

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-8), Saturday, 25 November 2023

Interpreter: GĪTĀ PRAVĪṆA RUPAL SHUKLA

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/IINTetpeg5U>

Bhagavān recommends One Point Devotion in HIM & Ultimately Reach HIM

The 12th Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is about **the Yoga of Bhakti - The Yoga of Devotion** and describes the various ways one can reach The Divine. The chapter also describes the various characteristics of a devotee (bhakta lakshana) that God would want his disciple to possess/ follow in order to reach Him.

The session started with the lighting of the lamp and prayers to Śrī Bhagavān. This was followed by prayers to the Gurujans, saints expressing gratitude for their blessings. It is through their grace and perhaps some of our punya karma that we have been connected with Śrīmadbhagavadgītā. We have been handed the opportunity to learn and recite Bhagavadgītā with perfection, in spite of the fact that many of us may not be exposed to Hindi or Sanskrit. In the 18th chapter, Śrī Bhagavān proclaims that he who learns, teaches and spreads the knowledge of Gītā is His most favourite! We are blessed indeed.

As new entrants into Geeta Pariwār one might wonder why the recitation of Bhagavadgītā begins from the 12th chapter. The main reason is that this chapter is the shortest (with 20 shlokas) and once we learn to recite the slokas herein, it instills confidence and kindles the enthusiasm to surge forward. Contrary to this, the first chapter consists of 47 shlokas and as early learners, the lengthy challenge may dissuade us from moving on in our Gītā journey.

The talk went on to strengthen the background for the 12th chapter a bit further. To understand anything, one must understand its components in its entirety. To this end, it is important to understand the 3 major components of the Gītā before delving into it-

Arjuna - who comes across as someone in his late 30s, engulfed by stress and depression. This is the picture that we paint in our minds when we imagine Arjuna's character. Well, it turns out that he is 84, mature, courageous, skillful; one who has fought many battles and has never lost. An individual who always follows Dharma and who has won over his sleep with great tapas. He is named

Gudakesha for this. He won the heart of Bhagavān Śiva with his courage and received the Pashupatastra.

Gītā – This miniature book (grantha) has answers to all questions a person could possibly have. Many of the well-known leaders and scientists found the best in this grantha. God created Vedas, which are the main source of knowledge to mankind. The Upaniṣadas are the gist of the Vedas while Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, which is the voice of Śrī Bhagavān is the gist of the Upaniṣadas. Importantly, the crux of Gītā is surrendering to the Supreme (sharanagati).

Śrī Bhagavān believes that Arjuna possesses all the divine qualities that are required to create the awareness among people and hence God chooses Arjuna as His medium. If the same had been imparted to someone like Duryodhana, the world might have been deprived of Gītā.

Bhagavān Śrī Krishna – HE asked Agnidev for Arjuna's love and was willing to be his charioteer. On Arjuna's direction, HE rode the chariot and halted the same in between the armies. However, HE who had maneuvered the entire Mahābhārata, stopped the chariot in front of Bhīṣma, Drona and Krupacharya, knowing too well that this would create a conflict in Arjuna's mind. This would in effect create the right context for imparting Śrīmadbhagavadgītā to mankind through Arjuna.

It must be understood at the outset that the portrayal of Arjuna's confusion through Śrīmadbhagavadgītā is an indication of how the human mind works and the advice therein is to guide us in the right path.

In the first 10 chapters, Śrī Bhagavān explains about worshipping the Aksharabrahman and in the 55th sloka of the 11th chapter, HE talks about the worship of the manifest form of the Supreme (Saguna Sākar; with attributes, such as Bhagavān Śrī Rāma and Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa). The 12th chapter opens with Arjuna's confusion about the unmanifested form of the Parabrahman (Nirguna Nirākāra Brahman; with no attributes or form) and Saguna Sākar Brahman.

12.1

arjuna uvāca

**evam(m) satatayuktā ye, bhaktāstvām(m) paryupāsate,
ye cāpyakṣaRāmayaktaṁ(n), teṣāṁ(ñ) ke yogavittamāḥ. 12.1**

Arjuna said :

The devotees exclusively and constantly devoted to You in the manner stated just earlier, adore You as possessed of form and attributes, and those who adore as the supreme Reality only the indestructible unmanifest Brahma (who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss solidified)- of these two types of worshippers who are the best knowers of Yoga?

