is already muktha purusha. Being liberated, he is neither interested in material goals nor spiritual growth. This is uthama bhakti.

2. Bhakti as sadhana or a means to an end. Krishna dedicates 12<sup>th</sup> chapter for bhakti as spiritual sadhana.

12<sup>th</sup> Chapter can be classified in two portions:

1. What is bhakti sadhana or who is sadhaka bhakta; This is described in verse 1 to verse 12.
2. After completion sadhaka bhakti, he becomes siddha bhakta; This is described in verses 13 to 20.

Bhakti is not a particular exclusive sadhana, but it is the name for all spiritual sadhanas put together. This is classified into three level in sashtra, and Krishna classifies this into five level.

1. Karma roopa bhakti, which involves physical action.
2. Upasana roopa bhakti, which involves mental actions like manasa puja.

3. Jñāna roopa bhakti, which involves vedantic or philosophical inquiry into the Lord, whom I have been worshiping in 1 and 2. This is vedanta sravana, manana nidhithyasanam.

Without the first two levels of bhakti, the third level is not possible; without the third level, the first two levels are incomplete.

Krishna feels the three step sadhana may be difficult for some, so he divides into five steps.

1. Karma roopa bhakti, bhakti in the form of doing actions. Krishna divides this into two:

1. Sakama karma: doing actions for my own benefit; materialistic action. Do all the actions as an offering to the lord. Don't take results as karma palam or your accomplishment, but as Eeswara prasadam.
2. Nişkāma Bhakti: Actions not meant for material benefits but for purifying mind and spiritual growth. Panca mahā yagya is nişkāma bhakti. These five yagyas are:
  1. Deva Yagya: Reverence to God
  2. Pitur Yagya: Reverence to elders and ancestors
  3. Brahma Yagya: Reverence to Vedas
  4. Manusha Yagya: Reverence to all human beings
  5. Bootha Yagya: Reverences to earth and all living beings.

These are nişkāma bhakti and are selfless action

1. Upasana Bhakti: In upasana bhakti, activities are reduced because one has contributed enough to the society through the first two levels. Ishta devata Upasanam is choosing God in any particular form. Meditate upon the ishta devata; this is Eka Roopa

Eeswara dhyānam.

2. Aneka roopa Upasanam: When meditating upon ishta devata, it is possible to favor towards one form over another. God may become sources of fear instead of freedom. Viśvarūpa dhyānam is described in Chapter 11 of Bhagavad Gita.
3. Nirguna Pradhāna Bhakti: This is also called vedanta sravana, manana nidhithyasanam. Here Lord is neither eka roopam nor aneka roopam; Lord is aroopam, beyond all forms. He doesn't have any sound or physical body. Nirguna bhakti is nothing but knowing that nirguna brahman can never be an object. You, the objectifier, can never be objectified. Nirguna Bhakti is vedanta Vichara, through which we claim that the nirguna Eeswara is not different from me. Sravanam is systematic study of Vedanta; any such study will bring out doubts. Mananam is to remove these doubts and Nidhithyasanam is the removal of habitual division between me and Bhagavan. Owning up my divinity is nidhithyasanam. Sravanam plus mananam plus nidhithyasanam is Jñāna pradhāna bhakti.

If a person is only interested in sakama bhakti or material results, Lord Krishna says pursue them, but consider the results as gift from the Lord or prasadam. The greatest benefit is tranquility of mind as everything is the result of the Lord.

Arjuna asks which is superior, saguna bhakti or nirguna bhakti. Lord Krishna said this is not a valid question because the two are not comparable; saguna bhakti is a means and nirguna is the end. Saguna bhakti is incomplete without nirguna bhakti and nirguna bhakti is not possible without saguna bhakti.

Those who go through nirguna bhakti will be free from samsara – free from raga, dwesha, moha etc. Those who follow these

five forms of bhakti are dear to Lord Krishna. Follow the fivefold bhakti and achieve jivan Mukti.

## **Chapter 13: The Yoga of Distinguishing Matter from Spirit (kṣetra-kṣetrajña-vibhāga-yoga)**

With this chapter we are entering charama śatakam or final section. In this section Lord Krishna highlights the main theme of jivatma paramatma aikyam, the essential nature of jivatma and essential nature of paramatma. In the Upanishads any statements revealing the oneness is maha vakyam. The 13<sup>th</sup> chapter gives the essence of the Upanishads very clearly. Another theme Lord Krishna highlights in this section is importance of ethical values. Vedanta can't work unless one follows ethical values as well. Lord Krishna also emphasizes importance of scriptural studies. Tradition accepts systematic study of scriptures as the only means of getting knowledge. Meditation and intuition are not accepted as the means of getting knowledge; they only can be used to assimilate the knowledge. Vedanta vichara (systematic study of scriptures for a length of time under the guidance of a qualified guru) can be postponed but one must go through this method for getting jñānam.

Three portions of 13th Chapter

1. Mahā vakya vichara; analysis of jiva and Eeswara; micro and macro analysis. Any differences between jivatma and Paramatma are superficial and not essential difference. Similar to wave and ocean; both are water. Both wave and ocean are name and form for water
2. Preparatory disciplines or jñāna yogyatha for discovering mahā vakya vichara.
3. Vichara palam or the benefits of this inquiry.

Mahā Vakya Vichara:

This is popularly known as atma anatma vivekaha. Even though each individual appears as one unit, really speaking each individual is made up of two entities. Since the two entities are intimately mixed, we do not realize the difference, similar to the mix of water and milk.

Lord Krishna calls shethra and ashethra or atma and anatma or matter and spirit. Sprit here means consciousness. Consciousness and matter put together is jiva. Vedantic definition of consciousness:

1. Consciousness is not a part, property, or product of the body.
2. Consciousness is an independent entity which pervades and enlivens the body.
3. Consciousness is not limited by the boundaries of the body.
4. Consciousness is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed. It is not limited by time and space.

This consciousness is called atma or chaithanyam. One nearest example is space and the second exanoke is prakasam (light). We will take the light example. When you look at the hand, we only see the hand, and anything else on the hand like dirt, lines etc. But we do not see the light. Applying the four features from above:

1. Light is not a part, property, or product of the hand.
2. Light is an independent entity which pervades and illumines the hand.
3. Light is not limited by the size of the hand.
4. Light will continue to be there even when the hand is removed. Light is appreciated only when there is a medium like hand. Without the hand light is not recognized. With hand it is vuakthkam or manifested; without hand it is avkyaktam or not manifested.

Similarly, when the body is gone, the consciousness continues



but not appreciated. Chaithanyam is called shethram and body mind complex is called ashethram.

The body mind complex is made up of matter. Consciousness is sprit and everybody is a mix of these two.

Once I know that an individual is a mixture of these two principles, which one should I claim as real I and which one should I claim as incidental. Whatever is subject to arrival and departure cannot be intrinsic nature; for example, the intrinsic nature of fire is heat. But heat is not the intrinsic nature of pot.

