



श्रीमद्भगवत् गीता  
गुणत्रय विभाग योगः  
**Chapter 14**  
**Volume 4**

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Sri Krishna has been talking about the three-fold गुणs - सत्व गुण, रजस् गुण and तमस् गुण

- ❖ What their manifestations are
- ❖ How they bind a person who has no Self knowledge
- ❖ The four natural sequential orders in which these three गुणs naturally co-exist in every person, and what their integrated manifestations are, and
- ❖ How these गुणs persist in a person from one life to the next

All that has been said. Continuing, भगवान् says:

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः, सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।



रजसस्तु फलं दुःखं, अज्ञानं तमसःफलम् ॥

14-16

आहुः – They say, who says?

शिष्टाः आहुः – The enlightened people, people who are knowledgeable and qualified to say so, they say, what do they say?

सुकृतस्य कर्मणः फलम्, सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् – The result of सुकृत कर्म is सात्त्विकं and निर्मलं.

Now, we must understand these Upanishad words सुकृत कर्म, सात्त्विकं and निर्मलं. सुकृत कर्म literally means a कर्म well done, any कर्म well done. "Well done" means what? In the Upanishad, a कर्म is a सुकृत कर्म only if it is totally rooted in सत्यं, धर्मम् and सेवनं – truthfulness, propriety and service to the common good of the entire society. Such कर्म is indeed ईश्वर आराधन कर्म – a कर्म in the service of परमेश्वर, as worship of परमेश्वर, already in oneself.

Again, such कर्म is indeed स्वधर्म विहितं कर्म – every कर्म one is called upon to do by virtue of one's स्वधर्म – one's natural function in the society by virtue of one's circumstances of birth, education, training, occupation and station in life, as an active participant in this creation, in accordance with ईश्वर नियमनं – as ordained by परमेश्वर, already in oneself, for the peace, harmony, and progress (both material progress and spiritual progress) of the entire जीव लोक – the entire society of living beings. Only such कर्म is सुकृत कर्म – a well-done कर्म, a good कर्म, a पुण्य कर्म, in terms of the Upanishad.

What one gets by doing such सुकृत कर्म is सात्त्विकं and निर्मलं. सात्त्विकं is that which is a manifestation of सत्व गुण, namely सुखं and ज्ञानं, which means a life of zest and enthusiasm for a meaningful life, peace and happiness, and ज्ञानं – the ability to gain knowledge, contributing to the diligent cultivation of सुक्ष्म बुद्धि – penetrating intellect capable of incisive inquiry, leading to the recognition of increasingly higher and higher orders of subtlety in cause-effect relationships in the natural order of existence, such recognition having been gained through कर्म योग बुद्धि,



ज्ञानलक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति, सर्वकर्मफल त्याग बुद्धि and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि. Such is the nature of सात्त्विकं.

निर्मलं is अन्तः करण शुद्धि – cleanliness and purity of mind and बुद्धि, which is indeed a divine blessing.

Such सात्त्विकं and निर्मलं is ज्ञानसाधनं – helpful for gaining आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge, It is such सात्त्विकं and निर्मलं what one gets by doing सुकृत कर्म. On the other hand

रजः तु फलं दुःखं – the result of a कर्म born of रजस् गुण, which means a कर्म born of राग-द्वेष forces, forces of likes and dislikes, is simply दुःख – unhappiness, unfulfillment, pain and distress of some kind. Why? Because, as भगवान् has pointed out earlier

लोभः प्रवृत्तिः आरम्भः कर्मणां अशमः स्पृहा

14-12

Greediness, physical and mental restlessness, continuous urge to undertake new projects, and a craving for something or other at all times, these are the manifestations of रजस् गुण.

Thus, a person impelled to act by one's रजस् गुण is always under some kind of pressure, and because of that pressure, one cannot always follow the right means. Therefore, impropriety in action becomes inevitable when one is propelled by राग-द्वेष forces, the forces of likes and dislikes.

We must also understand that actions propelled by रजस् गुण do result in some significant accomplishments, which do give some सुख – some satisfaction. But that सुख always turns to be अल्प सुख – a limited satisfaction. A limited satisfaction only exaggerates one's dissatisfaction. Therefore अल्प सुख also is दुःख – unhappiness of some kind. Further,

अज्ञानं तमसः फलं – the result of a कर्म born of तमस् गुण is अज्ञानं – ignorance, not ignorance of Self-knowledge, but simple ignorance, ordinary ignorance of the kind



we deal with in every day life. Because, as we have already seen, अप्रकाश, अप्रवृत्ति, प्रमाद and मोह – lack of discriminative knowledge, dullness in all activities, laziness and indifference, and mental confusion arising from one's inability to use one's intellect - these are the manifestations of तमस् गुण. All these are also the results of अज्ञानं – simple ignorance. Therefore, when action is prompted by simple ignorance, there is not even अल्प सुख – meager satisfaction. Therefore, the result of तमस् गुण is तमस् only. Ignorance produces only ignorance. That is all. From all that has been said above, it is clear that

