

Bhaja Govindam

Class 1 Introduction

The faculty of choice, or free will, is one of the defining features of human beings. Animals do not have any goals in life. They eat, reproduce, live for a few years, and die. However, many human beings question free will and argue that we do not truly have free will, and that we are governed by destiny alone. Even if that is one's view, we can still divide human beings into those who accept free will and exercise it, and those who do not accept it. According to the scriptures, those who do not accept free will are not very different from animals. The scriptures primarily address human beings who accept free will.

Once we accept free will, we recognize that we have many goals to achieve and we work toward fulfilling those goals. In the Katha Upaniṣad, two mantras address this topic. The entire Bhaja Govindam text is based on these two mantras. All human goals can be classified into two varieties:

- The limitless, eternal, immortal, and complete goal. This can only be one, because only one infinite is possible. One name for this infinite goal is Bhagavān/Īśvara/Brahman/Mokṣa. In the Katha Upaniṣad, this is called śreyas. All these terms are used synonymously.
- Finite goals. All other goals are finite: money, status, name, fame, political victory, relationships, position, possessions, etc. All of these are limited by time and space. They are called dharma, artha, and kāma. In the Katha Upaniṣad, these are called preyas.

For convenience, I will call the finite “the world,” and the infinite “God.” The scriptures point out that those who choose mokṣa as the ultimate goal are intelligent, and they are called vivekī. Those who do not choose mokṣa as the goal are

called avivekī. The scriptures seek to educate people and transform avivekīs into vivekīs. Whoever chooses mokṣa as the ultimate goal is called a mumukṣu.

Three sets of people: religious, spiritual, and atheistic

We should differentiate spiritual people from religious people. Both accept God. A spiritual person accepts God and chooses Him as the destination. A religious person accepts God, but does not accept God as the destination; instead, God becomes a means to an end. A third set of people does not accept God either as a means or as a goal; that is the atheistic group. The scriptures say that non-spiritual people remain in saṃsāra. This is described by Śaṅkarācārya in Bhaja Govindam.

This work consists of 30 verses, discussing various problems faced by human beings and how we make wrong choices. The aim is to change the direction of our life—converting an atheist and a merely religious person into a mumukṣu. Vedantic scriptures are relevant only for a mumukṣu.

The original name of Bhaja Govindam is Moha Mudgara. Moha means delusion. The majority of human beings are governed by moha—like moths attracted to the brightness of fire, and fish attracted to bait at the end of a hook. Human beings, despite intelligence, do not realize that a finite and perishable thing cannot give lasting security. Our intelligence is covered by delusion. The simple message of Bhaja Govindam is: choose the infinite and discover lasting happiness.

Class 2

Bhaja Govindam is a work called Moha Mudgara, meant to remove our delusion with regard to the means and ends of life. A deluded person makes the mistake of treating the finite objects of the world as goals, which creates problems because finite objects cannot give lasting peace, happiness, and security. Only the infinite can give that. The first

correction is with regard to the goal: instead of treating the world as the goal, treat the infinite as the goal. The infinite is referred to by different names: śreyas, mokṣa, Brahman, and Īśvara. Choose mokṣa or Bhagavān as your goal. Whoever has done so is a mumukṣu, a spiritual seeker.

Are we to reject the world totally? No. Instead of seeing finite things as the destination, use the world as a means to attain the end. Use every object to support your spiritual journey. Use the finite world as a means and the infinite God as the end. Currently, we often use the infinite God to obtain finite worldly ends. This is a reversal. Correcting this reversal is the conversion of a materialistic person into a spiritual person. This is the project of Bhaja Govindam.

Even after becoming a mumukṣu, we should further refine ourselves; then the Vedantic message becomes clearer. A mumukṣu can be of three types: manda mumukṣu, madhyama mumukṣu, and tīvra mumukṣu. How do we differentiate these three?

- A manda mumukṣu accepts God as the goal, but it is the last item on the list of desires. Such a person has not discerned the full value of mokṣa. Perhaps after several years, decades, or even janmas, mokṣa becomes the top priority.
- When mokṣa becomes the top priority, one becomes a madhyama mumukṣu. At this stage, mokṣa “eats up” other desires. The mokṣa-icchā becomes stronger and can become an obsession. Eventually, there is only one priority: mokṣa.
- When a person has very high intensity, that person becomes a tīvra mumukṣu.

All three will benefit from Vedanta, but the benefit depends on the level of intensity.

Śaṅkarācārya got the inspiration to write this work after meeting a very old person in Kāśī. This person was studying

Sanskrit grammar, including original verbal roots. Instead of working for spirituality, he was absorbed only in grammar. When Śaṅkarācārya met him, the man was repeating the rules from his book. “Kṛ” is the verbal root (dhātu) from which many forms are derived. There are nine forms—one each for singular, dual, and plural, and first person, second person, and third person. Each of these forms also changes based on tense: past, present, and future.

Using that person as a starting point, Śaṅkarācārya addressed all humanity and composed this text.

Śaṅkarācārya addresses the Kāśī paṇḍit as mūḍha-mateḥ—one who is confused about the purpose of life. Mūḍha-mati means a deluded person. Choose Lord Govinda as the ultimate goal of life, because He can be a permanent support, like an anchor. There is nothing in this world that is stationary; everything is affected by time. If you want to live meaningfully in this world, you must hold on to something that does not move. That stable anchor is Govinda, the Lord.

One meaning of the word go is cow. Go also means earth, and go also means the sense organs. In short, Govinda indicates Paramātmā. First seek and understand your relationship with Paramātmā. All other relationships will come and go, but the relationship with the Lord—Govinda—alone is permanent. Establish that relationship first.

Every object in creation is constantly attacked by kāla (time), personified as Yama Dharma Rāja. When Yama draws near, only the Lord can give security. The conqueror of time is the Lord alone. If you want to hold on to the Lord at that time, you must start practicing now. “O Lord, come into my mind along with Pārvatī and occupy my mind.” At the time of death, other than the Lord, nothing else can rescue us.

Class 3

Any study of material disciplines—like grammar, language, and

logic—is called aparā vidyā. Knowledge that speaks about mokṣa, or liberating wisdom, is called parā vidyā. Aparā vidyā is relevant as a stepping-stone to parā vidyā. Material knowledge is the means, and spiritual knowledge is the end. One can never come to parā vidyā without the help of aparā vidyā; without language, a guru cannot teach a śiṣya. At the same time, aparā vidyā remains incomplete without leading us to parā vidyā. Both are complementary—as means and end. When I do not understand this relationship, I am mūḍha-matī.

Verse 2

Another field in which there is widespread delusion is money or wealth. There are two extremes:

1. Some people claim money is everything, giving excessive importance to money.
2. Some people say money is dangerous and one should not touch money at all.

One is overestimation; the other is underestimation. Śāstra says we should avoid both extremes and have clarity regarding the role of wealth.

Everything in creation is a manifestation of the Lord. The entire creation may be seen as involving three factors, and all three are important for human life:

1. Knowledge, revered as Sarasvatī. We respect all knowledge, both parā and aparā.
2. Power or physical health, revered as Durgā Devī. We need strength to function and move.
3. Wealth. Money alone gets converted into food, shelter, and infrastructure.

All three are important and complementary. All three must be revered and respected.

Money has a significant role to play, but we must know its role—and also what money cannot give.

The first misconception is that money is the source of human happiness. Money can provide physical comfort, which is external and connected to the body. Happiness has nothing to do with physicality; happiness is an inner condition of the mind. There is no necessary cause–effect relationship between money and happiness. If there were, all rich people would be happy and all poor people would be unhappy. But we see many rich people who are not happy, and some even take their own lives. We also see many people with little money living happy lives.

The second misconception is that money is the source of security. This can be negated with similar reasoning. Money itself often becomes a cause of fear and insecurity, because we add the “security of money” to our list of worries. Security is an inner sense and has nothing to do with money by itself.

Money and happiness have no guaranteed link. Money and security have no guaranteed link. Money and contentment have no guaranteed link. You cannot obtain happiness, security, and contentment merely through money.

According to śāstra, the primary purpose of money is to do noble work and to maintain family infrastructure. Dhārmic karma is possible only with money. Dharma alone will lead to security, happiness, and contentment. Therefore, give up greed for accumulating more and more money in the hope of gaining greater security, happiness, and contentment. Develop an attitude of contentment. Learn to be happy with whatever you can legitimately earn. The amount is not important; learn to be content with that. Happiness is not what I possess; it is a habit I cultivate.

Grammar represents aparā vidyā, or worldly education. We often treat it as an end in itself, but it should lead to spiritual education. The same principle applies to money as well. Money should lead to noble actions and purification of the mind. Money cannot directly lead to peace and happiness.

Verse 3

Now the topic is kāma, or desire. Desires are of two types:

1. Acquired desire (āgantuka kāma): This varies from individual to individual; it is not universal. It depends on time, space, and personality. One may like coffee and another tea. These desires can be acquired over time and also dropped over time.

2. Natural desire (svābhāvika kāma), or instinctive desire: desire for security, health, comfort, etc. These are universal. Mutual attraction between male and female in any species falls under this.

In Verse 3, Śaṅkarācārya deals with mutual male/female attraction. To handle this, we should have clarity and avoid delusion. Because this is a natural desire, we do not have a choice regarding its existence, and we are not responsible for its existence; therefore we should not feel guilty about its presence. At the same time, we do have a choice regarding activating and nourishing this attraction.

It is perfectly acceptable to choose not to activate or promote this desire; that is called a brahmacarya vrata. It is not compulsory for everyone to take this vow. Otherwise, the desire should be activated and expressed deliberately and properly. Śāstra prescribes the gr̥hasthāśrama for this purpose. If handled improperly, it becomes moha, an obstruction to spiritual progress.

