

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/4LHVinT9PxY>

From Devotion to Realization: The Journey to the Divine

The 12th chapter of the **Bhagavadgītā** is titled **Bhakti-Yoga**, the Yoga of Devotion. Today's session began with the ceremonial lighting of the holy lamp, followed by an invocation to Śrī Bhagavān and reverence to Gurudev.

Śrī Bhagavān immensely blesses us to have embarked on this sacred journey of studying the **Bhagavadgītā**, a path that not only enriches this lifetime but also holds the potential to elevate the lifetimes to come. Whether the merits that have brought us here are the fruits of virtuous deeds from this life or the result of blessings and good karma from previous births, it is clear that this opportunity is not one we chose ourselves. It is only through the grace of Bhagavān that we have been chosen to immerse ourselves in the wisdom of the **Bhagavadgītā**.

The **Bhagavad Gītā**, composed over 5,300 years ago, continues to be revered worldwide, drawing praise from renowned philosophers and scholars alike. Intellectual luminaries such as Aldous Huxley, Henry David Thoreau, Swiss poet Hermann Hesse, American scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, Lord Hastings, and Albert Einstein have all drawn profound inspiration from its teachings. Remarkably, the Gītā's reach extends far beyond Sanatani Hindus; even India's former president, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, read the **Gītā** daily, finding wisdom and guidance in its verses.

In India, thousands of sects have emerged, each with distinct practices, scriptures, and belief systems. However, despite this diversity, the three major **Sampradāyas**—**Shaiva**, dedicated to the worship of Lord Śiva; **Vaishnava**, focused on Lord Vishnu; and **Shakta**, which venerates the Divine Mother (*Shakti*)—all revere the **Bhagavad Gītā** as a foundational scripture. The Gītā's authority and relevance are so universally acknowledged that it is even used in courts of law for taking oaths, reflecting its deep significance and acceptance across all strata of society.

The universal appeal of the **Bhagavad Gītā** lies in its inclusiveness. It does not demand adherence to a single form of worship or a rigid set of doctrines. The concept of "religion," as understood in modern terms, is absent from the Gītā. Instead, Śrī Bhagavān contemplates the essential truths of life and offers multiple paths—be it through devotion (*bhakti*), knowledge (*jnana*), or selfless action (*karma yoga*)—all leading toward the same supreme goal. This timeless message of inclusivity and spiritual unity is what makes the

Bhagavad Gītā relevant to people of all beliefs, backgrounds, and eras.

The **Bhagavad Gītā** was revealed by Śrī Bhagavān for the eternal benefit of humanity, with Arjuna serving as the chosen medium to convey its profound teachings.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत्॥

"All the Upanishads are like cows, the milker is Krishna, the son of the cowherd, and Arjuna is the calf; the wise drink the supreme nectar of the Gītā."

This verse illustrates that while the wisdom of the **Gītā** is accessible, it is only through Śrī Bhagavān's grace that individuals are able to truly grasp its essence.

Śrī Bhagavān Himself affirms the centrality of the Gītā in His teachings:

गीता मे हृदयं पार्थ, प्रज्ञा मे सुसमाहिताः।

"The Gītā is My heart, O Partha, and supreme wisdom is contained within it."

This declaration signifies the Gītā as the very core of Śrī Bhagavān's message, containing His deepest wisdom. Furthermore, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of spreading this sacred knowledge in verse 18.68:

य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति।
भक्तिं मयि परां कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः॥ 18.68॥

"He who, with supreme love for Me, shares this most profound wisdom of the Gītā among My devotees, will undoubtedly come to Me."

This verse highlights that those who engage with and share the teachings of the **Gītā** are truly blessed, as it requires both past and present virtuous deeds to walk this path of spiritual wisdom.

Why Begin with Chapter 12?

Many may wonder why traditional Gītā study often begins with Chapter 12. This practice is deeply rooted in ancient tradition and can be explained with a simple analogy:

The Gateway of India, built in 1913 by the British in Mumbai, symbolized the point of entry into the country. Later, as the capital shifted to Delhi, the India Gate was built in 1921. Unlike the Gateway of India, the India Gate did not mark an entry point but served as a symbolic representation of India's heart and essence. The Gateway of India represents the physical entry, while the India Gate symbolizes access to the soul of the nation.

Similarly, starting the study of the Gītā with Chapter 1 is akin to entering through the Gateway of India, engaging with the external layers of the text. However, beginning with Chapter 12 is like passing through India Gate, directly reaching the heart of the Gītā's teachings. Chapter 12 opens the door to the core spiritual wisdom of the Gītā.

It's important to recognize that the Bhagavad Gītā is a continuous 45-minute dialogue between Śrī Bhagavān and Arjuna. The divisions, or avatarnika at the beginning and Pushpika at the end of each chapter, were added by Vedavyāsa for the sake of structure and understanding, but the conversation itself flows seamlessly.

Significance of Chapter 12: Bhakti Yoga

Chapter 12, though the shortest with only 20 verses, holds immense spiritual significance as it focuses on Bhakti Yoga—the path of devotion. Mastering this chapter alone grants the essence of devotion and its transformative power. While Chapter 1, which deals with Arjuna's despondency, may offer little practical benefit, Chapter 12 teaches the profound art of Bhakti. By following this path, individuals gain access to the highest blessings.

For this reason, the ancient tradition of Gītā study often begins with Chapter 12. This chapter serves as a gateway to the heart of the Gītā's teachings, offering unparalleled spiritual wisdom and guiding the aspirant toward the ultimate goal of divine devotion and self-realization.

Before we begin understanding the 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā, it is important to reflect on the circumstances under which this sacred text was revealed.

Duryodhana, Dushasana, Shakuni, and Karna—infamously known as the "Chandāl Chaukdi" (the vicious foursome)—were consumed with jealousy towards the Pāṇḍavas. This jealousy led Duryodhana and Shakuni to conspire multiple times to kill the Pāṇḍavas. In a deceitful game of dice, they managed to defeat the Pāṇḍavas, usurp their kingdom, and exile them for thirteen years, with the final year to be spent in anonymity.

Despite their immense valour, the Pāṇḍavas, led by Yudhishtira, adhered to Dharma. When Yudhishtira was crowned king of Hastinapur, he was so powerful that all the visiting kings honoured him with the title of 'Samrat.' Had the Pāṇḍavas wished, they could have easily disobeyed the Kauravas, defeated them, and taken back their kingdom. However, they were righteous and chose to respect Dhritarashtra, whom they regarded as a father figure, by accepting exile instead of going to war.

After 13 years and 6 months of exile, the Pāṇḍavas sent a messenger from Viratnagar to remind Duryodhana that their exile period was over and that they should be given their kingdom as promised. Duryodhana, however, denied this, claiming that their calculation of the 13 years was incorrect. Despite Bhīṣma Pitāmaha confirming the Pāṇḍavas' calculations, Duryodhana remained adamant.