Only because I am conscious of sleepiness, I was able to talk about sleep. So, consciousness alone is the intrinsic nature and body mind complex is only incidental for our worldly transactions. So, I must own up the consciousness as my real nature. Shift from I am the body and I have consciousness to I am the consciousness and I have the body.

Basic law of Vedanta: I am different from whatever I experience because whatever I experience is object and I am the subject. Subject is eternally different from object. For example, eyes can never see eyes. Subject is never subject to objectification. Based on this, vedanta says negate anything that you experience. The entire world will be negated; the body will be negated. The mind is also experienced by me and therefore the mind will also be negated. I am the experiencer distinct from them. This is subject object discrimination. The end of my transactions is not the end of me. Even when the body is destroyed, I the consciousness is not destroyed.

Analysis of God:

Just as jiva is a mixture of two aspects, Eeswara is also a mixture of two principles: Purusha and Prakriti.

Common features:

They both are uncreated, origin less and anadhi. So, the mixture is also beginning less.

Four differences:

1. All pervading conscious principle is called purusha; prakriti is defined the basic matter principle out of which the whole universe evolved. Matter can't be created or destroyed. God created the world is illogical because nothing can be created. Like a seed can manifest into a tree. Similarly, matter can manifest into kariya avasta and karana avastha. Karana avastha is unmanifested state of the entire universe and there is no difference between many jivas etc. Science calls this as energy, but vedanta calls is unmanifested; other names are maya, avyaktam, sakthi, avidhya or prakriti. Before the origination or manifestation of creation, there were two basic principles: All-pervading consciousness principle purusha; the matter principle prakriti. Both put together is universe.

1. Purusha is chethanam and achethanm or inert.
2. Purusha or consciousness is not subject to any modifications; Prakriti is subject to modification
3. Consciousness is indivisible. Matter or prakriti is divisible.
4. Consciousness is Sathyam independently existent, self-proving and self-evident. Matter requires consciousness to prove it. Consciousness is Sathyam, matter is mithyam.

Before Srishti, prakriti being savikara, at proper time (determined by the laws of karma) prakriti gets ready to undergo modification. Five subtle elements and five gross elements are born. The physical body is the example of gross creation and mind is the example for subtle element. Both gross and subtle elements are manifestation of prakriti. This evolution also takes place in a very gradual evolution. Throughout this process, purusha or consciousness continues to

be there without any modification.

Before creation unmanifested matter and consciousness was there. After creation manifested matter and consciousness exist. Prakriti goes back to unmanifest condition at pralaya to be followed by the next manifested condition. Creation is not a linear process; it is cyclical process continuing forever.

Where to find that purusha? Prakriti is subject to modification and purusha is not subject to modification. To discover Purusha, go on negating whatever is subject to change, because whatever is subject to modification is prakriti. Whatever is left is purusha. Body and mind are subject to modification, and they are prakriti. Negate the body, mind, world. You will never come across purusha, because the one who is looking for is purusha. Purusha is nothing but you the consciousness principle. God is behind in your own body and mind as the consciousness principle and the experiencer. Instead of claiming I am the purusha the experience, we mistake ourselves as the experienced prakriti.

Consciousness is the same in the god and individual and the differences are all at prakriti level. Consciousness behind you the micrograms is same as the consciousness behind the macrograms, Lord Krishna. If I don't recognize this fact, I will claim myself as mortal body creating all kinds of problem. We do not accept mortality, we struggle to reject the mortality, making life miserable. Only way to immortality is to shift your identification from incidental physical body to intrinsic consciousness.

Next topic is the preparations required for this knowledge:

1. Viveka: I should diagnose the problem very clearly. The problem is you; the solution is you. Our whole life is miserable because we want to acquire temporary things to gain permanence.

- Understand self-ignorance is the problem.
2. Vairāgyam: Once you understand self-knowledge is the solution, all problems become minor.
  3. Bhakti: You should have the grace of the Lord for the grand pursuit of life.

What is the benefit of this inquiry? We look at the prakriti objectively. I look at my own body and mind objectively. I will accept the loss prakriti, the material universe, without resistance. I enjoy prakriti without any problem.

## **Chapter 14: The Yoga of the Threefold Modalities (guṇa-traya-vibhāga-yoga)**

Krishna approaches the mahā vakyam “jivatma Paramatma aikyam” from a different angle.

Eeswara is defined as a mixture of purusha (or conscious principle) and prakriti (or inert principle). From that Eeswara alone the creation evolved. If Eeswara is karanam and world is kariyam, then we should know that whatever the feature of karanam will be present in kariyam also. Similar to when the ornament is made of gold, the ornament will have the same component as gold. Purusha, the consciousness principle, is there in the form of chaithanyam or experience. Prakriti is in the universe in the form of material principle. Universe has all the features of prakriti.

In this chapter, we will focus on three features or gunatrayam. The three features are:

1. Sattva Gun
2. Rājasa guna
3. Tāmasa guna

Nirguna is Eeswara, and prakriti is sagunam with the three guna. The whole universe has all the three gunas. The body and mind being products of prakriti that also has three guna. Everything I experience has the three gunas except the

experiencer.

The three gunas are responsible for samsara or bondage. Guna also means rope or strings. These three gunas are like three types of rope, capable of binding. We can see three topics in this chapter:

1. Analysis of three gunas and how they bind us
2. How to get out of these threefold binding gunas.
3. The benefits of transcending the three gunas.

Analysis:

There are five topics under this Analysis:

1. Definitions:

1. Sattva guna is the nature of tranquility.
2. Rājasa guna is the nature of activity or restlessness.
3. Tāmāsa guna is of the nature of dullness overpowers tranquility and dynamism, inertia.

2. How do they bind us with samsara?

1. Sattva guna makes a person love tranquility and knowledge, sometimes making him addicted to tranquility and knowledge. Any disturbance to tranquility upsets him. To be good, one must transcend tranquility.
2. Rājasa guna pushes one person to action, producing more karma, producing more life
3. Tāmāsa guna binds one by negligence, carelessness, incapacity to think and discriminate.

3. Indications to know which guna is predominant.

1. When sattva is predominant, more knowledge is obtained. Sattva guna results in better grasping and retention power.
2. When Rājasa guna is predominant, there is an increased action.
3. When Tāmāsa guna is predominant, there is

negligence and oversight.

4. Consequences of the three gunas:

1. When sattva guna increases, gyanam increases.
2. When rājasa guna increases, activities increase.
3. When tāmāsa guna results in eternal conflict, delusion, and procrastination.

5. What will happen to person after death?

1. Sattva guna goes to higher loka
2. Rājasa guna goes neither up nor down he will be in manusya loka,
3. Tāmāsa guna goes to lower loka.

All three gunas are binding; One must become free of all three gunas to get liberation.

How to become gunathitha: What are the sadhanas to become free of gunas? Our scriptures do not prescribe revolutionary changes. All changes must be slow and gradual. Many people in the beginning stages are tāmāsa guna pradhāna, for example, a child sleeps for a longer period of time. Tāmāsa guna pradhāna is indicative of lack of action; actions are instinctive not planned. An inactive person first must be transformed to selfishly active person. So, the first process is from an inactive person to selfishly active person. He is called guna vaishya, an active person with all actions for self-improvement.

