

Śloka 12

ये चैव सात्त्विका भावा राजसास्तामसाश्च ये ।
मत्त एवेति तान् विद्धि न त्वहं तेषु ते मयि ॥ १२ ॥

*ye caiva sāttvikā bhāvā rājasāstāmasāśca ye
matta eveti tān vidधि na tvaham teṣu te mayi*

ये	<i>ye</i>	whatever
च	<i>ca</i>	and
एव	<i>eva</i>	even
सात्त्विकाः	<i>sāttvikāḥ</i>	pure
भावाः	<i>bhāvāḥ</i>	natures
राजसाः	<i>rājasāḥ</i>	active
तामसाः	<i>tāmasāḥ</i>	inert
च	<i>ca</i>	and
ये	<i>ye</i>	what
मत्तः	<i>mattaḥ</i>	from Me
एव	<i>eva</i>	even
इति	<i>iti</i>	thus
तान्	<i>tān</i>	them
विद्धि	<i>vidधि</i>	know
न	<i>na</i>	not
तु	<i>tu</i>	but
अहम्	<i>aham</i>	I
तेषु	<i>teṣu</i>	in them
ते	<i>te</i>	they
मयि	<i>mayi</i>	in Me

VERSE 12

The Lord is All-Pervasive and the Root Cause of Creation

12

And whatever beings that are sattva (pure), rajas (active), and tamas (inert), know them as evolved from Me; yet I am not in them, they are in Me.

Verses 7-11 explained that everything in creation, from gross to subtle, is strung on God. Like jewels of a necklace, all objects are strung on the unseen and eternal thread of super-consciousness (God). This verse completes this topic by saying that whatever beings and objects are born of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas guṇas* **know them as evolved from Me**.

Mind, intellect, ego, the senses, the objects of the senses, the subtle and gross states of the elements, and all good and evil qualities, actions, thoughts, ideas, and feelings are born of the three *guṇas*. All are within the lower nature of God (eight-fold *prakṛti*). However, the lower nature of God carries out its function of creation, sustenance, and annihilation only by being superimposed on the higher nature of God, which is the Self or super-consciousness. This reality is the substratum that comprises God's higher nature (*puruṣa*).

Even though nature is entirely dependent in all its functions on God or the Self, the Self is neither polluted by the modifications that take place in nature, nor does the Self experience bondage due to the qualities of the *guṇas* or to desires and attachment. Although the Self is the substratum of the evolutes of *prakṛti*, neither do the three *guṇas* exist in the Self, nor does the Self exist in the three *guṇas*. The relationship between the Self and *prakṛti* is not one of cause and its effect but rather is a superimposition of matter upon the Self.

they are in Me - This means that the existence of the matter principle depends entirely upon the Self, or the pure conscious principle.

I am not in them - This statement of the Lord is understood by the example of a solar cooker. The solar cooker has no heat of its own so it is entirely dependent on the sun's heat. Yet the sun does not exist in the solar cooker.

Śloka 13

त्रिभिर्गुणमयैर्भावैरेभिः सर्वमिदं जगत् ।
मोहितं नाभिजानाति मामेभ्यः परमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

*tribhirguṇamayairbhāvair---ebhiḥ sarvamidam jagat
mohitam nābhijānāti ---māmebhyaḥ paramavyayam*

त्रिभिः	<i>tribhiḥ</i>	by three
गुणमयैः	<i>guṇamayaiḥ</i>	composed of guṇas
भावैः	<i>bhāvaiḥ</i>	by natures
एभिः	<i>ebhiḥ</i>	by these
सर्वम्	<i>sarvam</i>	all
इदम्	<i>idam</i>	this
जगत्	<i>jagat</i>	world
मोहितम्	<i>mohitam</i>	deluded
न	<i>na</i>	not
अभिजानाति	<i>abhijānāti</i>	knows
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
एभ्यः	<i>ebhyaḥ</i>	from them
परम्	<i>param</i>	higher
अव्ययम्	<i>avyayam</i>	immutable, imperishable

VERSE 13

Why the All-Pervasive God is not Realized

13

Deluded by these threefold modes of nature (guṇas), all this world does not know Me as higher than they and imperishable.

All animate creatures are guided by their respective temperaments, dispositions, and mental makeup, and they accordingly identify with objects constituted by the three *guṇas*. They get charmed by various objects and get attached to them. Taking objects as real and considering them as a source of pleasure and happiness, they completely forget about their transitory nature. As a result they live lives completely dependent on the objects in the world and are totally unaware of the divine possibilities within. Thus all animate creatures go through the cycles of pleasure and pain, and birth and death, because in truth all the evolutes of *prakṛti* are transitory and full of sorrow.

