**BHAGAVAD GĪTA​**

The Bhagavad Gīta is *Smṛiti Prasthāna*. Embedded in the Mahābhārata, the Bhagavad Gīta is a text of special scriptural significance. It occupies its place in Bhīshmaparva (6th Chapter) of Mahābhārata. It pictures as the narration of Sanjaya to Dratharashtra about the incidents of Kurukshetra war field. Although it is a tiny part of the Mahabharata and technically classed as a Smriti text, it is traditionally accorded the rank of an Upaniṣad. The date of composition falls between 5th and 2nd BCE. It is considered as the practical elaboration of Upaniṣadic knowledge. It suggests practical ways for liberation amidst of the constant struggles and tensions of the world. The Bhagavad Gīta recalls that upholding dharma can be challenging, especially in situations where there is no a clear demarcation between right and wrong.

**BHAGAVATGĪTA-SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN SREE KRISHNA AND ARJUNA:** A struggling human soul is seeking to escape from the grief and miseries of the world. He/she is represented in the Gīta as a being of action, a fighter but confused as to her/his duty and the true meaning and goal of life, and yet eager to find a way towards peace and freedom. The Gīta is, therefore, in the form of a conversation between Krishna, who represents Naryana or God and Arjuna, who represents Nara or Human.

**BHAGAVATGĪTA** is divided into eighteen chapters, which can be again classified into three sections, each comprising six chapters. The first section deals with Karma Yoga or the path of action, the second describes Jñāna Yoga or the path of Knowledge and the last section discusses about Bhakti Yoga or the path of love or devotion. These paths signify the attainment of liberation through the will, reason and emotion respectively. Yoga literally means union. Here, yoga represents the method by which one attains the realization that union with Brahman.

# KARMA YOGA

The path of Action described in Srimad Bhagavad–Gīta.

## Importance and necessity of Karma : Karma is necessary in life. None can remain inactive even for a moment (Śloka 3.5). There is no one who can remain without action, even for a moment. Indeed, all beings are compelled to act by their qualities born of material nature (the three guṇas). Gīta says, ‘the action superior than inaction”. By ceasing activity, even your bodily maintenance will not be possible (3.8). Moreover, Gīta reiterates none can achieve liberation by renouncing action (3.4).

*niyataṁ kuru karma tvaṁ karma jyāyo hyakarmaṇaḥ*

Gīta claims that action is better than non action. Therefore, performing ones daily duties is inevitable in life.

**Causes for the Success of Action:** The body, the doer, the various senses, the many kinds of efforts, and Divine Providence—these are the five factors of action. (Śloka 18.14) All actions are performed by the contribution of these factors (Śloka 18.15). Impure intellects accept Soul as the doer (Śloka 18.16). Those who do not understand this regard the soul as the only doer. With their impure intellects they cannot see things as they are.

***Performance of Actions: Lokasaṅgraham, Yajña, and Niṣkāmakarma***

***Lokasaṅgraham***

Actions are performed for **the universal good**. Even God performs action for the universal good. By considering the good of the universe one is justified in doing work (Śloka 3.20-21).

*loka-saṅgraham evāpi sampaśhyan kartum arhasi.*

*[loka-saṅgraham](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/loka-sangraham)*—for the welfare of the masses; *[eva api](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/eva%20api)*—only; *[sampaśhyan](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sampashyan)*—considering; *[kartum](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/kartum)*—to perform; *[arhasi](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/arhasi)* *eva*—you are certainly justified.

***Yajña***

*Yajña* is theaction **dedicated** to lord, which never leads to bondage (Śloka 3.9)

*yajñārthātkarmaṇo ’nyatraloko ’yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ |*

[*yajña-arthāt*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yajna-arthat)—for the sake of sacrifice; *[karmaṇaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karmanah)*—than action; *[anyatra](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/anyatra)*—else; *[lokaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/lokah)*—material world; *[ayam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/ayam)*—this; [*karma-bandhanaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karma-bandhanah)—bondage through one’s work;

Work must be done as a *yajña* (sacrifice) to the Supreme Lord; otherwise, work causes bondage in this material world. Therefore,, perform your prescribed duties, without being attached to the results, for the satisfaction of God.

***Niṣkāmakarma***

One should always **perform duty without the desire of fruits** (Śloka 2.47) –

*karmaṇy-evādhikārastemāphaleṣhu kadāchana |  
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo ’stvakarmaṇi ||*

[*karmaṇi*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karmani)—in prescribed duties; *[eva](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/eva)*—only; *[adhikāraḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/adhikarah)*—right; *[te](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/te)*—your; *[mā](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/ma)*—not; *[phaleṣhu](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/phaleshu)*—in the fruits; *[kadāchana](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/kadachana)*—at any time; *[mā](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/ma)*—never; [*karma-phala*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karma-phala)—results of the activities; [*hetuḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/hetuh)—cause; [*bhūḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhuh)—be; [*mā*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/ma)—not; [*te*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/te)—your; [*saṅgaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sangah)—attachment; [*astu*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/astu)—must be; *[akarmaṇi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/akarmani)*—in inaction.

You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, nor be attached to inaction.

Therefore, *Karmamārga* is not **renunciation of action but renunciation in action.**

**Results**

*yoga-yukto viśhuddhātmā vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ  
sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtātmā kurvann api na lipyate (5.7)*

[*yoga-yuktaḥ*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yoga-yuktah)—united in consciousness with God; *[viśhuddha-ātmā](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vishuddha-atma)*—one with purified intellect; *[vijita-ātmā](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vijita-atma)*—one who has conquered the mind; *[jita-indriyaḥ](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jita-indriyah)*—having conquered the senses; *[sarva-bhūta-ātma-bhūta-ātmā](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sarva-bhuta-atma-bhuta-atma)*—one who sees the Soul of all souls in every living being; [*kurvan*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/kurvan)—performing; [*api*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/api)—although; [*na*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/na)—never; [*lipyate*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/lipyate)—entangled.

One who works in devotion, who is a pure soul, and who controls his mind and senses is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him. Though always working, such a man is never entangled.

*lipyate na sa pāpena  
padma-patramivāmbhasā* (**5.10)**

One who performs his duty without attachment, surrendering the results unto the Supreme Lord, is unaffected by sinful action, as the lotus leaf is untouched by water.

## SVADHARMA

*Svadharma* is one’s own prescribed or innate duty. It is of foremost importance even if done imperfectly (Śloka 3.35) –

*Śhreyān svadharmoviguṇaḥpara-dharmāt sv-anuṣhṭhitāt |  
swa-dharme nidhanaṁ śhreyaḥ para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ ||*

[*śhreyān*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/shreyan)—better; *[swa-dharmaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/swa-dharmah)*—personal duty; *[viguṇaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vigunah)*—tinged with faults; [*para-dharmāt*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/para-dharmat)—than another’s prescribed duties; *[su-anuṣhṭhitāt](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/su-anushthitat)*—perfectly done; *[sva-dharme](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/swa-dharme)*—in one’s personal duties; *[nidhanam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/nidhanam)*—death; *[śhreyaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/shreyah)*—better; [*para-dharmaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/para-dharmah)—duties prescribed for others; *[bhaya-āvahaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhaya-avahah)*—fraught with fear.

It is far better to perform one’s natural prescribed duty, though tinged with faults, than to perform another’s prescribed duty, though perfectly. In fact, it is preferable to die in the discharge of one’s duty, than to follow the path of another, which is fraught with danger.

*Svadharma* or ordained duty is according to the nature of the person (Śloka 18.41). The duties of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras—are distributed according to their qualities, in accordance with their *guṇas* (and not by birth).

* Duties of Brahmana of Sattvika–nature (Śloka 18.42) –
* Tranquility, restraint, austerity, purity, patience, integrity, knowledge, wisdom, and belief in a hereafter—these are the intrinsic qualities of work for Brahmins.
* Duties of Ksatriya of Sattva–Rajas–nature (Śloka 18.43) –
* Valor, strength, fortitude, skill in weaponry, resolve never to retreat from battle, large-heartedness in charity, and leadership abilities, these are the natural qualities of work for Kshatriyas.
* Duties of vaiṣya (Rajas–nature) and ṣudra (Tamas–nature) (Śloka 18.44) –
* Agriculture, dairy farming, and commerce are the natural works for those with the qualities of vaisyas. Serving through work is the natural duty for those with the qualities of ṣudras.