Once you are selfishly active, then progress to selflessly active state. Highly active, but every action is for the benefit of society. Then learn to quiet the mind, because a heavily active mind can't gain Jñānam. Veda prescribes upasana (dhyānam or meditation) to progress from active mind to tranquil mind. Through Upasana a guna shathriya is converted into guna brahmin.

So, the path is inactive to selfishly active to selflessly active to contemplatively active. A person who has gone through karma yoga and upsana or the first four stages of

bhakti becomes sattva pradhāna brahman. This guna brahmana is ready to become gunaatheetha.

How can saguna become nirguna? How can I transcend guna? Saguna never become nirguna. Saguna is prakriti and nirguna is purusha. Consciousness can never become matter; matter can never become consciousness. Finite can never become infinite. Jñānam is the only way. Karma and upasana cannot give liberation, but they are not useless. They are required to prepare a person for knowledge.

How can one become gunaatheetha through jñānam? Through jñānam you don't become gunathetha; body mind complex is eternally sagunam; atma is eternally nirguna. Before jñānam, I claimed myself as saguna body mind complex. After jñānam, I claim myself as nirguna atma. I am not changing saguna śarīram, I disidentify from saguna śarīram and identify with chaithanyam, witness consciousness, which is neither tāmasa guna, rājasa guna or sattva guna. This shifting identification from prakriti to purusha, from anatma to atma, is "becoming" gunaatheetha.

Every gunathetha must be a jñānam or sthira pragya. All the stages of sadhanas are bhakti, therefore, every guna theetha must have gone through all five stages of bhakti. Guna theetha is equal to sthira pragya is equal to para bhakta.

The third and final topic is what are the benefits of becoming a guna theetha? For a jñānam, all the virtues are spontaneous. These virtues must be attempted and practiced as sadhana by an ajñāni. Few virtues of a gyani:

1. Adhweshtaha: jñānam is one who does not hate anyone. According to our scriptures there is no legitimate hatred. Every person is noble person. But the actions of many people are improper. But this also does not deserve hatred. Because hatred will not work and will not change the behavior of a person. It can harm the person hating

more than the person being hated. Such a person requires a healthy and proper response. First ask the question, if that improper action is within my ability to change that person's behavior. If there is no control, are you the victim of the behavior. The only thing you can do is to pray to change the behavior of the person. The first victim of the improper behavior is the person who does the improper behavior. Pray to get the strength to withstand that behavior until the behavior changes. These choiceless situations are only to strengthen ourselves.

2. Tranquility of mind: Life means pairs of opposite – good and bad. The only way is to strengthen your mind is through knowledge and devotion. For a jñāni, samatvam is sadhana; samatvam is alangara. This samatvam is the strength of guna theetham.

Analysis of Gunas			
Based on Swami Paramarthananda's Teachings			
प्रकृति (Prakriti)			
Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
लक्षण (Definition)	Chapter 14, Verse 6 Prakasatmakam	Chapter 14, Verse 7 Ragatmakam	Chapter 14, Verse 8 Mohanatmakam
	Pre-disposed to acquire more knowledge; addicted to introspect	Tend to act more; clings on to possessions and desires for things not yet possessed	Eternal conflict, delusion and procrastination; not sure about the needs
बन्धनप्राकार (Mode of bondage)	Chapter 14, Verses 6 & 9 Causes attachment to knowledge; addicted to knowledge	Chapter 14, Verses 7 & 9 Causes attachment to activity; addicted to karma (activities)	Chapter 14, Verses 8 & 9 Causes attachment to indifference; bound to negligence
लिङ्ग (Sign of predominance)	Chapter 14, Verse 11 Increase of knowledge	Chapter 14, Verse 12 Increase of activity, greed, restlessness and craving	Chapter 14, Verse 13 Dullness, inaction, negligence and delusion
गति (travel after death)	Chapter 14, Verses 14 & 18 To higher lokas	Chapter 14, Verses 15 & 18 To middle lokas	Chapter 14, Verses 15 & 18 To lower lokas
फलम् (consequence in this life)	Chapter 14, Verses 16 & 17 Punya & Knowledge	Chapter 14, Verses 16 & 17 Sorrow & greed	Chapter 14, Verses 16 & 17 Ignorance & delusion



## Chapter 15: The Yoga of the Ultimate Person (puruṣottama-yoga)

Bhagavad Gita is a secondary scripture based on smṛiti; Since it is a secondary scripture or Sruthi, it contains the essence of Vedas. The entire Gita is classified:

1. Prathama śatakam; predominantly deals with karma or karma pradhāna śatakam.
2. Madhyama śatakam; predominantly deals with Upasana or mediation or it is Upasana pradhāna śatakam. Lord can be mediated in one form, formless form. But the middle section concentrates on viśva roopa upasana or aneka roopa upasana.
3. Charama śatakam is Jñāna pradhāna śatakam which is the culmination of spiritual sadhana in the form of Jñāna.

The 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> chapter deal with the knowledge. The fifteenth chapter also concentrates on Jñānam. This is the last philosophical chapter, condenses the essence of the Upanishad. This can be divided into three sections:

1. Description of samsara to develop vairāgyam. Without vairāgyam, one can't enter into any inquiry.
2. Moksha sadhanani. Primary and secondary disciplines required for moksha.
3. Eeswara Swaroopam or nature of God – higher nature as well as lower nature.

First topic is Samsara varnanam or description of samsara: Lord Krishna compares samsara to huge tree. This is borrowed from Katho Upanishads. The dualistic world in general, is like a huge tree. Common features of samsara and tree:

- Mahatvam: Human samsara is widespread, because it is caused by relationship. The asvatha tree is also widespread.
- Adhyantha rahithvam: The beginning of samsara can't be

traced. It is anadhi. Because of jenma karma comes; because of karma jenma comes. The present tree because of the seed; and seed is because of the previous tree. How did the first seed come? It is anadhi.

- Anirvachaneeyam: Can't be classified. Whether a particular jenma cause or effect? It can't be determined because it is the effect of previous jenma and cause for the next jenma. Similarly, a tree is the cause for next tree and is the effect of previous tree.
- Moolavatvam: Both samsara and tree have roots as sustainer. The tree is sustained by invisible roots. Similarly, invisible Eeswara is the sustainer of samsara.
- Both have many branches; some are upper branches, and some are lower branches; some are middle branches. Similarly, deva śarīra are higher branch; animals are lower branches; humans are middle branches.
- Palavatvam: Tree and samsara both produce three types of fruits:
  - Sweet; pleasure
  - Bitter; pain
  - Mixed.
- Pakshi...: Wherever fruits are available, bird will come and perch on the branches, making noise and eating the fruits. Similarly, there are jivas will come with samsara – pleasure, pain and mixed. Some jenmas are on the higher branches; some jenmas are on the lower or middle branches.
- Chaltvam: The tree moves about in different directions because of the wind. Same way, samsara also moves in different directions because of karma. Karmas of all the jivas take one place to another. Karma moves us not only from jenma to jenma, but also within jenma.
- There is light at the end of the tunnel as both are destructible. The tree can be destructed. Similarly, samsara can be uprooted and get moksha.
- The tree has many leaves, which are required for

sustenance of the tree. Samsāra also has leaves in the form of karma. Because karma alone produces palam, resulting in next jenma.