सत्वात् संजायते ज्ञानं, रजसो लोभ एव च ।

प्रमादमोहौ तमसो, भवतः अज्ञानं एव च ॥

14-17

सत्वात् संजायते ज्ञानं – From सत्व गुण, naturally arises knowledge helpful for gaining आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge. Since such knowledge has the intrinsic capacity to liberate a person from bondages, one needs to cultivate सत्व गुण by doing सुकृत कर्मसु – good कर्मसु, consistent with सत्यं, धर्मम् and सेवनं – truthfulness, propriety and service to the common good of the entire society, as pointed out earlier, and

रजसः लोभः एव संजायते – From रजस् गुण, only greediness and related qualities arise naturally

तमसः प्रमादमोहौ एव भवतः अज्ञानं च – From तमस् गुण arise only indifference and delusion born of confusion, together with a blanket of ignorance covering one's mind and बुद्धि. This verse is essentially a repetition of the last verse. भगवान् repeats the same message twice only to underline the importance of this message, for every person in daily life. We have to order and reorder our lives continuously, every day, through self-discipline and assimilation of proper values, so that we diligently cultivate सत्व गुण to predominate in our daily living.

That is not enough. One has to uplift oneself, by oneself, from the bondages of all गुणसु, including सत्व गुण, in order to be able to gain identity with one's स्वरूप – the आत्मा. Thus, one has to become a गुणातीतः – one beyond the hold of all the three गुणसु, for



gaining मोक्ष. To point out this human need is the very purpose of this entire discourse in this chapter. Continuing, भगवान् says:

ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः, मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।  
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्थाः, अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥

14-18

How one chooses to live in this life is going to account for what one will be in one's next life. That is what भगवान् is pointing out in this verse, in terms of positive, zero and negative progress in one's ladder of spiritual growth. भगवान् uses three words here: ऊर्ध्वम् – above, मध्ये – middle, and अधः – below. Naturally every one needs to move up the ladder of spiritual growth. The verse says:

ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः – सत्त्वस्थाः means सत्त्व गुण वृत्तिस्थाः. Those who are committed to the cultivation of thought forms of सत्त्व गुण in daily life, ऊर्ध्वम् गच्छन्ति – they go up the spiritual ladder in the next life, which means they will become even superior human beings in terms of सुख and ज्ञान – happiness and knowledge, or they may even become celestial beings – देवs etc., and

मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः – those who are committed to the pursuit of राजस गुण in this life, performing कर्मs of various kinds, propelled by one's likes and dislikes for various worldly objects and experiences

मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति – they stay in the middle, which means they neither move up nor move down in the spiritual ladder in the next life. They continue to remain as they are now in their next life also, and that means they continue to go through their never-ending cycle of birth and death. On the other hand

जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्थाः तामसाः अधः गच्छन्ति – Those who abide in the lowest among गुणs, they are called जघन्यगुण वृत्तिस्थाः, and they are तामसाः – those who are committed to तमस् गुण – a life of laziness and indifference in this life

अधः गच्छन्ति – they go down spiritually in their next life, which means if they are reborn as human beings, they will naturally take to a life of degrading and improper activities, or they may take to lower forms of existence in their next life.



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This is being said here only to show the importance of cultivating सत्त्व गुण in this very life itself, when one still has an opportunity to uplift oneself spiritually.

One must also realize that सत्त्व गुण also is binding in nature. Ultimately one must uplift oneself from all the three गुणs, including सत्त्व गुण. How is that possible? Only through a clear vision of आत्मा – The Self I, as the very स्वरूप of oneself, which means only through such आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge. Therefore, भगवान् says:

नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं, यदा द्रष्टा अनुपश्यति ।  
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेति, मद्भावं सः अधिगच्छति ॥

14-19

अनुपश्यति means the one who sees clearly, not seeing something as an object in existence, but recognizing the Reality of Existence Itself in the wake of knowledge gained from the teachings of the Upanishads. The one who has absolute clarity of vision of such Upanishad knowledge is the one who sees clearly - अनुपश्यति. Such a person is a द्रष्टा – a seer, a wise person.

The Upanishad knowledge involved here is what भगवान् has been teaching in the last chapter and in this chapter, namely:

- The स्वरूप of every person, The self of every being in this creation is The आत्मा, The परमेश्वर, The Universal Awareness, ever-existent changeless unbound and uninvolved. On the other hand
- The स्वभाव of every person is one's own गुणs - unique and peculiar to oneself, transient, ever-changing, and ever manifesting in some form or other.