# STHITAPRAJÑA

Bhagavad–Gīta describes the nature of the one who is free from all the afflictions and is indifferent i.e. *Sthita-prajna*. One who discards all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind, and becomes satisfied in the realization of the self. Indifferent to all the mundane conditions (Śloka 2.56)

*jitātmanaḥ praśhāntasya paramātmā samāhitaḥ  
śhītoṣhṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣhu tathā mānāpamānayoḥ*

[*jita-ātmanaḥ*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jita-atmanah)—one who has conquered one’s mind; *[praśhāntasya](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/prashantasya)*—of the peaceful; *[parama-ātmā](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/parama-atma)*—God; *[samāhitaḥ](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/samahitah)*—steadfast; *[śhīta](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/shita)*—in cold; *[uṣhṇa](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/ushna)*—heat; *[sukha](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sukha)*—happiness; *[duḥkheṣhu](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/duhkheshu)*—and distress; *[tathā](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/tatha)*—also; *[māna](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/mana)*—in honor; *[apamānayoḥ](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/apamanayoh)*—and dishonor

## The yogis who have conquered the mind rise above the dualities of cold and heat, joy and sorrow, honor and dishonor. Such yogis remain peaceful and steadfast in their devotion to God.

## Characteristics of *Sthitaprajña*

**Control over all the senses (Śloka 2.55)** –

The Supreme Lord said: O Parth, when one discards all selfish desires and cravings of the senses that torment the mind, and becomes satisfied in the realization of the self, such a person is said to be transcendentally situated.

**Indifferent to all the mundane conditions (Śloka 2.56)** –

*duḥkheṣhv-anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣhu vigata-spṛihaḥ |  
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir uchyate ||*

[*duḥkheṣhu*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/duhkheshu)—amidst miseries; *[anudvigna-manāḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/anudvigna-manah)*—one whose mind is undisturbed; *[sukheṣhu](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sukheshu)*—in pleasure; *[vigata-spṛihaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vigata-sprihah)*—without craving; [*vīta*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vita)—free from; [*rāga*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/raga)—attachment; [*bhaya*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhaya)—fear; [*krodhaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/krodhah)—anger; [*sthita-dhīḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sthita-dhih)—enlightened person; *[muniḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/munih)*—a sage; *[uchyate](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/uchyate)*—is called.

One whose mind remains undisturbed amidst misery, who does not crave for pleasure, and who is free from attachment, fear, and anger, is called a sage of steady wisdom.

**Unattached from everything (Śloka 2.57)** –

One who remains unattached under all conditions, and is neither delighted by good fortune nor dejected by tribulation, he is a sage with perfect knowledge.

**Withdrawal of all the senses (Śloka 2.58) –**

One who is able to withdraw the senses from their objects, just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell, is established in divine wisdom.

## Attainment of Peace and Bliss (Śloka 2.70)

Just as the ocean remains undisturbed by the incessant flow of waters from rivers merging into it, likewise the sage who is unmoved despite the flow of desirable objects all around him attains peace, and not the person who strives to satisfy desires.

**The desireless, attains the perfect bliss (Śloka 2.71)**

That person, who gives up all material desires and lives free from a sense of greed, proprietorship, and egoism, attains perfect bliss.

**Reaches the Lord-The establishment of such state leads to the adobe of the Lord (Śloka 2.72) –**

Partha, such is the state of an enlightened soul that having attained it, one is never again deluded. Being established in this consciousness even at the hour of death, one is liberated from the cycle of life and death and reaches the Supreme Abode of God.

# JNANA YOGA

The path of Knowledge taught by Lord in Bhagavada–Gīta . Gīta rechognises two kinds of knowledge. Jnana –intutive knowledge about ultimate principles behind apparent series: knowledge about the splendor of Reality and Vijana- intellectual apprehension of the details of existence.

## TranscendendtalKnowedge

* Knowledge of Lord’s Advent and Deeds leads to attainment of Him (Śloka 4.9) –
* Those who **understand the real nature Self and Eternal Self**, do not have to take birth again, but come to eternal abode (attains brahman).Those who understand the divine nature of my birth and activities, O Arjun, upon leaving the body, do not have to take birth again, but come to my eternal abode (attains me).
* Cultivation of transcendental knowledge leads to divine love (Śloka 4.10) –
* Being freed from attachment, fear, and anger, becoming fully absorbed in me, and taking refuge in me, many persons in the past became purified by knowledge of me, and thus they attained my divine love.

## Characteristics of Jnana Yogi: one who understand the real nature Self and Eternal Self

* Master of all his action is a truly wise person (Śloka 4.18) –

*karmaṇyakarmayaḥpaśhyedakarmaṇi cha karma yaḥ |  
sa buddhimān manuṣhyeṣhu sa yuktaḥ kṛitsna-karma-kṛit ||*

[*karmaṇi*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karmani)—action; [*akarma*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/akarma)—in inaction; [*yaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yah)—who; [*paśhyet*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/pashyet)—see; [*akarmaṇi*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/akarmani)—inaction; [*cha*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/cha)—also; [*karma*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karma)—action; [*yaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yah)—who; [*saḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sah)—they; [*buddhi-mān*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/buddhi-man)—wise; [*manuṣhyeṣhu*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/manushyeshu)—amongst humans; *[saḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sah)*—they; *[yuktaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yuktah)*—yogis; *[kṛitsna-karma-kṛit](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/kritsna-karma-krit)*—performers all kinds of actions.

* Those who see action in inaction and inaction in action are truly wise amongst humans. Although performing all kinds of actions, they are yogis and masters of all their actions.
* The person free from all desires is truly a *Pandita* (Śloka 4.19) –
* The enlightened sages call those persons wise, whose every action is free from the desire for material pleasures and who have burnt the reactions of work in the fire of divine knowledge.

## Superiority and Attainment of Spiritual Knowledge

* Consumation of all works in Jnana (Superiority) (Śloka 4.33) –

*śhreyāndravya-mayādyajñājjñāna-yajñaḥ parantapa |  
sarvaṁ karmākhilaṁ pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate ||*

[*śhreyān*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/shreyan)—superior; *[dravya-mayāt](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/dravya-mayat)*—of material possessions; *[yajñāt](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yajnat)*—than the sacrifice; *[jñāna-yajñaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnana-yajnah)*—sacrifice performed in knowledge; *[parantapa](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/parantapa)*—subduer of enemies, Arjun; *[sarvam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sarvam)*—all; [*karma*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/karma)—works; *[akhilam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/akhilam)*—all; *[pārtha](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/partha)*—Arjun, the son of Pritha; *[jñāne](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnane)*—in knowledge; *[parisamāpyate](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/parisamapyate)*—culminate.

* subduer of enemies, sacrifice performed in knowledge is superior to any mechanical material sacrifice. After all, O Parth, all sacrifices of work culminate in knowledge.
* **Three means of attaining Spiritual Knowledge** (Śloka 4.34) –

Approaching A Guru, 1. with submissive spirit 2. honest enquiry after Truth, 3. obedient temperament

## Efficacy and Goal of Spiritual Knowledge

* Realisation of all beings in the self and the Lord (Śloka 4.35) –

*yajjñātvānapunar moham evaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava |  
yena bhūtānyaśheṣheṇa drakṣhyasyātmanyatho mayi ||*

[*yat*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yat)—which; *[jñātvā](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnatva)*—having known; *[na](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/na)*—never; *[punaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/punah)*—again; *[moham](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/moham)*—delusion; *[evam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/evam)*—like this; *[yāsyasi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yasyasi)*—you shall get; *[pāṇḍava](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/pandava)*—Arjun, the son of Pandu; *[yena](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yena)*—by this; *[bhūtāni](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhutani)*—living beings; *[aśheṣhāṇi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/asheshani)*—all; *[drakṣhyasi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/drakshyasi)*—you will see; *[ātmani](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/atmani)*—within me (Shree Krishna); *[atho](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/atho)*—that is to say; *[mayi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/mayi)*—in me.