Arjuna wants to know which one of the paths is better for a devotee.

One who has perpetually immersed himself in Saguna Sākar form entirely or one who chooses to follow the Nirguna Nirākāra Brahman?

But it should be noted that Arjuna's query is not intended to differentiate between the two forms of the Supreme but is primarily to understand which path is better for a seeker.

Happiness is the main goal of all pursuits, material or spiritual as described in the 15th chapter and the main source for eternal happiness (*Paramanand*) is Bhagavān Krishna HIMSELF.

Taking the example of 2 people involved in devotion or *Sādhana* (spiritual practice); one is in constant contemplation of Bhagavān and the other is not. The person on the spiritual path glows with peace and radiance of his devotion who seems calm and happy. This is similar to the glow created by the reflection of light as one move towards the source.

Both the paths of Manifest and Unmanifest worshipping involved constant contemplation of Paramātmā. One needs a form to meditate while the other is formless.

When HE explained about *Saguna Brahman*, Arjuna was confused, hence he inquired about the simpler path to reach HIM.

12.2

**śrībhagavānuvāca
mayyāveśya mano ye mām(n), nityayuktā upāsate,
śraddhayā parayopetāḥ(s), te me yuktatamā matāḥ. 12.2**

Śrī Bhagavān said :

I consider them to be the best Yogīs, who endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, worship Me with their mind centred on Me.

Śrī Bhagavān explains that those who worship the manifest form of the Supreme with unflinching faith, stay connected and think of ME at all times, even in adversities, are the better knowers of yogas. Having said that, it should be understood that worshipping Saguna Sākar Brahman (bhakti marga) is easier while the path of knowledge (jñāna marga) is more difficult. This is the reason God said that devotees following the bhakti path are better - only because the path is easier!

Those who are integrated and completely fixated on The Divine are considered the true yogis. One should also remember that conscious bhakti is better than unconscious bhakti as one needs a form to meditate and focus completely.

This isn't saying that the *Saguna Sādhana* was better as individual sadhak would determine what type of path he was to follow just as one mathematical question can be solved by different people in different ways.

For most common people, Bhakti yoga is relatively easier. However, that wasn't the only method, the next shlok enlightens about the other ways of devotion.

12.3

**ye tVākṣaRāmanirdeśyaṁ(m), avyaktaṁ(m) paryupāsate,
sarvatragamacintyaṁ(ñ) ca, kūṭasthamacalaṁ(n) dhruvam. 12.3**

Those, however, who fully controlling all their senses and even-minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all beings, constantly adore as their very self the unthinkable,

Arjuna's confusion about the people who worship the indestructible, unmanifest form or Aksharabrahman continues - something that has no attributes, is undefinable, Omnipresent, unchangeable, immovable, eternal, is beyond comprehension and hence very difficult to worship.

12.4

sanniyamyendriyagrāmaṁ(m), sarvatra śamabuddhayaḥ, te prāpnuvanti māmeva, sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ. 12.4

omnipresent, indestructible, indefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest and changeless Brahma, they too come to Me.

In this shloka, Bhagavān Śrī Krishna explains the guidelines for behaviour (*Āchāra Samhita*), for those asserting themselves to be His devotees. The devotee must:

- a. control all the ten senses (indriyas) - sense organs of knowledge (*jñānendriya*) and sense organs of action (*karmendriya*)
- b. look at everyone equally as Brahman is in everyone, and
- c. always think for the welfare of all.

Let there be no doubt that a devotee who follows the path of *Nirguna Nirākāra Brahman* will also definitely reach HIM.

Nirguna Brahman (unmanifest consciousness) can be identified by the following qualities:

- **Akshar Swarupa** (that which never decays/destroys/degrades),
- **Anirdeshya** (that which could not be indicated),
- **Avvyakta** (indescribable and that which was invisible).
- **Achintyam** (something that is beyond dreams and thoughts of beings).
- **Kutastha** (the cause of Maya-illusion).
- **Achalam** (unmovable).
- **Dhruvam** (eternal)

The Upanishads described *Nirguna Brahman* as something that couldn't be seen through one's physical eyes, but the eyes were powered (to see) by HIM because HE is Omnipresent. *Yogeshwar* is present in every atom. When in meditation, one is asked to close the eyes and meditate on nothing; that is *Brahman*.

