

Adhyāya - XIVSection - I ; Verses - 1 - 2

A fresh beginning : One more kind of wisdom (jñāna):
One more conception of Perfection, viz. Similarity
of Attributes with the Lord (sādharmya).

The Blessed Lord Said :

1. Further (bhūyah), I shall explain (pra + vaksyāmi)
the highest (param) wisdom (jñānam), the best (uttamam) of
all kinds of wisdom (jñānānām), having known (jñatva) which
(yat) all (sarve) sages (munayah) have gone (gatāh) from
this (world) (etah) to the highest (param) Perfection -
(siddhim).

Notes: 1. The plural form (jñānānām) shows that the different
jñānas of the different Adhyāyas of the Gītā are -
independent of one another.

2. The fresh beginning of this Adhyāya indicates that
each Adhyāya has its own teaching, i.e., its own
yoga or aspect of yoga "Disinterested Action".

Saṅkara:

(In order to explain how all that is born, is born out of the Ksetra-Ksetrajña-Samyoga as stated in XIII.26,- Adhyāya XIV is begun. Or, - in order to show that Ksetra - and Ksetrajña (Prakṛti and Puruṣa) who are subject to God- (Parah Puruṣah XIII.22) are the cause of the world (XIII.20-21), but not the Ksetra and Ksetrajña who are independent of God, as in the Sāṃkhya system it has been stated that - Puruṣa resides in Prakṛti and that his attachment to the - gunas is the cause of the world. Now it remains to be - explained what kind of attachment the Puruṣa gets for each guna, what are the gunas, how do they bind the Soul, and - how the release of the Soul from the guna is possible. - Therefore, the Lord said:)

Again (bhūyah) I shall explain to you the highest (Param) (and) the best wisdom of all kinds of wisdom. (The plural form 'jñānānām' refers to the knowledges of yajñādijñeyavastuvisayas. Those jñānas do not lead to mokṣa; but this jñāna results in mokṣa. Therefore the author praises (stauti) this jñāna by the words Para and Uttama in order to create a liking for this knowledge in the mind of the hearer:-) Having got this knowledge, all Munis (Munayah) = Sannyāsins have attained mokṣa after (this body).

Notes:1. 'Jñānānām yajñādijñeyavastuvisayānām' - In my opinion jñānas refer to the theories of the - various Adhyāyas about the creation, origin of beings, etc..

2. Sankara takes the jñāna of Adhyāya XIV as stuti.

3. Sankara :- Munayah = Sannyāsinaḥ.

2. (Persons having) attained (āgataḥ) (highest perfection in the form of) similarity of attributes (sādharmyam) with Me (Mama) after resorting (upāsṛitya) to this (edaṃ) kind of wisdom (jñānam), are not (re-)born (upajāyante) even (api) at the (time of) creation (sarge) and (ca) do not (na) suffer (vyathanti) at the (time of) dissolution (of the universe) (pralaye).

Notes: 1. Sādharmya is a conception of mokṣa not met with in any of the other Adhyāyas of the Gītā. This shows that each Adhyāya has its own particular conception of the nature of the Soul in liberation and that the Gītā does not insist on a belief in any particular concept of liberation. It should not be argued that the concept of sādharmya is the chief one in the Gītā and all other concepts are secondary or vice versa.

Sankara :

They who, having devoted themselves to this knowledge, have attained with Me identity are neither born at the time of creation, nor at the time of dissolution.

Note:1. Sankara explains Mama sādharma as Matsvarūpatā 'Identity with Me', and not samānedharmatā, because, he says, the Gītāśāstra does not accept the non-identity of Ksetrajña and Īsvara. He also adds that this verse is phalavāda meant for stuti (unreal - praise).

Section - II ; Verses - 3-5

The highest principle is a Trinity consisting of (the Material nature), Mahad Brahman (the spiritual Nature) and Sri Kṛṣṇa. The latter two produce all beings. Prakṛti produces (the world of) three qualities (gunas).

3. (The spiritual principle well known by the name of) Mahad Brahman is the womb (Yoni) for Me (Mama). I (aham) - place (dadhāmi) the germ (garbham) in it (tasmin). O Descendant of Bharata! The birth (sambhavaḥ) of all beings (sarva - bhūtānām) takes place (bhavati) therefrom.

Notes:1. Mahad Brahman and Kṛṣṇa produce all beings, the former acting as mother and the latter as father. In the Upanisads Brahman is generally declared to be the origin of all beings and in Brahmasūtra I.1 it is decided that the principle called Ānandah, Ākāśah, jyotśah, prāṇah, from which the beings are born, on account of which they continue to live and into which they disappear is Brahman. So, Mahad

Brahman should mean Spiritual Nature. The Mundaka Upaniṣad describes the emanation of the progeny - from Pumān (Male) and yosita (Female):-

Pumān retah siñcati yositāyām, bahvih prajāh puruṣāt-samprasūtāh. It also says that Brahman is the yonī for puruṣa.