* Following this path and having achieved enlightenment from a Guru, O Arjun, you will no longer fall into delusion. In the light of that knowledge, you will see that all living beings are but parts of the Supreme, and are within me.
* Uplifts even the worst of the Sinners (Śloka 4.36) –

*apichedasipāpebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpa-kṛit-tamaḥ |  
sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva vṛijinaṁ santariṣhyasi ||*

[*api*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/api)—even; *[chet](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/chet)*—if; *[asi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/asi)*—you are; *[pāpebhyaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/papebhyah)*—sinners; *[sarvebhyaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sarvebhyah)*—of all; *[pāpa-kṛit-tamaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/papa-krit-tamah)*—most sinful; *[sarvam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sarvam)*—all; *[jñāna-plavena](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnana-plavena)*—by the boat of divine knowledge; *[eva](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/eva)*—certainly; *[vṛijinam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vrijinam)*—sin; *[santariṣhyasi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/santarishyasi)*—you shall cross over.

* Even those who are considered the most immoral of all sinners can cross over this ocean of material existence by seating themselves in the boat of divine knowledge.
* Exhausts all the fruits of actions performed (Śloka 4. 37) –

*yathaidhānsisamiddho ’gnirbhasma-sāt kurute ’rjuna |  
jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi bhasma-sāt kurute tathā ||*

[*yathā*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yatha)—as; [*edhānsi*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/edhansi)—firewood; [*samiddhaḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/samiddhah)—blazing; [*agniḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/agnih)—fire; [*bhasma-sāt*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhasma-sat)—to ashes; *[kurute](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/kurute)*—turns; [*arjuna*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/arjuna)—Arjun; *[jñāna-agniḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnana-agnih)*—the fire of knowledge; *[sarva-karmāṇi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sarva-karmani)*—all reactions from material activities; *[bhasma-sāt](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhasma-sat)*—to ashes; *[kurute](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/kurute)*—it turns; *[tathā](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/tatha)*—similarly.

As a kindled fire reduces wood to ashes, O Arjun, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all reactions from material activities.

* Transcendental knowledge as the purest of all the things (Śloka 4. 38) –
* In this world, there is nothing as purifying as divine knowledge. One who has attained purity of mind through prolonged practice of Yog, receives such knowledge within the heart, in due course of time.
* Eternal bliss as the ultimate goal of Transcendental Knowledge (Śloka 4.39)

*śhraddhāvānlabhatejñānaṁ tat-paraḥ sanyatendriyaḥ |  
jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śhāntim achireṇādhigachchhati ||*

[*śhraddhā-vān*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/shraddha-van)—a faithful person; *[labhate](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/labhate)*—achieves; *[jñānam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnanam)*—divine knowledge; [*tat-paraḥ*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/tat-parah)—devoted (to that); [*sanyata*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sanyata)—controlled; *[indriyaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/indriyah)*—senses; *[jñānam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/jnanam)*—transcendental knowledge; *[labdhvā](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/labdhva)*—having achieved; *[parām](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/param)*—supreme; *[śhāntim](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/shantim)*—peace; *[achireṇa](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/achirena)*—without delay; *[adhigachchhati](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/adhigachchhati)*—attains.

* Those whose faith is deep and who have practiced controlling their mind and senses attain divine knowledge. Through such transcendental knowledge, they quickly attain everlasting supreme peace.

# BHAKTI YOGA

The path of love and devotion as explained by Lord in Bhagavada–Gīta as **Worship with great faith and unswearving devotion**

## The Way of Bhaktiyoga

* Yogi absorbed in the Lord is superior to all (Śloka 6.47) –.

Of all yogis, those whose minds are always absorbed in me, and who engage in devotion to me with great faith, them I consider to be the highest of all.

“**Fix your mind** on me alone and surrender your intellect to me. There upon, you will always live in me. Of this, there is no doubt. If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on me, O Arjun, then practice **remembering** me with devotion while constantly restraining the mind from worldly affairs. If you cannot practice remembering me with devotion, then just try to work for me. Thus **performing devotional service** to me, you shall achieve the stage of perfection. If you are unable to even work for me in devotion, then try to **renounce the fruits of your actions and be situated in the self**. Better than mechanical practice is knowledge; better than knowledge is meditation. Better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of actions, for peace immediately follows such renunciation. (Śloka 12: 8-12). Thus, Bhakti being disinterested service to God, is a form of karma. Disinterested action is not possible without true knowledge. In that sense, Bhakti is too, like Nishkamakarma that which can be performed by true Jñāni.

## Salvation is Ensured

Consecration of all actions with their fruits and deep concentration on him ensure Salvation (Śloka 12.6-7). “But those who dedicate all their actions to me, regarding me as the Supreme goal, worshiping me and meditating on me with exclusive devotion, O Parth, I swiftly deliver them from the ocean of birth and death, for their consciousness is united with me.”

## Love as Most Important while Offering to Lord

Lord accepts even the most humble offerings which is offered with love (Śloka 9.26) –

*patraṁpuṣhpaṁphalaṁtoyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayachchhati |  
tadahaṁ bhaktyupahṛitam aśhnāmi prayatātmanaḥ ||*

[*patram*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/patram)—a leaf; *[puṣhpam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/pushpam)*—a flower; *[phalam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/phalam)*—a fruit; *[toyam](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/toyam)*—water; *[yaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yah)*—who; [*me*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/me)—to me; *[bhaktyā](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhaktya)*—with devotion; [*prayachchhati*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/prayachchhati)—offers; [*tat*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/tat)—that; [*aham*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/aham)—I; [*bhakti-upahṛitam*](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhakti-upahritam)—offered with devotion; *[aśhnāmi](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/ashnami)*—partake; *[prayata-ātmanaḥ](http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/prayata-atmanah)*—one in pure consciousness.

If one offers to me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or even water, I delightfully partake of that article offered with love by my devotee in pure consciousness.

Everything as offering to Lord (Śloka 9.27) – Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, and whatever austerities you perform, O son of Kunti, do them as an offering to me.

**Four Types of Devotees**

Below are the verses of Bhagavat Gīta which explain about the above said 4 types of devotees.(7/16).

1. Arta (the distressed):- These are the people who are experiencing pain and suffering either at physical level or at mental level. They approaches GOD to get liberated from their pains and hence are called *‘Arta’*
2. Arthārti (Devotees with certain wishes) –These devotees approaches GOD with the desires of material wealth, kids, name and fame.
3. Jigyāsu (Knowledge Seeker)- These are the devotees who have faith in GOD and want to explore more about Him. They are just curious to know more about Divine and are very much inquisitive about *BRAHMAN*. They read scriptures and other literature from saints and try to figure out ways and means to discover greater depths of infinite GOD.
4. Jñāni (Self-Realised)-These are the devotees who have finally realized GOD and have true knowledge of Him, His creation and the entire cosmos. They understand Brahman and are liberated from all Karma specific boundations of life.

## SANTA BHAKTA

* Free from Malice and attachments (Śloka 12.13) –

Those devotees are very dear to me who are free from malice toward all living beings, who are friendly, and compassionate. They are free from attachment to possessions and egotism, equipoised in happiness and distress, and ever-forgiving.

* Contented and devoted (Śloka 12.14) –

They are ever-contented, steadily united with me in devotion, self-controlled, firm in conviction, and dedicated to me in mind and intellect.

* Neither source nor affected by annoyance (Śloka 12.15) –

Those who are not a source of annoyance to anyone and who in turn are not aGīta ted by anyone, who are equal in pleasure and pain, and free from fear and anxiety, such devotees of mine are very dear to me.

* Indifferent, Pure and Unselfish (Śloka 12.16) –

Those who are indifferent to worldly gain, externally and internally pure, skillful, without cares, untroubled, and free from selfishness in all undertakings, such devotees of mine are very dear to me.

* Steadfast (Śloka 12.17) –

Those who neither rejoice in mundane pleasures nor despair in worldly sorrows, who neither lament for any loss nor hanker for any gain, who renounce both good and evil deeds, such persons who are full of devotion are very dear to me.

* Indifferent to people and mundane conditions (Śloka 12.18) –

Those, who are alike to friend and foe, equipoise in honor and dishonor, cold and heat, joy and sorrow, and are free from all unfavorable association.