This was proved by Narsimha Avatar to Hiranyakashipu when he asked Prahlad whether his Vishnu Bhagavān was in the pillars. Prahlad agreed and Bhagavān Narsimha appeared when Hiranyakashipu mockingly crashed the pillar.

12.5

kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāṁ(m), avyaktāsaktacetasām, avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṁ(n), dehavadbhiravāpyate. 12.5

Of course, the strain is greater for those who have their mind attached to the Unmanifest, as attunement with the Unmanifest is attained with difficulty by the body-conscious people.

Following the unmanifested, undefinable form of the Supreme is difficult for people who have not renounced their ego with respect to their body (identify themselves as the physical form). This is the reason why Bhagavān advises HIS devotees to take the easier path of devotion to reach HIM.

The Divine acknowledged that the strain and struggle was higher when one followed the path of worshipping the Unmanifest, especially since humans are limited by their physical bodies. So, HE recommended Arjuna to follow Bhakti yoga.

For those finding even the path of complete devotion difficult, more paths are elaborated further by HIM.

12.6

**ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi, mayi sannyasya matparāḥ,
ananyenaiva yogena, mām(n) dhyāyanta upāsate. 12.6**

On the other hand, those depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me

In the next few slokas, Śrī Bhagavān explains the various ways that one can reach HIM. Surrendering all karmas, holding HIM as Supreme; those who feel intertwined with Bhagavān with complete dedication, they will reach the same brahman.

12.7, 12.8

**teṣāmahaṁ(m) samuddhartā, mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt,
bhavāmi nacirātpārtha, mayyāveśitacetasām. 12.7
mayyeva mana ādhatsva, mayi buddhiṁ(n) niveśaya,
nivasīṣyasi mayyeva, ata ūrdhvaṁ(n) na saṁśayaḥ. 12.8**

with single-minded devotion, them, Arjuna, I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me.

Therefore, fix your mind on Me, and establish your intellect in Me alone; thereafter you will abide solely in Me. There is no doubt about it.

Śrī Bhagavān asserts that those who merge in HIM will cross the ocean of birth and death with HIS help. Further, Śrī Bhagavān says that dedicating one's mind and intellect in HIM will help one dwell in the same Brahman.

Arjuna from his actions seemed to seek more guidance, and Śrī Bhagavān in all HIS compassion eagerly gives him another method that is to completely surrender to HIM.

One should meditate on HIM with exclusivity and devotion, dedicating all of their karmas (actions) to HIM.

Just as Meera bai said '*Mere toh Giridhar Gopala Dusroh na Koi*'- as she believed completely that the only thing, she possesses is *Giridhar Gopal* (another name for Śrī Krishna Bhagavān), and no one else. This is also known as **Ananya Yoga** (Yoga of exclusive devotedness).

Those who completely fix and connect their mind in The Divine, will be welcomed on HIS boat to cross the Bhavasagar (the ocean of birth and death of the created world / samsara).

One uses intellect to think while the mind helps to grow affection towards other beings. When the Mind and Intellect, both in a person are completely absorbed and fixed on The Divine, ultimately, they would reach HIM.

To prepare Arjuna to fight the war, Paramātmā is going to present many more options which would continue in the next session with 9th shloka.

The discourse ended with HARINAM SANKIRTANAM.

Question and Answer

Harshita Ji

Question: How to get the video of previous sessions?

Answer: For daily zoom classes, it is not available. For vivechan sessions, it is available on vivechan.learngeeta.com.

Gargi Ji

Question: Did Bhagavān Śrī Krishna impart the knowledge of Gītā to Arjuna as he had all the 26 Gunas and his other Pāṇḍava brothers did not have all the Gunas?

Answer: All the Pāṇḍava brothers had all the Gunas. As Arjuna was most dear to Śrī Krishna, he was chosen to hear the divine knowledge of Gītā

Sangeeta Ji

Question: Bhagavān Śrī Krishna imparted the knowledge of Gītā To Arjuna as he was his close friend. Is it not like teaching the favorite student and ignoring the rest (say the other Pandavas brothers)?