2. All the passages of the Gītā which describe the origin and disappearance of beings (bhūtas = souls in bodies) should be studied together.

Sankara:

O descendent of Bharata! Māyā which is triguṇātmikā is my womb or My womb is the Mahat Brahman (Prakṛti); in that I place the germ; thence is the birth of all beings.

Note:1. "This verse explains how Ksetra-Ksetrajña-Samyoga is the bhūtakāraṇa. Garbha means the seed of the birth of Hiraṇyagarbha. Mahad Brahma is Māyā. First Hiraṇyagarbha is born and then bhūtas are born". This is Paurāṇika Mythology rather than the Gītā's Mythology.

4. I (aḥam) am the seed-giving (bījapradah) father (pitā) (and) Mahad Brahman the womb (yonih) of those (tāsām) souls-in-bodies (mūrtayah) which (yah), O Son of Kunti (Kaunteya) are born (sambhavanti) in all wombs (sarvayonisu), (when they emanated in the beginning of the world).

Sāṅkara :

O Kaunteya! Whatever forms are produced, in any wombs whatsoever, the Mahat Brahman (Prakṛti) is their womb, I am the seed-giving father.

Note:1. Sankara takes mūrtayah as dehasamsthānalaksanāḥ i.e., bodies only. But mūrtayah here means bhūtas and bhūtāḥ mean Souls-in-bodies. Only bodies (without - Souls) are not born in any form of existence (yoni).

5. The quantities (guṇaḥ), viz., Goodness (sattvam), passion (rajas) and Darkness (tamas), are born of Prakṛti (a principle in the composite Reality which is in this study a Trinity, and which you already know well); O Great-armed - one (Mahābāho)! They bind firmly (nibadhnanti) in the body (dehe) the unchanging (avyayam) soul (dehinam) lit. possessor of the body.)

Notes:1. Prakṛti - Verse 5 is introduced here as if the hearer or the reader knows the relation of Prakṛti to Mahad Brahman and Srī Kṛṣṇa. As mahad Brahman is spiritual Nature, Prakṛti which produces sattva, rajas, tamas would be probably the Matter, the - Material Nature. These two ~~go~~ together with Kṛṣṇa would make the Trinity, the three-fold Reality taught here.

Sankara;

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas - These gunas born of Prakṛti
O great armed One! bind the indestructible embodied one fast
in the body.

Note:1. Prakṛti means Mahad Brahma. But this is not correct.
Sankara explains nibadhnanti as nibadhnanti eva. This
may be logically correct, but not in the mind of the
author of the Gītā.

Section - III ; Verses - 6 - 9

All the Three Qualities cause Attachment.

Even Sattva causes Attachment.

6. Of them (tatra) Pleasure (Sattvam), due to its purity
(nirmalvat), (is) illuminating (prakāśakam) (and) free from
disease (anāmayam), (and hence), O sinless One! (anagha) it -
"binds" badhnāti (the soul in the body) through attachment to
'knowledge' (jñānasangena) and 'attachment to happiness' -
(sukhasangena) (respectively).

Notes:1. The conception of sattvaguna here is different from
that of sāṃkhya as well as from that in Adhyāyas -
XVII.11,17,20 and XVIII.20,23,26,33. In the fourteenth
Adhyāya, Sattva is conceived as a binding quality and
is therefore to be overcome, as is clearly expressed
by the idea of gunātita 'the man who has overcome -
the qualities'.

But, the sattva in Adhyāyas XVII and XVIII is the quality of freedom from desire for the fruit and the Yogin is to fix himself firmly in sattva, he is to become sattvanistha (vide II-45 B). All the - Adhyāyas of the Gītā do not teach one and the same conception of the qualities. Moreover, in the - sāṃkhya philosophy Sattva may mean goodness, but in this Adhyaya (XIV) of the Gītā, Sattva means - 'pleasure'.

Sankara:

Of these Sattva, being stainless, is luminous and healthy. It binds O sinless One! by creating attachment to happiness and attachment to knowledge.

Notes: Sankara says that attachment to sukha and jñāna is itself avidyā. He also adds that this attachment is illusory, and says that jñāna in this verse is like sukha, is antahkaranadharmā and not Ātmadharmā.

7. Know (viddhi) rajas (passion) (to be) of the nature of passion (ragātmakam) (and) born of desire and attachment - (trsnāsaṅgasamudbhavam). O Son of Kunti! It binds the possessor of the body through attachment to action.