**DOCTRINE OF DIVINE DESCENT or AVATĀRA (4. 7-8)**

Since everyone is the embodiment of the Supreme Reality or Brahman, What is the difference between an avatāra and a human being?. Gīta portrays differences in two verses. The nature of birth and the purpose of birth distinguish both. The first verse depicts an avatāra is the embodied human form by **His own accord**. It is absolutely out of His freedom. It says;

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata*

*abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānaṁ sṛijāmyaham*

[*yadā yadā*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yada%20yada)—whenever; [*hi*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/hi)—certainly; *[dharmasya](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/dharmasya)*—of righteousness; *[glāniḥ](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/glanih)*—decline; *[bhavati](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bhavati)*—is; *[bhārata](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/bharata)*—Arjun, descendant of Bharat; *[abhyutthānam](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/abhyutthanam)*—increase; *[adharmasya](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/adharmasya)*—of unrighteousness; *[tadā](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/tada)*—at that time; *[ātmānam](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/atmanam)*—self; *[sṛijāmi](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/srijami)*—manifest; *[aham](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/aham)*—I.

Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjun, at that time I manifest myself on earth. Human birth is due to the work of Karma but incarnations are free from Karma and never leave any Karmic samsk*ā*ras which engender the next birth. An avatāra is freed from the influence of previous karma and the imprints for rebirth. He is the All-Will and descends when he wills. He manifests of His own accord. The second verse calibrates the **purpose** of avatāra;

*paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ vināśhāya cha duṣhkṛitām*

*dharma-sansthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

[*paritrāṇāya*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/paritranaya)—to protect; *[sādhūnām](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sadhunam)*—the righteous; *[vināśhāya](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/vinashaya)*—to annihilate; [*cha*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/cha)—and; *[duṣhkṛitām](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/dushkritam)*—the wicked; [*dharma*](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/dharma)—the eternal religion; *[sansthāpana-arthāya](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sansthapana-arthaya)*—to reestablish; *[sambhavāmi](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/sambhavami)*—I appear; *[yuge yuge](https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/w/yuge%20yuge)*—age after age

To protect the righteous, to annihilate the wicked, and to re-establish the principles of dharma I appear on this earth, age after age.

**BRAHMASŪTRA**

The oral transmission of knowledge demands a higher degree of cognising capacity. So, Sages urge to find out certain means to memorise Vedic knowledge. It leads to the formation of Sūtra texts. Sūtras are aphorisms. An aphorism is concise and clear statements of impregnable ideas. *Brahmasūtra* is the aphoristic statements of Upaniṣadic knowledge. In other words, *Brahmasūtra* is those in which *brahma vidya* has been logically proved and arranged. Thus, it is also called as the *Nyāya* *prasthāna*. *Brhama* *vidya* initiates the right knowledge of Brahman. B*ā*drayana Vyās is the author of *Brahmasūtra*. *Brahmasūtra* has written in *sūtra* forms. It comprises of four chapters (*adhyāyas*), each of which has four sub-divisions (*pada*), each *pada* consists of sub-topics (*adhikarana*), and each *adhikarna* contains one or more *sūtras*. Four *adhyāyas* are;

1. *Samanvaya* *adhyāya*- Proving Brahman as the central theme of Upaniṣadic teachings.
2. *Avirodha adhyāya*- Proving Brahmavidya as free from all contradiction.
3. *Sādhana adhyāya*- the means to attain Brahmavidya.
4. *Phala adhyāya*-fruit of Brahmavidya.

The style of *Brahmasūtra* is based on logic. The logical arrangement of their arguments has a sound value:

1. *Viṣaya* –Establishes the point of discussion
2. *Samśaya*- the possible doubts
3. *Pūrvapakṣa*-Stating contrary arguments
4. *Uttarapakṣa* and *siddāntha*- Refuting them with strong logical arguments and presenting the right argument.
5. Nirṇaya- Announcement of the conclusion.

Four *adhyāyas* are the collection of sixteen *pada*, one hundred and ninety one *adhikarna*, and five hundred and fifty five *sutras*. Thus, we restrict our study to first *adhikarna* which consist of single *sutra*. The first sutra calibrates the scope, objective and relevance of the subject discussed in the text. They are the gauging principles for a good introduction. *Brahmasūtra’s* first sutra describes four components (*anubandha chatuṣtayam*) of a good introduction.

1. *Adhikāri*- the competent person
2. *Viṣaya*- the subject matter
3. *Prayojanam*-the benefit
4. *Sambandha*-the relation of the text to the purpose.

With this brief introduction, we move to analyse and understand the first sutra.

## First Sutra: ‘*Athato* *Brahmajijñāsa’*. “Thereafter, Therefore, the inquiry of Brahman”

* ‘Atha, Thereafter

It represents the series or sequence of the four pre requisite (*sādhanachatuṣtaya*), to attain Mok*ṣ*a. Without these *sādhanachatuṣtaya*, *Brahmajijñāsa’* can’t be acquired. It squarely defines the nature of the competent person for the study of *Brahmavidya*. It also considers as the recquirement for the study of *upani****ṣ****ad*. A student who treads the path of Truth must, therefore, first equip himself with ***Sādhana Chatuṣtaya*** - the "four means of salvation". They are discrimination ([Viveka](http://veda.wikidot.com/viveka)), dispassion ([Vair*ā*gya](http://veda.wikidot.com/vairagya)), the sixfold qualities of perfection ([*Shad-Sampat*](http://veda.wikidot.com/shad-sampat)*i*), and intense longing for liberation (*[Mumuk](http://veda.wikidot.com/mumukshutva)*[*ṣutva*](http://veda.wikidot.com/mumukshutva)). **Viveka** is the discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the permanent and the impermanent, and between the Self and the non-Self. **Vairagya** is the dispassion for the pleasures of this world and of heaven (Detachment). The third requisite is **Shad-Sampat**, the six-fold virtue. It consists of [Sama](http://veda.wikidot.com/sama) (control over the mind), [Dama](http://veda.wikidot.com/dama) (control over the senses), [Uparati](http://veda.wikidot.com/uparati) (turning the mind away from desire for sensual enjoyment), [Titikṣa](http://veda.wikidot.com/titiksha) (the power of endurance), [Sraddha](http://veda.wikidot.com/sraddha) (intense faith) and [Sam**ā**dhana](http://veda.wikidot.com/samadhana) (fixing the mind on Brahman or the Self). All these six qualities are taken as one because they are calculated to bring about mental control and discipline, without which concentration and meditation are impossible. **Mumukṣutva** is intense desire for liberation.

* ‘Atah’: ‘Therefore’.

Karma doesn’t give Moksha. Only by the knowledge of Brahman we get it. Therefore, Brahman jijnasa must be there for the attainment of Mok**ṣ**a.

* ‘*Brahmajijñāsa’*: Brahman is the direct subject of inquiry. It’s not that we need to know different aspects of Brahman. Because knowledge of Brahman gives the knowledge of all the other aspects also (like nature, etc.). E.g. If we say ‘King’ is going. It means that all other like guards, vehicle of the King, etc. are also going. It doesn’t denote that King is alone going walking on foot. ‘*jijñāsa* (inquisitive) of Brahman remains there until we have the realization of Brahman. All the miseries of the world are permanently removed after the knowledge of Brahman. When the Knowledge of Brahman is attained then both Ignorance and the Knowledge of Shruti goes, because knowledge of shruti is only needed until we attain the knowledge of Brahman.

Second Sutra: *‘Janmādyasya yataḥ’*- That is Brahman from which are derived birth, etc. of this Universe. (‘Tad Brahman’ (that is Brahman) is added in the sutra to complete the meaning.

Third Sutra: ‘*Śāstrayonitvata’*- Two Meanings: 1st: Brahman as the cause of *Śruti*; 2nd: *Śruti* as *Pramāṇa* for Brahman. Ontologically Brahman is first (as it is the cause of the *Śruti*), But Epistemologically *Śruti* is first (as through *Śruti* we know Brahman).

Fourth Sutra: ‘*Tat tu samanvayat*’. Brahman is the *Samanvya* (co-ordination) of all the Vedas.