Yudhishtira and Śrī Bhagavān Krishna sought every possible means to avoid war. They sent several emissaries to negotiate with Duryodhana, but each time he refused to return the Pāṇḍavas' rightful kingdom. Eventually, Śrī Bhagavān Krishna Himself went as a peace envoy to Duryodhana's court, proposing a peaceful solution: the Pāṇḍavas would settle for just five villages. Duryodhana, blinded by pride, adamantly refused, declaring that he wouldn't give them land equal to even the tip of a needle.

Duryodhana's jealousy of the Pāṇḍavas was compounded by his resentment of Śrī Krishna's favour towards them. To provoke Krishna, Duryodhana attempted to arrest Him, disregarding the sacred rule that a messenger cannot be harmed. Śrī Krishna, having foreseen this, accepted the challenge. Duryodhana ordered his men to arrest Him, but Śrī Krishna had already stationed an army led by Satyaki at the borders of Hastinapur. At that moment, Śrī Krishna assumed His **Viraat Roop**—His massive cosmic form—visible only to Vidura and Bhīṣma Pitāmaha. The rest of the court, unable to withstand the brilliant light, shut their eyes.

Though most of the Pāṇḍavas were reluctant to wage war, Sahadeva supported it. Kunti Mata sent a message to Yudhishtira, reminding him of his duty as a warrior and urging him to prepare for war to rectify the injustice inflicted by Duryodhana. Following his mother's directive, Yudhishtira accepted the call to war and began preparations for battle.

A suitable location was needed for a war of such unprecedented scale. The chosen battleground had to be vast enough to accommodate massive armies, with facilities for horses, elephants, and soldiers from across the country. Additionally, it had to be a sacred site, ensuring that all those who died in battle would attain heaven. After much deliberation, Kurukshetra—a site where King Kuru and many sages had performed penance—was selected. The region was equipped with bridges over rivers, wells, and food godowns to sustain the armies. Months of preparation ensued, and the date for the war was set for the

Ekadasi of the month of Margashirsha.

Arjuna's Dilemma and the Birth of the Bhagavad Gītā

On the first day of the war, with both armies arrayed, Arjuna requested Śrī Bhagavān Krishna to position his chariot in the middle of the battlefield so that he could see both sides. Bhagavān Krishna, with great foresight, placed the chariot in front of Bhīṣma Pitāmaha and Dronacharya, Arjuna's beloved elders. At that moment, Arjuna was overwhelmed by a profound moral and emotional dilemma. He was struck by the thought of fighting his kinsmen, teachers, and friends. Gripped by confusion and intense emotions, Arjuna expressed his reluctance to participate in the battle, declaring that he would rather renounce the fight than kill his loved ones.

Why Arjuna?

Many wonder why Śrī Bhagavān chose Arjuna as the recipient of the Bhagavad Gītā's teachings. At the time of the Mahabharata war, Arjuna was 84 years old, while Bhagavān Krishna was 89. Contrary to the image of a confused youth, Arjuna was a mature and seasoned warrior who had fought and won numerous battles throughout his life. His delusion on the battlefield was not a sign of weakness but rather a reflection of his deep compassion and moral integrity.

Arjuna's life was marked by humility and virtue. Despite being victorious in every battle, he never let pride cloud his judgment. For example, when Yudhishtira lost the game of dice, Draupadi, Bhīma, Nakula, and Sahadeva all criticized him, but Arjuna remained silent, never blaming his elder brother.

In that moment of profound inner conflict, Arjuna became a perfect conduit for Śrī Bhagavān's universal teachings. Recognizing the potential for spiritual transformation, Śrī Krishna used this pivotal moment to impart timeless wisdom, not just for Arjuna, but for all of humanity. Through Arjuna's dilemma, Bhagavān conveyed the immortal message of the Bhagavad Gītā, a guide for living a righteous and purposeful life, promoting the well-being of all mankind.

Arjuna was a remarkable warrior, yet despite his many victories, he remained humble and virtuous, never succumbing to pride. His humility was evident in many instances, such as when Yudhishtira lost the game of dice. While Draupadi, Bhīma, Nakula, and Sahadeva openly expressed their anger and disappointment towards Yudhishtira, Arjuna remained silent, choosing not to blame his elder brother.

Arjuna's quest for knowledge and strength led him to seek out divine weapons (Divyastras). During this journey, he encountered his father, Indra Dev, who proposed that Arjuna live with him in the heavens. However, Arjuna refused, stating that he could not abandon his brothers and mother to enjoy the luxuries of heaven. Indra, initially angered by Arjuna's refusal, urged him once again to forsake his mortal ties and join him. Arjuna humbly declined, reaffirming his commitment to Dharma and expressing his willingness to accept any curse Indra might impose.

Pleased with Arjuna's unwavering dedication to duty, Indra revealed that this was a test of Arjuna's resolve. He acknowledged that if Arjuna had accepted the offer of heavenly pleasure, he would not have blessed him with the divine weapons. Indra then guided Arjuna to acquire the Pashupati Astra—the powerful weapon of Bhagavān Shiva—through deep penance.

Arjuna's resolve was tested again when he sought Shiva's blessings. Disguised as a hunter, Bhagavān Shiva engaged in a fierce duel with Arjuna on a hill near present-day Hyderabad. The intensity of their battle led to the hill being named Mallikarjuna, where a temple dedicated to Shiva now stands. Pleased by Arjuna's valour and persistence, Shiva granted him the Pashupati Astra and showed him the path to heaven.

Upon reaching heaven, Indra shared his throne with Arjuna. During a celestial performance, the beautiful apsara Urvashi danced before the court of Indra. Arjuna, however, looked at her with reverence,

considering her to be an elderly motherly figure of the Kuru clan. Mistaking Arjuna's respectful gaze for attraction, Indra sent Urvashi to Arjuna's chambers to please him. Arjuna, recognizing her intent, respectfully lowered his gaze and addressed her as a maternal figure. Infuriated by the rejection, Urvashi cursed Arjuna to become impotent. Arjuna, the mightiest warrior of his time, accepted the curse with humility and remained steadfast in his Dharma.

True to his principles, Arjuna endured the curse during his final year of exile, when he assumed the identity of Brihannala, a dance teacher to Uttara, the daughter of King Virata. This episode highlights Arjuna's unshakeable commitment to righteousness, even in the face of undeserved adversity.

The Khandava Forest Episode

In the Khandava Forest episode, Arjuna and Śrī Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa encountered Agnidev, the Fire God, who sought their help in consuming the forest. In return for their assistance, Agnidev bestowed divine gifts upon Arjuna, including the mighty Gāṇḍīva bow, an inexhaustible quiver of arrows, and a celestial chariot. These gifts empowered Arjuna and further solidified his prowess as a warrior.

However, while Arjuna received these material gifts, Śrī Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa made a unique request from Agnidev—He asked for Arjuna's love as His gift. This request demonstrated the depth of Kṛṣṇa's affection for Arjuna, showing that while divine weapons and power were important, Kṛṣṇa cherished their bond of friendship and devotion far more. This episode beautifully illustrates Śrī Bhagavān's selfless love for Arjuna, valuing their relationship above material wealth and power.