Note: 1. Trsnāsaṅgasamudbhavam lit. the birth of which is from Trsnā and āsanga. Trsnā, āsanga and rāga are in the rising degree.

Sankara :

Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of thirst and attachment; it binds fast, O Son of Kunti ! the embodied one by attachment to action.

Note: 1. Trenāsangasamudbhavam - raja is the origin of trsnā and āsanga.

8. But (tu) know darkness (tamas), the deluder - (mohanam) of all possessors of bodies, to be born of - ignorance (ajñāna). O Descendant of Bharata! It binds fast (the possessor of the body) through negligence - indolence and sleep.

Notes: 1. Ajñāna - In the Gītā ajñāna is the absence of knowledge like the knowledge given in v.3-4-5 of this Adhyāya. It is not the avidyā 'Nescience' 'Illusion' of the Sāṅkara Vedānta or that of the Buddhism. The Gītā is earlier than these schools of thought.

Sankara :

But know the tamas to be born of ignorance deluding all embodied beings. It binds O Bharata! by heedlessness, - indolence and sleep.

9. Pleasure (sattvam) makes (a man) attached (sañjayati) to happiness; passion (rajah) to action (karmani), O Descendant of Bharata! But darkness (tamah) indeed (uta), having shrouded (āvṛtya) the particular type of wisdom in question (jñānam), makes (a man) attached (sañjayati) to negligence (pramāde).

Notes: 1. (Sanjayati) - Verse 9 is a summary of verses 6-8.

All the qualities even the sattvaguna produces - attachment sañjayati in man and binds him. So, the gunas are to be overcome.

2: Jñānam should mean any one of the various schemes of arstiprakriyā or explanation of the origin of actions and of Disinterested Action stated in the various - Adhyāyas of the Gīta.

Sankara:

O Bhārata! Sattva binds one to happiness and Rajas to action, while Tamas verily veils knowledge and binds one to heedlessness.

Note : Jñānam = Sattvakṛtam vivekam.

Section - IV ; Verses - 10 - 18

The three qualities function by the predominance of ONE and suppression of the other TWO. Characteristics - of the predominance of each quality in a man (v.11-13). - Effect of the predominance of each quality during the - departure of a Soul from the body (v.14-15). Immediate - results of sāttvika and other actions (verses 16-18) ;

10. Pleasure works having overpowered (abhibhūya) passion and darkness, O Descendant of Bharata! passion (works, having over-powered), pleasure and darkness; - similarly darkness (works, having over-powered) pleasure and passion (rajas).

Notes:1. "Bhavati" here means functions, 'works'. According to the Sāmkhya system the Prakṛti consists of the three gunas while the Gītā says that the three gunas are born of the Prakṛti. So, in the Sāmkhya school 'gunas' means 'constituents' or 'strands'; while in the Gītā 'quality' would be perhaps the proper translation of the word guna. The Sāmkhya school says that when all the three gunas are each of them equally powerful, the Prakṛti is in the state of equilibrium and there is no working or functioning of the Prakṛti, so that there is a - state of dissolution of the universe (pralaya).

But, when the Prakṛti actually begins to evolve (Prakṛti to evolve, to increase), one of the three gunas becomes predominant while the other two remain subordinate to that one. The Gītā - does not seem to know the view about the state of equi-balance (sāmyāvasthā) of the Prakṛti and its disturbance by gunavaiśamya (inequality of - the gunas); because it simply says, 'the sattva - works (bhavati) or increases, develops (see - vivṛdha in v.11)', and 'sattva' etc., are gunas 'born' of the Prakṛti. So, the Gītā's teaching of the functioning of the three gunas seems to be earlier than that of the classical Sāṅkhya system.

Sāṅkara:

Sattva asserts itself by predominating over rajas and tamas; and rajas over sattva and tamas; and tamas over sattva and rajas.

Note:1. Sāṅkara explains 'bhavati' as "udbhavati vardhate yadā tadā.....svakāryam.....ārabhate".

11. When (yadā) illumination (prakāśa) (i.e.,) knowledge (jñānam), is produced (upajāyate) in (i.e.,) through all the doors (i.e., senses, sarvadvāresu) in this body (asmin dehe), then (tadā) one should indeed know "pleasure (has) increased (i.e., has developed)".

Sankara:

Translation would be the same as of ours. But śā
Sankara explains prakāśa as antahkaranasya buddheh vṛttih.

12. Greed (lobhah), activity (without inward peace) (pravṛttih), starting (ārambhah) (new) actions (karmanām), absence of peace (asamāh), desire (sprhā) - O Best among the descendents of Bharata! (Bharatarṣabha)-these are born - (jāyante) when passion (rajasi) has increased (vivṛuddhe).