The second method of handling this desire is to recognize that the physical body is made of flesh, bones, etc.—a gross

personality subject to aging and destruction. Any pleasure derived through the physical body is limited. Human beings have the capacity to discover a superior, more lasting joy—spiritual joy. Through the discovery of this nitya (lasting) ānanda, kāma becomes irrelevant or effectively nonexistent—like stars that are present but not visible during daytime. This possibility belongs uniquely to human beings; animals do not have it. Humans alone can transcend this svābhāvika desire by discovering the higher ānanda. Choose the ānanda that comes from spirituality as nitya ānanda.

Therefore, use the discrimination method first and supplement it with the second method.

Verse 5

We have a limited time period to accomplish the ultimate goal; therefore, do not postpone this pursuit.

- About 50% of life is spent in sleep or a sleepy condition. In a 100-year life, this is 50 years.
- Of the remaining 50 years, about 25 years are lost because one is either too young or too old.
- That leaves 25 years. Even during that time, we may be sick, we may lose someone or something, or we may be compelled to work and earn—so we do not find time for spirituality.

Therefore, do not postpone spiritual pursuit; the best time is the present.

Vyādhī refers to a physical ailment affecting the sthūla śarīra, and mental hurt also obstructs the pursuit. When conditions are reasonably supportive, pursue spirituality.

Class 5

The main teaching so far is that whatever we have in our lives is only a temporary gift. The Lord has the right to take it

away from us. Since it is a temporary gift, the Lord does not expect us to claim ownership as “mine.” We should use these gifts for spiritual growth. If we do so successfully, whenever the Lord comes to take them away, we will be comfortable returning them. If this is not clear, it is delusion. Viveka, or wisdom, is remembering this constantly. We should use this wisdom to gain mokṣa. This is the essence of Bhaja Govindam.

Verse 5

In this verse, Śaṅkarācārya refers to the love we receive from people. Any love we receive in the world is conditional love. Unconditional love is not available in the world, except from Bhagavān and a jñānī. In a family, if a person contributes to the well-being of the family, that person enjoys a certain status. Suppose that person ceases to be a contributor; then the quality of love undergoes subtle change. If the person becomes a burden, the quality of love can change further. Love varies from contributor to non-contributor to liability. There is no absolute love coming from anybody. If I expect unconditional love, or if I mistake conditional love for unconditional love, that is moha. I am expecting something from the world that it is not capable of giving.

Verse 6

These are bitter truths, and many people get disturbed by reading Bhaja Govindam. People, money, and anything I hold on to are temporary.

The next delusion is with regard to our own physical body. My body is valuable, but do not overestimate it or become overly attached to it. Use the body to obtain knowledge and wisdom. Convert the body into a disposable śarīra. When prāṇa departs, the body is reduced to a corpse; even the closest person is afraid to keep the body at home for long.

Verse 7 (not in all books)

This verse deals with delusion regarding money. We think money is the cause of happiness. If money and happiness always occur together, then one might infer a cause–effect relationship. But money is not only a potential source of comfort; it is also a source of distress and pain. In a rich family, discussions begin about assets, wills, inheritance, and so on. Money can create havoc. Do not overestimate its value. Money should be used for noble work—for citta-śuddhi, jñānam, etc.

Verse 7

When we were babies, we were not interested in bhakti, Bhagavān, temples, etc. We did not know the value of prayer. When a person becomes a youth, there is a natural attraction to the other sex. Then there is little time to pursue what is truly worthwhile.

Class 6

One of the biggest delusions is that spiritual pursuits can be postponed to the later part of life. There are two problems with this attitude:

1. We do not know how long we will live. Therefore, postponement is a delusion and a mistake.
2. If a person is immersed in materialism, a sudden shift to spiritual pursuit is not easy. Therefore, interest and training in spirituality should begin early. The proportion of time may differ at different stages, but we should gradually transition toward greater spiritual pursuit.

Verse 8

Śaṅkarācārya deals with delusion regarding family in this verse. The jīva already existed as a jīva in pūrva-janma; the mother does not “create” the jīva. The mother is responsible for the present body, which is only a temporary residence for

a few years. If you separate yourself from the body, you do not have parents at all. If you consider all your janmas, you may have had millions of parents. You cannot take any one set as “the” parents absolutely.

Verses 9 and 10 are skipped for now.

Verse 11

Delusion is caused by youth, wealth, and the people around us. In youth, we become arrogant. We are proud of wealth and health. Many people admire us, and that makes youth even more arrogant. Work for something that Yama cannot touch.

Verse 12

Human beings tend to keep postponing spiritual study. For beginning spirituality, now is the auspicious time. Time and seasons come and go.

Verse 9

Suppose Śaṅkarācārya’s effort succeeds and you are awakened. You cannot know by yourself how the spiritual journey should be undertaken; a guru is required. Slowly you will find that you have all the qualifications required for mokṣa. When ignorance is removed, you discover the Lord within yourself; previously, ignorance covered this fact.

Verse 10

This points out how knowledge leads to liberation or independence. Dependence on the external world is purely because of ignorance. When ignorance is removed, kāraṇa and kārya go away; saṃsāra is gone. Three examples illustrate that when the cause goes away, the effect goes away:

1. Desire forces a person to work for the fulfillment of desire. This is possible only when there is youth and strength. When youth is gone, strength is gone.

2. The reason for a reservoir is water. When the water is gone, the reservoir is meaningless; when water is gone, where is the question of a reservoir?

3. What keeps people around me? Money keeps people around me. When money is gone, I may not have people around me.

Therefore, destroy delusion, seek the Lord, approach a guru, and gain jñānam. Jñānam destroys ignorance; then you become a free person.

The first 12 verses are compared to 12 flowers. These 12 verses were composed by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the master of all śāstras and the embodiment of compassion. The remaining verses were composed by his disciples.

Class 7

The second portion of Bhaja Govindam consists of verses composed by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's disciples.

Another title for Bhaja Govindam is Moha Mudgara—like a hammer destroying our delusions by repeated striking.

Human beings often become deluded by taking the means as the end. For example, money and the physical body are only means, but often we take them as the ultimate end. The physical body is a means to accomplish enlightenment, but we treat it as an end and spend our life beautifying it.

Throughout the first portion, one point emphasized is that we can discern the following truths:

1. Nothing is fully predictable; the future is unpredictable.
2. Even if some factors are predictable, because of limited power we cannot control all factors.
3. Even if we manage to keep factors favorable, we can never sustain them permanently.

Instability is the intrinsic nature of everything. Therefore, when we are surrounded by unstable things, we cannot feel stable. As long as a human being depends on an unstable setup, that person will have constant insecurity. Emotional security is not possible when we depend on an unstable setup.

What is “emotional insurance”? We think that by relying on the world, relatives, and friends we gain emotional insurance. But we do not gain lasting emotional security, because friends may die, relationships may change, and conditions may shift. Only one thing can give permanent emotional security, and that is Govinda. Even if everything—money, friends, relatives, job, etc.—goes away, I have something to fall back on, and that is Govinda. Use God for permanent security.

Each disciple of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya offers a verse to the guru. This forms the second part of Bhaja Govindam. Before each śloka, the name of the disciple appears. Some ślokas highlight virtues to nourish; others highlight human weaknesses.

Verse 13

In this verse, Padmapāda emphasizes the virtue of sat-saṅga (satsaṅga), association with mahatmas, and gradual disassociation from those who pursue only artha and kāma. It is not wrong to pursue artha and kāma, but they are uncontrollable, unsustainable, and unpredictable. Therefore, we should gradually shift emphasis from artha–kāma to dharma–mokṣa.

Sense objects and sense pleasures are viṣaya. Attachment to sense pleasures binds us. Padmapāda questions those who are attached to sense pleasures: “What is this inexhaustible passion? Why can we not pursue something superior?” If we hold on to sense pleasures, we will not have lasting security. We must approach sādhu-puruṣas and learn.

Our scriptures speak of four goals of human life: artha (wealth), kāma (sense pleasures), dharma (moral values), and mokṣa. Dharma serves two purposes: first, it provides mental peace and health; second, it prepares the mind for spiritual enlightenment. Mokṣa is spiritual liberation.

In the early stages of life, our mind is not mature enough to understand the significance of dharma and mokṣa. Therefore, we are often obsessed with artha and kāma. The Veda allows this, but expects us to understand the limitations of artha and kāma and to mature into dharma and mokṣa. Artha and kāma need not be totally eliminated, but their importance should reduce, and the importance of dharma and mokṣa should increase. This gradual change is indicated by the four āśramas. The easiest and most effective way is to maintain regular contact with a jñānī.

Saṃsāra is shifting from one perishable to another and getting “burnt” in the process. We should cross over from the perishable to the imperishable to avoid saṃsāra. Satsaṅga constantly reminds us not to depend on perishables and teaches us independence.

Verse 14

Sotakācārya (Toṭakācārya), a great disciple of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, composed this śloka.

Shifting priority from artha-kāma to dharma-mokṣa is not easy. We develop a strong addiction to money; the world constantly tells us money is important. Our obsession with money and sense pleasures is built up over years. Therefore, external transformation may be easier, but bringing a corresponding change in the mind is difficult. Internal transformation is difficult, but it is more important.

Renounce obsession with artha and kāma; if one has not renounced this obsession, one is not mature enough for enlightenment. External appearance can be a show for society.

Toṭakācārya warns: one may cheat society, but one cannot cheat the Lord. Give importance to internal transformation.

A sannyāsī has only three supports: guru, śāstra, and Īśvara.

Jainism accepts tapas as the most important sādhanā for liberation.

Verse 15

This verse is attributed to Hastāmalaka Ācārya. He wrote Hastāmalakīyam—twelve verses that present the essence of Vedānta. He is called Hastāmalaka because he could “see” the Ātman clearly, like one can clearly see a gooseberry (āmalaka) in the palm of the hand.