Arjuna and Duryodhana Seek Kṛṣṇa's Aid

Before the Kurukshetra war, both Arjuna and Duryodhana sought Śrī Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa's assistance. Upon arriving at Kṛṣṇa's palace, Duryodhana, filled with pride, sat near Kṛṣṇa's head, while Arjuna humbly sat by His feet. When Kṛṣṇa awoke, He offered them a choice: either His unarmed presence or His powerful Narayani Sena (army). Since Kṛṣṇa saw Arjuna first, He gave him the first choice.

Without hesitation, Arjuna chose Kṛṣṇa's presence, even though He would not fight in the war, demonstrating his deep love and unwavering trust in Kṛṣṇa. Duryodhana, on the other hand, chose the Narayani Sena, confident that this would secure his victory. This incident highlights Arjuna's unwavering devotion and faith in Śrī Bhagavān, prioritizing Kṛṣṇa's companionship over any material advantage. In return, Kṛṣṇa agreed to be Arjuna's charioteer, a gesture that symbolized their profound bond of love and friendship.

The Bhagavad Gītā and Sanjay's Divine Vision

The Bhagavad Gītā is a significant 45-minute dialogue between Bhagavān and Arjuna that took place on the first day of the Kurukshetra war. Although this conversation occurred at the outset of the battle, the narration was relayed to Dhritarashtra by Sanjay on the 11th day of the war, after Bhīṣma had been defeated by Arjuna and lay on a bed of arrows. Sanjay returned from the battlefield to inform Dhritarashtra of Bhīṣma's fall, prompting the blind king to request a detailed account of everything that had transpired in Kurukshetra from Day 1.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच ।

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।

मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥1॥

"In the sacred expanse of Kurukshetra, where the forces are assembled for battle, what transpired between my sons and the sons of Pandu? Enlighten me, Sanjay."

This marks the first verse of the Bhagavad Gītā. Blessed with divine insight by his guru Vedavyāsa, Sanjay narrated the entire discourse between Śrī Bhagavān and Arjuna to Dhritarashtra.

Preparing for the Gītā: The Right Mindset

Before immersing oneself in the teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā, it is essential to approach with an open and receptive mindset. This concept is illustrated through the story of Narayan Swami, a devout bhakta, and Shravan, a learned scholar. Shravan, struggling with spiritual uncertainties, sought Narayan Swami's guidance on the path of devotion. Narayan Swami, acknowledging Shravan's request, asked him to refresh himself and offered him a drink. However, instead of serving freshwater, Swami continued pouring liquid into an already-filled glass, causing it to overflow.

Perplexed, Shravan inquired why Swami was doing this. Swami explained that just as a filled glass cannot hold more liquid, a mind burdened with preconceived notions and past knowledge cannot absorb new wisdom. To truly embrace the teachings of the Gītā, one must first empty the mind of past assumptions and approach with humility and openness. Only when we acknowledge that we "know nothing" can we truly be ready to receive new insights.

In the same way, when we adorn deities, we first remove their old adornments and tilak before applying fresh ones. If we were to place a new tilak over an old one, it would not look beautiful. The same principle applies to spiritual wisdom—we must clear the old to make way for the new.

The Bhagavad Gītā comprises 700 verses: 1 verse spoken by Dhritarashtra, 41 by Sanjaya, 84 by Arjuna, and 574 by Śrī Bhagavān. The Gītā is the Song of the Divine, sung by Bhagavān Himself. While the Upanishads distill the essence of the Vedas, the Bhagavad Gītā holds a unique and exalted position because it is directly narrated by Śrī Bhagavān Himself, offering timeless wisdom and guidance for all of humanity.

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?

In Chapter 11, Arjuna witnessed the awe-inspiring Virat Vishwaroop form of Śrī Bhagavān, a divine revelation that transformed his understanding of Kṛṣṇa. Until that moment, Arjuna had considered Kṛṣṇa as his dear friend, philosopher, yogi, and warrior. However, after beholding the vast, fearsome cosmic form, Arjuna realized that Kṛṣṇa was none other than Śrī Bhagavān Himself—the Supreme Being. Overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of that vision, Arjuna requested Kṛṣṇa to return to His more familiar, gentle form and apologized for his earlier casual behavior, which stemmed from ignorance of Kṛṣṇa's true divine nature.

In this chapter, Arjuna poses a profound question about two significant spiritual paths. The Bhagavad Gītā outlines four main paths of Yoga: Jnana Yoga (path of knowledge), Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion), Karma Yoga (path of selfless action), and Dhyana Yoga (path of meditation). Among these, two stand out as the central teachings—Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Karma Yoga integrates into Bhakti Yoga, while Dhyana Yoga is often considered a part of Jnana Yoga.

Arjuna seeks clarification on which of the two—the path of devotion to the personal form of God (Bhakti Yoga) or the path of meditative worship of the formless Brahman (Jnana Yoga)—is superior for attaining

spiritual perfection.

- **evam satatayuktā ye bhaktāstvām paryupāsate:** Arjuna speaks of those devotees who are ever steadfast, exclusively devoted to Śrī Bhagavān in His personal form. These worshippers engage in practices such as prayer, meditation, and loving service (saguna bhakti), focusing on the divine attributes and form of God. Their devotion is filled with love and reverence for Śrī Bhagavān's personal, relatable form.
- **ye cāpyakṣaRāmavyaktaḥ:** Arjuna refers to another group of seekers who meditate upon the formless, imperishable Brahman (nirguna upāsana). This path involves contemplating the abstract, all-pervading reality that is beyond human perception and is without form or attributes. It requires intense philosophical reflection and meditative discipline.
- **teṣāṃ ke yogavittamāḥ:** Arjuna asks which of these two types of worshippers—those devoted to the personal form or those contemplating the formless Brahman—are superior in their knowledge and practice of Yoga. Here, "Yoga" refers to spiritual union with the Divine, not merely physical or mental disciplines.

1. **Devotion to God with Attributes (Saguna Bhakti):** The path of worshipping a personal deity (with attributes) allows devotees to establish a tangible and emotional connection with God. They see the Divine in a relatable form, possessing qualities like compassion, love, and power. This path enables spiritual growth through acts of devotion, rituals, and personal prayers. For many, worshipping God in a personal form creates a pathway for deep emotional and spiritual connection.
2. **Contemplation of the Formless (Nirguna Upāsana):** Worshippers of the formless Brahman take a more intellectual and meditative approach. They seek the eternal, unchanging reality that is beyond all forms and attributes. This path, while considered lofty, is often more challenging, requiring great mental discipline, detachment, and deep philosophical understanding. It appeals to those who pursue the absolute Truth beyond physicality and form.

In this verse, Arjuna poses a timeless question: Is it better to worship God in a personal, emotional way (Saguna Bhakti), or to contemplate the formless Absolute (Nirguna Upāsana)? Both paths offer distinct benefits, and Arjuna seeks to understand which leads to a greater realization of Yoga, or spiritual union with the Divine.

Śrī Bhagavān provides a succinct response in the next verse, and He elaborates further in the following verses of Chapter 12, offering deep insight into the paths of Bhakti and Jnana.

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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān responds to Arjuna's inquiry about which type of devotee is the most advanced in Yoga. Bhagavān explains that the highest Yogīs are those who remain constantly engaged in His worship, with unwavering faith and their minds completely absorbed in Him.