Sankara:

Greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, unrest, longing - these arise, O best of the Bharatas! When Rajas is predominant.

13. Absence of illumination (aprakāśah), and (ca) inactivity (apravṛttih), heedlessness (pramādaḥ) and (ca) also (eva) bewilderment (mohaḥ), (regarding one's duty) - These (etāni) are born (jāyante), when Darkness (tamasi) has increased (vivṛuddhe), O Son of the family of Kuru (Kurunandana).

Sankara:

Darkness, inertness, heedlessness and delusion - these arise O Joy of the Kurus! when tamas is predominant.

14. If (yadā) the bearer of the body (dehabhrāt) goes (yāti) to dissolution (pralayam) when pleasure (sattvam) has verily (tu) increased (pravṛddhe), then (tadā) he attains (pratipadyate) pure (amalān) worlds (lokān) of those who know the highest (uttamavidām).

Sankara:

If the embodied one meets with death when sattva is predominant, then he goes to the pure worlds of those who know the highest.

Note:1. Uttamavidām = mahādāditattvavidām etyētst.

15. Having gone (gatvā) to dissolution (pralayam) when the passion (rajasi) (has increased), (a man) is born (jāyate) among people attached to action (karmasangisu); - similarly (tathā), (a man) dissolved (pralīnah) when darkness (tamas) (has increased) is born (again) in the wombs (yonisu) of the bewildered (mūḍha).

Sankara:

Meeting with death in Rajas, he is born among those attached to action and dying in Tamas, he is born in the wombs of the deluded.

Note:1. Mūḍhayonisu = Paśvādiyonisu.

16. They say (āhuh) the fruit (phalam) characterised by pleasure (sāttvika) of an act (karmaṇah) rightly done - (sukṛtasya) is pure (happiness) (nirmalam); while (tu) the fruit (phalam) of (an act characterised by) passion (rajasah) is unhappiness (duḥkham) (and) the fruit (phalam) of (an act characterised by) darkness (tamasah) is ignorance (ajñānam).

Sankara:

The fruit of good action, they say, is sāttvika and pure; verily the fruit of rajas is pain, and ignorance is - the fruit of tamas.

17. From pleasure (sattvāt) wisdom (jñānam) is born (sañjāyate), and (ca) from passion (rajasah) greed (lobhah) indeed (eva); negligence and bewilderment (pramādamohaḥ) as well as ignorance (ajñānam eva ca) are (bhavataḥ) from darkness (tamasah).

Sankara:

Sankara's interpretation is the same as of ours.

18. Those established in pleasure go upwards; those (established) in passion remain in the middle, (i.e., do not make any spiritual progress); those (established) in darkness (tamasah); staying in the work of the base quality -

(jaghanya-guna-vrttisthāh), go downwards (adhah).

Sankara:

Nothing is particular. But Sankara says 'Urdhvam' means Devalokādisu; 'madhye' means manusyesu and adhah means pasvādisu.

Section - V ; Verses 19 - 20

Purpose of Verses 6 - 18 is to show that all Actions in the world are done by the three qualities. The Lord is above them. Man, rising above them, gets the Immortal One.

19. When (yadā) a seer (drstā) (here a Yogin) sees after proper inquiry (anu+pasyati) (na) no, agent (Kartāram) (of the actions done in and through his body) other (anyam) than the qualities and (When) he knows (Me, the One) higher than the qualities, he gains My Existence.

Notes: 1. Each Adhyāya of the Gītā is primarily concerned with the origin and explanation of Action (Kartṛtva) of man. This verse dealing with that problem is the most important one in this Adhyāya. Here we are told that the three gunas alone do all deeds; the Soul is not an agent. The realization of this fact will make a man free from the bondage of all actions which he may be doing.

2. In the light of this verse the action of ~~the~~ - illuminating or revealing, keeping healthy and happy, belongs to sattva; the action of making a man attached to action and that of bewildering him belong respectively to rajas and tamas (verses 6-8, and 11-13). Similarly, all kinds of actions done apparently by a man can be philosophically explained as really done by one of the three qualities.

3. Gunebhyasca param vetti - Cf.

Tribhiḥ gunamayair bhāvairābhiḥ sarvamidam jagat,
mohitam nābhijānāti māmebhyah paramavyayam (VII.13).

The Lord mentioned as the bijapradah pitā in XIV. Verses

3-4 would be the one above the gunas.

4. As the seer in this verse is to see who is the real agent (kartr), it is likely that a yogin (follower of Disinterested Action) is the topic of this verse.

