

# 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-mati.

## 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.

Class 4

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 gṛhasthāśrama 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.

Vyādhi 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.

---

## **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 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 guṇa 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 tāmo 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 gunathrayâṃ.

### 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 śatkam of Bhagavad Gita.

In the first śatkam, Lord Krishna highlighted karma yoga, in the second śatkam, Krishna highlighted Upasana yoga and in the third śatkam 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 upanishad sara is given in these chapters. These chapters highlight drk drsya 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. kṣetrajña

3. jñeyam
4. jñānam
5. Prakriti
6. Purusha

Kṣetrajña, purusha and jñeyam are 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 experienter 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 sādhana 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 28<sup>th</sup> 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 kṣetrajañña 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 destroys 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. Prakrithi 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 adharmā; 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.

---

## **Bhagwat Geeta, Class 177 – Chapter 13 Verses 25 to 27**

Krishna points out that this knowledge is a liberating knowledge. A person who knows that body mind complex is prakriti and that I am purusha. Body is prakriti and mind is prakriti; the association of mind and body is birth and dis-association of mind and body is death; they are all happening at the level of prakriti. There is no question of one birth, then where is the question of rebirth. A Jñāni who realizes this and knows that he is anādi purusha, does not have rebirth and gets moksha.

Verse 25

*Some seekers see the Self in the mind with the mind through*

*meditation. Some others see through Gyana yoga. Still others see Karma Yoga.*

In verse 25 to 35 Krishna discusses the preparations needed for self-knowledge and what are the benefits of self-knowledge.

The ultimate goal of all spiritual sadhanas is self-knowledge only. There should not be any doubt regarding this goal. We should discover atma within ourselves, using our own buddhi. Buddhi is the only instrument to get knowledge. But this buddhi should be a refined buddhi supported by guru sastra upadesa.

Preparatory stages for reaching self-recognition through the mind within oneself, five stage preparation helping in removing one obstacle in each stage:

1. Karma yoga stage, where mental impurities are removed. Impurities like raga, dwesha, kama, moha etc. Karma yoga removes impurities and refines the mind.
2. Upasana or meditation upon saguna Eeswara; Removing the obstacle of restlessness of mind and extrovertedness; helping mind to focus.
3. Vedanta Sravanam: Systematic and consistent study of Vedantic scriptures under the guidance of a competent guru, removing ajñānam or ignorance.
4. Mananam: Asking myself if I am convinced of the teaching of the scriptures and guru. Converting knowledge into conviction; removing intellectual obstacles.
5. Nidhithyasanam: Deliberate invocation of Vedanta to get rid of disturbing reactions of life.

These five stages are compulsory for all. If one does not complete all five stages in one life, the remaining stages are completed in the next life. The one who passes through the

four stages and in the next life goes through nidhithyasanam, resulting in spiritual prodigy.

Verse 26

*Not knowing thus, some others pursue self-knowledge by hearing from others. Being committed to listening, they also definitely cross over mortality.*

Vedanta does not require any particular scripture but insists upon the vedantic teachings. Vedanta does not refer to language, but only the teachings and the contents. If a person who doesn't know the Upanishad but has assimilated the teachings, he is liberated. However, if one goes through all the upanishad, but does not assimilate the teachings, he is not liberated.

Verse 27

*Whatever being, moving or stationary, is born – know that to be out of the union of shethragya and kṣetram – oh Arjuna!*

For preparation and purification of mind, there are many sadhanas, but for mokṣa there is only Jñānam. Samsara is caused by ignorance and error. We are ignorant of the fact that we are purusha or atma. Identifying ourselves with the body or prakriti or anatma is error. Self-ignorance leads to body identification. I, the consciousness take ourselves to be the body. I, the immortal purusha mistake myself to mortal body. Apūrṇathvam leads to kāma; Kāma leads to karma, karma leads to punya pāpam, punya pāpa leads to sukha duḥkam, and later to punar janma. In fact, entire cycle of birth and death is dēha abhimāna. All beings go through re-birth because of this error and the cause of the error ignorance. To remove the error, we need to remove the cause, and the cause is ignorance.