- **mayyāveśya mano ye mām:** Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that the most dedicated devotees are those who have fully surrendered their minds to Him. Their thoughts, emotions, and consciousness are continuously focused on the Divine. This absorption represents the deepest level of devotion, where the mind no longer wavers between worldly distractions but remains fixed on the Divine presence.
- **nityayuktā upāsate:** These devotees are not sporadically engaged in their worship but are perpetually connected to Śrī Bhagavān. Their devotion is not limited to moments of prayer or meditation but is woven into the fabric of their everyday lives. Whether through thoughts, actions, or intentions, they remain constantly united with Him.
- **śraddhayā parayopetāḥ:** The cornerstone of their devotion is supreme faith. This faith (*śraddhā*) is not simply belief but a deep, unwavering conviction in the Divine's grace and presence. It is this faith that strengthens their resolve, allowing them to remain steadfast in their worship, even amidst challenges.
- **te me yuktatamā matāḥ:** Śrī Bhagavān declares that those who worship Him with complete focus and supreme faith are the most accomplished in Yoga. The term *yuktatamā* signifies the highest state of union, where the devotee's mind, body, and soul are perfectly aligned with the Divine.

Clarification of 'Nitya yukta' and 'Sattata yukta':

Arjuna's question pertained to 'Sattata yukta'—those who are constantly engaged in devotion. Bhagavān, in His response, speaks of 'Nitya yukta,' meaning those who are perpetually united with Him. While 'Sattata yukta' implies a continuous engagement in devotional activities, 'Nitya yukta' reflects a deeper, all-encompassing union where every aspect of life is imbued with Divine consciousness. In this state, the devotee no longer distinguishes between spiritual and worldly activities, as their mind is constantly absorbed in Bhagavān.

A Story to Illustrate Devotion:

Consider the story of two friends. One friend, preparing for his wedding, invited the other to join him in distributing the wedding invitations. However, the second friend was not dressed for the occasion and hesitated. To help, the first friend offered one of his own newly-stitched outfits, but as they visited each home, he kept mentioning that his friend was wearing his clothes. This constant reminder created tension, as the second friend grew increasingly uncomfortable with the repeated references to his borrowed attire.

This story highlights the nature of attachment. The first friend could not stop thinking about his clothes, even though they were performing an important task. Similarly, when our mind is fixated on something—whether it be material possessions, thoughts, or emotions—we cannot fully concentrate on anything else. In the same way, if our attachment is directed towards Bhagavān, He remains in our thoughts at all times, no matter what we are doing.

1. **Absorption in the Divine (mayyāveśya mano):** The most advanced Yogīs are those who immerse their minds fully in God. This level of focus means that all distractions, desires, and attachments fall away, allowing the devotee to merge their consciousness with the Divine.

2. **Constant Connection (nityayuktā):** True Yoga, as Śrī Bhagavān explains, is not just a temporary state but a continuous relationship with the Divine. These devotees remain connected to Bhagavān in every thought, action, and moment of their lives, transcending any division between the spiritual and the mundane.
3. **Supreme Faith (śraddhayā parayā):** Faith is the foundation of their spiritual journey. This unwavering trust in Bhagavān's presence and guidance gives them the strength to persevere, regardless of external circumstances or challenges. Their devotion is not rooted in ritual alone, but in a profound inner conviction.

We, as humans, have a natural tendency to become attached to worldly objects—our possessions, relationships, and achievements. However, when this attachment is redirected towards Bhagavān, our entire outlook changes. A true devotee is one who, while performing all their worldly duties, keeps Bhagavān constantly in their heart and mind. Whether at work, at home, or even in leisure, the mind remains centered on the Divine.

Much like the friend in the story, whose mind was preoccupied with the thought of his clothes, the true devotee's mind remains continually engaged with thoughts of Bhagavān, no matter what they are doing. This devotion brings about a transformation in the very nature of the devotee, as their actions, thoughts, and feelings become aligned with the Divine.

In this way, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that among those on the path of knowledge and those on the path of devotion, it is the devotee who is constantly absorbed in Him, with unwavering faith, who is most dear to Him. This verse highlights the supreme importance of devotion (bhakti) as the highest form of union with the Divine, transcending intellectual knowledge and leading directly to the heart of spiritual realization.

In the following verses (12.3–12.4), Śrī Bhagavān describes the worship of His formless aspect (Nirākāra), but it is clear that the path of bhakti—where the mind remains lovingly fixed on His personal form—leads to the highest union with the Divine.

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,

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes those who devote themselves to the worship of the unmanifest Brahman, the formless and eternal reality that is beyond human understanding. These devotees are deeply dedicated to the Absolute, which transcends sensory perception and cannot be captured by words or thought.

- **ye tvākṣarāmanirdeśyaṁ avyaktaṁ paryupāsate:** Śrī Bhagavān refers to those who worship the imperishable (*akṣara*) and indescribable (*anirdeśya*) Brahman. This formless (*avyakta*) Brahman cannot be perceived by the senses or grasped by ordinary means, as it is unchanging and eternal. Devotees of this path are absorbed in meditating on this abstract and unmanifest aspect of the Divine.

- **sarvatragamacintyaṁ ca:** The Brahman is all-pervading (*sarvatragam*) and beyond thought (*acintya*), incapable of being understood by the mind or defined by logic. These worshippers contemplate the infinite and inconceivable reality that exists everywhere, yet remains beyond ordinary comprehension.
- **kūṭastham acalaṁ dhruvam:** Brahman is also described as immutable (*kūṭastha*), unmoving (*acala*), and eternal (*dhruvam*), representing the absolute truth that remains unchanged despite the fluctuations of the material world.

The term *kūṭastha* can be likened to the ironsmith's anvil, which remains unaltered despite the continuous hammering it undergoes. In the same way, the Brahman is the unchanging reality amidst the dynamic changes of life.

Key Insights:

1. **Worship of the Unmanifest (avyakta bhakti):** Those who worship the unmanifest Brahman engage in a deeply contemplative practice. They focus on the infinite, formless reality that transcends physical existence and thought. This path demands immense discipline and detachment from sensory experiences as the devotee seeks to connect with the eternal essence of all things.
2. **Control of the Senses (indriya samyama):** These devotees have mastery over their senses, maintaining complete control over their desires and impulses. Their minds remain undistracted by the material world, enabling them to focus entirely on the formless Brahman through deep meditation.
3. **Even-Mindedness and Compassion:** Such individuals maintain equanimity towards all beings, treating both favorable and unfavorable situations with the same calm. They are also dedicated to the welfare of all, expressing compassion and kindness in their actions, reflecting their recognition of the oneness of all existence.

Goswami Tulsidas captures this profound truth in his verse:

"नाम रूप दुउ अखध कहानी, समझ परे नहि जाहि बखानी"

"The name and form of the Divine are eternal and beyond comprehension, impossible to fully explain in words."

Tulsidas illustrates that while we may speak of God's name and form, their true essence is boundless and beyond human intellect. This mirrors the concept of *achintya* (the inconceivable Brahman), which transcends the limitations of words and thought.