5. Madbhāvam - Though Maṃ sādharmaṃ is mentioned in XIV.2, here we find Madbhāvam 'My State'. In fact, the Gītā allows a man to conceive the state of liberation, as he chooses to do. Some interpreters of the Gītā hold that the gunasamkhyāna doctrines of the Sāṃkhya school is mentioned in this Adhyāya and in Adhyāyas XVII-XVIII or, roughly speaking, in Adhyāyas XIII-XVIII, the Ṛtīya satka called the jñāna-kānda of the Gītā.

Some go a step further and assert that the Gītā has borrowed its gunasamkhyāna doctrine from the Classical Sāṃkhya or that the Gītā was originally a Sāṃkhya work, it was then revised in favour of Theism and still - later in favour of Pantheism. But A.B.Kieth has shown that the gunasamkhyāna doctrine was originally a part of the Upanisadic philosophy which was much earlier than the classical Sāṃkhya. Moreover, in the opinion of the present author, the Gītā, does not mention the gunasamkhyāna doctrine. It mentions only as much of it as is necessary to explain one aspect of yoga - 'Disinterested Action' based upon it, viz., gunatraya-vibhāgayoga. The Gītā is interested only in explaining kartr̥tva with the help of the gunas, not in giving the details about the gunas which we find in Sāṃkhya works when the nature and characteristics of the gunas are described.

Sankara:

("The attachment of man to the gunas is the cause of his transmigration"- This was told very briefly in Adhyāya - XIII.20-21. The same has been stated in details in this - Adhyāya (XIV.5-18) by mentioning gunasvarūpa, gunavrttam, svavrttena gunānām bandhakatvam and the gati of gunavrtta- nibaddha purusa. All this proves that mithyājñānamūlam bandha- kāraṇam. "The cause of bondage lies in wrong understanding" (mithyājñāna). Now, the achievement of mokṣa through right - understanding is to be stated.)

Sankara:

When the Seer (Drstā) perceives no agent other than the gunas, and knows Him who is higher than the gunas, gets identity with Me.

Notes: 1. Prakṛti is the agent of all actions. Guṇas being none other than the Prakṛti.

2. Brahman is beyond the three gunas.

3. Sankara says gunebhyah param as gunavyāpārasāksi-
bhūtam.

4. Note how Sankara connects Adhyāya XIII with Adhyāya XIV. These remarks of Sri Sankara are rather misleading. The real fact is that, 'kartṛtva' is the topic in Adh. XIII and also in Adh. XIV, as it is in all the Adhyāyas of the Gītā. In Adh. XIII the kartṛtva is traced to Prakṛti through kāryakāraṇa; in Adh. XIV it is traced directly to the gunas (nānyam gunebhyah - kartāram).....v.19.

5. Sri Sankara's view that Adh. XIV verses 5 - 18 describe 'bandhana' and Adh. XIV. verse 19 - describes Moksa is also not quite exact. Adh. XIV verses 5 - 18 point out the various actions of the three gunas, while Adh. XIV verse-19 sums up verses 5-18 by same "nānyam gunebhyah kartāram" (all actions are done by the gunas, not by the Soul).

20. Having crossed over (atītya) these (etān) three (trīn) qualities (gunān), from which the body has its birth (deha - samudbhavān), the soul (dehī), liberated (vimuktah) from the pain (duḥkhaḥ) of birth (janma), death (mṛtyu) and oldage (jarā) gains (asnute) immortality (amṛtam).

Notes: 1. Trīn gunān atītya - I would once again note that according to the conception of sattvaguna in this Adhyāya, the perfect Man has overcome even the sattvaguna because it causes attachment to jñāna and sukha. The conception of sattva in Adhyāyas XVII - XVIII is different because there the Perfect Man is one who has established himself firmly in sattva - which helps him to get rid of all attachment to karmaphala.

2. "Amṛtam asnute" is one of the several expressions of moksa in the Gītā.

3. According to Adhyāya XIII.21, the Puruṣa can enjoy the gunas without being "bound".

Sankara:

The embodied one having crossed over these three qualities out of which the body is evolved, is freed from birth, death, decay and pain and attains to immortality.

Notes:1. Sankara says Amrtam asnute means Madbhāvamadhigacchati i.e., identity with Me.

2. Sankara explains gunān as māyopādhibhūtān.

Section - VI ; Verses - 21-27

Characteristics of the Man who becomes Perfect by crossing over the Three Qualities. He holds, "The Qualities are acting," and remains himself immovable. He may be an ascetic (verse - 25) or may follow Disinterested Action through Devotion to Kṛṣṇa who is above the Qualities (and who is his ideal) and above Brahman Itself - (v.27), whose support he is (Brahmano hi pratisthā śham - v.27).