**These four sutras are collectively called *Chattusūtri***

**ADVAITA VEDĀNTA-ŚANKARĀCĀRYA**

Advaita Vedānta is the Vedāntic School of non-dualism. Advaita (*A*+*dvaita*) means non-dual. Although Śaṅkara is regarded as the profound philosopher of Advaita Vedānta as a distinct school of Indian philosophy, the origins of this school predate Śaṅkara. The Advaitic tradition originates from Gaudapada and Govindapada and flourishes with Ādi Śankarācārya. Śaṅkara had four direct disciples - Suresvaracarya, Padmapada, Hastamalak and Totakacarya. Gaudapada wrote a commentary on *Mandūkya Upaniṣad* called as *Mandūkya Kārika*, which is the first advaitic treatise.

**Life:** Śankara was born in Kaladi (Kerala). By the age of eight he was well versed in all the Vedas and took Sanyāsa at this very young age. He died at the age of 32 at Kedarnatha (Uttarakhand).

**Work:** He has written commentaries on the ten major *Upanisads*, *Brahmasūtra* and *Bhagawad Gita*. He also wrote many introductory texts (*prakaraṇagranthās*) like *Vivekacudamani, Aparoksanubhuti, Upadesasahasri*, etc.

He established four peethas at the four corners of India.–

* **Jyotir Math –** Location: North, In Badri, Uttarakhand;
* **Govardhan Math –** Location: East, In Puri, Orrisa;
* **Sringeri Math –** Location: South,Sringeri, Karnataka;
* **Sharda Math –** Location: West, In Dwarka, Gujarat;

**PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of Śankarācārya can be summed up in one line as ‘***Brahmasatyam jagatmityam jivobrahmaevanaparāḥ***’ ‘Brahman is the reality, world is illusion and Brahman and Jiva are not different’. Brahman is *saccidānandmadvayam*. Brahman is *sat*-*cit*-*ānanda*. It is not an existent thing; whereas it is the existence (*sat*). It renders ‘*isness’* to all existent things. It is ‘*Being in itself*’ or ‘*Pure Being*.’ There are different experiences (love, rejection, depression, and contentment etc.). However, what remains in all experiences is awareness. Brahman is the awareness or consciousness (*cit*). *Ānanda* represents the completeness or fulfilment. It is not mere happiness. Obviously, it has the experience of bliss. This Brahman is non-dual (*advayam*). The experienced world and objects are appearances and not real because they don’t exist by themselves. Then why do we feel differences and changes?

To explain this, Śankarācārya postulate the concept of māya. *Māya*/*Avidya*/*Adhyāsa* is the cause of differences. Śankarācārya has written a commentary on *Brahmasūtra,* which is called *Śāririka* *Bhaṣya*’. He has written a preface titled, ‘*Adhyāsa Bhaṣya*’ for the commentary on *Brahmasūtra*. *Adhyāsa* means Superimposition, like that of Snake (world) on Rope (Brahman). *Adhyāsa* interprets the meaning of the existence of Jagat, Jiva and Isvara in relation with Brahman. This preface is written to prove the aim and subject matter of *Brahmasūtra*. The aim is *Mokṣa* and the subject matter is the identity of Brahman and Atman.

### MAYA/AVIDYA/ADHYASA

Brahman appears as the manifold objects of experience because of its creative power, *māyā*. *Māyā* is that which appears to be real at the time of experience but which does not have ultimate existence. It is dependent on pure consciousness. *Māyā* is the superimposition of the unreal on the real, like the false perception of a snake in a rope which is not snake. Śankarācārya defines it as “the apparent recognition of something previously observed in some other thing like water in a mirage.” *Māyā* has two powers: the veiling power (*āvaraṇa śakti*) and the projecting power (*vikṣepa śakti*). *Āvaraṇa śakti* is of the nature of ignorance and veils the true nature the Reality. *Vikṣepa śakti* is the creative power that projects the entire world of names and forms.

* *Māyā* is the power of Brahman. It is absolutely dependent on Brahman. Its locus as well as object is Brahman but Brahman is untouched by it, even as a magician is unaffected by his magic or colourless *akaśa* is untouched by the dark colour attributed to it. Therefore, the realization of Truth is the absolute annihilation of *Māyā*.
* *Māyā* is Positive (*bhāvarūpa*)- It refutes the contention that *Māyā* is mere negation. In other words, it is not mere absence of knowledge. If we consider *Māyā* is mere negation, *Māyā* owns an absolute existence. It is against Vedantic view for which Brahman is the only absolute substance. Therefore, the positive nature of *Māyā* denotes differentiation from negation.
* *Māyā* is Indescribable (*Anirvacanīya*)-It cannot be proved by our reasoning because human reasoning can never be free from ignorance. This attempt is to prove the darkness with the darkness. It cannot be proved by Knowledge, as at the awakening of pure knowledge there cannot remain any trace of ignorance. This attempt is to prove the darkness by a blazing light. Advaitin says it is neither real nor unreal, nor real-unreal, neither with parts nor without parts, neither separable from Knowledge nor inseparable from it. It is not non-existence like the child of barren woman; otherwise there would not be any dealing with the world. It is not existent like Brahman. It is not real, for it has no existence apart from Brahman; it is not unreal, for it projects the world of appearance.
* *Māyā* is material and unconscious. It is made of three qualities- Three qualities are sattva (effulgence), rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia).
* *Māyā* is opposed to Knowledge. Ignorance and its modifications completely vanish at the awakening of KNOWLEDGE.
* *Māyā* is not eternal. It is without beginning but it has an end.

# THREE LEVELS OF REALITY (*Satta Traya*)

There are three planes of existence according to classical Advaita Vedānta: the plane of absolute existence (***paramārthika satta***), the plane of worldly existence (***vyāvahārika satta***) and the plane of illusory existence (***pratibhāsika satta***). It doesn’t mean that there are three realities. Reality is one. But one perceives the reality in three ways. A *pratibhāsika* existence occurs for short time (phenomenal experience), such as objects seen in dream and mistaking rope for a snake etc. It is individual experience. They are not to be taken totally unreal or non-existent like a barren woman’s son because the illusion gives to the ignorant man an impression of reality until they are corrected by proper sense experience. At the same time, they are not real because they do not have independent existence. The transactional world (*vyāvahārika*) exists because it is experiential. It is our daily experience of the world we live in. It is shared experience and mostly not individual. It can also said to be non-existing because it has no essence and it depends on Brahman for existence. ***Param****ā****rthika*** is the ultimate truth level. It is the experience of ultimate reality. It can exist by itself without depending on anything. It contradicts other two levels of experience. One can know the unreality of dream only from the waking state. As long as we are dreaming, we won’t understand that dream is unreal. In the same way, in waking state we will consider the external world as Real and ultimate. But when we get the ‘higher knowledge about Brahman’ (Brahma-vidya) we will realize that the experiential world is not ultimately real. According to Śaṅkara, these three different grades of existence are known as *Sattatraya*.

**SAMSĀRA**

Brahman is the only reality. Then what is the universe or *samsāra*? *Samsāra* is, according to Śaṅkara, *Mithya*. It is just illusion and he gives the example of rope and snake illusion (*rajjusarpa*). The illusion does not mean completely unreal. The world is neither totally real nor totally unreal. It is not totally unreal since it is experienced. It is not totally real since it is suppressed and annihilated by knowledge of Brahman. Hence, Śaṅkara accepts its reality at the empirical level (*vyavahārika*) as we cannot negate it completely. Advaitin acclaims that the world is the apparent modification (*Vivartha*) of Brahman. The illusion of *Samsāra* is due solely to an illusory notion (*Māya*) and is not an absolute reality. The creation theory of Śankara is *'Brahmavivartavāda’*. It means Brahman is wrongly seen as world due to the power of *māyā*. Just as the rope (reality) is seen as the snake (illusion) due to darkness (ignorance) in the same way the Brahman is seen as world. The rope does not transform into snake and so is Brahman. The law of *vivartha* is fundamentally different from the law of evolution, which admits real change in the cause. Just as the spider, when considered from the standpoint of its own self, is the efficient cause of the web, and looked upon from the standpoint of its body, is also the material cause of the web. The spider makes the web without the help of cotton and other materials. Like this, the Brahman through His own power *māyā* creates the entire universe. Brahman associated with *māyā,* when looked upon from the standpoint of His Consciousness aspect, is the efficient cause. When looked upon His *Upādhi* (condition) aspect, Brahman is the material cause of the universe.