Second topic: Moksha sadhanani. Krishna describes a set of disciplines:

1. Reduce your dependence on the world. Dependence on the world is samsara but the world is violently changing due to prarabtha karma. So, it is unreliable. Cultivate world dependence to God dependence. You can assume any ishta devata.
2. Learn to accept the pairs of opposite in life; life is a mixture of opposites. Don't allow them to torment your mind.
3. Inquiry into the nature of God for gaining knowledge. This inquiry is conducted with the help of two factors, acharya or guru and sasthram. If you give form to God, then that god will have boundary. Then the god will be limited and samsari. Personal god should give way to absolute. We must inquire the higher nature of God.

Of these two sadhana, the primary sadhana is the third sadhana, Brahma Vichara. The benefit of these sadhana is the discovery of real nature. Brahman or Eeswara can't be illuminated by anything. Illumination means making a thing known. Because everything else is illumined or known by Brahman; therefore, Brahman is never illumined by anything. What is that illumining everything but not illumined by anything? That is Chaithanyam or Jñāna swaroopam. Brahman is eternal knower, but never known. Brahman means the infinite one. As Brahman pervades everything and everywhere, Brahman is formless. Krishna is lower form of God meant for uplifting human beings.

The third and final topic is Eeswara swaroopam. First Krishna talks about lower or empirical form. The universe is divided into two: Sentient objects (Jiva or chethanam) and insentient

object (jagat or achethanam). In sleep stage we ourselves create this by creating a dream world. But we don't realize this when we are in dream. The same way, one Eeswara alone appear as jiva and jagat.

The universe inert and material, achethanam. The physical body also made up of matter. Even the mind is made up of subtle matters. But the mind has the unique ability to forming a reflection in the mind and conduct consciousness and become sentient. In the scriptures it is called chitha basa or reflected consciousness. Mind becomes luminous and able to illumine other objects and conduct transactions. Both chethanam and achethanam are forms of God. Krishna takes the examples of sun, moon and fire. Sun illumines the world during the day; moon illumines during the night. Fire illumines during full moon. Because of the fire principle alone we can digest food. Not only God is outside in the form of sun, moon and fire, I am also inside in the form of digestible fire principle. Everything, knower, known. Experienced and experiencer are all Lord.

Krishna now describes his higher nature. Chara purusha, Akshara purusha and uttama purusha. Chara and Akshara is matter principles. Manifest form of matter is chara and unmanifest or potential form matter is Akshara or energy. The third uttama purusha is the witness of matter and energy. This is the superior nature of mine. Purushothama refers to formless, attribute less chaithanyam swaroopam.

If you know the two forms of God (Chara and Akshara), then you become fulfilled, and this is moksha.

## **Chapter 16: The Yoga of Differentiating Godly and Ungodly Assets (daivāsura- sampad-vibhāga-yoga)**

A particular chapter can't be understood unless the central

theme and purpose of Gita is understood. This is presented in the introduction of Gita when Arjuna describes his condition to Lord Krishna. He said I am going through intense sorrowful condition of mind. This sorrow can't go away with any resource at my disposal. From this we get those human sorrows can't be eliminate by name, fame, possession etc. The second point is that Arjuna is deeply interested in eliminating that sorrow. This is the start of Bagawad Gita. Krishna started his teaching saying that only wise people are free from grief. This conveys the idea that wise people do not grieve and so people who grieve are ignorant. Ignorance is the cause of grief and wisdom – atma Jñānam – is the only remedy. The primary aim is to give atma Jñānam as a remedy for human sorrow. Since the essence of entire Veda is atma Jñānam, and the essence of Gita is also atma Jñānam. This self-knowledge is not one of the solutions for moksha, this is the only solution. For gaining gyanam, the only instrument we have is manaha or buddhi. Atma Jñānam can only be obtained through mind. Jñānam is the goal and mind are the tool. But scriptures say mind can't know atma. An unrefined mind can't know. Wherever it is said mind should know, we should take it as refined mind. Most of us born with unrefined mind and we should convert that into refined mind. The immediate goal is to be converting unrefined mind into a refined mind. This process is called samskara. Veda poorva deals with samskara and Veda Anta deals with Jñānam. 41 Samskaras prescribed in our traditions, from birth to death. Refinement alone takes time, Jñānam does not take any time. Chapters 13, 14 and 15 deal with Jñāna prapthi. If we come to Jñānam, without any preparation, Gita may appear to be not useful. Two chapters entirely dedicated to the samskaras or refinement. Any refinement consists of two processes:

1. Dosha apanayanam: Removal of impurities or negative traits from the mind. These are negative traits, and these are called asuri sampat.
2. Guna Aadhanam: Addition of virtues. Cultivating healthy

and positive virtues. These positive traits are called daivi sampat by Lord Krishna.

Krishna gives a list of these qualities. This list can be prepared by ourselves by using these principles:

- Whatever I want other to do to me, I should do.
- Whatever I don't want others to do to me, I should avoid.

Six virtues out of many that Krishna has described. Five Devi Sampat:

1. Self-confidence. Freedom from fear of failure. If I do not have faith in myself, I can't accomplish anything in life. We will end up as negative complaining person.
2. Self-mastery: Bagawan has given us a human body which is capable of reaching our destination of moksha. Control over body, word, sense organs, thoughts are required. A healthy body is your friend; An unhealthy body is your enemy. Ashtanga yoga deals with self-mastery.
3. Self-integration: All the instruments should function in co-ordination. This is arjavam (harmony or integration).
4. Humility: Any success is the result of infinite number of favorable factors – all put together is Eeswara.
5. Purity: Purity of mind, thought and motive. All our thoughts are known to us only. How much of our thoughts can we publish? The purer the mind, the higher percent of thoughts we are willing to publish.
6. Compassion or empathy: The capacity to feel other person's feeling. When I feel the pain of others, I will not be the cause of pain to others. A sensitive mind is compassionate mind.

Asuri Sampat – inner enemies of human beings.

1. Kama or desire:
  1. When kama is obstructed, it leads to anger.
  2. If kama is fulfilled creates more kama; we only

become more and more active and extroverted,  
creating samsara.

To handles kama or desire:

1. Remove illegitimate desires; then limit legitimate desires for spiritual sadhanas. This means moderations of desire; desires should not come in the way of yama and niyama. Convert the desires into non-binding desires.
2. Krōdha or Anger:
  1. Angry person becomes violent creating verbal of physical injury.
  2. Anger leads to injustice; when I am angry, whatever action I do is not an action but an impulsive reaction without no thinking and deliberation.
  3. Anger leads to destruction. Physical anger leads to physical destruction and relationship destruction.