Arjuna said :

21. By (possessing) which marks (kaiḥ līngaiḥ) does (a man) become bhavati 'One who has crossed over (atītaḥ) these (etān) three (trīn) qualities (gunān)'? O Lord (Prabho)! What is his behaviour (ācāra)? And how does he remain (vartate) beyond (ati) these three qualities (gunān)?

Sankara:

Sankara's interpretation is the same as of ours.

The Blessed Lord said :

22. He does neither hate illumination, activity (pravṛtti) and bewilderment if they are working, nor does he desire to - get them, if they have ceased to work (because they are not of his making but they are respectively the work of sattva, rajas and tamas).

Note:1. The Upaniṣadic method was to retire to a forest and thereby avoid contact with the gunas. The Sāṅkhya - philosophy also believes in the isolation of the - puruṣa from prakṛti. The Gītā asks a man to allow - the gunas to act as they please and thus to realize that all the three kinds of aspects of every action are the effects of the gunas and not of his own Soul.

Sankara:

O Pāṇḍava! He, who hates no light, activity and delusion, when present, nor longs (kāṅksati) after them when absent.

Note:1. Sankara says that the characteristic of a gunātīta given in this verse is not para-pratyakṣam, but it is gunātīta's Ātmapratyakṣam. But this is not correct; because if a man says that he "has been" made every active and now he should give up some of his activities, one can say that the man hates activity on the contrary, if he says that he has been inactive, he -

should now be more active, one can say that he desires to get activity. But the gunātīta would say nothing, because he realizes that he was neither active nor he is now inactive, because he knows - that rajoguna was active and rejo guna has now - withdrawn it-self. Thus, when the man says nothing, we can say he is gunātīta.

23. He who remains like one who is neutral, is not shaken (from his neutrality) by the qualities (gunas), who stands - firm (avatiṣṭhate) simply holding "The qualities are acting - (varṭante = pravartante)," and does not move is called gunātīta).

Sankara:

He who (being an Ātmavid and sannyāsin remains like one who is neutral and is not shaken (from viveka-darsana), who definitely knows:" The gunas (in the form of the body, senses and objects) are in one another and does not move,.....

Note:1. Sankara adds Ātmavid; but the Gītā does not combine Ātmajñāna with gunātītatva; according to the Gītā a gunātīta may not have Ātmajñāna. So also, Sankara's addition of sannyāsin is not proper. The gunātīta - need not be an ascetic.

24. He who looks upon misery and happiness equally, who resides in himself, who regards clay stone and gold to be the same, to whom one who likes him and one who dislikes him are equal, who is wise (dhīra) and considers his censure and - praise to be the same,.....

Sankara:

He, who is equal to misery and happiness, standing in his ownSelf, and who is equal to clay, stone and gold, to whom agreeable and disagreeable are equal, firm, the same in censure and praise.

25. He who is the same in honour and in insult, the same to friend and foe, (and) who has renounced (mentally) all - actions (as being done by the gunas) is called gunātīta, 'one who has gone beyond the gunas'.

Notes: 1. Sarvārambha-parityāgī - Here the mental renunciation of all actions seems to be meant, such renunciation - while actually actions are being done is called karmasu-kausalam and it is yoga. This sarvarambhaparityagi is a follower of yoga, as we find in verse 26 and in the colophon of this Adhyāya i.e., gunātrayavibhāgayoga.

Sankara:

The same in honour and dishonour the same to friend and foe, giving up all the undertakings he is said to have-risen above the gunas.

Notes:1. Sarvārambha parityāgi = dehdhāranamātra-nimittavyatirekena sarvakarma parityāgītyarthah.

2. Tilak - One who abandons all selfish desires.

3. Sankara mentions in verses, 23 - 25 the mumuksu's means for gunātītatva to be performed by a sannyāsin; when the same become firm, they would be the characteristics of a gunātīta yati.

26. And he (Who puts into practice the means of gunātītatva stated in 22 - 25 and) who serves Me by avyabhicāra - bhaktiyoga "exclusive Disinterested Action based upon Devotion" becomes fit for identity with Brahman (Brahmabhūya), having crossed these qualities (gunān).

Notes:1. Avyabhicārena bhaktiyogena - Cf. Ananyanaiva yogena Bha.Gītā Adhyāya XII-6 c.

2. Bhaktiyoga is taught in Adhyāya XII 6-8 and 13-20. Sākāra-Bhakti-Yoga is said to be best Yoga, because it is the most difficult in XII.8-11.

3. Brahmabhūya = Identity with Brahman Cf. XVIII-53.54.

4. Yah Mām sevate sa Brahmabhūyāya kalpate - Cf., for the reverse of this Te'pi yānti Māmeva sarvabhūtahite ratāh. "The meditators on Aksara also reach Me alone".