Answer: On the battlefield, Arjuna was depressed and gripped by confusion and fear. Hence, Bhagavān starts the divine knowledge of Gītā. Arjuna was just a medium to impart this knowledge to one and all. HE has dispelled the doubts and ignorance of Bhima, Yudhishtir, Gandhari, Kunti and other characters of Mahabharat as well when they came seeking for advice from HIM.

Ashok Ji

Question: It was mentioned that the age of Arjuna was 84 hrs. But it is told that there are stages of Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaraprasta and so on. Ideally at the age of 84, Arjuna had to be in a stage of Vanaraprastha. Please clarify.

Answer: This was in Dwaparayuga and in those days, the average age was around 200-300. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha lived for 300 years, Śrī Krishna lived for 126 years, and Arjuna lived for 124 years. Bhīṣma Pitāmaha was a Kṣatriya till his last breath. Also, scriptures only advice a path to adopt Vanaraprastha or Saṁnyāsa during old age but it is a choice and not a mandate.

Anandkumar Ji

Question: What is the highest transformation state that one can achieve with Gita?

Answer: There are examples like Mahatma Gandhi ji and Swamy Vivekanda ji. Seekers also report of reduced anxiety levels, reduced state of anger and illnesses being cured. Experience of each seeker is unique and cannot be categorised as high or low transformation.

Sreevidya Ji

Question: Karna was known for his quality of giving and why Arjuna had a jealousy towards Karna?

Answer: It was Karna who harbored jealousy towards Arjuna. He had only one Daivi or saintly trait of the quality of giving and Arjuna had more. Karna was also in the company of Duryodhana and did engage in traits that were not saintly.

Asha Ji

Question: Please explain the meaning of the following words - (1) **Nirguna Nirakaara** and (2) **Acharya samhita**

Answer: *Nirguna Nirakara* is the unmanifest almighty. The almighty is formless and without any attributes or properties. There are types of the Divine or almighty (1) Almighty with a form - say Śrī Krishna or Śrī Ram which is manifested form and (2) Formless almighty which is unmanifest. *Acharya samhita* implies regulation book.

Ruby Ji

Question: How to triage all the Gunas that Arjuna had in current day or in today's world to make an impact on one's life?

Answer: There are 26 Gunas (say fearless, truthfull, tolerance, so on and so forth) and each of these virtues is needed even today. It was not just relevance 5000 years ago and it has its relevance even today.

Question: In current times, how can one be truthful in this Yuga?

Answer: 5000 years ago, as well Duryodhana deviated from these virtues and hence, he was called Duryodhana instead of Suyodhana. In today's world as well, even the most corrupt Politician would want to have the most honest PA. Hence, even the most corrupt person would except honesty from the other.

Sunita Ji

Question: Like how Arjuna was gripped by anxiety and depression on the battlefield, in current times, if anyone is gripped by by anxiety and depression, which Chapter or shloka of Gītā should be taught to them?

Answer: Instead of a specific shloka or chapter, one should engage in learning the entire Gītā. By reciting the entire Gītā over a duration of time, it makes a positive impact on the mind.

Question: How to go about if one is not in a situation to engage in studying Gītā?

Answer: Then it could it read to them and the results could be seen with time. There are many examples where depression has been cured with the study of Gītā.

Venkata Ji

Question: The worst thing that can happen is a war. Today's example of Ukraine and Russia war is the worst situation. Then why did Śrī Krishna encourage Arjuna to wage a war?

Answer: Imagine a situation where if India is in a state of war with Pakistan and the army officer says he would quit the war when the war is on. Śrī Krishna tries three times to put off the war and all attempts of peace and negotiations fails with the Kaurava camp. He even asks for just five villages for the Pāṇḍavas instead of the kingdom and Duryodhan declines the request saying he would not grant even an inch of land. Hence, for the sake of the subjects of the kingdom, the war had to be fought.

Question: Did Śrī Krishna fail as a peace negotiator? He could do so many miracles being Bhagavān himself (say lifting the Govardhan mountain) and why could he not put off the war.