Control anger with education; kama turns into krōdha; kama is the seed and krōdha is the seed. If anger is used as an instrument to get things done, then you should get angry and angry should not get you. You should be able to get angry when you want and drop it whenever I want to drop it. If you want to deliberately get angry, the best method is to postpone it. But deliberate anger is not possible because anger is always a reaction and not an action.

1. Lōbha or greed: Not sharing our possessions with others. Really speaking, we don't possess anything. Everything is a temporary gift from the Lord. If I try to hold on to things, Bagawan will take away one after another. This includes people and relationship.
2. Moha or delusion: The main confusion is that we think our happiness is dependent on what we possess. But happiness is dependent on what we are. Delusion will go

away only by vivekaha.

3. Madha or arrogance: When failure comes, an arrogant person can't withstand it. I can't accept another person is glorified. Whatever glory I have, it is a gift from the Lord. We should be happy that we are a vessel
4. Machariam or jealousy: Never compare yourself with other; be happy what you have and what you are. Enjoy growing without comparison. Any comparison will lead to complexities – superiority complex and inferiority complex. Competition brings out jealousy, cheating etc.

Get rid of the negative traits and develop positive traits, get moksha.

## **Chapter 17: The Yoga of Differentiating Threefold Faith (śraddhā-traya-vibhāga- yoga)**

A mind that is not refined can't obtain atma Jñānam. Mind is divided into two types:

- Prakritha mind or animal man
- Samskiratha mind or purusha; man man
- Jñāni manuṣya; divine man

One must progress from prakriti purusha to samskirtha purusha to Jñāni manuṣya

A prakriti manuṣya or unrefined person is one whose actions are governed by personal raga dwesha. I do whatever I like, and I don't do whatever I do not like. I don't bother whether the actions are good or bad to society. Animals do exactly like this.

A samskirtha manuṣya also have rāga and dwesha. Even though he feels like doing many things but before implementing anything he thinks through the consequences of the action. He doesn't want to get the benefit at the cost of others. Similarly, if



there are actions that I don't like doing, but if it is beneficial to others, he will do those actions. Actions are governed by dharma. When one's actions are governed by dharma has progressed from prakritha purusha to samskritha purusha. This is called twice born.

When a child is born to a mother, the child is prakritha purusha; when the child learns dharma sashtra from the acharya, mother is gayatri devi and the father is acharya.

Veda poorva bagha converts prakritha purusha to samskirtha purusha and Vedanta converts a person from samskirtha purusha to Jñāni.

Subdivision of prakritha purusha:

- When the life governed by rāga or selfish wishes, the same prakritha manuṣya is called asura. Selfish people.
- When the life is governed by dwesha, results in lot of cruelty and violent. They are called prakritha rakshasa manuṣya; harmful, cruel people.

Samskirtha manuṣya are satvic people. Prakritha asura are rajasic people; prakritha rakshasa are tamasic people.

Tamasic types are the deadliest ones as their actions are harmful to the society and should be immediately removed. Rajasic variety do not create immediate threat to society, but in the long run, they are harmful.

In this chapter, Krishna describes tamasic variety which should be immediately given up; Rajasic variety which should be given up soon. Satvic varieties should be developed and cultivated.

Five items

1. Shraddha: Faith
2. Ahara: Food
3. Yagya: Worship

4. Tapaha: Austerity

5. Dhana: Charity

Ahara or food influences our personality:

1. Gross form of food caters to taste only and nothing else.
2. Subtle form of food; nutrient part of the food; does not necessarily caters to the taste, but it nourishes physical body.
3. Subtlest form of food nourishes sūkṣma śarīram

The food should nourish the physical and subtle body. Sastrha thinks of both physical and spiritual body. If you are a spiritual seeker, you should choose only those that nourish both sthūla and sūkṣma śarīram.

- Satvic ahara: Vegetarian food; that ahara which is offered to the Lord and consumed with the remembrance of the lord. Included in this list, all the sweets. Madhura
- Rajasic ahara: All other varieties other than sweet are Rajasic food. They should be consumed in moderation or minimum quantities.
- Tamasic ahara: Uncooked, or overcooked; those not offered to the lord; stale food.

Yagya (prayer and worship of the lord), dhana (charity) and tapa (moderation in everything) are important religious sadhana. Panca mahā yagya are very important.

Three types of yagya: Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic and they are determined by the type of deity, method of worship and motive of worship.

1. Type of deity; deities contributing to spiritual growth are sattvic; deities contributing to material growth are rajasic deities; Tamasic deities are black magic deities.
2. Method of worship: Worship in quiet place with withdrawn

mind is Satvic. Example is japa; Noisy japa is Rajasic; Torturing body, animal sacrifice, offering liquor etc. are Tamasic.

3. Motive of worship: Selfless motive is Satvic and is performed for the wellbeing of all. Spiritual seekers should continue to perform these types of worship. When the motive is for materialistic growth and self-wellbeing, it is Rajasic; One should reduce this type of worship and grow out of this one day. When the motive is destructive, injurious and harmful to others, it is Tamasic. This type of worship should be avoided.

We can classify worshipper as follows:

1. Those who will do good to others at the expense of self; satvic.
2. Those who will do good to others as long as it does good to ourselves also; rajasic.
3. Those who will do harm to others to get good to self; tamasic.
4. Those who will do only harm to self; also, tamasic.

The same principles can be extended to shraddha or faith. Sattva yagya, raja yagya and Tomasa yagya

Dhanam:

- Satvic dhanam is right gift given to right person at the right place with respect, without expecting anything in return.
- Rājasa dhanam is given with the expectation of a return. Expecting name and fame in return.
- Tomasa dhanam is wrong gift given at the wrong time, insulting that person. Even tāmasa dhanam is better than no dhanam.

Tapaha: Discipline, austerity; Classified from the standpoint of instrument.

- Kayikam tapaha: Body or activity oriented; doing rituals physically. Scriptures are given more importance because it destroys tamoguna. Doing namaskara, brahmachariyam etc. come under this category.
- Vachika Tapaha: Verbal discipline. Speech is the most powerful organ, next to intellect. For example, the written word stands for, the spoken word. The spoken word stands for the knowledge of the word. Vedic wisdom is available even today in the form of written and spoken words. As it is most powerful, it can be most destructive also. Four disciplines or factors to consider before speaking:
  1. Words should not hurt or disturb or cause violence; this is verbal non-violence. Don't use abusive, negative, indecent, loud language.
  2. Sathyam: Never speak untruth; only speak truth. I may or may not be materially successful, but I will be spiritually successful.
  3. Priyam: Language must be pleasant, soft
  4. Chitham: Whatever is good for all. Spoken words should benefit everyone.
- Manasa Tapaha: Mental discipline.
  1. Purity of thoughts; anybody should be able to listen.
  2. Calmness and equanimity.

Tapas from the guna point of view: When it is selfish rajasic. When it is spiritual, satvic; tapas used for negative purpose, it is tamasic.

Our goal is to take up satvic, negate tamasic, reduce rajasic.