People may not always have an opportunity for satsaṅga and learning from mahatmas to understand the limitations of the world, because much of the world is obsessed with money and pleasure. Another opportunity is life itself—especially experiences of loss, including losing objects and people we hold dear. An intelligent person learns from these losses. Every loss indirectly teaches that nothing in creation is stable. The ultimate source of love and care is the Lord, and that Lord is within ourselves.

Class 9

Gradually change priority from an artha-kāma-pradhāna life to a dharma-pradhāna life. To accomplish this, there are many methods. Many scriptures guide us, and Bhagavān teaches us through life experiences. Despite all these methods, if we refuse to learn, we make the omnipotent Bhagavān “impotent,” as it were—because we refuse His teaching.

Verse 16

Our śāstras speak of four āśramas, and each āśrama involves transformation of human life:

1. External: the dress code itself changes. The dress for a brahmacārī is different from that of a gṛhastha.

2. Internal: equally important.

Of these two, internal transformation is primary. External transformation is for convenience and is secondary. A sannyāsī is supposed to dedicate life to spiritual pursuit. A sannyāsī who changes clothes but not inner attitude gives the wrong message to society. This also creates tremendous strain for the sannyāsī.

The purpose of sannyāsa āśrama is to provide time for reflection and freedom from preoccupation. A sannyāsī limits preoccupations by limiting four factors:

1. Possessions (we must plan to protect and maintain them)
2. Obligations (every duty causes mental preoccupation)
3. Relations (every relationship causes mental preoccupation)
4. Transactions (every transaction causes preoccupation)

Sannyāsa āśrama reduces all four and is meant for total spiritual pursuit.

Verse 17

Five basic principles of Vedantic teaching:

1. Lasting peace, security, and happiness are possible only through mokṣa.
2. Mokṣa is possible only through spiritual knowledge.
3. Spiritual knowledge is possible only through systematic education with the help of guru and śāstra.
4. Systematic spiritual education is possible only if one has a prepared mind.

5. A prepared mind is accomplished through various spiritual exercises like japa, rituals, dānam, etc.

For lasting peace and security, there is only one path—mokṣa. Many paths exist only for preparing the mind.

Prepare, learn, know, and be free.

Verse 18

Spiritual pursuit requires reduction of possessions, obligations, relations, and transactions. Among these, possessions often create the most preoccupation because possessions lead to more possessions, and then they must be cleaned, repaired, maintained, etc. Try to simplify life. External clutter leads to cluttered thinking. You do not require “more and more” to be happy.

Class 10

Verse 18

External possessions have no direct connection to mental peace and happiness. Peace is connected with what we are, not what we have. External possessions can provide physical comfort, but physical comfort does not guarantee mental peace.

Verse 19

This verse was written by Ānandagiri, who also wrote sub-commentaries to many of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya’s commentaries.

Inner transformation is the primary goal of life because:

1. Inner transformation itself can give peace, security, and happiness even without external transformation.
2. External transformation cannot be fully achieved by a human being because world-forces are too many. We cannot change most of them; the external world cannot be totally changed.

For inner transformation, the śāstras prescribe the four stages of life. Initially one takes to active life; through karma one purifies the mind—this is pravṛtti mārga. After purification, one withdraws from excessive involvement; through enlightenment one gains mokṣa—this is nivṛtti mārga. A change in lifestyle is not compulsory. One need not withdraw physically to a forest; one can withdraw mentally and dedicate oneself to spirituality.

Do not give excessive importance to external circumstances. If the mind is no longer dependent on an unpredictable, uncontrollable, and unsustainable creation, and instead depends on stable Brahman, that person is secure and safe. Mental stability is possible only by holding on to something stable. Without mental stability, peace is not possible. The only stable “thing” is Brahman. You need not renounce the world, but do not depend on the world.

Verse 20

Three basic disciplines for mokṣa:

1. Scriptural study, because you must know the teaching. You need not study all scriptures; the essence is available in the Bhagavad Gītā.
2. At least sip Gaṅgā water. This is symbolic; pilgrimage requires tapas. A pilgrimage represents forgoing comfort. Tapas is deliberate self-denial to establish mastery over the sense organs. Mokṣa is emotional freedom from all addictions.
3. At least once a day, worship the Lord. A house can be made into a temple through regular pūjā. (The spirit of the teaching is that a dhārmic home becomes protected through devotion and discipline.)

Verse 21

Nityanātha wrote this verse.

Every human being has one common problem: saṃsāra. Saṃsāra means moving from one setup to another, from one condition to another, from one situation to another. We have been doing this since birth. Even death is not the end, because everyone is reborn. Being repeatedly born and repeatedly dying is the human condition. It is extremely difficult to get out of this cycle of time. Only one “reality” is outside this cycle: Brahman.

Class 11

In this section, the author mentions the importance of Īśvara kṛpā. Spiritual pursuit is not easy because obstacles arise from oneself, from known external factors, and from unknown external factors. Therefore, human effort must be reinforced with Īśvara kṛpā. Effort and grace are like the two wings of a bird; a bird can fly high only when both wings function. Similarly, spiritual pursuit succeeds when there is both effort and grace. That is why we pray: to protect ourselves from obstacles.

Verse 22

Here the disciple speaks about the glory of a yogi or an enlightened sannyāsī. He is on a spiritual path leading to truth beyond puṇya and pāpa. A sannyāsī gives up possessions, obligations, relations, and transactions (PORT). We may pity such a person, but he is full of inner riches, even though he is “poor” from the standpoint of worldly possessions and transactions. Society pities him, but he pities society. His mind is ever fixed upon self-knowledge. Voluntary poverty is simplicity. The world measures richness and poverty in terms of possessions.

Verse 23

“Who are you? Who am I? Who is my mother? Who is my father? From where do all these people come, and what is their nature?” A body is simply a name given to a bundle of flesh

and bone. By inquiring into the nature of the world, reflect that the world is name and form, and that name and form are changing and unstable. If I hold on to this unstable nāma-rūpa, how will I get stability in my life? This world is like a dream. The world is like a decorated cardboard chair—use it for decoration, but do not sit on it.

Verse 24

On inquiry, the whole world is reduced to name and form. The differences we experience are differences only in name and form. There is only one ultimate substance, which is Ātman or Brahman. Here the author refers to this ultimate reality as Viṣṇu. When you focus on superficial differences, it leads to rāga, dveṣa, etc. When you focus on advaitam, there is no conflict. Focus on non-difference rather than superficial differences.

Verse 25

We look at the world through “private eyes,” colored by our likes and dislikes. We divide the world into favorable and unfavorable. People become friends and foes. Constantly, every moment, we generate friends and foes around us. This becomes an endless dilemma. Therefore, do not waste your energy and life fighting with people and patching things up. If you want to attain mokṣa, spend more time in spiritual sādhanā.

Verse 26

Obstacles may come from outside, but you cannot run away from internal obstacles. The internal obstacles are:

1. Kāma: obsession or passion for the external world, making the mind extrovert.
2. Krodha: disturbs the mind; the mind is not available for spiritual pursuit.
3. Lobha: greed to possess more and more.

4. Moha: delusion—expecting security from insecure objects; expecting permanence from impermanent things.

Inquire into your real nature and discover the secure Ātman within yourself.

Class 12

Verse 27

The entire spiritual sādhanā is described in the first two verses: remove kāma, krodha, lobha, and moha by following karma yoga, and know the Ātman through jñāna yoga. Those who do not know this are tormented in the world of mortality. Even higher lokas involve mortality. Wherever there is mortality, there is insecurity and pain.

Verse 28

This verse talks about four fundamental sādhanās:

1. Pārāyaṇam of scriptures. Scriptural knowledge is not compulsory for everyone. The Vedas should be chanted with utmost care; therefore, it may be preferable not to do Veda-pārāyaṇam casually. Instead, do pārāyaṇam of non-Vedic scriptures and stotras.

2. Dhyānam or upāsanam: meditate upon the Lord.

3. Sat-saṅga (satsaṅga): develop interest in satsaṅga; remain in touch with informed guides.

4. Dānam: charity; a percentage of income should be allocated to charity.

According to our facility, capacity, and capability, we can follow any of these, in any order.

Verse 29

Many people dedicate their whole life to earning wealth and

then using it exclusively for sense pleasure. When we draw joy from Rāma, it is real and elevating. When we indulge in sense pleasures, addictions arise, leading to overindulgence and various diseases.

Such a person keeps accumulating things and takes ownership of as many things as possible. But we cannot own anything; everything is a temporary gift from Bhagavān. Whatever we have is a temporary gift—use it, and return it with gratitude when it is taken back. Using is our aim; owning is not our aim. Even though death will end all ownership and everything we “own” will be snapped away, we often fail to understand this.

Verse 30 & 31

What is the goal of life? Many people think sense pleasure is the ultimate goal. But the goal of life is not indulgence in sense pleasure or increasing the number of things we own. Constantly discriminate between what is nityam and what is anityam. Use discretion and fix your goal properly.

Practice prāṇāyāma, which improves both physical and mental health. Choose any name of the Lord you like for japa. This can lead to samādhi, absorption in that mantra. Complete absorption is samādhi. Be alert and committed to these disciplines: breathing control, sense control, inquiry, practice of samādhi, and constant alertness.

Verse 32

Two important general disciplines:

1. Necessity of a spiritual guide: be humble and accept the guidance of someone who knows. Surrender to that teacher. Real bhakti is seeking guidance and following it. Establish a systematic educational program to receive the teaching and follow it.

2. Making oneself fit to receive the teaching: mastery of indriyas and mind. Before beginning the journey, ensure that

the indriyas are disciplined. This leads to the discovery of one's higher nature, Ātman. Whatever one seeks in life—immortality, purity, fulfillment—Ātman alone can provide. This is freedom from saṃsāra.

Self-management and the guidance of a guru together lead to fulfillment and independence.