In contrast, the *Saguna* (with form) aspect of Bhagavān is more accessible and describable:

- **Sri Rama:**
"सर्वे रमति इति रामः"
"He who delights in all is Rama."
- **Sri Krishna:**
"सर्वे आकर्षति इति कृष्णः"
"He who attracts all is Krishna."
- **Govind:** One who is beyond the senses and mind, yet remains the protector and guide of all.

Eshwara, the Supreme Being, effortlessly possesses and controls the eight siddhis:

- **Aṇimā** (becoming infinitely small)
- **Mahimā** (becoming infinitely large)
- **Garimā** (becoming incredibly heavy)
- **Laghimā** (becoming weightless)
- **Prāpti** (reaching anything)
- **Prākāmya** (fulfilling all desires)
- **Iṣṭva** (absolute lordship)
- **Vaśitva** (control over all beings).

Whether referred to as **Sitapati**, **Girija Shankar**, **Laxmikant**, **Kaushalpati**, or **Raghupati**, He is the same Saguna Brahman—approachable through different names. Yet, the **Paramatma** remains the same, whether addressed by any name or no name at all, as His essence is eternal and unchanging.

This truth is beautifully illustrated by a story involving **Param Shraddheya Brahmalin Hanuman Prasad Poddar Ji**, the revered editor of *Kalyan*. He once asked **Param Shraddheya Brahmalin Seth Ji Jaydayal Goyenka**, the founder of Geeta Press, a profound question: "How can one contemplate (*chintan*) on the Supreme Being (*Paramatman*), who is beyond contemplation (*achintya*)?" Seth Ji offered a simple yet profound answer: "Contemplate on Bhagavān's *Leela* (divine pastimes)." Hanuman Prasad Poddar Ji took this advice to heart, and by following this path with deep devotion, he became absorbed in the eternal divine play (*Nitya Leelālin*).

In this way, we can contemplate the Divine through **Nam (name)**, **Roop (form)**, **Leela (divine play)**, and **Dham (abode)**—four aspects that connect us with the Supreme.

Finally, Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes in Bhagavad Gītā 8.5:

"अन्तः काले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।
यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ 8.5 ॥"

"Whoever, at the time of death, leaves the body while remembering Me alone, attains My being; of this, there is no doubt."

This verse underscores that those who focus on the Divine at the moment of death are assured of liberation. Through Śrī Bhagavān's guidance, one can pursue the path of devotion to the formless Brahman, though difficult, and ultimately realize the eternal, unchanging reality that underlies all of existence.

12.4

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

Controlling all their senses, equal-minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all beings, assuredly they come to Me only.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān further elaborates on the qualities of those who worship the unmanifest Brahman. These individuals, through self-discipline, equanimity, and universal compassion, ultimately achieve union with the Divine.

- **sanniyamyendriyagrāmaṁ**: These seekers have gained mastery over their senses. The term

indriyagrāma refers to the collective group of senses, and *sanniyama* means controlling or restraining them. By disciplining their sensory perceptions, they remain focused on higher spiritual realities, rather than being swayed by worldly desires and distractions.

- **sarvatra śamabuddhayaḥ**: These individuals maintain a steady and balanced mind in all circumstances. Whether faced with joy or sorrow, success or failure, they remain calm and composed. This equanimity reflects their detachment from external fluctuations and their inner alignment with the Divine.
- **sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ**: They are devoted to the welfare of all beings, driven not by selfish interests but by a deep sense of compassion and kindness. These individuals work selflessly for the greater good, recognizing the interconnectedness of all life and embodying universal love.
- **te prāpnuvanti māmeva**: Śrī Bhagavān assures that such individuals, through their disciplined lives and selfless actions, will undoubtedly attain Him. Their path of sensory control, mental equanimity, and dedication to the well-being of others leads them directly to union with the Divine.

Key Insights:

1. **Control of the Senses (sanniyamyendriyagrāmaṁ)**: Mastery over the senses is essential for spiritual progress. These individuals transcend the distractions of the material world by controlling their desires and impulses, allowing them to focus on their inner spiritual journey.
2. **Equanimity in All Situations (sarvatra śamabuddhayaḥ)**: By maintaining mental balance in all situations, they rise above the temporary nature of external experiences. Their even-mindedness reflects a profound understanding that worldly situations are fleeting, and their focus remains on the eternal truth.
3. **Devotion to Universal Welfare (sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ)**: These seekers dedicate themselves to the well-being of all beings, embodying selfless service, compassion, and kindness. They recognize the Divine presence in every form of life and act accordingly, fostering harmony and unity.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that those who master their senses, maintain equanimity in all circumstances, and dedicate themselves to the service of others inevitably attain union with the Divine. Their disciplined and compassionate way of life naturally leads them to the realization of Śrī Bhagavān, the ultimate source of all existence. Even those who worship the unmanifest Brahman can attain the Paramātmā, yet Śrī Bhagavān reveals in the next verse that there is a significant condition to be met in order to reach this state.

12.5

**kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāṁ(m), avyaktāsaktacetāsām,
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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān explains the inherent challenges faced by those who worship the unmanifest Brahman. This path requires tremendous mental discipline and detachment, making it especially difficult for individuals who strongly identify with their physical body and material existence.

- **kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāṁ avyaktāsaktacetasām:** The strain (*kleśa*) is much greater for those whose minds are fixed on the formless, unmanifest Brahman (*avyakta*). Since the unmanifest is beyond sensory perception, the mind struggles to maintain focus on something so abstract and intangible, leading to greater mental effort and difficulty for such seekers.
- **avyaktā hi gatir duḥkhaṁ:** The path to realizing the unmanifest Brahman is full of hardships (*duḥkhaṁ*). Because the formless Brahman cannot be grasped by the senses or intellect, following this path involves many obstacles, especially in maintaining consistent focus on such an abstract concept.
- **dehavadbhiravāpyate:** The difficulty is compounded for those who are attached to their physical body (*dehavadbhih*). Those who identify primarily with their body and material existence find it even harder to connect with the formless aspect of the Divine. Their attachment to sensory experiences and the material world makes it challenging for them to transcend these limitations and focus on the unmanifest Brahman.

Key Insights:

1. **Challenges of Worshipping the Unmanifest (avyakta bhakti):** The path of worshipping the unmanifest Brahman is a highly intellectual and abstract pursuit. It requires immense mental concentration and detachment from sensory experiences, which makes it more difficult compared to worshipping a personal deity. Without the tangible, emotional connection that comes with Saguna bhakti (worship of a deity with form), this path demands a higher level of discipline and inner focus.
2. **Greater Strain for the Body-Conscious (dehavadbhih):** Those who are strongly identified with their physical body and worldly desires face greater difficulty on this path. Their attachment to material experiences creates a barrier to connecting with the formless Brahman, as it requires transcending the senses and intellect to focus on the unmanifest, which is beyond ordinary perception.
3. **The Difficulty of Attaining the Unmanifest:** Śrī Bhagavān acknowledges that the path to the unmanifest Brahman is not easy. It is filled with strain and obstacles, making it accessible only to those who are ready to undergo intense mental and spiritual discipline. The abstract nature of the unmanifest requires the seeker to rise above body consciousness and worldly attachments.