# JĪVA

Jīva is the individual soul. The reality is reflected or limited in the form of Jīva. The reflection of reality, which identifies with gross body, is called the individual soul or Jīva. It is similar to the reflection of the sun in a bucket of water and assumption of the identity as a reflection in the water. In contrast to Iśvara, Jīva is Brahman **associated with** Avidya, individual ignorance, and is **bound** **by** it. This bondage ends only when one realizes that ‘I am what I seek’. Knowing oneself to be infinite reality would liberate him/her from the cycle of transmigration.

# IŚVARA

Iśvara is the highest manifestation of Brahman. Iśvara is defined as Brahman associated with Māyā or universal ignorance but He is not affected by Māyā. On account of preponderance of pure sattva (effulgence principle), he is free from ignorance. Thus, Iśvara always know His true nature and does not get overpowered by Māyā. He is the Lord of Maya. Through Māyā, he created the world. Iśvara is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe and personal God. The qualities of universal lordship, all controlling power, inner guide, and causality are attributed qualities of Him. Thus, He is known as the qualified Brahman. The word Iśvara is popularly known as God in Advaita literature. The vedāntin does not confer absolute existence to Him because He is an unreal as the phenomenal universe from the transcendental point of view. But He is the God in transactional or phenomenal world. The difference between *Iśvara* and *Jīva* is that the former is associated with *Māyā* but not bound by *Māyā*; whereas, *Jīva* is associated with *Māyā* and bound by it.

# *TATVAM ASI* (THAT THOU ART)

Śankara is the adherent of the liberation through the means of knowledge. Hence, he reiterates that ‘The knower of the self becomes the truth itself (*brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*)’. Now, let us have a glance at the Advaitc interpretation of ***TATVAM ASI***

A sentence has two meanings:

The literal meaning *Vacyārtha*: Each word understood literally and put together as a sentence to give us a particular meaning. The implied meaning *Lakṣyārtha*: Here the literal meaning is rejected and the implied meaning is understood. For example, when one says, ‘He is lion’; the sentence does not indicate that man is a lion but it suggests that he is brave like a lion.

The literal meaning of ‘Thou’ is that the individual identified with gross and subtle bodies. It represents immediate experience. The implied meaning of ‘Thou’ is Pure Consciousness. So also the literal meaning of ‘That’ is the lord who is endowed with omniscience and other perfect qualities. It represents the reality associated with the remoteness. The implied meaning of the word ‘That’ is, the Pure Consciousness free from all conditioning.

There are three kinds of implications:

1. *Jahat lakshana*-When the direct meaning of sentence is discarded in favor of an indirect meaning. For eg. The village of cowherds is on the Ganges. The direct meaning is eschewed in favor of the indirect meaning, “on the banks of Ganges”.
2. *Ajahat Lakshana*- Without giving up the direct meaning of the sentence, what is implied by it is also adopted to get the meaning intended to be conveyed. For eg. The red is moving. It indicates the red flag or red horse is moving. We get a full meaning of the sentence with the addition of a noun form with adjective red.
3. *Jahat Ajahat Lakshana*- When one part of direct meaning retains and other part is given up, it is the case of Jahat Ajahat. For eg. This is that Devadatta. Here, the association regarding time and space are eliminated, but the person called Devadatta is accepted. Similarly, in Vedic dictum *Tat Tvam Asi*, the contradictory factors of remoteness and immediacy associated with That and Thou are given up and Pure Consciousness, which is common to both, is accepted. It is a kind of relation between two words having same locus. ‘That’ refers to the consciousness characterized by remoteness. ‘Thou’ signifies consciousness characterized by immediacy. But the locus is same Brahman.

**VIŚIṢTĀDVAITA-RĀMĀNUJA**

Rāmānuja (1075-1140) initiate into the theistic and devotional south Indian Sri Vaiṣnava tradition. He is a philosopher and scriptural exegete. His philosophical tradition comes to be known as Viśiṣtādvaita Vedānta. The word Advaita means non-dualism emphasising the oneness of the ultimate reality. Brahman is the only reality and nothing exists independent of it or outside of it. Viśiṣta signifies for the qualified whole. Non dualistic reality is qualified by conscious souls and unconscious matter. Viśiṣtādvaita can be translated as ‘non-duality of the qualified whole’. Commonly, it translated as qualified monism or qualified non-dualism.

Rāmānuja Vedānta becomes known as philosophical Vaiṣnavism because along with the Vaiṣnaava sects, he formulates philosophical constructs from the integration of,

1. The sectarian Tantric (non-vedic) Pancarātra temple ritual and theology based on Pancaratra scriptures (agamas).
2. The emotional devotionalism (bhakti) towards personal deity with qualities of tamil Alvar poets.
3. Classic Vedānta elements

He consolidated a process initiated by Nāthamuni and developed by Yamuna. The most monumental work of Rāmānuja is Śrībhāṣya on the Brahmasūtra of Bādrāyana and Gītabhāṣya on the Bhagavat Gīta. His theistic and dualistic interpretations of the Upaniṣads have provided a classical basis for the popular devotional religion (Bhakti Religion).

**RĀMĀNUJA AND MĀYA**

Rāmānuja has used the term ***Māya*** in a sense that is entirely different from that of Śankara. For him, *Māya* stands for the real power of God. Rāmānuja believes that with the help of this power God creates this wonderful world. God has within Him two constituent parts, namely, matter (acit) and soul (cit). In the process of creation, these two parts really get transformed into the material things and spiritual beings of the world respectively. Therefore, for Rāmānuja, the world of matter and that of the souls are as real as God Himself; and *Māya* is also a real power of God. *Avidya*, the other name for *Māya* is treated by Rāmānuja as ignorance because of which the individual self identifies itself with other material objects like the body, the senses, the mind etc. Such wrong identification causes bondage of the self; whereas the immediate intuitive knowledge of God leads to liberation.

**SEVEN IMPORTANT CHARGES (*ANUPAPATTI*) AGAINST THEORY OF *MAYA*.**

***Āsrayānupapatti*-** The first charge of Rāmānuja is about the support of *Māya*. *Māya* should have a locus (*āsraya*) that supports it i.e. it should have a place to reside. It cannot reside in Brahman, because that will make Brahman qualified, which is against Śankara’s concept of indeterminate non- dual Reality. Moreover, Brahman is self-luminous (*svaprakāsa*) and of the nature of self- consciousness. Therefore, it cannot be the locus of ignorance. If it is said that *Māya* resides in Brahman then it would mean that ignorance resides in knowledge. That would be sheer contradiction. Nor can *Māya* reside in the finite self, because the individuality of the selves is the creation of *Māya* itself. Thus, *Māya* has no locus at all. This charge is called *āsrayānupapatti*.

***Tirodhānānupapatti***- This charge is about the concealment of Brahman by *Māya*. It is said in the Śankara -Vedânta that *Māya* conceals the real nature of Brahman and projects in its place the unreal world. Rāmānuja questions the very meaning of this statement. *Māya*, according to Śankara, is of the nature of ignorance, whereas Brahman is of the nature of consciousness. How can *Mâya*, which is of the nature of ignorance, conceal the self conscious and self luminous Brahman is not comprehensible. Brahman cannot be covered by a principle of ignorance. This charge of Rāmānuja is named *tirodhânanupapatti*.