Delusion starts when the pure Self gets rooted in the intellect and ego consciousness develops. The ego consciousness remains preoccupied with its own identification, and with attachment and desire of the outer world; it completely forgets about its own purity and divinity. The ego goes through all kinds of contamination and sorrow, due only to the delusion created by the ego's false identification with nature. As a result the ego does not realize its own supreme nature, which is imperishable and beyond the threefold modifications of nature (*guṇas*).

Śloka 14

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ १४ ॥

*daivī hyeṣā guṇamayī mama māyā duratyayā
māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṃ taranti te*

दैवी	<i>daivī</i>	divine
हि	<i>hi</i>	verily
एषा	<i>eṣā</i>	this
गुणमयी	<i>guṇamayī</i>	made of guṇas
मम	<i>mama</i>	My
माया	<i>māyā</i>	illusion
दुरत्यया	<i>duratyayā</i>	difficult to cross over
माम्	<i>mām</i>	in Me
एव	<i>eva</i>	only
ये	<i>ye</i>	who
प्रपद्यन्ते	<i>prapadyante</i>	take refuge
मायाम्	<i>māyām</i>	illusion
एताम्	<i>etām</i>	this
तरन्ति	<i>taranti</i>	cross over
ते	<i>te</i>	they

VERSE 14

How to Cross Over the Divine Illusion Made Up of the Guṇas

14

Verily, this divine illusion of Mine, made up of guṇas, is hard to cross over; those who take refuge in Me alone, they cross over this illusion.

The **divine illusion** is made up of the three *guṇas*, which are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. They are, together with their evolutes, the lower nature of God (*prakṛti*) and are referred to here as *māyā* (divine illusion). The material and phenomenal world exist only in this divine illusion of God.

In this verse the Lord says that it is extremely difficult for those individuals who live a life based on egocentric desire to **cross over** this illusion and attain God or Self-realization. However, it is possible for one who takes refuge in God alone to cross over.

The previous chapter described the methods of meditation to attain Self-realization. Verse 47 of that chapter specifically explains how one can take refuge in God by meditation on God with a single-pointed mind. When one achieves perfection in meditation, the ego loses its idea that “I am the performer” and surrenders to God alone. This leads to complete separation from the illusion (*māyā*). It is the same as God-realization.

The *guṇas* are not perceptible. That which is perceptible is only delusion (*māyā*), which is not useful in achieving knowledge of the Self.

Vācaspati Miśra* says that *prakṛti* is like *māyā* but it is not *māyā*. It is of little use in the sense that it is changing. Just as *māyā* constantly changes, so the transformations of *prakṛti* are every moment appearing and disappearing and thus suffering momentary changes. *Prakṛti* being eternal is real and thus different from *māyā*.

In **Vedānta** *prakṛti*, *avidyā*, and *māyā* have the same meaning.

* Vācaspati Miśra (10th century CE) was an Indian philosopher who founded one of the main Advaita Vedānta schools, the Bhāmatī school.

Śloka 15

न मां दुष्कृतिनो मूढाः प्रपद्यन्ते नराधमाः ।
माययापहतज्ञाना आसुरं भावमाश्रिताः ॥ १५ ॥

*na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ prapadyante narādhamāḥ
māyayāpahṛtajñānā āsuram bhāvamāśritāḥ*

न	<i>na</i>	not
माम्	<i>mām</i>	to Me
दुष्कृतिनः	<i>duṣkṛtinaḥ</i>	evil doers
मूढाः	<i>mūḍhāḥ</i>	the deluded
प्रपद्यन्ते	<i>prapadyante</i>	seek
नर अधमाः	<i>nara adhamāḥ</i>	the lowest of men
मायया	<i>māyayā</i>	by māyā
अपहतज्ञानाः	<i>apahṛtajñānāḥ</i>	deprived of knowledge or discrimination
आसुरम्	<i>āsuram</i>	belonging to demons
भावम्	<i>bhāvam</i>	nature
आश्रिताः	<i>āśritāḥ</i>	having taken to

VERSE 15

Why People Do Not Seek Refuge in God

15

The evildoers, the deluded, the lowest of men, deprived of discrimination by māyā and following the ways of demons, do not seek refuge in Me.

The previous verse explained that it is hard to cross over the divine illusion, but for those who take refuge in God alone, it is possible to transcend self-created delusion (*māyā*). In this verse Lord Kṛṣṇa says that those who are the **evildoers, the deluded, and the lowest of men**, who follow **the ways of demons, do not seek refuge in Me** (God). Those who act in the world with selfish motive, who are greedy, and who are attached to worldly objects are described as evildoers. Due to their selfish motives, all their actions, thoughts, and ideas are guided by dishonesty, fraud, anger, and deceit.

Such people are described as deluded because worldly pleasures become real and important to them. They cannot see that the cause of pain and misery is their own attachment to the world. They are not capable of discriminating between the real and the unreal; consequently, instead of seeking peace or God, they seek worldly pleasure and go through all kinds of suffering.