Verse 28

*He who sees the supreme Lord who dwells alike in all being and who is imperishable among perishables (alone really) sees.*

From this verse onwards, Lord Krishna enumerates Jñāna phalāḥṃ. The first one mentioned is to be aware of changeless atma which is in and through all anatma. Just as there are numerous waves, there are innumerable anatma, which are different from each other. Among these innumerable bodies, there is one imperishable sat chit atma or paramatma. Wise person is the one who does not lose sight of this fact during day-to-day transactions. If I am aware of the permanent one, I will handle the impermanent one but will not depend on the impermanent one.

---

## **Bhagwat Geeta, Class 176 – Chapter 13 Verses 23 and 24**

Lord Krishna has come to the last pair of topics, purusha and prakriti. Purusha and prakriti are two basic principles that existed even before the creation of the world, and this mixture of purusha and prakriti is called God. The common features of purusha and prakriti are both are anādi and both of them can't be the cause of creation alone.

Uncommon features or difference between Purusha and Prakriti are:

1. Purusha is chethanam and Prakriti is achethanam.
2. Purusha is nirvikāram. Prakriti is savikāram.
3. Purusha nirgunam; Maya is sagunam.
4. Purusha sathyam; Prakriti is mithyam.

Everything is prakriti and purusha is available behind the body mind complex and available as the witness. Whatever is experienced or witnessed is prakriti or the object of experience. The body mind complex falls under prakriti or the object of experience. The body mind complex is used as a medium to experience and witness and as a result often mistaken for Purusha or I. The body mind complex used as an instrument, appears as subject. World is prakriti, mind is prakriti. I am different than the world, mind and prakriti. Illuminating the body mind is not the activity of Purusha, but the body mind illumined by the very presence of purusha.

This is similar to sun. Sun does not illumine the objects, the objects get illumined by the very presence of the sun. Even the blank condition of the mind is also witnessed by the consciousness. Transference of body mind complex attributes to I, the consciousness and witness, causes samsara. This is similar to transferring the problems of a character in a movie to me, the audience.

Verse 23

*The supreme purusha in this body is said to be the proximate witness, the supporter, the sustainer, the experiencer, the great Lord and the supreme Self.*

Krishna says purusha is in the form of witness everywhere. The nature of this purusha is different than the prakriti. Lord Krishna gives more features of purusha:

1. Paraha: Free from all limitations; The consciousness not only within the body, it is also extends beyond the body. Eventually we must realize that we are inside the consciousness. This is similar to space. Space is inside the room, outside the room; but really the room is in space.
2. Upadhrishta: The intimate witness of everything happening inside you. Purusha pervades every cell of

our bodies.

3. Anumandhacha: Purusha blesses inert body and mind and because of its blessing alone body is what it is.
4. Bartha: Purusha lends existence to everything in creation.
5. Boktha: Purusha is experiencer from the standpoint of an ignorant person. Seeming boktha, as though suffering from attributes.
6. Maheswaraha: Purusha is ever free. For a wise person, consciousness is a free entity. Body and mind are bound by prakriti, but purusha is not.

I am called jivatma when I take the attributes of prakriti, but when I take the attributes and understand that they don't belong to me but to prakriti, then I am paramatma.

Verse 24

He who thus knows purusha and prakriti along with the gunas, is not born again, in whatever manner he lives. This clear knowledge about prakriti and purusha will give a person great relief from samsara. The initial knowledge is I am a mixture of purusha and prakriti. I also know there are many physical attributes and subtle, internal attributes. But these attributes belong to prakriti. For all day-to-day activities, we have to identify with prakriti. But understand that the whole life is a series of role playing. But when role playing is taken seriously, it results in samsara. A Jñāni who understands this, he will not have a punar jenma or re-birth.