***Svarūpānupapatti***- This objection states that we cannot have any definite knowledge of *Māya*. If *Māya* is called positive it cannot be a synonym of *avidyâ* (absence of knowledge). *Avidyâ* is a negative term, so *avidyā* and *Māya* cannot mean the same thing. Moreover, if *Māya* is regarded as positive then nothing can destroy it. Again, if is called negative then *Māya* cannot give rise to the world of appearance, which is a positive activity. If it is said that *Māya* is both positive and negative then it will be self-contradiction. Again, if it is said that *Māya* is neither positive nor negative then it will mean abandonment of all logic. Rāmānuja calls this charge *Svarūpānupapatti*

***Anirvacanīyatvānupapatti***- Defining *Māya*, Śankara acclaims it as indescribable. This is sheer contradiction. It is said that *Māya* is indescribable (*anirvacaniya*) because it does not strictly fall under the categories of reality or unreality. But reality and unreality are exclusive categories. There is no third category besides these two. Nor is there any intermediate category between the two. If *Māya* is neither real nor unreal, then it is a nonentity; It is a fiction of imagination of the advaita philosopher. This charge against Śankara’s doctrine of *Māya* is known as *Anirvacanīyatvānupapatti*

***Pramāṇānupapatti***- Rāmānuja‘s charge here is that there is no valid means by which cognition of *Māya* is possible. None of the means of valid cognition (*pramāna*) can give any knowledge of *Māya*. We cannot perceive *Māya*. *Māya* is neither an entity nor a non-entity, so it is not perceptible. Nor can it be inferred because the process of inference requires a mark or middle term, which is not there in *Māya*. The scriptural authority, too, does give us knowledge of *Māya* as an illusion producing principle. In the scriptures *Māya* is spoken of as a real power of God, but Śankara does not admit that and he interprets it in a different way. But none of the *pramânas* gives us any idea of *Māya* as Śankara wants to present. This charge is known as *pramânanupapatti*.

***Nivartakānupapatti***- This charge is about the absence of remover of *Māya*. It is said by Śankara that *Māya* or *avidyâ* is removed by the knowledge of unqualified indeterminate Brahman. But Rāmānuja argues that such knowledge can never be attained. We acquire knowledge through determination and discrimination. Determinate and qualified things alone can be known. Indeterminate and attributeless Brahman is unknowable. In the absence of such knowledge *Māya* or *avidyâ* can never be removed by anybody. Therefore, there is no remover of *Māya*. This charge is called by Râmânuja as *nivartakanupapiatti*..

***Nivrtyānupapatti***- Here, Rāmānuja shows that removal of *Māya* is not at all possible. *Māya* is positive (bhâvarupa), according to Śankara. But that which exists positively cannot be removed from existence by knowledge. Therefore, removal of *Māya* is not possible. Rāmānuja names this charge as *nivrtyanupapatti*.

**IDENTITY-IN-DIFFERENCES OR VIŚIṢTADVAITA**

Vedāntic non-dualistic schools hold the reality is one. But, they differ widely from one another when it comes to determine the sense in which Reality is one. Rāmānuja acclaims that the ultimate reality, though one, is not the absolute without any differentiation. His metaphysical position is to be understood as ***the identity in and through the difference***. In other words, non-dualism (*advaita*) is qualified by differences (*Viśiṣta*).

The Absolute is a concrete whole which consists of inter-related and inter-dependent subordinate elements (*Viśeṣana*) and the immanent spirit (*Viśeṣya*). God is the Absolute and immanent inner controller (*Viśeṣya*). The matter and the individual soul are the interdependent subordinate elements (*Viśeṣana*) and they are dependent on the God. The reality as a whole is the identity in differences. The subjects (individual soul) and objects of experience (matter) are supported by the Brahman. They are incapable of existence independently of Him. Since they are comprehended within the unity, they are related to the Supreme person as body to the soul (*śarīra-śarīrī bhāva*). Therefore, all conscious and non conscious entities are the body of the supreme person (*śeṣi*) and their sole essence is to be his ancillaries (*śeṣa*). The Soul and matter are the ancillaries or attributes of the principle entity or substance, Brahman. Thus, Rāmānuja classifies them (matter, soul, and God) as ***tattvatraya***.

**Apṛathaksiddhi or Inner Inseparability:** The relationship among *cit* (soul), *acit* (matter) and *Brahman* (God) is explained with the aid of special mode of relationship, called *Apṛathaksiddhi*. *Apṛathaksiddhi* is a kind of relation between the principle ground (*ādhāra*-Brahman) and dependent entity (*ādheya*- the individual soul and the world), *Apṛathak* means not-separate. *Siddhi* implies two thing *Sthiti* or existence and *pratiti* or cognition. *Apṛathak*-*sthiti* means *ādhāra* and *ādheya* cannot exist as two separate entities. *Apṛathak*-*pratiti* signifies that *ādhāra* and *ādheya* cannot be comprehended separately. This relation is not a third separate entity but relation by virtue of their intrinsic nature.

**THE WORLD-** ***BRAHMAPARINĀMAVĀDA***

Brahman is both substratum and the efficient cause of the world. Therefore, his causation theory is known as *Brahmaparināmavāda*. This theory promulgates that the universe is the real modification (*parināma*) of Brahman. The theory of causation, maintaining ontological link between cause and effect, is the vehicle for the existential continuity between God and the universe. The essential theological implication is that God is the ground of all realities and those beings exist in Him. That the cause is real and so the effect, and therefore, the universe cannot be illusory as Advaitins think. So what about the imperfection of the universe? Is it tantamount to the imperfection of Brahman? Rāmānuja argues that the fact Brahman is the subtractive cause, does not mean the effectual states of Brahman are intermingled with Brahman. It is comparable to the relation between soul and body (*śarīra-śarīrī bhāva*). The self pervades the body while being distinct from it and its imperfections. Brahman stands in a relationship analogous to that obtaining between the selves and their bodies.

**DRAVYA OR SUBSTANCE**

A substance or *dravya* is defined as the substratum of attributes. The six dravyas are **Isvara (**god**)**, **Jīva** (individual self), **Dharmabhūta Jñāna** (attributive consciousness), **Suddhasattva** (pure non-material stuff), **Kāla** (time), and **Prakṛti** (primodial Matter). The six dravyas are divided into two classes-Jada (material) and Ajada (non-marerial). Prakṛti and Kāla come under former and rest four come under latter class. A further distinction is also made among ajada as pratyak (self-revelation) and parāk (revelation for others). Jīva and Isvara are of the former type, whereas the rest belong to the later. What is other than dravya is adravya. Adrvya is defined as that which cannot be substratum of anything else but necessarily depend upon dravya. They are ten, five attributes of gross elements (Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa, and Gandha), three gunas of Prakṛti (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas), samyoga (conjunction) and sakti (potency).

**GOD**

Rāmānuja denotes the Supreme Being, by such expressions as *Brahman*, *Nārayana*, *Iśvara*, *Bhagvān*, *Puruṣothama*, and *Viṣhṇu*. This absolute self is a spiritual principle, called God or Brahman. The qualities of being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*) render to God a character and personality. Along with this two more characteristics added; *Anatam* (Infinity) and *amalatva* (Stainlessness). They are known as *Svarupa* of God. There are qualities manifested in him in relation to finite beings. They are six; Omniscience (*Jnāna*), omnipotence (*Bala*), lordship (*Aiṣwarya*), creative power (*Śakti*), immutability (*Vīrya*) and splendour (*Tejas*). He is the supreme personality, as the perfection of personality. He is the support (*ādhāra*) of his own essential qualities as well as those of the objects depends on him. The conscious and unconscious objects of the universe coexist with God. They derive their existence from him and sustained through him yet, he is distinct from them. He is One/non-dual but manifests Himself in five forms in order to help his devotees;

* *Antaryāmi*- Inner controller
* *Nārayaṇa* - Transcendent Personality
* Four-fold *Vyūha* - The creator, preserver, and destroyer
* *Vāsudeva*-The Lord of transactional world.
* *Saṅkarṣhaṇa* - The Destroyer and the Ruler of cognitive aspect
* *Pradyumna*- The Creator and the Ruler of emotional aspect
* *Aniruddha*- The Preserver and the Ruler of volitional aspect
* *Vibhava* or *Avatāra*- The incarnation of God in human form or animal form
* *Archavatāra*-The Holy Idols enshrined in recognized temples

**THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL**

The individual soul is from God, yet possess such spontaneity and choice that they deserved to be called as persons. The individual soul, through a mode of the supreme, is real, unique, eternal, endowed with intelligence and self consciousness, without parts, unchanging, imperceptible and atomic. It is different from body, senses, vital breath, and buddhi. The diversity in the distribution and enjoyment of pleasure and pain validates the plurality of the self. The characteristic essence of the Jīva is the consciousness of the self. The Jīva is not one with God, since it differs in essential character from him. Differentiating characters from god are his atomic nature and dependence (*ādheya*). But, Jīva is said to be a part of Brahman.