Converting all actions into satvic action: After the completion of any action, dedicate it to the Lord. This will convert any mistaken action as satvic.

Krishna has described positive traits to be acquired and negative traits to be avoided. Krishna does not say how to

accomplish this. Sastra does describe this in five methods:

1. Vivekaha: We must study the significance of every virtue. A value is a value only when the value of the value is valued by you.
2. Sankalpa: Taking a resolve and reduce the violation of the value. This can be translated as auto suggestion.
3. Prathipaksha bhavana: Practicing the opposite: When there is hatred, practice love, mentally.
4. Sat Sanga: Association with virtuous people.
5. Prarthana: Pray to the lord for help.

Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
<b>श्रद्धा (Faith)</b>	Chapter 17, Verse 4	Chapter 17, Verse 4	Chapter 17, Verse 4
	Worship of satvic deities	Worship of rajasic deities	Worship of tamasic deities
	Mental worship	Verbal and physical worship	Violent worship
	Spiritual motive	Materialistic motive	Destructive motive
<b>आहार (Food)</b>	Chapter 17, Verse 8	Chapter 17, Verse 9	Chapter 17, Verse 10
	That which is delicious, which gives longevity, health, strength and happiness	That which is excessively bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent and which causes pain	That which is improperly cooked, without nutrition, putrid, stale, left over and impure
<b>यज्ञ (Sacrifice)</b>	Chapter 17, Verse 11	Chapter 17, Verse 12	Chapter 17, Verse 13
	All activities done sincerely according to the scriptures; without expecting any results; karma yoga is satvic yoga; focus is on what one gives to the society	All activities done for fame, show and money; focus is on what one gets back from the society	All activities done involuntarily; without rules, faith, mantra or dakshina
<b>दान (Charity)</b>	Chapter 17, Verse 20	Chapter 17, Verse 21	Chapter 17, Verse 22
	Given with sincerity to a deserving person at the proper time and place without expecting any return; Charity is the end in itself	Given reluctantly for the sake of return and result	Given without respect to an undeserving person at an improper time and place
<b>तपस् (Austerity)</b>	Chapter 17, Verse 17	Chapter 17, Verse 18	Chapter 17, Verse 19
	Practiced with faith and without expecting any results; any worldly results should only be by-products	Practiced for the sake of show, name and fame; Results will be temporary and uncertain	Practiced with false notions and bodily torture for harming others

# Chapter 18: The Yoga of Liberation (mokṣa-yoga)

In this chapter, Krishna summarizes the whole Gita. This chapter can be classified as four chapters:

1. Types of sadhanas; satvic, rājasa and tāmāsa. The point is we should take up satvic variety, avoid tāmāsa variety and reduce rājasa variety.
2. Karma yoga as a preparation for Jñāna yoga.
3. Summary of Jñāna yoga as a direct means of liberation.
4. Summary of the entire teaching.

The first topic is three types of sadhanas. Seven topics are taken up and each of them is taken up as satvic, rajasic and tamasic.

## 1. Sanyasa or renunciation

1. Sattvic is performing of duties and renouncing anxiety about the future.
2. Rājasa is renouncing of duties even after knowing the importance of duties
3. Tāmāsa is renouncing of duties due to ignorance.

## 2. Jñānam

1. Sattvic is the knowledge that there is one atma which is different from the body.
2. Rajasic is knowing that atma is different from body, but each atma is different.
3. Tamasic is taking the body as atma and not accepting an atma other than body.

## 3. Karma

1. Satvic is motivated by dharma, whatever is good to the entire world; personal raga dwesha are subservient to the wellbeing of the society.
2. Rājasa is raga dwesha pradhāna karma or based on one's own personal well being
3. Tamasic is which is directed towards the harm of the society.

#### 4. Kartha: or Doer

1. Sattvic whoever performs satvic karma
2. Rājasa whoever perform rājasa karma
3. Tamasic whoever performs tamasic karma.

#### 5. Buddhi or intelligence; rope/snake example: In the dark, one mistakes the rope as snake and is frightened. But when the light is turned on, one realizes there is no snake it was rope all along; this knowledge relieves one's fear. Similarly, we mistake ourselves as body and subject ourselves to the changing nature of body and the results of the actions (karma) of body; when we own up to our higher nature (atma), the samsara goes away. Another example is Mahabharata war; Arjuna thought punishing the adharmic enemies is adharma. But punishing adharmic people is needed to establish a dharmic society and therefore punishing adharmic enemies is dharma.

1. Satvic intelligence knows everything comprehensively

1. At lower level what is dharma and what is adharma

2. At higher level truth and untruth

2. Rajasic intelligence which knows everything but incompletely. Doubtful knowledge; as good as ignorance.
3. Tāmāsa intelligence is all the knowledge in the opposite direction, wrong knowledge, but definite about the wrong knowledge.

#### 6. Druthi or will power

1. Satvic is pursuing spiritual pursuit regardless of obstacles
2. Rajasic is pursuing material pursuit regardless of obstacles
3. Tamasic is not pursuing either spiritual or material but purposeless life.

#### 7. Sugam or pleasure

1. Satvic is any ananda born out of spiritual growth
2. Rajasic is any ananda born out of external

condition and material growth

3. Tamasic pleasure is born of sleep and inactivity.

Topic	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
<b>सन्यास (Renunciation)</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 9	Chapter 18, Verse 8	Chapter 18, Verse 7
	Renunciation of the results of nityakarmas	Renunciation of nityakarmas due to fear of bodily strain	Renunciation of nityakarmas due to the ignorance of their value
	Continues to do karma yoga, but renounces the results		Renunciation of dhyanam and tapas
<b>ज्ञान Knowledge</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 20	Chapter 18, Verse 21	Chapter 18 Verse 22
	Sees the undivided Self in and through all the beinas	Takes the Self to be distinct from every other being	Takes the body as the self
	I am the conscious principles which enlivens the body mind complex (I am the consciousness)	I am the tenant/owner of the body and am immortal; there are many immortal jivas just as me (I am the mind)	Believes in only what can be sensed by sense organs (I am the body)
<b>कर्म (Karma)</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 23	Chapter 18, Verse 24	Chapter 18, Verse 25
	Duty performed without attachment and expectations	Action done with egoism for the sake of results	Indiscriminate action done without considering the consequences
	Action done to improve my self knowledge	Action done to improve my surroundings	Actions done without any planning
<b>कर्ता (Doer)</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 26	Chapter 18, Verse 27	Chapter 18, Verse 28
	Detached, perseverant, enthusiastic, unassuming and calm in success and failure	Attached, greedy, harmful and subject to elation and depression	Undisciplined, uncultured, arrogant, harmful, dull and procrastinating
	Does not get attached any success or failure and uses all experiences for inner growth	Gets attached to success and failure and does not use the results for inner growth.	Does not have an integrated personality
<b>बुद्धि (Intellect)</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 30	Chapter 18, Verse 31	Chapter 18, Verse 32
	Clearly knows dharma and adharma, right and wrong as well as the bondage and liberation	Has doubts regarding dharma and adharma, right and wrong	Considers adharma as dharma (e.g. Arjuna thought the war was adharma at the beginning of Bagawat Geeta)
<b>धृति (Will)</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 33	Chapter 18, Verse 34	Chapter 18, Verse 35
	Sustains the functions of all organs in the spiritual path; controls sense organs by unswerving practice of yoga	Pursues dharma, artha and kama craving for their benefits	Does not give up sleep, fear, grief and indulgence
	Leads to spiritual success	Leads to material success	Leads to sensory pleasures and attachment
<b>सुखम् (happiness)</b>	Chapter 18, Verse 37	Chapter 18, Verse 38	Chapter 18, Verse 39
	Like poison in the beginning and like nectar in the end; Happiness is born of self-knowledge	Like nectar in the beginning and like poison at the end; happiness is born of contact between sense organs and objects	Deludes the mind in the beginning and in the end; happiness is born of indolence and negligence.
	Not subject to loss; sadhana shadhushta sambanthi सधन सुतुष्ट सम्बन्धी	Subject to loss and will go away creating a vacuum	Based on fatalism and does not use free will