---

# Bhagwat Geeta, Class 175 – Chapter 13 Verses 21 and 22

With the 19<sup>th</sup> verse, Lord Krishna has completed four topics out of six topics that Arjuna wanted to know. The four completed topics are: kṣetram, kṣetrajña, jñeyam and jñānam.

From the 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> verse, Lord Krishna deals with Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is Brahman and Prakriti as Maya. So, this discussion is Brahman and Maya. Purusha and Prakriti are basic principles and are anathi; We call the mixture of purusha and prakriti as Eeswara. Eeswara existed before shristi or the origination of the universe; so, the shristi must have come from Eeswara.

The common features of Purusha and Prakriti is that they both are beginningless and the both of them together created shristi, exactly like father and mother.

Uncommon features or difference between Purusha and Prakriti are:

1. Purusha is chethana tatvam or consciousness principle and Prakriti or Maya is achethana tatvam or material or energy principle.
2. Purusha is nirvikāra tatvam – not subject to time and modification, ever changeless principle. Prakriti is savikāram or subject to change and the influence of time.
3. Purusha is free from all attributes; nirguna tatvam; matter or Maya is endowed with all attributes or saguna tatvam.
4. Purusha has an independent existence and is satya tatvam; it is intrinsic. The matter principle depends on consciousness principle, and it is called mithyam.

The purusha prakriti mixture called God was there before the existence of world. We will not be able say where God was located, because before creation, even akasha or space was not there.

Nothing happens to purusha tatvam and will remain the same. All the changes must happen to prakriti, the basic matter or energy principle. The universe evolves from this prakriti principle. All the products are born out of this prakriti or maya. Initially the five basic elements were born, and later through these five elements, all other matters were born. Our physical body is also an evolved prakriti, because the body is matter and made up of chemicals and elements. The body is nothing but a chemical bundle and is subject to modification. Therefore, the body is a product of prakriti. The mind is also the product of prakriti, subject to change.

If both mind and body are born out of prakriti, then they both must be insentient. But they appear to be sentient. That is because they are refined version of prakriti, they are able to reflect borrowed consciousness.

Not only all the objects are born out of prakriti, all the properties of objects are also born out of prakriti.

Verse 21

*Prakriti is said to be the cause in the creation of the physical and subtle bodies. Purusha is said to be the cause in the experience of pleasure and pains.*

Everything in the universe is born out of prakriti, including body mind complex. If everything is product of prakriti, where is purusha? Experienced world is prakriti; experienced body is prakriti; experienced mind is prakriti; If everything is product of prakriti, where is the purusha? If you look for purusha outside, everything outside is subject to change, so it is prakriti. If you look for purusha within the body, body is also subject to change, so it is prakriti. Inside the

mind, the thoughts are always changing, so it is also prakriti.

Purusha is the experiencer, I, the basic conscious principle. I am the witness of the world, witness of the body, witness of mind. It is not an object, because all objects are subject to change and are prakriti. Purusha is boktha, the experiencer of body. The body and the all conditions of body belong to prakriti. All the observed properties can belong only to the observed object and never to the observer. The observer is always property free.

In the created world, prakriti is available as object and purusha is available as subject and purusha can never be objectified. This is similar to how the eye can never see itself. If the eyes can never be seen, what is the proof of the existence of the eyes. Because you don't require proof of the existence of eyes, because every object seen is proof of the existence of eyes. The subject does not require proof because the very search for proof proves the existence of the subject.

Verse 22

*Residing in Prakrit, Purusha experiences the gunas born of prakriti. Attachment to the gunas is the cause of birth in superior and inferior wombs.*

Before creation, purusha was neither the subject nor the prakriti was object. When did purusha get the subject status? At that time consciousness was all pervading un-enclosed consciousness. After the creation, consciousness was still all pervading but enclosed within the body mind complex. The whole world becomes an object. Purusha becomes the subject and prakriti becomes object.