Every person is different from every other person only in terms of one's गुणs, one's स्वभाव, and not स्वरूप. All that one does, all of one's likes and dislikes, actions, experiences, etc. are all manifestations of one's गुणs, only. There is no कर्ता – there is no doer in oneself, other than one's own गुणs. The one who is clear about this knowledge is a द्रष्टा – the seer of reality of existence as It is. Such a person



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अनुपश्यति – sees clearly, recognizes reality as It is. Referring to such a द्रष्टा – the wise person, भगवान् says:

यदा द्रष्टा, गुणेभ्यः अन्यं कर्तारं, न अनुपश्यति – Being awake to the teachings of the Upanishads, when one does not see a कर्ता – a doer other than one's गुणs, which means when one realizes and recognizes, through Upanishad knowledge, that one's गुणs are the only कर्ता – the doer in oneself.

सः गुणेभ्यः च परं वेति – that person understands, appreciates, realizes and recognizes The Self in oneself as गुणेभ्यः परं – ONE other than all of one's गुणs, transcending all of one's गुणs - independent of all of one's गुणs, and beyond the reach of all of one's गुणs. In the wake of Upanishad knowledge, one recognizes one's स्वरूप – The Self I in oneself as

गुणेभ्यः परं – above one's गुणs, independent of one's गुणs, beyond the reach of one's गुणs. So recognizing

सः मद्भावं, मत् स्वरूपं, ईश्वर स्वरूपं, अधिगच्छति – That person gains identity with Me, The परमेश्वर. That person recognizes परमेश्वर as ONESELF Itself, independent of all of one's गुणs. That person thus gains identity with परमेश्वर Itself. How does that identity happen? भगवान् says:

गुणान् एतान् अतीत्य त्रीन्, देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।

जन्म- मृत्यु-जरा-दुःखैः, विमुक्तः अमृतं अश्नुते ॥

14-20

एतान् त्रीन् गुणान् अतीत्य – Uplifting oneself from these three गुणs, namely सत्त्व, रजस् and तमस् गुणs. How can one uplift oneself from one's गुणs which one already has? Only by knowledge, only by clearly recognizing that these three गुणs are देह समुद्भवान् – these गुणs constitute the entire cause for the very existence of one's body-mind-intellect complex. One's शरीर – one's body as it is, has come into existence



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entirely from one's own गुणs, past and present. Other than these three गुणs, there is no कर्ता, there is no doer in oneself.

One's स्वरूप, The आत्मा – The Self I in oneself is NOT the doer in oneself. The आत्मा – The Self I Itself transcends all the गुणs, and exists totally independent of all of one's गुणs. So realizing and recognizing oneself clearly, by one's विवेक बुद्धि, one uplifts oneself from one's गुणs by not identifying oneself with one's गुणs, and by totally identifying oneself with one's स्वरूप The आत्मा. By so doing, what happens?

जन्म– मृत्यु–जरा–दुःखैः, विमुक्तः – one is naturally freed from birth, death, old age and the sorrows and distresses of daily life. The freedom comes by knowledge, through Self-realization and Self-recognition by one's own विवेक बुद्धि. By virtue of such freedom

देही अमृतं अश्नुते – the person gains immortality, gains मोक्ष, because आत्मा – the स्वरूप of the person, the true nature of the person, is not subject to birth and death, and आत्मा is ever free and ever existent. Recognizing one's identity with The आत्मा, one naturally recognizes oneself as immortal.

Recognizing one's identity with the आत्मा, gaining such मोक्ष, such freedom from जन्म–मृत्यु–जरा and दुःख can only be through clearly recognized Upanishad knowledge on the true nature of oneself. Gaining such मोक्ष – Absolute Liberation, is identical with जीव ईश्वर ऐक्यं – becoming ONE with the all-pervading परमेश्वर Itself, ब्रह्मन् Itself, which state of existence one can gain even in one's own life time. How is that possible?

It is only common experience that one gets older every day, and one is certain to die one day. When that is the case, how can one gain freedom from old age and death in this world of mortal existence. The answer is: one can gain freedom from old age and death in this very life, only by recognizing one's स्वरूप, i.e. one's true nature is The आत्मा. That आत्मा is not subject to birth and death. That आत्मा is immortal, and one can gain immortality in this mortal world by realized Self-knowledge – आत्मज्ञानं.





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Thus, we must clearly understand that Immortality is not for this transient physical body, but immortality is for ONESELF, The Self in oneself, which is possible through Self-realization, through आत्मज्ञानं – Self-recognition by knowledge.

This statement from भगवान् to the effect that even a mortal human being can gain Immortality through Self-knowledge by uplifting oneself from the hold of all the three गुणs, gives an opportunity for Arjuna to ask Sri Krishna a few questions on the subject.

Arjuna's questions, and Sri Krishna's answers form the concluding part of this chapter, which we will see next time.