Second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Chapter is summary of Karma Yoga.

Karma yoga is proper action with proper attitude. Proper action is taking proper profession in life with which we can contribute to the society. To determine proper profession:

1. Uttama or best: Choosing a profession suitable to my swabava. I love what I do, and I do not expect any separate reward; reward becomes bonus.
2. Madhyama: Choosing a profession based on hereditary as swabava is determined by hereditary
3. Worse: Choosing a profession based on income.

Proper attitude is when you do that action for the selected profession and learn to enjoy that action. Dedicate the result to the lord. What you offer is not worship and how you offer or what you do is worship. Convert all actions into worship; no need to change profession.

Karma yoga will lead to purity of mind.

Next topic is a summary of Jñāna yoga. Two stages of Jñāna yoga are:

1. Cognitively and intellectually separating consciousness from the physical body. Five features of consciousness
  1. Consciousness is not a part, property, or product of body
  2. Consciousness is an independent entity which is different from body and pervades and illumines the body.
  3. Consciousness is all pervading and not limited by the boundaries of the body.
  4. Consciousness continues to exist even after the body is gone.
  5. Consciousness which survives the body, does not interact with the world because it does not have the medium of transaction – body.

Example is light on the hand; light is independent of body, is beyond the boundaries of the hand, continues to exist even after I remove the hand.

1. Train myself to identify with consciousness instead of the body. I am the consciousness operating with this body; when the body goes away the transacting medium goes away but not the consciousness. Example is deep sleep; When I sleep, I don't stop to exist, I continue to exist, but the medium is resting, and the transactions do not happen, but I exist. This shows that body is only an intermediary medium for transaction. Body comes and goes, but I always continue to exist. Learn to identify with atma, then you will be able to look up the body objectively and will be able to accept the laws that govern the body:

1. Desa: Body is affected by space or the place.
2. Kala: Body is governed by time. As we age, body ages and is subject to decay and decease.
3. Prarabtha: Results of karma. Body is subject to pavam and punyam of our lives

Accept these universal laws without resistance. Krishna emphasizes one particular feature of atma in the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter, that is, akartha and aboktha, free from all pavams and punyams; body is never free from pavams and punyams. If you identify with the body, then you can't escape the results of pavams and punyams. Owning up of akartha and aboktha will give moksha.

Krishna emphasizes mediation and dhyānam. Bhakti yoga is not a separate yoga, but it is a common name for karma yoga. Lower-level bhakti yoga is karma yoga and higher-level bhakti yoga is Jñāna yoga.

Dharma refers to karma yoga way of life; After purifying the

mind with the use of karma yoga, one should transcend karma yoga. Karma should be reduced, reducing extrovert activities and come to j Jñāna yoga or self-inquiry; sravana, manana nidhithyasanam

The final stage of saranakathi or bhakti is surrendering the ego. Ego can never be surrendered by a physical action; ego is born out of ignorance. There is no wave, but only water. Similarly, there is only lord, I as a separate entity do not exist. Since ego is developed by ignorance, it will go away only by knowledge or Jñānam.

One reason for this logic is that, in the introduction of Gita, Krishna makes it clear that j Jñānam alone is means of freedom from sorrow. So saranakathi can't mean anything else but Jñānam. Krishan can't start with saranakathi and end with something else.

Second reason is dharma is all duties prescribed in Veda. If Krishna asks to renounce all karma, then it can't be karma; it should be something other than karma. J Jñānam alone is something other than karma. Therefore, saranakathi means j Jñānam.

When there is contradiction between Sruthi and Smriti, Sruthi alone prevails. Veda clearly says j Jñānam is the only means of liberation. Saranakathi presented as a means of moksha, therefore saranakathi should be understood as jñānam.

Follow karma yoga, purify mind, follow g Jñāna yoga and attain liberation.

Gita Jñānam should be given only those fulfilling these conditions:

1. Tapaha: Discipline in life
2. Bhakti: Devotion to lord as destination
3. Sushrusha: One who wants to learn Gita
4. Anasuya: Not finding fault with Gita teaching.

Those who listens the benefit is swarga, those who listens and understands will get moksha.

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## Chapter 3: The Yoga of Action (karma-yoga)

In the second chapter Lord Krishna taught karma yoga and Jñāna yoga, focusing more on Jñāna yoga. Lord Krishna begins second chapter with Jñāna yoga and concludes the second chapter with sthira pragra. In between the two, he discusses karma and asks Arjuna to do his karma, which is to fight the Mahabharata war. Lord Krishna glorifies Jñāna yoga but asks Arjuna to do karma yoga. Arjuna finds this unacceptable.

### Introduction Verses 1 to 7

Arjuna asks should I follow Jñāna Yoga or Karma Yoga. If you consider Jñāna Yoga is better, then why should I fight the war? In answering this question, we should note the following points:

1. There is no choice between karma yoga and Jñāna yoga. It is apples to orange comparison.
2. Qualifications for Jñāna yoga can be obtained only through karma yoga. Qualifications are detachment, purity, maturity. Many of us do not have these qualifications.
3. Moksha can be obtained only through Jñāna yoga.

Follow karma yoga to obtain qualifications; Use the qualification to acquire jñāna yoga; Use jñāna yoga to obtain moksham. All other yogas like japam, parayanam etc. are all part of karma yoga. There are no other yogas other than karma

yoga and jñāna yoga.

Arjuna's question was wrong; both yogas should be followed. There is a choice regarding marga or lifestyle; one can follow sanyasa asrama or gragasthasram; but both of them should follow karma yoga and jñāna yoga.

Which is better? Grahasthasram or sanyasa asram? Krishna is clear that grahasthasram is better for most people.

### **Karma Yoga Verses 8 to 20**

In these verses, Krishan elaborately discusses Karma yoga. Karma: Proper action; Yoga: Proper attitude. So proper action with proper attitude is karma yoga.