Answer: He was in human avatar, and he had to assume the same form with humans. Govardhan mountain was lifted by him when Devaraj Indra was against him who was a celestial Devata and hence, he assumed his divine attributes. If one reads Mahabharata, one will understand that Śrī Krishna was never a failure, and he was the most successful of all.

Usha Ji

Question: Where can i find the Gītā with meaning in Tamil?

Answer: It is available in Geeta Press and also on Amazon

Parul Ji

Question: Where can one read about the 36 Gunas?

Answer: Chapter 16, shlokas 1,2 and 3

Question: If Sanjaya is reciting the entire conversation of Gita, how did it translate to Bhagavad Gita?

Answer ji: On the 10th day, Sanjaya informs Dhritarashtra about Bhīṣma Pitāmaha that he is on his deathbed. Dhritarashtra then asks Sanjaya to narrate the happenings of the war from the beginning as Sanjaya had the Divya Drishti bestowed by his Guru Ved Vyas ji whereby he could see the events of war. Ved Vyas ji initially asked Dhritarashtra if he would like to see the war with the Divya Drishti or divine vision. Dhritarashtra responded by saying that he was blind all his life and he does not wish to see this war and the divine vision could be bestowed to Sanjaya. The first shloka of Gītā starts with Dhritarashtra asking Sanjaya to describe the scene on the battlefield and Sanjaya starts to describe what he sees. Ved Vyas ji also had the divine vision, and he writes the Mahabharat based on his own divine vision.

Ajit Ji

Question: When shlokas are recited without knowing the meaning, does it have any benefit?

Answer: Certainly. All the shlokas need not be understood. When recited correctly, the shlokas or mantras would have its effect. Bhagavad Gītā was spoken byt he almighty and when one chants the same, it has an effect on brain programming, physiology, psychology and also has a positive effect on the surrounding. Even without listening to the vivechans, if one chants regularly, one will still experience positive benefits.

Murthy Ji

Question: What was the duration of the conversation of Gītā?

Answer: The conversation happened for a duration of 45 mins on the battlefield just before the war.

Srishti Ji

Question: How to identify if one is on the right path after studying Gītā?

Answer: If one is happy from within and everyone in the surrounding are also in a state of happiness, then one is on the right path.

Harshar Ji

Question: Is devotion the same as worship?

Answer: Worship is a part of devotion and the 39 attributes of a devotee will be explained in the next session.

Savita Ji

Question: In Dwaparayuga, people were more positive and virtuous. How can this be applied in Kaliyuga?

Answer: There were demons in all Yugas, even in Satyuga and Treta Yuga. The nature has Sattva,

Rajas and Tamas and all these Gunas will be present in nature. If Tamo Guna is high, then the qualities would be demoniac and if Sattva Guna is high, it would be divine qualities. In every era, one would get to see the good and the bad.

Bhuvaneshwari Ji

Question: The mind is distracted during meditation and while chanting shloka. Is this common?

Answer: It is common during the state of meditation and the thoughts that arise during the day reflects when one is contemplating in silence. If the activities are more Sattvika, then the negative thoughts reduce and eventually concentration increases.

Anuradha Ji

Question: What is the gist of Chapter 12?

Answer: Who is a devotee and which category of devotees are most dear to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna.

Question: Is it relevant in current times?

Answer: Yes, it is relevant, and it would be explained next week.

Mahesh Babu Ji

Question: Why do we start from Chapter 12?

Answer: For a beginner, it is recommended to start from Chapter 12 as it has the minimum number of shlokas, and it is the Yog of devotion. Even if one is unable to continue the study further, at least one would learn Bhakti Yog. Hence, it is recommended to start with Chapter 12.

Sridevi Ji

Question: Why does not Śrī Krishna fight during the war?

Answer: Śrī Krishna knew that he was the supreme divine personality and the side which had Śrī Krishna by their side, the win was certain. Also, he was a relative to both Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas and the Pāṇḍavas camp wins his support for the war.

The session ends with the prayer.



We are sure you enjoyed reading the Vivechan write-up. Please invest three minutes of your time to provide us your feedback. Use the link below:

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/feedback/>

Thank you-For reading the summary

You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/>

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta

|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||