Statements like these show that under certain conditions the worshippers of the sākāra reach the nirākāra and vice versa. These statements clearly distinguish between sākāra and nirākāra aspects of the Reality; they only mean that some times the sākāra-upāsaka gets the nirākāra Reality and some times the nirākāra-upāsaka gets the sākāra one.

Sankara:

(Now, the Lord replies to the question : "How does a man go beyond the three qualities?")

That ascetic or performer of actions (yatih karmī vā) who serves Me with yoga in the form of bhakti (i.e., serves Me with bhakti) which never changes, becomes eligible to become one with Brahman (Mokṣa).

Notes: 1. Sankara takes verse-25 as referring to yati only, while he takes verse-26 as dealing with yati or karmin. He holds that in v.21 Arjuna has asked three questions:

- I. The definition, i.e., the characteristic of gunātīta (v.21 A).
- II. The means of becoming gunātīta (v.21 c), and
- III. How a man can go beyond the gunas (v.21 d).

The first of these questions is answered in v.22, the second in verses 23-25 and the third in verses 26-27. This construction of verses 22-27 would mean that verse 22 gives the first or ordinary stage, verses 23-25 give the more advanced stage and v.27 gives the highest stage; accordingly Sankara has given the various avataranikās to verse-22 (- yat tāvat kair līngair yukto gunātīto - bhavati eti tatrunu), v.23-25 (Athedānīm gunātītaḥ kimā-cārāḥ eti prāśnasya prativacanamāha) and v.26 (Adhunā katham ca trīn gunānavartate eti prāśnasya). Moreover he remarks -

- a. That the lakṣana of gunātīta is given in v.22 and it is meant for the gunātīta yati's Own - internal examination of himself, because his dvesa or ākāṅkṣā, mentioned in the verse, cannot be "seen" by anybody else,
- b. That the gunātītatvasādhana of the mumukṣa whom Sankara takes to be a yati (sannyāsin) would - itself become gunātītasya yateḥ lakṣanam, when that sādhana will be firm (sthiribhūtam tu - svasaṁvedyam sat) and
- c. that the chief sādhana in v.26 is bhakti itself, which in the Sāṅkaramata is lower than jñāna and the inner soul (aham - in v.27) is Brahmanah-pratisthā.

In my opinion, it is wrong to distribute the verses 22-27 into these three divisions. In fact v.21 does not contain really three questions, though there are three queries from Arjuna. There is only one question and it is regarding the conduct of the gunātīta. In v.22 there is no mention of the lakṣaṇa of gunātīta, unless we read the avstaranikāś of Sankara to v.22 and v.23, we do not know the minute distinction between the topic of v.22 and that of verses 23-25; and the 'ca' in v.26 suggests that the man who conducts himself according to what is prescribed in v.26. Also it is Sankara who says that the topic of v.26 is yati or karmin; in fact the verses 22-26 deal with one and the same man and that man, as shown by the title of the Adhyāya, gunatrayavibhāgayoga and by the word bhaktiyoga (in v.26) is, in my opinion, a yogin a follower of niskāmakarmācarana. Sankara himself says that sādhana when it has been long practised becomes lakṣaṇa (vide Sankara's - remarks in his bhāṣya on v.25); so how can there be any hard and fast distinction between the statements regarding the two. One can easily say that v.22 gives the ācāra of the gunātīta and it can be noticed by one who closely watches the gunātīta from the behaviour of the gunātīta. Verse 26 would mean that unchanging bhaktiyoga helps the man trying to be gunātīta by means stated in v.22-25. The author has so far (v.1-25 of Adhyāya XIV) explained a kind of a jñāna as useful to title of Adh.XIV

now in v.26-27 he adds to it Bhaktiyoga as a help to the same; and it is the yoga based upon Sākārabhakti. Sākārabhaktiyoga leading to gunatrayavibhāgayoga (Cf. yah Mām bhaktiyogena sevate saḥ gunān trīn atītya XIV 20 a) would result in the yogin becoming one with Brahman the nirākāra, of course, if the yogin so desires; and this result of Kṛṣṇabhaktiyoga is possible because Kṛṣṇa is the pratisthā of the nirākāra viz., Brahman. The Pratisthā can give the pratisthitatva if desired by the worshipper. If we read verses 26 and 27 we can make out the purpose of v.26. Verse 26 aims at telling that by Kṛṣṇabhaktiyoga the gunatrayavibhāgayogin can, if he desires, achieve Brahmabhāva and verse 27 gives the reason for this. The latter says that the Lord Kṛṣṇa is the basis or support of the nirākāra Brahman, so the gunatrayavibhāgayogin can by resorting to Kṛṣṇabhaktiyoga get Brahmabhāva (called Brahmabhūya). It seems that Brahmabhāva (called Brahmabhūya) was valued much by mumukṣus in the days of the Gita; and hence it is here made clear that Kṛṣṇabhakti can enable the seeker to get Brahmabhāva for the simple reason that Kṛṣṇa is the sustainer of Brahman. The purpose of verse 26 is not to tell anything particularly regarding the question: "How a man can overcome the three gunas?", as Śaṅkara supposes. It rather says that if a man trying to become gunātīta by the means stated in v.22-25, serves the Lord Kṛṣṇa by bhaktiyoga, he can get Brahmabhāva if he desires. Therefore it should be translated as follows:-