Concluding verses

When Śaṅkarācārya was in Kāśī, an old man was repeating a grammar rule of Pāṇini. Language is a means, not an end. Śaṅkarācārya and his disciples point out that life is not meant for grammar alone, but for enlightenment. After this teaching, the man recognized his folly, became free of his delusion, and decided to change the direction of his life.

Spiritual sādhanā can be started at any age, as long as one starts at some point.

Follow nāma-smaraṇam until you find a guide. Liberation will not come directly from nāma-smaraṇam alone, but it creates the ideal condition for further sādhanā.

Baghawad Gita, Class 203: Verses 15 to 19

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said,

From the 7th verse of the 16th chapter, Sri Krishna is talking about asuri sampat, which we have to know as an obstacle to spiritual growth; and therefore, we should take all pains to avoid these traits; And asuri sampat includes, rakshasic Sampath. Asuri sampat means raga pradhāna life; a life in

which raga or attachment is dominant; rajasic raga is dominant and rakshasic sampat is that in which dwesha pradhāna behavior, tamasic behavior is dominant. In raga pradhāna life, one is utterly selfish and in dwesha pradhāna life, a person harms other people. Only difference is when I am selfish, I do not directly and immediately harm the people, but in the long run, a selfish person affects the society because he takes more and gives less to the society. And therefore, this behavior will create a disharmony in the society in due course, and it will hurt the society and also the very selfish person himself. but this disturbance is not immediately felt, it is a gradually poisoning of the society. Thus, a raga pradhāna person hurts the society very gradually, whereas dwesha pradhāna person hurts the society immediately and directly. But both of them harm the harmony of the society and both of them harm themselves, ultimately. And Sri Krishna is describing both asuri people as well as the rakshasic people; both are included.

And we generally call them materialistic people; or artha kama pradhāna people who do not value dharma and moksha. And we should remember when we criticize the materialistic people or materialism, we are not against the materialism totally.

Criticism of materialism must be carefully understood. We are not against materials, because we need them for our living; we require money for food, we require money for shelter. So, we are not against money and materials; we do not want to hate money and materials; but what we are criticizing is the over-emphasis of artha kama to such an extent, that this person has no time for dharma and moksha. And therefore, if we are not careful from attachment to money; we may go to the other extreme of hatred of money. If attachment to money is an evil; hatred of money is also equally an evil. And that is why in our culture money is seen as Lakshmi devi. Please give respect to money; even a sanyasi has to respect money, because money alone fetches the food that he eats; money alone fetches the

dress that he is wearing; and if he has an ashram, money alone runs the ashram not Gita and Upanishads. Therefore, attachment is an evil; hatred is an equal evil. A balanced attitude towards money is what we are recommending and what is a balanced attitude? Use the money for spiritual growth; earn the wealth and use it for spiritual growth of yourselves as well as the other people. And these materialistic people do not have this balanced vision and therefore, they are obsessed with materialistic thing, they do not understand that behind the matter, there is spirit. Behind the body, there is atma, respect the body, respect the atma also. This is the balanced approach which the asuric people are missing.

And ,therefore, Sri Krishna is describing their thought pattern; what preoccupies their mind most of the time; they are obsessed with what type of thinking most of the time; our scriptures point out that one should start the day with thought of the Lord, as I said; think of Lakshmi, but have some time to think of Narayana also. How can you be so selective concentrating on Lakshmi only and miss Narayana? These people do not have the balance. And therefore what happens, we were seeing from verse No.13, the pattern of their thinking all the time is calculative wondering what all things they have acquired in life, and what all things they plan to acquire and how they want to implement those desires; And not only they are interested in things, they are interested in wealth also, only for their wellbeing and anybody who obstructs this, they consider as a competitor; a rival and they do not have any scruples at all. They want to finish off all those obstacles without any compunction.

Just as big companies swallow the small companies. They say in globalization, at the end, there will be only a few international giant companies and they can adjust the market itself in such a way; because they can afford that all these small people will be swallowed and they will be so powerful that they can even change the government.

These are the materialistic people; and their thinking is, I am the most powerful person; I alone enjoy, power and money; I am the most successful person, the strongest and given to all types of enjoyment.

Shloka 16.15:

[illegible]

16.15 'I am rich and high-born; who else is there similar to me? I shall perform sacrifices; I shall give, I shall rejoice,'-thus they are diversely deluded by non-discrimination.

These are the thoughts of the materialistic people.

I am the richest person and I belong a noble family, although it is doubtful if he even knows the Gayathri.

A culture which has started from millennia before, all of them have been surrendered at the altar of money.

Bhrthari in his Vairagya shatakam looks back: Oh Lord in search of money what all I did; I dug all part of earth, hoping to get some wealth from ground; I went in search of all types of ores, to extract the metals, gold, silver, etc. I went in search of; I went all round the globe in search of the wealth and for this travel, I have to please so many bureaucrats and politicians and counsels and all types of people; I did not propitiate the devatas and gods; I propitiated all these arrogant human beings;

What all should not have been eaten, I ate, all for the purpose of business promotion; I went to the black money people , I ate all kinds of things which are banned in the religion, what all should not be drunk, eaten, everything I did contrarily, in concentrated form; At least am I happy now; at the fag end of my life; I have not improved anything at

all; only losing the culture and tradition; is only the thing that happens; You read Bhrthari, you will feel like running away; so powerful is his writing;

So, he says; I belong to wonderful family but I did not make use of the advantage that I had; I squandered this manuṣya Jenma advantage and the rival won and I lost.

Bhrthari says such a person is the embodiment of arrogance. He does not believe in the scriptural study or puja, but still he wants to perform certain rituals, not for

inner growth; but for the publicity. And therefore, he says; I will do big rituals and make sure that it is captured in the photos and videos so that my name will

spread. Even puja is done only to pump his arrogance.

I will give charity but I will make sure that my name appears in the appropriate newspaper in the appropriate magazine;

When person after person comes and glorifies me, institutions glorify me, because they need my money, they will glorify and all adding to the ego which is the cause of spiritual destruction. More bloated the ego is, less the chances of spiritual growth.

And Sri Krishna says, thus, all these people are utterly deluded and confused; they do not know, they are digging their spiritual grave, they do not know what is good and what is bad; and they are suffering. In fact, Lord is angry with those people and only feels pity for them. And Lord has provided methods of avoiding these traps. We have got mahatmas to guide us; we have got the scriptures to guide us; from these traps; but the problem is that he does not make use of them, because his arrogance does not allow him to go to a Mahatma or even read a few verses of the Geeta.

And therefore, Bhagavan says, medicine is there; but he does

not make use of it

And Bhagavan cannot come and force the medicine down his throat. Bhagavan has given us something called grey matter.

Therefore, Sri Krishna says: he is deluded by utter ignorance. And as I have often said, ignorance itself is not a sin; because all of us are born with ignorance; In

fact, that is our capital; that is the only wealth we all uniformly brought. Therefore, ignorance in itself is not sin; but perpetuation of ignorance is the greatest sin;

because Bhagavan has provided methods for the removal of ignorance, he has provided wonderful pramanams, but these people do not expose themselves to them.

Shloka 16.16

16.16

16.16 Bewildered by numerous thoughts, caught in the net of delusion, (and) engrossed in the enjoyment of desirable objects, they fall into a foul hell.

Therefore deluded by ignorance; carried away by the abovementioned thought patterns; given in the previous three slokas, 13, 14, and 15, they are immersed and lost in, a network of moha or delusion, or misconception, the misconception being that money and possessions will give the ultimate goal, will give the ultimate security, will give everything that I want. Thus, we have a set of beautiful sayings: **They say money can buy a house, but it cannot buy a home; money can buy bed, but money cannot buy sleep; money can buy people; but money cannot buy love. In fact, money can buy many things; but all-important things in life, like peace, knowledge, love, all these things money cannot buy; But these people do not understand this and it is called moha.**

A materialistic society will use all its resources only to improve methods of entertainment. That is the indication of a materialist society; whether there is material resources or scientific advancement, all

of them will be used to improve sense pleasures and they think that is the growth of the society; and that is why, you can find in India, any scientific improvement comes first, it will be used in religious field; TV, Ramayana and Mahabharata serials. All swamis will start appearing in TVs. that is our culture; any

scientific advancement, we imagine, we think of using for spiritual purpose; that is called a healthy society; a materialistic society will think of improving sense

pleasures; and these materialistic people are lost in entertainment and enjoyment of sense objects.

And even medical advancement, they want to use the body to become younger and younger so that again that the body can be used not for spiritual sadhana but for, how I can be young at the 90th year.

So, what will happen to them?

Sri Krishna gets so wild; he says they will go to hell. Animals are the only living beings which have got only two purusārthas; after-all animals work for their

security; animals work for their enjoyment; animals do not know what is dharma; animals do not know what is moksha; animals do not require veda purva; animals do

not require veda anta.

This inferior life is called is called narakam. Spiritually inferior life is called naraka for one's who are spiritually backward. Such a person falls.

Shloka 16.17

॥ अहंकारं, दम्भं, मत्तुष्टिं, श्रद्धां, धनं, शक्तिं, ॥ १६.१७ ॥

॥ अहंकारं, दम्भं, मत्तुष्टिं, श्रद्धां, धनं, शक्तिं, ॥

Self-conceited, haughty, filled with pride and intoxication of wealth, they perform sacrifices which are so in name only, with ostentation and regardless of the injunctions.

When our dharma shastras talk about a dharmic way of life, it is a way of life in which I maintain harmony at all levels. It starts with internal harmony; harmony between my thought, word and deed, is internal harmony. Even my eating, sleeping, etc.

should have a harmony, even among the various organs of the body, there should be harmony. It starts with internal harmony; then I lead a lifestyle in which there is harmony in the family; among the various members. There is no stress; strain or tension, I am not

uncomfortable I should feel at home. That is why it is called a home; inter-action should be smooth, well-oiled, there should not be any friction

And similarly, I should have harmony in the society; and therefore, social customs, social manners, politeness, etiquette; all of them are also part of dharma.