Those deluded evildoers are the lowest among humans. There is a difference between people with a human level of consciousness and people with an animal level of consciousness in that those of human consciousness have a superior intellect that is able to discriminate between good and evil, between what brings peace and what causes pain, and between what is moral and what is immoral. As a result of this superior intellect, those of a human level of consciousness are capable of removing their own self-created delusion and finding their true nature, the Self. In contrast, those of animal consciousness are devoid of this kind of superior intellect and live their lives by their instinctive abilities, which are limited to working to feed themselves, sleeping, and reproducing. By referring to these people as the lowest of humans, it is implied that they are no better than animals.

The more a person lives in egocentric desires, full of attachment, the more delusion increases and the more a person gets lost in the world. Such a person displays only a demonic disposition and follows the impulses of lust, anger, greed, hypocrisy, and violence. That person will not even think of seeking God.

Śloka 16

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरार्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ १६ ॥

catuṛvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino'ṛjuna
ārto jijñāsurarthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha

चतुर्विधाः	<i>catuṛvidhāḥ</i>	four kinds
भजन्ते	<i>bhajante</i>	worship
माम्	<i>mām</i>	Me
जनाः	<i>janāḥ</i>	people
सुकृतिनः	<i>sukṛtinaḥ</i>	virtuous
अर्जुन	<i>arjuna</i>	O Arjuna
आर्तः	<i>ārtaḥ</i>	the distressed
जिज्ञासुः	<i>jijñāsuḥ</i>	the seeker of knowledge
अर्थार्थी	<i>arthārthī</i>	the seeker of wealth
ज्ञानी	<i>jñānī</i>	the wise
च	<i>ca</i>	and
भरत ऋषभ	<i>bharata ṛṣabha</i>	O Best of the Bharatas

VERSE 16

What Type of People Worship God?

16

Four types of virtuous people worship Me, O Arjuna: the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise, O Best of Bharatas.

In the previous verse Lord Kṛṣṇa described the negative nature of those who are unable to take refuge in God. In this verse the Lord describes the various reasons why virtuous people seek God. He classifies these into four main categories: 1) *ārta*, **the distressed**, 2) *jijñāsu*, **seeker of knowledge**, 3) *arthārthī*, **the seeker of wealth**, and 4) *jñānī*, **the wise**.

1) *Ārta* (the distressed): When people are either in physical or emotional pain, they try to remove the cause of that pain; it is a natural reaction. However, virtuous devotees who suffer pain and misery in this world take refuge in God with their prayers in order to free themselves from all suffering. They start seeing that the greatest suffering comes from the continuous cycle of birth and death, which is the result of ignorance. To be free from the cycle of birth and death and to enjoy infinite bliss, they worship the divine with complete faith and devotion.

2) *Jijñāsu* (the seeker of knowledge): A seeker of knowledge is motivated by the desire to obtain the highest knowledge of reality, which exists behind the appearance of the phenomenal world. By knowing this reality, everything is known. A seeker with such motivation worships God with complete faith and devotion.

3) *Arthārthī* (one who desires worldly possessions): The devotees who desire worldly possessions depend on God alone, and worship God with faith and devotion. Their desire does not remain limited merely to worldly possessions. They also wish to attain the divine kingdom on earth, which is comprised of virtuous life, wealth earned by virtuous means, and fulfillment of spiritual desires.

4) *Jñānī* (the wise): The virtuous devotees who have achieved wisdom also worship God with complete faith and devotion. They do not worship for the sake of achieving anything in the world. Such devotees neither desire to have anything, nor do they worry if they do not have anything. Their demands, needs, and desires subside because for them all worldly expectations are insignificant in comparison to supreme divine realization. Such devotees take refuge in the supreme divine only to merge and become one with it.

All four types of virtuous devotees, with their different aims, worship God with unflinching faith.

Śloka 17

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
 प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

teṣām jñānī nityayukta ekabhaktirviśiṣyate
priyo hi jñānino'tyarthamaham sa ca mama priyaḥ

तेषाम्	<i>teṣām</i>	of them
ज्ञानी	<i>jñānī</i>	the wise
नित्ययुक्त	<i>nityayukta</i>	ever steadfast
एकभक्तिः	<i>ekabhaktiḥ</i>	whose devotion is to the One
विशिष्यते	<i>viśiṣyate</i>	excels
प्रियः	<i>priyaḥ</i>	dear
हि	<i>hi</i>	verily
ज्ञानिनः	<i>jñāninaḥ</i>	of the wise
अत्यर्थम्	<i>atyartham</i>	exceedingly
अहम्	<i>aham</i>	I
सः	<i>saḥ</i>	he
च	<i>ca</i>	and
मम	<i>mama</i>	to Me
प्रियः	<i>priyaḥ</i>	dear