Despite the constant change in the physical body, those who are body-conscious remain attached to it. Similarly, the mind's likes and dislikes change over time, yet people remain attached to their mental states. However, the *Chaitanya Jīvatma*—the living, conscious self—remains unchanged through all these transformations. This *Jīvatma* continues its journey through different bodies in different lifetimes, but it is always the same, unaffected by physical or mental changes. Those who realize they are not the body but the *Chaitanya Jīvatma* can more easily worship the *Nirguna Nirākāra Paramātmān* (the formless, attributeless Supreme).

Through this verse, Śrī Bhagavān highlights the difficulties of pursuing *nirguna upāsana* (worship of the

formless) for those deeply rooted in bodily identity and sensory experiences. While it is possible to attain the unmanifest Brahman, the journey is long and arduous, requiring deep discipline, detachment, and the ability to transcend material attachments.

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 with single-minded devotion.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān describes the path of *saguna bhakti*—devotion to God with attributes and form. He emphasizes that those who dedicate all their actions to Him, meditate on Him continuously, and engage in single-minded devotion can achieve direct connection and union with Him.

- **ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannyasya:** Śrī Bhagavān speaks of the devotees who surrender all their actions to Him. These individuals see every action as an offering to the Divine, relinquishing attachment to the results. By dedicating all their deeds to Bhagavān, they align their lives with a higher, spiritual purpose.
- **matparāḥ:** These devotees, known as *matparāḥ*, see Bhagavān as their ultimate refuge and the center of their existence. Just as Bharat Ji prepared extensively to bring back Śrī Rama from exile, considering himself merely a servant with no attachment to the wealth of Ayodhya, these devotees see themselves as humble servants, dedicating everything to Bhagavān.
- **ananyenaiva yogena:** These devotees practice *ananya yoga*—undivided, exclusive devotion to Bhagavān. Their focus is unshakable, and they rely solely on Bhagavān for their spiritual progress, much like Bharat Ji's unwavering dedication to Śrī Rama.
- **mām dhyāyanta upāsate:** These devotees constantly meditate on Bhagavān with deep reverence and love. Their worship involves keeping their minds focused on the form, qualities, and pastimes of the Divine, ensuring that they are continuously connected to Him through prayer and devotion.

Key Insights:

1. **Surrender of Actions (sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi sannyasya):** The path of *saguna bhakti* encourages devotees to dedicate every action, whether physical, emotional, or intellectual, to Bhagavān. By surrendering all efforts to the Divine, devotees free themselves from attachment and ego-driven desires, allowing their actions to become a form of worship.
2. **Single-Minded Devotion (ananyena yogena):** This path emphasizes exclusive devotion to Bhagavān, with the devotee's focus directed entirely toward the personal form of God. Such devotion fosters a deep emotional and spiritual bond between the devotee and the Divine, bringing them closer to liberation.
3. **Constant Meditation (mām dhyāyanta upāsate):** Continuous meditation on Bhagavān's form

and attributes is essential in *saguna bhakti*. Devotees keep their thoughts centered on the Divine throughout their daily lives, reinforcing their connection and strengthening their devotion.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the accessibility and grace of the *saguna bhakti* path, wherein devotees can achieve union with the Divine by surrendering all actions, maintaining unwavering devotion, and constantly meditating on the personal form of God.

Navavidha Bhakti:

Navavidha Bhakti refers to the nine forms of devotion as outlined in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Ramcharitmanas* by Tulsidas. These nine forms offer different ways to express and cultivate devotion (*bhakti*) towards Bhagavān, allowing a devotee to connect with the Divine through various paths suited to their temperament and disposition.

The verse describing Navavidha Bhakti:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्।
अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

This verse describes the nine forms of devotion to Vishnu—listening, singing, remembering, serving His feet, worshiping, offering prayers, serving Him as a servant, befriending Him, and completely surrendering to Him.

The Nine Forms of Bhakti:

1. Śravaṇam - Listening to the Glories of Bhagavān:

Listening attentively to the stories, praises, and teachings of Bhagavān, often through scripture recitations or devotional songs. By listening to the *leelas* (divine pastimes) and qualities of Bhagavān, the devotee immerses in devotion and gains spiritual wisdom.

- **Example:** King Parikshit who listened to Śrī Śukadeva narrate the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

2. Kīrtanam - Singing or Chanting the Divine Name:

Singing or chanting the holy names, praises, or glories of Bhagavān, often in a group setting or alone. Kīrtanam helps purify the mind and deepens devotion.

- **Example:** Narada Muni, who constantly sings the praises of Bhagavān Vishnu.

3. Smaranam - Remembering Bhagavān:

Continuously remembering and meditating on Bhagavān throughout the day. It involves internal worship, focusing the mind on Bhagavān's form, name, and deeds.

- **Example:** Prahlada, who constantly meditated on Bhagavān Vishnu even amidst adversities.

4. Pāda-sevanam - Serving the Feet of Bhagavān:

Serving the feet of Bhagavān through symbolic actions like offering flowers, food, or cleaning His temple. This devotion represents humble service to the Divine.

- **Example:** Lakshmana, who served Bhagavān Rama with devotion during their exile.

5. Arcanam - Worshiping Bhagavān:

Offering formal worship through rituals and offerings of flowers, fruits, and incense. This is an expression of reverence and love for Bhagavān.

- **Example:** *King Prithu* who was known for his dedicated worship.

6. **Vandanam - Offering Prayers:**

Offering prayers and prostrations to Bhagavān as an expression of gratitude, reverence, and devotion.

- **Example:** *Akrura*, who offered prayers to Bhagavān Krishna during his visit to Gokul.

7. **Dāsyam - Serving Bhagavān as a Servant:**

Serving Bhagavān selflessly, like a loyal servant. This form of devotion emphasizes humility and complete dedication to the Divine.

- **Example:** *Hanuman*, who served Bhagavān Rama with utmost dedication and humility.

8. **Sākhyam - Befriending Bhagavān:**

Developing a deep and personal friendship with Bhagavān, sharing joys and sorrows with Him as a dear friend.

- **Example:** *Arjuna*, who shared a deep bond of friendship with Bhagavān Krishna.

9. **Ātma-nivedanam - Complete Surrender:**

Surrendering oneself completely to Bhagavān, giving up ego, desires, and sense of individuality. This is the highest form of devotion, where the devotee trusts entirely in Bhagavān's will.

- **Example:** *Bali Maharaja*, who offered everything, including himself, to Bhagavān Vamana.

Navavidha Bhakti represents nine distinct ways to express and cultivate devotion toward Bhagavān. Each form provides a unique path for connecting with the Divine—whether through listening, chanting, serving, or complete surrender. These approaches allow devotees to engage with Bhagavān in ways that resonate with their individual nature, ultimately leading to union with the Divine.