Dharma is not mere religious activity but even social interaction must be in keeping with harmony. And therefore, every refined civilized society has its own manners all indicating my refined conduct and behavior expressed in my body language.

The way you stand; the way you sit; the way you talk, the way you eat; because the body language communicates something and therefore in our culture, they say; we all have as children, we have experienced, when some mahatma or somebody comes, our

parents will say sit properly, how you hold your hands, your head, your legs; therefore these are all body language should convey, respect, love, humility; and not only body language should convey my refinement; even my words should convey my refinement; that in a group, I do not dominate by talking all the time.

And Sri Krishna says when a materialistic person grows in money and power, chances are he becomes more and more puffed up with power and pride. He becomes more and more gross. He becomes more and more desensitized and he does not bother about his behavior; his conduct, his manners, his language and the

first causality is humility; and the unfortunate thing is when I become a man of power and wealth, there will be always a coterie of sycophants around me. They want to take advantage of my power and money; and therefore, they will come and they will glorify me

An oft quoted shloka says: Once you have got money and power, everybody would come and say, that you are beautiful, you are cultured; and your language is

wonderful, you are educated, they will do namaskar. Already arrogant, these people already pumped and their ego gets bloated and bloated, First humility goes

and then devotion to God disappears. Arrogance and Īśvara bhakti cannot go together. You study the life of all our rakshasas, whether it is Ravana or Kamsa, or

Hiranyakashipu, or Hiranyaksha, as money and power comes, arrogance comes, humility goes, and then devotion goes.

Once humility and devotion goes, the mahatmas will begin to avoid me; because where there is ego, the great people do not go there, as God is absent; and therefore mahatmas avoid; Therefore my few chances of correcting myself is also gone; if

I have at least some great people around; they will tell me as it is.

Brhathari says:

A few cultured and refined people you associate with; they will guide me; but in the case of this person, Mahatmas go away gradually; and sycophants surround me, and they will further see to it that all my culture, manner, politeness, all of them go away as well. As we have read in purana, Kamsa refused to even to get up, when Sri Krishna came. So, these are all the problem.

Therefore, Krishna says, every namaskara I receive from others, can bloat my ahamkara; that is why there are people who do not take namaskara from

others; there are some swamis who do not allow; or if at all they do, they say that you do not receive the namaskara, quietly hand over to your guru; let him handle it; and what will your guru do, he will give his guru; and ultimately it will go to God, no problem, because God deserves all the namaskara.

Therefore, glorification is deadly and these people, they

are egoistic, power hungry, arrogant, full of materialistic desires; and full of anger, because they can get away with any form of behavior; because money and power

compensates. Therefore, nobody will criticize me, nobody will correct me; They will be dominating any group.

Because of dhanam, wealth, they have these weaknesses; they do lot of puja alright, but the puja should give them more humility; but if puja is not approached properly, instead of giving humility, that puja itself will add to arrogance; he will say that I have done this, I have done that; means pujas for names sake only; there is no heart in the puja but for

pomp and show.

Shloka 16.18

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 000000000000000000 00000000000000000000000000**16.18**

16.18 Resorting to egotism, power, arrogance, passion and anger, hating Me in their own and others' bodies, (they become) [As the finite verb is missing in the verse, we have supplied 'they become'. S. adds the verb *prabhavanti*, wax strong, from verse 9, and constructs the last portion thus: '□□.the envious ones wax strong.' Following S. S., however, one may combine this verse with the preceding verse by taking 'perform sacrifices' as the finite verb.-Tr.'] envious by nature.

So, all the refinement in his behavior is the causality; all the social etiquettes, humility, politeness in manners everything goes away, because there is nobody to correct him; and he can get away with all those things. Therefore, what all things happen? His life is dominated by ego, power; born out of status; with resulting arrogance; and desire and anger. And gradually this will lead to a nasthika svabhava also; because it is unconducive to devotion and therefore devotion will gradually get eroded.

So, they begin to hate me, says Sri Krishna; not only he begins to hate the Lord, he begins the hate the scriptures also; he becomes highly critical of the scriptures, which are supposed to be the gifts from the Lord himself.

Shloka 16.19:

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 □□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□**16.19**□□

16.19 I cast for ever those hateful, cruel, evil-doers in the worlds, the vilest of human beings, verily into the demoniac

classes.

So thus, religious life disappears from them; religious life goes away; religious practices goes away; and of course, spirituality also disappears.

They feel bad declaring that I am a Hindu; I am a vaidhika; they consider themselves secular.

We do not want to declare to anyone, and even the names are chosen in such a way, and you

do not know what they are; original name is Meenakshi, Kamakshi, but now they keep pinky, chinky, etc. but they do not want to reveal their identity.

They are also very rude in their behavior, lacking politeness, culture, and refinement. So, they are representatives of ashubha; ashubha means deterioration in spirituality; amangalam, means dharma and moksha deterioration, they are representatives of amangala.

And Sri Krishna says what can I do; I have to throw them into naraka. First, I try through scriptures and mahatmas; hoping that the scriptures and mahatmas will change the society; and when the society is so corrupted, that even the mahatmas and scriptures cannot change, I will take avathara and I will annihilate them.

Take away:

They say money can buy a house, but it cannot buy a home; money can buy bed, but money cannot buy sleep; money can buy people; but money cannot buy love. In fact, money can buy many things; but all-important things in life, like peace, knowledge, love, all these things money cannot buy;

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 185 – Chapter 14 Verses 10 to 19

When sattva guṇa is dominant jñānendryas will be more operational, whereas rājo guṇa is dominant, karmēndriyas will be more functional; whereas when tāmo guṇa is dominant, neither jñānendryas nor karmēndriyas will be operational. Tamo guna will suppress jñānendrya and make them dull. Tamo guna will also suppress karmēndriyas also and there will be no activities. A tamasic person should not go to vedanta vichAra, but start with sakama karma, then to niṣkāma karma, progress to Upasana and then only to vedanta.

The fourth topic is gathi or what direction each of dominant personalities will travel.

Verse 14

If a person dies when sattva is predominant, then, he attains those pure worlds belonging to the upsAakas of great deities.

If a sattva guna pradhāna ajñāni dies, he will go to higher and purer loka or punya predominant loka. When a jñāni dies, his bodies merge with prabañcha and a jñāni does not travel after death.

Verse 15

Having died when Rajas is predominant, one is born amidst those who are attached to action. Likewise, having died when tamas is predominant, one is born in the wombs of deluded being.

A rājo guna dominant person will be reborn in a loka in which people are given lot of karma, that is manuṣhya loka. In the

higher lokas and lower lokas you can't acquire new karma phalāḥṃ you can only exhaust karma phalāḥṃ. Only in manuṣya loka, a person can both acquire and exhaust karma phalāḥṃ.

When a tāmo guna predominant person dies, that person is reborn in lower planes of existence. It can be lower lokas or they will be born as animals or plants where they will have no free will to acquire fresh karma.

Verse 16

Scriptures say that the result of sattvic action is pure punya. The result of rajasic action is sorrow. Whereas the result of tamasic action is ignorance.

These verses discuss phalāḥṃ of each guna. Sattvic person's actions are free from anxiety, tension and there will be harmony and peace. There will be spiritual growth.

For a person is rajasic, there will be lot of activities, anxiety, tension, intolerance, stress and strain. There will be hurtful chain reaction among rajasic personalities. Even communication may breakdown after a while, and it will be a broken environment. There will be materialistic prosperity without spiritual growth and peace.

For a tamasic person, human life is wasted, and ignorance is perpetuated. Ajñānam or ignorance is the result of tamasic karma.

Verse 17

Knowledge is born out of sattva. Greed is born out of rajas. Negligence and delusion along with ignorance are born out of tamas.

Out of sattva guna jñāna is born, because jñānendryas are bright and operational. Knowledge increases by leaps and bounds.

When rājo guna is dominant there will be greed and ambition. Tāmo guna will result in forgetfulness, omission delusion conflict and indecisiveness. Perpetuation of ignorance will continue for a tamasic person..

Verse 18

Sattvic people go up. Rajasic people remain in the middle. Tamasic people, abiding by the functions of the lowest guna go down.

Sattva guna predominant person goes to higher loka. Rājo guna predominant person neither goes up nor goes down, and they stay stagnant. Tamo guna predominant person travel downward. Higher, middle and lower lokas refer to the quality of the lokas and not the physical location.

Verse 19

When the seer understands the doer to be none other than the gunas and knows the self which is beyond the gunas, he attains My nature

There is no escape from the bondage created by the three gunas; only the mode of bondage will be different. Sattva guna is addicted to knowledge predominant environment. A rājasa guna is addicted to activity predominant environment. AhaMkAra can never be free from gunas. It can only change the predominance of the gunas. The only way is to claim the higher nature of I, the sAkshi chaithanyam. sAkshi need not become guna free, because it never has any guna. So, there is no question of how to become guna free. You become guna free when you shift your identification from the lower I, the ego, ahaMkAra, anatma to higher I, consciousness, sAkshi chaithanyam, Atma. As long as I identify myself with body mind complex, I will be saguna ahaMkAra and I can never escape from saMsAra. The only solution is to know and identify with the higher nature and own up the higher nature.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 184 – Chapter 14 Verses 10 to 13

Our body mind complex is made up of three gunas, and ahaMkAra is part of body mind complex. As a result, we can't escape the three gunas and we are forced to live with the three gunas and saguna ahaMkAra. To handle the ahaMkAra, we must understand ahaMkAra and which guna is dominant in us and how the three gunas behave. We must understand how the three gunas impact our material life and spiritual life.

Definition:

- Satvic guna is a personality inclined to learn more and more; predisposed to acquire more knowledge.
- Rajo guna is a personality that tends to act more; tends to do more; and wants to use karmēndriya more than JñAnendriya;
- Tamo guna is a personality always in doubt, not sure what to do; in eternal conflict, delusion and procrastination.

