

Searching your true nature & evaluating your lifestyle

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Hindu philosophy, like Christianity, focuses on the concept of trinity: God's existence as creator of the universe, preserver of the good and destroyer of evil in the world.

The *Bhagavadgita*, believed to be the essence of the Vedas, contains 18 chapters and 700 verses. The first 16 chapters focus on the immortal nature of soul and mortal nature of the human body. Chapters 17 and 18 offer 15 triads to describe "karma philosophy," which involves experiential training, learning and fine-tuning over a period of human life.

In each chapter (17 and 18), all but two of the triads have to do with the three gunas—sattva, rajas and tamas— which are described as natural-born qualities. In chapter 17 these two are:

1. Three kinds of austerities: austerities of speech, the body and mind
2. Three-fold designations of the Absolute: Om, Sat and Tat.

In Chapter 18 there are:

1. Three motivations of an action: knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knower
2. Three constituents of action: the doer, the action and the organ of action.

The rest of the trinities concern the gunas. The *Bhagavadgita* offers

information to help people place themselves in the applicable category and potential to make a choice to uplift their nature through self-discipline. For it is not the birth alone, but the way in which the earned life is lived that matters.

TRY THE TRIADS

Take this self-reflective quiz, drawn from chapters 17 & 18 of the *Bhagavadgita*, to help determine which guna prevails in you

From Chapter 17:

To whom do you pray?

- A. Worship of the gods
- B. Worship of Rakashasas and Yaksas
- C. Worship of spirits and ghosts

Which foods do you enjoy?

- A. Foods that are sweet, bland and nourishing
- B. Foods that are salty, bitter, acidic or very hot
- C. Foods that are very rare, half-cooked or stale

Which type of sacrifice do you perform?

- A. Sacrifice performed in congruence with the scriptures without desire for fruits
- B. Sacrifice performed for ostentation with desire for fruits
- C. Sacrifice performed without faith, fee, food distribution, sacred formula or sanction of scriptures

What is the nature of your penance?

- A. Penance performed with supreme faith without desire for fruits
- B. Penance performed for winning respect, honor and worship
- C. Penance performed with deluded understanding and torture of mind, senses and body for oneself or others

In what spirit do you give gifts?

- A. Gifts given for dutifulness or regard to the place, time and recipient of the gift
- B. Gifts given with gainful intention
- C. Gifts given at an improper place and time in a disrespectful, insulting manner to an undeserving person

From Chapter 18:

What is the nature of your action or inaction?

- A. Dutiful performance of action without attachment to or desire for the fruits
- B. Withdrawal of actions due to fear of physical discomfort
- C. Giving up action out of ignorance

Which type of knowledge do you possess?

- A. Knowledge generated by the concept of Oneness by which one sees harmony and unity
- B. The existence of diversity and variety to separate through discrimination
- C. Knowledge limited to one individual only and having little value or meaning for others

What type of doer are you?

- A. Free from attachment, unegotistic, firm, vigorous and unaffected by