12.7

**teṣāmahaṁ(m) samuddhartā, mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt,
bhavāmi nacirātpārtha, mayyāveśitacetasām. 12.7**

O Arjuna! Who fix their mind on Me, I rescue them from the ocean of birth and death.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān offers a profound assurance to His devotees who wholeheartedly surrender to Him. He promises that those who dedicate themselves fully to Him, keeping their minds constantly focused on the Divine, will be liberated from the endless cycle of birth and death, also known as *saṁsāra*.

- **teṣāmahaṁ samuddhartā mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt:** Śrī Bhagavān declares that He is the one who rescues such devotees from the vast and turbulent ocean of birth and death (*mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt*). This metaphor of an ocean signifies the enormity and difficulty of escaping the cycle of reincarnation. Śrī Bhagavān Himself becomes the savior, lifting His devotees from this overwhelming cycle of life, death, and rebirth.
- **bhavāmi nacirāt:** Śrī Bhagavān promises that He does not delay in coming to the aid of His devoted followers. *Nacirāt* means "without delay," emphasizing that He swiftly acts to liberate those who truly surrender and focus their minds on Him, offering them quick and immediate rescue from

the pains of *saṁsāra*.

- **mayyāveśītacetasām:** This phrase highlights the key condition for receiving Bhagavān's grace—having a mind (*cetas*) fully absorbed in Him. For those whose thoughts, emotions, and consciousness are completely fixed on the Divine, Bhagavān ensures their transcendence over the limitations of the material world.

Key Insights:

1. **Rescue from the Ocean of Birth and Death (*mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt*):** The cycle of birth and death, or *saṁsāra*, is often compared to an endless and overwhelming ocean. Śrī Bhagavān reassures His devotees that He personally rescues them from this difficult cycle, offering liberation and freedom from the struggles of reincarnation.
2. **Swift Liberation (*nacirāt*):** Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the immediacy of His divine help. Those who surrender with deep devotion and fix their minds on Him do not have to wait long for liberation. Once their minds are fully absorbed in Him, they are quickly lifted out of the trials of material existence.
3. **Mind Absorbed in the Divine (*mayyāveśītacetasām*):** The essential factor for receiving Bhagavān's grace is complete surrender and absorption of the mind in Him. Devotees who live in a state of constant devotion, focusing their thoughts and hearts entirely on the Divine, are freed from the cycle of birth and death.

Through this verse, Śrī Bhagavān reassures His devotees that those who fully fix their minds on Him, surrendering in complete devotion, will be liberated from the painful cycle of birth and death. This promise underscores the power of unwavering devotion and the swift grace of Bhagavān in the path of *bhakti yoga*, where the Divine personally intervenes to lead the devotee to liberation.

12.8

**mayyeva mana ādhatsva, mayi buddhiṁ(n) niveśaya,
nivasīṣyasi mayyeva, ata ūrdhvaṁ(n) na saṁśayaḥ. 12.8**

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.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān gives Arjuna a clear and direct instruction on attaining spiritual realization. He urges Arjuna to focus both his mind and intellect entirely on Him, assuring that by doing so, Arjuna will attain union with the Divine without any doubt.

- **mayyeva mana ādhatsva:** Śrī Bhagavān tells Arjuna to completely fix his mind on Him. The word *ādhatsva* means to direct or place, signifying the need for unwavering focus on Bhagavān. This emphasizes the importance of single-pointed concentration in devotion and meditation, ensuring that all thoughts are directed toward the Divine.

- **mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya:** Beyond fixing the mind, Bhagavān instructs Arjuna to place his intellect in Him. This means aligning one's understanding and reasoning with the Divine will. It's not just about emotional devotion, but also about surrendering intellectual pride and ego, allowing God to guide one's thoughts and decisions.
- **nivasiṣyasi mayyeva:** By focusing both mind and intellect on Him, Śrī Bhagavān assures that Arjuna will dwell in Him alone. This reflects a state of complete absorption in the Divine, where the devotee lives in constant awareness of God's presence.
- **ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ:** Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that there is no doubt (*na saṁśayaḥ*) that Arjuna, or any devotee following this path, will attain union with the Divine. Once the mind and intellect are entirely centred on Bhagavān, spiritual success is inevitable.

Key Insights:

1. **Fixing the Mind on God (mayyeva mana ādhatsva):** Bhagavān highlights the importance of dedicating the mind entirely to Him. A mind free from distractions and attachments is crucial for spiritual growth. By focusing all thoughts and emotions on the Divine, the devotee strengthens their connection with God.
2. **Aligning the Intellect with God (mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya):** Bhagavān also stresses the need for intellectual alignment with the Divine. This requires the surrender of the ego and a trust in God's wisdom, allowing one's decisions to be guided by higher truths instead of personal desires or worldly understanding.
3. **Attaining Divine Union (nivasiṣyasi mayyeva):** Bhagavān promises that when both the mind and intellect are fully absorbed in Him, the devotee will dwell in the Divine. This means achieving a state of oneness with God, where the devotee's consciousness is merged with the higher reality.

Through this verse, Śrī Bhagavān assures that those who devote both their mind and intellect to Him will attain the highest spiritual goal—union with the Divine. This path of complete surrender and focus leads to the ultimate realization of God's presence in every aspect of life, ensuring spiritual fulfilment and liberation.

12.9

**atha cittam(m) samādhātuṁ(n), na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram,
abhyāsayogena tato, māmicchāptuṁ(n) dhanañjaya. 12.9**

If you cannot steadily fix the mind on Me, O Arjuna! then seek to attain Me through the Yoga of practice.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān offers a compassionate alternative for those who struggle to maintain steady focus on the Divine. He advises seekers to follow *abhyāsa yoga*—the path of regular spiritual practice, which gradually leads to mental discipline and devotion.

- **atha cittam samādhātuṁ na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram:** Śrī Bhagavān acknowledges that not

everyone can immediately achieve a steady and unwavering focus (*sthira citta*) on Him. Mental restlessness, distractions, or attachments may make it difficult for the mind to remain fixed on the Divine.

- **abhyāsayogena tato:** For those who face this difficulty, Śrī Bhagavān suggests *abhyāsa yoga*—the Yoga of consistent practice. Engaging in regular spiritual activities like meditation, prayer, chanting, or acts of devotion helps to gradually discipline the mind and align it with the Divine.
- **māmicchāptuṁ dhanañjaya:** Through this persistent effort, the seeker develops a genuine desire (*icchā*) to attain Śrī Bhagavān. Even if the initial focus on God seems challenging, continued practice will lead to spiritual progress and ultimately, the realization of the Divine.

Key Insights:

1. **Challenges in Fixing the Mind (cittaṁ samādhātuṁ):** Śrī Bhagavān recognizes that it can be difficult for many to maintain steady concentration on the Divine, as the mind is naturally restless and easily distracted by worldly concerns.
2. **The Power of Consistent Practice (abhyāsayogena):** To overcome these challenges, Śrī Bhagavān recommends regular spiritual practice. Over time, consistent effort in activities like meditation, chanting, and prayer helps to discipline the mind, allowing it to focus more easily on the Divine. As the famous couplet says:

"करत-करत अभ्यास के जड़मति होत सुजान।
रसरी आवत जात ते, सिल पर परत निशान॥"

"With constant practice, even a dull mind becomes wise. Just as a rope, through repeated friction, leaves its mark on a stone."