How each guna bind:

- Satvic mind has a knowing tendency and naturally addicted to introspect, which is conducive to learning.
- Rajasic mind always wants to do something or other. And for that it needs infrastructure and karmēndriya. Rajasic mind is addicted to karma
- Tāmo guna mind is not sure about what infrastructure it needs. It is attached to negligence and carelessness.

Verse 10

Sattva manifests by overpowering rajas and tamas. Rajas (manifests by overpowering) sattva and tamas. Tamas (manifests by overpowering) sattva and rajas, Oh Arjuna!

Everything in creation is a product of prakriti and therefore everything has all three gunas, but the proportion is not uniform. Before creation, the three gunas were in equal proportion. After the creation, the distribution of the three gunas is disturbed and they are not in the equal proportion. Tāmo guna will be dominant in an inert object. Plant has a little bit more of sattva and rājo guna, but it doesn't have the capacity to learn and has a limited capacity of action like growing. Animals have more dominant rājo and sattva guna than plants. Humans have more rājo guna and sattva gunan than animals. All human beings do not have the same proportion of gunas; some of them have more sattva guna, some of them have more rājo guna and some have more tāmo guna.

For satvic person, satvic guna is dominant overpowering, rājo guna and tāmo guna. For a rajasic person, rājo guna is dominant overpowering sattva guna and tāmo guna. For a tamasic person tāmo guna is dominant, overpowering sattva guna and rājo guna.

However, a person's dominant guna (personality) can be transformed, but the rate of transformation may be different from person to person. All sadhanas in scriptures are meant for transforming gunas. Most people are born as tāmo guna predominant person (e.g. babies sleep more). Life has to start with karma and that is why scriptures prescribe karma yoga before jñāna yoga.

Rājo guna is of two types:

1. RTS: Rājo guna backed by Tāmo guna and followed by sattva guna. Such a person will be selfish for the

fulfilment of his own desires. Scriptures say start with selfish activities.

2. RST: Once selfishly active, convert this order to Rājo guna, followed by sattva guna and then followed by Tāmo guna. For this person, actions are selfless actions. The activities are beneficial to more people, not just for himself.

When the mind has become a mature mind, then convert the rajasic tendencies to satvic tendencies. Convert to a sattva guna dominant mind, followed by rājo guna and then followed by Tamo guna. RTS to RST to SRT. Inactivity to selfish activity to selfless activities to inquiry is our journey. When a person comes to the stage of inquiry, that person has already contributed to society through karma yoga and he should not have any feeling of guilt.

Progress from Guna Sudhra (less active) to guna vaishya (Selfishly active) to guna kShatriya (Selflessly active) to Guna brAhmaNa (Pursuit of knowledge).

Verse 11:

When the light of knowledge grows in all the sense organs in this body, then, one should know that sattva is predominant.

Lord Krishna is now entering the third topic, that is lingam: Indication or characteristics of gunas. How do we know which guna is dominant in us?

The five sense organs provide knowledge of external world. In a sattva guna dominant person, these five sense organs are bright, alert and have a great absorbing capacity.

Verse 12

Greed, activity, commencement of works, restlessness, and craving – these appear when rajas is predominant, Oh Arjuna!

When rājo guna is dominant, that person will always be active and not have time for inquiry. They will initiate many activities and projects. Their mind is ever restless and impatient. They also expect the same amount of speed from the people around them. Rajasic activities are very important for materialistic growth of a country.

Verse 13

Dullness, inaction, negligence and delusion – these appear when tamas is predominant, Oh Arjuna!

In a tamasic person, all the sense organs are dull. He is neither contemplative nor active. Both sattva guna and rājo guna are dominated by tāmo guna. He is negligent and careless. Does not know what he wants to do. Neither he can decide, nor will he take others advice.

Based on these lingam or indicators, we should infer the predominant guna in ourselves. Use this inference to gradually improve our character and gunas.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 183 – Chapter 14 Verses 6 to 9

Every individual is made up of two part – sakshi part, higher nature and ahaMkAra, the lower nature; the higher nature made up only consciousness or atma; the ahaMkAra, the lower part, is made up of body mind complex and enjoys reflected consciousness, because of which it becomes sentient. This is similar to a mirror which has two parts – the reflected light and the object in front of the mirror. Sakshi is neither the body nor the reflected consciousness, but the original

consciousness. The lower nature is saguna ahaMkAra and higher nature is nirguna sakshi. AhaMkAra is made up of prakriti. AhaMkAra is bound by the three gunas – satvic, rajasic or tamasic – only the proportion of each guna changes. That changes in proportion changes the type of bondage and samsara. AhaMkAra cannot escape the three gunas. We will have to renounce the three gunas and own up to higher nature. However, Lord Krishna states that to own up higher nature, we should use the three gunas – similar to a pole vaulter using the pole to cross the bar and then drop the pole.

Verse 6

Among them sattva is bright and harmless due to its purity. It binds by causing attachment to pleasure and by causing attachment to knowledge, Oh, Arjuna!

In the following verses, Lord Krishna describes the three gunas. The analysis of three gunas will be discussed in the following topics:

1. Definition of each guna
2. Mode or method of bondage
3. Indication of clue to find out which guna is predominant in one person
4. Course of travel taken by a jiva after death, based on each guna.
5. Consequence of the domination of each guna in this life

In verse 6 Lord Krishna discusses sattva lakshasam and bandhanam, in verse 7, he discusses rājasa lakshanam and bandhanam and in verse 8, he discusses tamasic lakshanam and bandhanam.

A sattva pradhana mind will have clarity, because it is not polluted by tamasic guna.

When sattva guna is influenced by tāmo guna, the mind will be

turbulent. But when sattva guna is not influenced by tāmō guna, the mind will be bright and calm, and have clarity in thinking. If rājo guna pollutes sattva guna, the mind will become restless. When rājo guna does not influence sattva guna, mind will be free from tension, stress, strain, and restlessness.

So, sattva guna is tranquil, bright and calm. But sattva guna is also bondage because a satvic mind seeks seclusion and tranquility. To be secluded and tranquil, external forces must be controlled. But external forces are difficult to control and when there is no seclusion, the satvic mind becomes disturbed and the quietude becomes raga. Sattva guna leads to noble dependence. A satvic mind is attached to tranquility and knowledge and is bound by greed for more knowledge or aparā vidyā. A satvic mind suffers from intellectual samsara.

Verse 7

Understand Rajas to be of the nature of passion and to be cause of desire and attachment. It binds the Self by causing attachment to activity, Oh Arjuna!

A rajasic mind is highly extroverted and wants to relate to things and people. Each guna plays its own role in our life and each one of them is required for life. We need all three gunas to attain moksha. Rājo guna has an ambitious mind and desires for possessions. Mind is full of desires – selfish desires and selfless desires. A rajasic mind wants to hold on to all possession. Rājo guna desires for things not yet possessed and attaches to things already possessed.

Karma is required for karma yoga, after that one must shift to jñāna yoga. The problem with rajasic person is he can't shift to jñāna yoga.

Verse 8

Understand tamas to be born of ajñānam and to be the deluder of all beings. It binds by causing negligence, indolence, and sleep, Oh Arjuna!

Tāmo guna was born out ajñānam or prakriti. The predominance of tāmo guna suppresses sattva guna and rājo guna. Since sattva guna is suppressed, there is no clarity or goal in life but there is delusion. Even when there are goals, there is no clarity of goals. A tamasic person is either asleep or sleepy; as he does not do any karma, he does not acquire punyam or pavam. This is not as good as it sounds because animals also do not acquire pavam or punyam.

Verse 9

Sattva binds one to pleasure. Rajas binds one to action. Whereas tamas binds one to negligence by veiling the discriminative power, Oh Arjuna!

Each guna binds by creating an addiction. Sattva guna is addicted to knowledge and tranquility. Rājo guna is addicted to karma. Doing karma is not a problem but addiction to karma is samsara. Each of the guna create samsara:

- Rajasic creates samsara by doing karma. Doing karma is wonderful, but addiction to karma is a problem.
 - Sattvic creates samsara by gaining knowledge. Gaining knowledge is wonderful, but addiction to knowledge is a problem.
 - Meditating is wonderful, but addiction to meditation is problem by covering clarity. (Tamasic).
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Bhagwat Geeta, Class 182 – Chapter 14 Verses 5

The first four verses are introductory verses, dealing with self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is liberating wisdom. The third and fourth verses discuss creation; every product in creation is a mixture of two parts – purusha and prakriti; or called brahma and maya; or father and mother; Whenever we talk of Eeswara, that Eeswara is a mixture of the two. Since the cause of creation is a mixture of two principles, the effect is also a mixture of two. Therefore, we all are also a mixture of consciousness principle and matter principle; This analysis will be the subject matter of Chapter 14.

Verse 5

Sattva, Rajas and tamas – these are the three gunas born out of prakriti. They fasten the changeless Self in the body, Oh Arjuna!

Bhagavan is a mixture of consciousness and matter principles therefore we are also a mixture of the two. The physical body is the material principle, and it is prakriti tatvam. The mind also comes under prakriti tatvam. Purusha tatvam is consciousness principle. The five features of consciousness:

- Is not a part, product or property of the body or any object.
- Is an independent entity which pervades the body and makes it existent
- extends beyond the body or object.
- survives the fall of the body or object
- surviving consciousness is not recognizable because of the absence of reflecting medium

This consciousness principle is me. Pure consciousness

principle which is nirguna (attribute-less) and nirvikāra (changeless) and witness principle called sakshi tatvam or my higher nature. It is witness to all the changes that is happening. Body/mind principle by itself is inert in nature; but because it is pervaded by consciousness, it has borrowed consciousness. This is similar to hot water – water is not inherently hot, but it is hot because it borrows the heat from the fire or agni principle.