"The man who tries to be gunātīta (gunatrayavibhāga-yogin) by the means prescribed in v.22-25 and who also serves the Lord by means of avyabhicārbhaktiyoga, becomes fit for Brahmabhāva (if he so desires), because the Lord is Himself the Pratisthā of Brahman", otherwise, by the means stated in v.22-25 only, he becomes mere gunātīta, but does not get either Brahman or SrīKṛṣṇa. In verses 22-25, neither Kṛṣṇa nor Brahman is mentioned, and hence the mention of Kṛṣṇabhakti and Brahmabhakti is quite appropriate in v.26 so far as the goal of Brahmabhūya fitness is concerned. Instead of explaining in this way; Sankara says that in v.26 Kṛṣṇabhakti is mentioned as a means to gunatrayātivartana ('going - beyond the three gunas).

27. Because I am the support of (that) Brahman, the immortal and the unchanging, of the eternal Dharma, and of absolute Bliss.

Notes:1. This verse explains why the gunatrayavibhāgayogin, who serves the Lord Kṛṣṇa would get Brahmabhūya - (identity with Brahman). Here the Gītā discusses the relation of Kṛṣṇa and Brahman. Kṛṣṇa is the Pratisthā, the support of Brahman the nirākāra - aspect of the Reality. So, it is no wonder that - one who serves Kṛṣṇa gets identity with Brahman - if he wishes.

2. Sāsvatasya ca dharmasya - Dharma is taught in Pūrva-kānda and in Manusmṛti etc. just as Brahman is taught in the Upanisads. Kṛṣṇa is the pratiṣṭhā of Brahman, Dharma and aikāntika sukha (XIV-27). So, here Brahman is not identified with absolute sukha. Prof. S.N. Dasguptā says that in XIV-27 the Nirākāra Brahman is clearly declared to be "Lower" than the Sākāra or Super-Personal Kṛṣṇa.

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Sāṅkara :

(How does the man who serves Kṛṣṇa with bhakti overcome the three gunas ? The following is the reply :)

The inner Śoul (Aham) is the support of Brahman, (= Paramātman) immortal and unchanging, (which can be reached by means of the eternal Dharma, the religious - practice (viz. Jñānayoga), and (which is itself) absolute Bliss. (The inner Śoul is the support of Paramātman which is of the nature of amṛta etc., it can be proved to be paramātman by means of right knowledge).

OR

The Inner Śoul (Aham) (which is nirvikalpaka, the impersonal aspect of the reality), is the pratiṣṭhā, the support of Brahman, (which denotes the savikalpaka) immortal and unchanging, of eternal religious advancement (Dharma) (in the form of the path of knowledge, jñānanisthālakṣanasya) and of absolute happiness (born of that Dharma).

- Notes: 1. Sankara takes Aham as Pratyagātma the inner Soul. But as we have Mām in verse-26, 'Aham' in this verse must mean SriKṛṣṇa.
2. Having taken Aham as Pratyagātman, Sankara takes, in his first explanation, sāsvata-dharma and aikāntika-sukha as identical with Brahman. He takes dharma as jñānayogadharma.
3. In the first interpretation Brahman may be both Savikalpaka and Nirvikalpaka, but in the second Sankara takes it as Savikalpaka and Aham the Pratyagātman as Nirvikalpaka.
4. In the second interpretation Sāsvatadharmā (interpreted as jñānanisthā) and sukha (the happiness born of jñānanisthā) are not identified with Brahman and so 'Aham' is explained to be the pratisthā of Brahman, dharma and Sukha.

Thus, in the Upaniṣads (Keys of doing one's duties disinterestedly) sung by the Lord, in the science of Brahman, in the scripture of Yoga (Disinterested Action), in the Dialogue between SriKṛṣṇa and Arjuna, the chapter fourteenth entitled the Disinterested Action through the Division of the three - Gunas, is ended.

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