Types of actions:

1. Satvic – Promotes the spiritual progress the most; Best action; beneficiaries are more; unselfish
2. Rajasic – Mediocre; promotes some spiritual growth; Beneficiaries are less; confined only to family; selfish actions.
3. Tamasic – Does not promote spiritual growth but results in degradation of spiritual growth; Harmful action; worst action. I get the benefits, but others get harmed.

Perform panca mahā yagya to improve spiritual progress and become satvic. The goal is to become samatvam by accepting all results as a Eeswara prasada.

Follow Karma Yoga:

1. As the command of God, follow out of fear of God
2. As a sense of gratitude or yagya
3. As a purifier of kama and soga
4. As dharma by which cosmic harmony can be maintained.

**Verse 20, second line to verse 29: Duties of a Jñāni**

jñāni does not require any sadhana (karma yoga, jñāna yoga etc.) because he already achieved the goal of jñānam. But as long as he is in the society, he should follow karma yoga as a model to the society. In this verse, Lord Krishna is indirectly advising all elderly people to be role models for rest of the society.

**Verses 30 to 35: Summarizes karma yoga; verse 30 is most important.**

Krishna gives five-part process of Karma Yoga:

1. Make the Spiritual goal as the primary goal; all other goals are subservient to this goal.
2. Eeswara arpana buddhi: Dedicate all your actions to God so you don't hate any of your duty.
3. Eeswara prasadhya budhhi: Be prepared for any future situations because future is not under your control. You are not the only one responsible for your success. Accept any result as Eeswara prasadam.
4. Nirmamaha: when success comes don't claim total credit.
5. Maintain mental poise/balance.

**Verses 36 to 43: Obstacles of karma yoga:**

Arjuna asks Lord Krishna what are the obstacles of karma yoga.

Lord Krishna answers Kama/krodha or raga dvesha; materialistic attractions; Artha kama is important, but dharma moksha is also important. But when artha kama becomes more important than dharma moksha, that becomes an obstacle. There are two stages handle this obstacle:

First Stage: handle in relative measures:

1. Dhamaha – Mastery of sense organs; don't let anything enter your mind without control.
2. Shamaha – Discipline of mind and thought pattern. Undisciplined mind tends to get attracted to anything.

3. Vivekaha – Discrimination; understanding that finite plus finite is always finite; insecurity plus insecurity is more insecurity. Understand that I am complete (poornatvam) with myself, and I will not be full of any amount of acquisition.

Second Stage: Obsolete solution is to discover fullness and security within myself. Atma is not only in your body but also extends beyond your body. One should know this and own up to the fact that this formless consciousness is the real I. The real transformation is the transcending the form, that I am the formless consciousness. Body and mind are like the instruments I use to transact with the world. By claiming the new identity, we should change our orientation from physical body to formless consciousness. This new orientation is jñāna nishta. The physical body is limited, but I am not limited.

Jñāna Nishta is internalizing this knowledge and ready availability of this knowledge at the time of difficulty. This comes by dwelling on the teaching in any form – by teaching, writing, thinking, sharing etc.

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## **Chapter 2: The Yoga of Analysis (sāṅkhya-yoga)**

The actual teaching of Bhagavad Gita starts at Chapter 2 verse 11 and continues through Chapter 18 verse 66.

Verses 1 to 10: Arjuna's saranakathi (surrender): Attachment leads to sorrow. When I am attached to something, I never want to lose it. Samsara leads to raga (attachment), soga (sorrow) and mogaha (inability to decide between right and wrong – human conflict)

Verses 11 to 38: Jñāna yoga: Discovery of essential nature of every individual – consciousness.

- Consciousness is not part, product or property of body.
- Consciousness is an independent entity that pervades and enlivens every body.
- Consciousness is not limited to the boundaries of a body.
- Consciousness continues to survive even after the fall of body.

Features of Atma (Consciousness):

1. Atma is eternal.
2. Atma is the reality existing independently.
3. Atma is all pervading.
4. Atma is the ever experiencer and never the experienced.
5. Atma is akārtha (not a doer) or aboktha (reaps the benefits).
6. Atma is free from modifications.

These features of one's essential nature and atma are the fundamental basis for Vedantic Teachings and are elaborated in many texts and scriptures (including Tatva Bodha)

Verses 39 to 53: Karma Yoga: Proper action with proper attitude is karma yoga.

- a. Satvika karma is an action in which beneficiaries are more in number; selfless action; usthama karma.
- b. Rajesic karma is selfish action; madhyama karma.
- c. Tamasic karma: action harming others for my benefit.

Proper attitude is enjoying what I do. Karma yoga is not meant for moksha but it is the preparation for Jñāna yoga.

Verses 54 to 72: Sthitapragya: Assimilate the knowledge that I am not the body but Atma and convert this knowledge into emotional strength to face life.



A guru can teach an agyani to pragyaha, but can't give their prgya. That effort is for the student.

- Master your senses because a distracted mind can't assimilate Vedanta.
- Control thoughts. Certain thoughts will come, but you decide their effect.
- Nidhidhyasanam: Dwelling on this teaching.

Benefits of sthitapragyaha is the freedom from binding desires, freedom from fear, anger, jealousy and constant tranquility. This Sthitapragya is a free bird. Both jivan mukthi and vidheha mukthi.

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# Chapter 1: The Yoga of Arjuna's Dejection (arjuna-viṣāda-yoga)

## Factors for healthy life

1. Objective Factors: Hygienic surrounding.
2. Subjective Factors: My body should be strong enough to withstand challenges; extend this to mental health as well
  1. If any mind is sufficiently strong psychological disturbances like anger, jealousy etc. will occur less.
  2. Intensity will also be less
  3. The duration will also be less
  4. After effects will also be less

Bhagavad Gita's subject matter will increase the strength and resistance at inner level.

First chapter is where Arjuna discovers that he has inner weakness.

1. Verses 1 to 20: Context: Mahabharata battlefield.
2. Verses 21 to 25: Arjuna wants to see who is fighting.
3. Verses 26 to 28: Arjuna's discovery of his weakness of Raga (attachment) and consequences.
4. Verses 29 to 35: Consequences of Raga (soga, dwesham).
5. Verses 36 to 47: Mohaga – confusion, delusion, indecision, raga, sogha, delusion; all of them put together is samsara.

Chapter 1 deals primarily with Arjuna's sorrow and confusion. Lord Krishna does not speak in Chapter 1.

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## Bhagavad Gita Summary

In these sections, I am reproducing my notes from classes that were given by Swami Paramarthananda as stand alone summary of Bhagavad Gita at Sanskrit College. These are the same classes that the students of Vedantic Study Group, Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago listened to online, starting in 2021.

Please note that these notes are summarized versions based on my reception and recollections. They are not word by word reproduction of the classes. Other students may have different recollections and interpretations. Also, note that Swamiji has not seen, reviewed or blessed these notes

While this summary of Bhagavad Gita gives a good starting point, one should study Bhagavad Gita in detail. Swamiji

recommends listening to his classes on Bhagavad Gita. While it requires significant investment of time, I found it to clarify many concepts and lay a strong foundation for spiritual growth.