Sakshi is the original consciousness. Body mind complex is endowed with borrowed consciousness. This body mind complex (prakriti) with borrowed consciousness (chithAbAsha) is called ahamkArA. Whenever we use the word I, it includes the body with borrowed consciousness and sakshi with original consciousness. Sakshi part of mind is nirguna, nirvikāra and Sathya chaithanyam. The AhamkArA aspect of the mind is saguna, savikāra and mithya. You should be able to differentiate nirguna sakshi and saguna ahamkArA. AhamkArA is our lower nature and sakshi is our higher nature. As long as you claim your AhamkArA, samsara can't be avoided. The only way of getting out of samsara is by transcending from lower AhamkArA nature and owning up to your higher sakshi nature.

AhamkArA is a mixture of prakriti and purusha. Prakriti has three gunas, and hence ahamkArA also has three gunas – satvic, rajasic and tamasic. Each of these gunas binds a person with consequences. That is why this chapter is called gunathrayâ vibhāga yogaha.

Guna has two meaning – property or rope. or shackle. So guna is a rope that binds you to samsara. One has to break the shackles of each guna and seek moksham.

At the time of creation, the three gunas were in equilibrium or in equal proportion. At the equilibrium stage there is no creation. At the time of creation, this equilibrium is disturbed. After creation, everyone and everything are a mixture of three gunas, but in different proportions. Even

the most inert object has the three gunas, but in different proportions.

In Satvic character is jñāna pradhāna personality and intellectually motivated. This person will be internally oriented, introverted; loves silence; when this silence is disturbed, a satvic mind is upset and that creates samsara. A satvic mind travels from finitude to finitude

In a rajasic character karma pradhāna will be activity oriented; highly turned outward; likes noisy activities; a rajasic mind is upset when there is no person is around or face silence, creating duḥkam and samsara. A rajasic mind ravel from finitude to finitude.

In Tamasic guna creates inertia or suppression of both jñāna and karma; suppresses both sattva and rājo gunas. For a tamasic character, there is no scope of progress at all. Remains in finitude and does not travel.

All three gunas creates bondage and mixed with pain and sorrow. All three gunas create dependence. All three gunas also create athripathi karathvam. A satvic person wants to get more and more knowledge. He goes on acquiring knowledge, but any amount of knowledge he gathers, his knowledge limitation does not go away. This creates intellectual samsara. A rajasic person suffers samsara in terms of activities, as he wants to accomplish more and more. For liberation, we will have to use the three gunas as stepping stone and then transcend them.

This is similar to a pole vaulter. A high jumper uses the pole to reach the top and lets the pole go when he reaches the top of his jump; if he doesn't, he will not finish the jump; but if he does not use the pole, then he will not be able to do the jump at all. So an intelligent person needs to use the pole to reach the top and then let go of the pole. Similarly, we need to embrace AhamkArA (all three gunas) to reach moksham

but let go the three gunas and AhamkArA once we get jñānam.

We also need all three gunas to live our life. We need to use tāmō guna for rest and relaxation. Rajasic guna is required for karma yoga. Satvic guna is required for jñāna yoga. But we should remember our real nature is sakshi which is free from all three gunas. A one who is free from all three gunas is a liberated person.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 181 – Chapter 14 Verses 1 to 4

In the last ṣatkam of Bhagavat Gita, the first three chapters – chapters 14, 15 and 16 – mainly focus on jñāna yoga.

Nethi Nethi method: Whatever I experience, I am not; by negating everything I experience, then I left out with is the experiencer, who can never be the object. Arrive at the subject by negating every object. By negating everything saguna, what is left will be nirguna atma. This chapter is saguna, nirguna inquiry. Everything that has gunas or attributes, they all are anatma or object. In this chapter, the subject Brahman is presented as attribute less. The subject matter of this chapter is I am gunathethaha and not gunathrayām.

Verse 1

The Lord said – Once again I shall impart that supreme knowledge which is the greatest among all forms of knowledge and gaining which all sages have reached the supreme goal from here.

When the subject matter is subtle and deep, it must be repeated. That is the reason Krishna repeats the topic of atma jñānam from another angle.

In this verse, first greatest indicates first greatest subject matter, which is atma or brahman; the second greatest indicates the benefits. Because this is the only knowledge that gives the greatest benefit moksha. Mundaka Upanishads calls this para vidhya; In the 9th chapter this is called raja vidhya. By gaining this greatest wisdom, all the seekers attain mokśa.

Verse 2

Resorting to this knowledge, they have attained the same nature as Mine. They are not born even during creation; nor do they suffer (death) during dissolution.

By acquiring this knowledge, the seekers have attained oneness with me, dropping their jivatvam and attaining eeswaratvam. Eeswara is Poornatvam, always complete and free from insecurity. A jñāni also attains this poornatvam, always complete and free from insecurity, no regret regarding the past and no anxiety towards the future. This is jivan mukthi. After death, they attain videha mukthi, that is freedom from puranapi janam and puranabi maranam. They are not afflicted by the pain caused by mortality.

Verse 3

The great prakriti is My womb. I place the seed in that. There upon takes place the origination of all beings, Oh, Arjuna!

Having introduced the subject matter in the first two verses, Krishna is summarizing the process of creation in verses 3 and 4. In the 13th Chapter, Krishna described creation. He said that before creation, there were two principles: Purusha and

Prakriti, both are anādi. The four difference between purusha and prakriti are:

- Purusha chethanam prakriti is achethanam.
- Purusha is nirguna tatvam; prakriti is saguna tatvam.
- Purusha is nirvikāra, no modification, prakriti is savikaraha.
- Purusha is Sathya tatvam, prakriti is mithya, does not have independent existence.

The mixture of purusha and prakriti is eeswara and eeswara is cause of creation. Purusha is compared to a male principle and prakriti is symbolized to female principle. This comparison shows that the two principles put together alone can be the cause of creation. If this mixture is the cause of creation, therefore, all the products will have the features of the mixture, that is the features of purusha and prakriti. Every individual is a mixture of purusha and prakriti tatvam. If we do not recognize this nature, then we will not know how to handle ourselves.

Once the conception is complete, the purusha and prakriti principles need not do anything, and the conceived baby grows appropriately. Similarly, evolution happens. Everything originates thereafter naturally.

Verse 4

Oh Arjuna! Whatever forms are born in all the wombs – for all of them the great prakriti is the womb. I am the father who provides the seed.

Krishna says I am the universal father and Maya is the universal mother. What is the difference between the universal couples and the human couples. Human couples can produce only human children. Whereas the universal couple give birth to all species. Whatever species of living being

is born, the original cause is prakriti, the Maya. We are all children of purusha and maya. Therefore, we will also have the features of the mixture.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 180 – Chapter 13 Summary

The thirteenth chapter is the beginning of the third śatkaṁ of Bhagavad Gita.

In the first śatkaṁ, Lord Krishna highlighted karma yoga, in the second śatkaṁ, Krishna highlighted Upasana yoga and in the third śatkaṁ Krishna is going to highlight jñāna yoga. The first three chapters, that is chapter 13, 14 and 15, are very important from the philosophical angle, as the entire upaniṣad sara is given in these chapters. These chapters highlight dr̥k dr̥śya viveka, the knowledge that clearly distinguishes the difference between Purusha and Prakriti.

In the first verse Arjuna asks for clarification regarding six technical terms appearing in the scriptures. These topics are:

1. kṣetram
2. kṣetrajñā
3. jñeyam
4. jñānam
5. Prakriti
6. Purusha

Kṣetrajñā, purusha and jñeyam all refer to atma. The words kṣetram and prakriti refer to anatma. jñānam remains

separate. Thus, the six topics are reduced to three topics: Atma, Anatma and jñānam.

Anatma

In verses 2 to 24, Lord Krishna describes Anatma. Anatma is Chethanam plus Prakrithi. Whatever I experience is anatma. The entire universe will fall under anatma. Anything objectifiable is anatma. The body comes under anatma, because we experience the condition of the body. The mind also comes under anatma, because we experience the condition of the mind. The world, body, and mind along with all their different conditions is anatma. Nature of anatma:

- Made up of matter and is inert in nature. The sentiency of the body is not intrinsic to the body but borrowed from the atma. The mind is also material.
- Full of attributes; sagunam, endowed with varieties of properties.
- Subject to constant fluctuations and modifications.

Because of the changing nature, it undergoes the condition and becomes visible and manifest. Maya is unmanifest universe.

Atma

Atma is kṣetrajña, purusha and jñeyam. If the whole universe falls under object of experience, then experienced universe pre-supposes the presence of an experience or subject. Every object presupposes a subject. Atma is Chethanam and Purusha. This unobjectifiable experiencer principle is atma. Features of I, the atma the consciousness principle:

- Not a part, product, or property of the body
- Independent entity pervading and enlivening the inert body
- Not limited by the boundaries of body

- Will continue to exist even after the fall of the body. Mortality is the feature of the body, not of the atma. Atma is immortal.
- Atma continues after the fall of the body, but not available for transactions because a medium is not available.

Atma/Consciousness can be compared to space and sunlight:

- They are all one (ekam)
- They can't move
- They are indivisible
- Can't be contaminated or polluted
- Support of everything
- Illuminates everything.

Jñānam

Dharmic values and study of scriptures is required for jñānam. Dharmic values must be assimilated in mind and a mind with dharmic values is needed for jñānam. The dharmic values are moral values and are fourfold qualifications. These fourfold qualifications or sādhanā catuṣṭaya saṃpatti are:

- Discrimination: Understanding that the world can't give security; that can come only from nithya vasthu the ever-present Brahman.
- Dispassion: Changing the priorities of life from world to Brahman.
- Discipline: Integration of the entire personality with Atma jñānam.
- Desire: For moksha or jñānam

These four are expanded into 20 terms in verses 8 to 12 of this chapter.