Three classes of Jīva

1. ***Nitya****-****mukta*** *or* ***Vaikuntha***- Enjoying bliss and free from karma and Prakṛti
2. ***Mukta***- freed souls; those who achieve liberation through their wisdom, virtue and devotion.
3. ***Baddha***- bound souls; those who wander in *samsāra* owing to their ignorance and selfishness. They are divided into four: celestial or superhuman, human, animal, and immobile..

**PRAKṚTI, KĀLA AND ŚUDDHATATTVA**

Prakṛti or matter, Kāla or time and Śuddhatattva or pure matter are the objects of experience. Prakṛti has three qualities sattva, rajas and tamas. It is in subtle condition at the time of creation. It is uncreated, though its forms appear and disappear. Kāla are the ground of the distinction of time, days etc... Śuddhatattva has only Sattva guna. It may be called as the non-material spiritual stuff. It is the stuff of the body of god in his condition of nityavibhūti. God reveals himself in his transcendent existence through his nityavibhūti. It is the stuff of consciousness but unlike Jīva without self-consciousness. Because it is conscious stuff, it is classified as Ajada (not material), though it comes under insentient substance.

**DHARMABHŪTA JÑĀNA**

Knowledge, which is known as Jñāna, is an attribute of Jīva. It is, therefore, described as Dharmabhūta Jñāna or attributive knowledge. It is distinct from Jīva or the knowing subject who is regarded as the spiritual entity, which is of the nature of consciousness. (*Jñāna svarūpa*). This nature of consciousness is known as *Dharmī Jñāna*. Substance consciousness is known as *Dharmī Jñāna*, and attribute consciousness is known as *dharmabhūta Jñāna*. The former is inward consciousness and the latter is outward consciousness. The former is making one aware of oneself while he later reveals things outside without being aware of itself. Dharmabhūta Jñāna is to reveal the external object but does not know it. Self (Dharmī Jñāna) cannot reveal the object but knows what is revealed by knowledge. The logical justification is that the Jīva is immutable and such cannot undergo any modification; whereas, knowledge is subject to constant modifications, as is warranted by our experiences. Knowledge manifests itself when it comes into contact with objects through mind and sense organs and it ceases tom function whenever it is not contact with any object.

**BHAKTI AND LIBERATION**

The Supreme Being is the absolute with attributes and here is no absolute entity beyond him. The attributes are actually depending on Him for their existence and meaning. It stress on the exclusive position of devotion and divine grace, as the only means to overcome the hold of karma on the Jīva and enable him to attain liberation. The liberation does not mean the merging of the Jīva in Brahman, but attaining to the status of eternal servant of his, which alone can give unalloyed bliss to the Jīva. The bondage of the soul is due to karma and avidya. Avidya has to be replaced by Vidya, or the intuition that God is the fundamental self of all and the need of absolute dependence on him. Rāmānuja believes that salvation is possible not through knowledge and karma, but through bhakti and prasada or grace. According to him, the essential nature of the self is to be under the absolute control and support of God and to fulfil the purpose of the Lord. Bhakti into three stages of development;

1. Sādhanā-Bhakti- Practice of devotional means
2. Parā -Bhakti-Higher devotion
3. Paramā-Bhakti-Supreme devotion

Bhakti embarks with the strong faith in God, as the highest value and sense of detachment from the world and one’s own performances.

**Sādhanā-Bhakti**;

* Viveka-discrimination of food
* Vimoka-freedom from all impulses of all passions and longing for God
* Abhyāsa- continuous thinking of god and practice of worship
* Kriya- Five-fold duties (god, teacher, parents, fellow beings, and creatures). Doing good to others.
* Kalyāṇa-wishing well to all and practice of virtues such as truthfulness, compassion, forbearance, integrity, non-violence and love as well as benevolence.
* Anavasāda- Keeping temperament in all situations.

Thus, bhakti is no mere emotionalism but includes the training of will as well as the intellect. Bhakti is, loving God with our entire mind and entire heart. **Parā-Bhakti** is the status of mind, even without any external stimulation goes towards the Lord. The apex of it (**Paramā-Bhakti**) is an intuitive realisation of God. Bhakti and Moksa is originally related and therefore, Bhakti is liberation in becoming. It is distinguished into two; formal (*vaidhi*) and supreme (*mukhya*). The formal is lower phase (*Prapatti*), where we indulge in prayer, ceremonies and image worship. All these help soul to forward but cannot by themselves save the soul. Prapatti is complete resignation to God. It is open to all irrespective of caste. Some characteristics of Prapatti are as follows;

* Resolve to subordinate ones will, thought and action always to the Divine will
* Avoidance of all will, thought and actions those are contrary to His will
* Firm faith that God is the savior of all
* Acceptance and appeal for God’s protective grace
* Acknowledgement of one’s insufficiency of all self-effort made for liberation and self surrender to God
* Resigning oneself absolutely to His care and protection

Both Prapatti and contemplation are mean s to realise the highest or the supreme Bhakti.

**LIBERATION**

As seen above, Liberation is not merging of the individual soul into the Absolute, but only the direct intuitive realisation by the individual soul of its own essential nature as a mode of God. The annihilation of karma and the dawn of divine grace which engenders the immediate intuition of God are the prerequisites for the liberation. It is a release from the limiting barriers (karma). The released soul attains the nature of god, though ***not identical*** with him. They appear ***similar to God or Brahman***. For him there is no Jīvanmukti because the extinction of karma is impossible with body. In the state of liberation, all souls are all of the same type. ***The souls have all the perfections of the supreme except in two points: They are atomic in size, where as the supreme soul is all-pervading and they have no power over the creative movements of the world, which exclusively to Brahman***.

**DVAITA VEDĀNTA- MADHVA**

Madhva is the chief profounder of Dvaita Vāda. *Dvaita* means dual. Different from non-dualistic Sankara tradition, Madhva teaches dualism. Thus, he is known as the champion of unqualified dualism. He was born in 1197 AD. Other than commentaries on *prasthanatraya*, he has written a number of philosophical works. A brief glance at his philosophy will be discussed in comparison with Advaita Vedānta and Viśiṣtādvaita philosophy.

**MADHVA AND ADVAITA**

Madhva was a staunch critique of Advaita teachings. According to him, Brahman and Atman are two different realities. Dvaita classifies two kinds of reality: God (*Brahman*) as the independent reality and Souls and Matter as the dependent reality. Different from Advaita Vedānta, God has attributes and qualities. Madhva advocates the reality of five-fold (*Pancabeda*) distinction.

* God and Individual Soul
* God and Matter
* Individual Soul and Matter
* One Individual Soul and other Individual Soul
* One Material thing and another Material thing

**MADHVA AND VIŚIṢTĀDVAITA**

Like Rāmānuja, Madhva believes in God, Soul, Matter as the three entities which are eternal and absolutely real. Souls and matter are absolutely dependent on God. God alone is independent. His concept of God is almost similar to Rāmānuja. He also promotes Bhakti as the most pleased means to attain liberation.

Although Madhva was greatly influenced by Rāmānuja philosophy, there are important point of difference between Madhva and Rāmānuja.

* Unlike Rāmānuja, Madhva does not consider that the God is qualified by soul and matter. Instead, there is absolute difference between Soul, Matter and God. However, they are depended on God but they have substantive existence themselves. They are not mere qualification of identity. Madhva is a dualist and reject the qualified non-dualism.
* Rāmānuja advocates qualitative monism and quantitative pluralism of the souls. It implies that all souls are essentially alike. But Madhva asserts both qualitative and quantitative pluralism. Each soul has difference from other. No souls are alike.
* For Rāmānuja God is the efficient and material cause of the creation. Madhva regards God as the efficient cause and Prakṛti (matter) as the material cause of the universe.
* Rāmānuja promotes the similarity of liberated souls and God. Madhva emphasizes on the differences between two. The liberated souls are inferior to God in some other aspects. It does not enjoy full bliss of God and hence, they cannot become similar to Brahman. The bliss enjoyed by the liberated soul is four-fold:
* *Sālokya* -Residence in the same place with God
* *Sāmīpya* -Nearness to God
* *Sārūpya* -Having the external form like that of God
* *Sāyujya* -Entering into the body of God and partially sharing His bliss with Him.
* The doctrine of eternal damnation is peculiar to Madhva philosophy. Certain souls are eternally doomed and damned and those souls can never get liberation.