Verses 25 to 35: jñāna sadhanam and jñāna phalāḥṃ; Stages to obtain this knowledge and benefits of this knowledge.

- Karma yoga to remove impurities
- Upasana to remove restless mind; extrovertedness of mind, so mind will become tranquil and focused.
- Sravanam: consistent and systematic study of Vedantic scriptures under the guidance of a competent guru.
- Mananam: Raising doubts and clarifying doubts
- Nidhithyasanam: Dwelling on the vedantic scriptural teachings.

Benefits of the knowledge:

- Freedom from raga and dwesha; freedom from attachments and aversion
- Immortality of atma; not afraid of mortality
- I come to know I am neither the kartha and boktha
- Brahmatvam: I am limitless.

In simple language, jivan mukthi is the benefit. This knowledge takes from bondage to liberation.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 179 – Chapter 13 Verses 32 to 35

Up to the 24th verse of this chapter, Lord Krishna discussed the six topics Arjuna requested. From 25, 26 and 27, the sadhanas were discussed. From the 28th verse onwards, jnana phalāḥṃ is being discussed.

The first benefit discussed was complete understanding of the universe. The eye of wisdom sees inherent superficial duality and this vision saves him from raga dwesha, which alone is the cause of samsara.

The second benefit mentioned was when a person sees plurality and division, finitude and mortality is inevitable. When you see the wave, you will see the birth death of wave. But when you see the water, from the stand point of water, there is no birth or death.

The third benefit mentioned is recognition of the fact that all the action belongs to prakriti and I the purusha, is the witness behind prakriti, and do not do any action. In my presence actions take place, but I am akartha.

Fourth benefit is brahamatva parapthi: I recognize I am Brahman. To assimilate this knowledge, self-knowledge is compared to waking up from a dream. When I am in dream, I feel like I am located in dream time and dream space. Within the dream, I see a variety of things that give me raga dwesha. But when I wake up, I realize the whole dream world exists within me, the waker. In the dream, I am a creature within the dream; when I wake up, I am the creator of the dream. I am not within the dream time, dream space or dream product, but they are all products of mine. This conversion requires only waking up and no additional effort. Self-knowledge is similarly waking up and realizing that I am the creator of the universe. From me alone the world emerges and from me alone the world rests – similar to the dream that emerges from me. I am the conscious principle from which this time, this space and this body are born. Just like I created a dream body, I also created this physical body. A waker is able to make this statement with regard to dream body, and Jñāni is able to make this statement with regard to his physical body. The day I am able to accept this glory, that I am the cause (karanam) and not the effect (kariyam) is the day I can claim aham brahma asmi. Just as the dream world

emerges, rests and resolves from me, the real world also emerges, rests and resolves from me, the original consciousness.

Verse 32

Being birth less and attribute less, the supreme Self is changeless. Though dwelling in the body, it neither acts nor is affected, Oh Arjuna!

Even though there are many similarities between dream and waking up, there is one major difference. When you wake up from dream, the dream world disappears, but even after you get Jñāni, the physical world continues to appear. When you wake up from dream, the dream does not continue, but when you get self-knowledge, the world continues to exist. But the Jñāni has the knowledge, that the world is like dream and anything happening in the world, does not affect the Jñāni, similar to what is happening in the dream does not affect the waker.

Birth is one of the six modifications and atma is anādi and does not have a birth. Atma does not have any modification or form change because it is not re-born; atma does not change attribute, because it is nirguna or attribute-less. A gold ornament goes through the change in form and attribute when it is converted into a bangle, but gold, the substance does not change. Even after waking up and knowing I am atma, I continue to be in the body, but atma remains akartha and aboktha. The body and sense organs have actions and results, but atma does not have karma or phalāḥṃ. This is the next benefit of self-knowledge, that I am aboktha.

Verse 33

Just as the all-pervading space is not affected due to its subtlety, so also, the self, which is present in everybody, is not affected.

Atma is involved in all activities, but not affected by any.

To illustrate this idea, Lord Krishna gives two examples – space and sunlight. Common features between space and atma:

1. Both are only one
2. Both are all pervading
3. Both can't move from one place to another place
4. Both remain same and does not decay or change
5. Both do not have parts
6. Both can't be tainted or polluted, either by good or bad qualities.
7. Both can't be easily comprehended.
8. Both support everything.

Verse 34

Just as one sun illumines this entire world, so also does the kṣetrajña illumine the entire kṣetram, Oh Arjuna.

The second example is sunlight. Sunlight pervades the entire earth during the daytime. Common features between sunlight and atma are similar to the space example:

1. Both are only one
2. Both are all pervading
3. Both can't move from one place to another place
4. Both remain same and does not decay or change
5. Both do not have parts
6. Both can't be tainted or polluted, either by good or bad qualities.
7. Both can't be easily comprehended.
8. Both support everything.

Because of consciousness atma alone everything is known; similarly, without light nothing will be visible. Light itself is not comprehensible without a reflective medium. Similarly, atma can be comprehended only through a reflective

medium. I am like akasa; I am like Prakasa.

Verse 35

With the eye of knowledge those who know thus the distinction between kṣetrajña and kṣetram, as well as the absence of prakṛiti which is the cause of beings attain the supreme

Wise people recognize the difference between kṣetrajña and kṣetram which are:

- Cētanam – acētanam; sentient; and insentient.
- Nirgunam – sagunam; one is attribute less; the other is with attributes.
- Nirvikāram-Savikāram, Consciousness is changeless; matter is ever changing.
- Sathyam – Mithyam.

Krishna emphasizes the fourth difference: consciousness, the atma alone exists independently, matter can't exist independently. Consciousness has intrinsic existence, matter has only borrowed existence.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 178 – Chapter 13 Verses 28 to 31

Up to the 24th verse, Lord Krishna dealt with all the six topics Arjuna wanted to know. From verse 25 to 27, Lord Krishna talked about the sadhanas required to gain this knowledge, the culmination of this knowledge should be knowledge. Problem of samsara is because of the error with regard to the perception of ourself or self-error. Through

the knowledge, self-delusion goes away, with that samsara also goes away. From 28 onwards, Lord Krishna talks about benefits of this knowledge.

First benefit is complete understanding of the world or sāma darshanam: Universe is a mixture of purusha and prakriti; every human being is also a mixture of purusha and prakriti; our vision will be right vision only if our vision is balanced with purusha and prakriti. The prakriti part is physically visible whereas the purusha part being nirguna nirvikāra sathya chethana tatvam, will not be visible for physical eyes and it has to be appreciated with our jñāna chakshu. Prakriti is useful in all our daily transactions but will not give poornatvam. Purusha alone can give poornatvam. Therefore, we need a balanced vision of purusha and prakriti. The first benefit of jñānam is sāma darshanam – proper vision – understanding that universe is a mixture of purusha and prakriti. Raga Dwesha weakens sāma darshanam

Verse 29

For, uniformly seeing the Lord who dwells everywhere alike, he does not ruin himself by himself. Thereby he attains the supreme goal.

Purusha is the supporter of prakriti. Just as without the support of screen, movie can't exist, prakriti can't exist without purusha. A wise person sees purusha all the time, but this jñāni does not destroy himself. This is the second benefit – immortality.

How does a person destroy himself? A person kills both lower nature and higher nature.

First, a person destroys himself by identifying himself with the body; once you identify yourself with body, you become a kartha or doer as a kartha I perform variety of actions earning pavam and punyam. These punyam and pavam are the reasons for creating a body. Both the arrival and departure

of body is the result of my karma. I alone am responsible for repeated birth and death. I destroy my own lower nature again and again.

Secondly, by identifying with the body, one also kills one's own higher nature – figuratively killing atma, by not being aware of higher nature, one disowns one's own higher nature. The benefits available by higher nature are lost and since I am not enjoying the benefits of higher nature, it is as though higher nature is absent. Since it is as though higher nature is absent, we have killed or destroyed the higher nature.

Every ajñāni destroys himself from the standpoint of body as well as Jñāni. A Jñāni does not destroy himself from either perspective.

Verse 30

He who sees all actions as being done by prakriti alone by all means, and likewise sees the self to be action less alone really sees.

The third benefit is akartatvam or understanding that I am not the doer. A kartha will be eternally associated with karma. Karma will get converted into favorable and unfavorable conditions. If I am a kartha, then I can't escape being a boktha and that is a choiceless, helpless situation.

All actions are done by prakriti – body/mind complex or śarīram. It is impossible to escape the cycle of arrival and departure of karma, the only way is to stay away from the cycle. Prakriti can't be stopped; the only way is to transcend from prakriti is by identifying with higher nature.

Vedanta should not be used for promoting adharma; a person should not use this verse to do adharmic activities, claiming all the activities are not done by "me" only by my lower nature, the body/mind complex.

Verse 31

When one sees the diversity of beings to be based on the oneself and their origination to be from that Self alone, then one becomes Brahman

Understanding atma must be done in many steps. We take the example of space and a hall.

- In a hall, there is hall and space inside the hall. So, there is space and a hall.
- Then, we see that there are many halls, and there is space in all those halls.
- Then we see that the space within them is not many but one and the same. Halls are different, but the space is not different.
- Then we see that the space is not only within the hall, but there is also space outside the hall.
- But really speaking, space is not inside or outside the hall, but there is only one space, and all halls are resting in it.
- Finally, we realize, space is not only supporter of all halls, but all the things are born out of space.

This example should be extended to atma. Space should be equated to consciousness and the hall should be equated to body:

1. There is a body and consciousness. The consciousness is within the body
2. Then we see there are many bodies and consciousness is within all other bodies also.
3. But the consciousness within our body as well as everyone else's body is the same.
4. Consciousness is outside all the bodies also.
5. But really speaking, consciousness is not inside or outside, but consciousness is everywhere, and all the

bodies are residing in consciousness.

6. Really speaking everything arises out of consciousness.

7. That consciousness is I am.