Continuous effort, no matter how difficult the task may seem, leads to mastery and progress.

3. **Gradual Attainment of the Divine (māmicchāptuṁ):** Even those who initially struggle can, through *abhyāsa*, gradually develop a deep desire for union with Śrī Bhagavān. This verse encourages patience and perseverance, emphasizing that regular practice will lead to spiritual success.

A relevant anecdote illustrates the power of consistent practice. There were two women—a daughter and a daughter-in-law—who lived in neighbouring homes but did not get along. A saint advised the daughter to light a lamp daily at a nearby temple and recite a sloka for a year to overcome her grievances. The jealous daughter-in-law would visit the temple after her and snuff out the lamp, seeking to sabotage the ritual. However, one rainy day, the daughter-in-law mistakenly thought the lamp was extinguished by the wind and relit it, only to snuff it out again. Pleased with her constant visits, Lord Shiva appeared before her and blessed her for her effort, even though her original intention was to extinguish the lamp. This story shows how regular practice, even with flawed motives, can lead to divine grace.

Through this verse, Śrī Bhagavān reassures those who struggle to focus directly on Him. He offers the practical solution of *abhyāsa yoga*—the Yoga of consistent practice—where the seeker gradually trains the mind and cultivates devotion over time. This path ultimately leads to spiritual progress and realization of the Divine.

**abhyāse'pyaṣamartho'si, matkarmaparamo bhava,
madarthamapi karmāṇi, kurvansiddhimavāpsyasi. 12.10**

If you are unable even to the pursuit of such practice, be intent to work for Me; you shall attain perfection (in the shape of My realization) even by performing actions for My sake.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān offers an alternative for those who find it difficult to maintain regular spiritual practice. He encourages individuals to dedicate their actions to Him, assuring them that through selfless work for His sake, they too can attain spiritual perfection.

- **abhyāse'py aṣamartho'si:** Śrī Bhagavān acknowledges that not everyone is capable of consistent spiritual practices like meditation or devotion due to life's challenges, distractions, or personal limitations. For such individuals, He provides a path focused on action.
- **matkarmaparamo bhava:** For those unable to follow regular spiritual disciplines, Śrī Bhagavān advises them to make their work and actions a form of worship. By prioritizing the Divine in all their actions and working with the intent of serving God, they can transform their daily tasks into acts of devotion.
- **madartham api karmāṇi:** Even if one cannot engage in traditional spiritual practices, performing actions for the sake of Bhagavān (madartham) is an effective way to connect with the Divine. This means dedicating one's efforts to God, turning even ordinary work into a means of spiritual growth and offering.
- **kurvansiddhim avāpsyasi:** By engaging in selfless actions with the intention of serving Bhagavān, one can attain *siddhi*, or spiritual perfection. Śrī Bhagavān assures that even through simple actions, performed with devotion, one can realize the Divine and achieve liberation.

Key Insights:

1. **Challenges in Consistent Practice (abhyāse'py aṣamartho'si):** Śrī Bhagavān acknowledges that not everyone is capable of engaging in steady spiritual practices due to the distractions and demands of life. He offers a compassionate understanding of these challenges and presents an alternative path.
2. **Dedicating Actions to the Divine (matkarmaparamo bhava):** For those who find it difficult to engage in formal spiritual practices, Bhagavān recommends dedicating their everyday actions to Him. Whether it's one's profession, household duties, or acts of service, all work can be transformed into a form of worship by offering it to the Divine.
3. **Attaining Perfection through Action (kurvansiddhim avāpsyasi):** Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes that even those who perform actions for His sake can attain spiritual perfection. This path is ideal for those who cannot engage in deep meditation or devotion but still seek spiritual progress through everyday activities.

In this verse, Śrī Bhagavān reassures those who struggle with formal spiritual practices. He offers a practical path where one can dedicate their work and actions to God, transforming them into acts of devotion. This approach leads to spiritual growth and the ultimate realization of the Divine.

Practical Reflection:

The bhajan beautifully encapsulates this sentiment:

"तेरा रामजी करेंगे बेड़ा पार, उदासी मन काहे को करे।"

"Your Ram will take you across the ocean, why does your sad mind worry?"

Bhagavān expects us to perform our inherent duties—whether as a mother, father, servant, or soldier—with sincerity and dedication, without attachment to the results. Renouncing the fruits of our efforts removes worldliness from the mind and strengthens the intellect, allowing for deeper spiritual understanding and progress.

Swami Ram Sukh Das Ji often said:

"हे नाथ मैं आपको भूलूँ नहीं"

"O Lord, help me never forget You."

This simple prayer can serve as a constant reminder of the Divine, allowing the devotee to bring the mind back to God whenever it wanders. Even with minimal practice, this consistent remembrance can lead to spiritual perfection.

Many devotional couplets emphasize the importance of chanting the Divine Name:

**"राम नाम रटते रहो, जब तक घट में प्राण।
तो दीन दयाल के भनक पड़ेगी कान॥"**

"Chant the name of Ram as long as there is breath in your body, and the compassionate One will surely hear your call."

Tulsidas Ji wrote:

**"तुलसी मेरे राम को, रीझ भजो या खीज।
भौम पड़ा जामे सभी, उल्टा सीधा बीज॥"**

"O Tulsi, sing praises of my Ram, whether in joy or sorrow. All actions, both good and bad, are bound by the law of karma."

**"भाव कुभाव अनख आलसहूँ।
नाम जपत मंगल दिसि दसहूँ॥"**

"Discard all emotions, laziness, and pride. Chant the Divine Name, and auspiciousness will appear from all directions."

Chanting the name of Paramātmā has the power to free us from the suffering of the cycle of birth and death.

In the next verses, Śrī Bhagavān describes the 39 characteristics of an *Uttama Bhakta* (the highest devotee).

Before we end this session, let us contemplate on a beautiful Bhajan:

कर प्रणाम तेरे चरणों में लगता हूँ अब तेरे काज ।
पालन करने को आज़ा तब मैं नियुक्त होता हूँ आज ॥

अन्तर में स्थित रहकर मेरे, बागडोर पकड़े रहना ।
निपट निरंकुश चंचल मन को, सावधान करते रहना ॥

अन्तर्यामी को अन्तःस्थित, देख सशक्ति होवे मन ।
पाप वासना उठते ही हो, नाश लाज से वह जल भुन ॥

जीवों का कलरव जो दिनभर, सुनने में मेरे आवे ।
तेरा ही गुणमान जान मन, प्रमुदित हो अति सुख पावे ॥

तू ही है सर्वत्र व्याप्त हरि! तुझमें यह सारा संसार ।
इसी भावना से अन्तर भर मिलूँ सभी से तुझे निहार ॥

प्रतिपल निज इन्द्रिय समूह से, जो कुछ भी आचार करूँ ।
केवल तुझे रिझाने को बस, तेरा ही व्यवहार करूँ ॥

With folded hands, I bow at Your feet,

Now, I devote myself fully to Your service.
To carry out Your commands,
I humbly accept my duty from this very moment.

Remain within me, holding the reins of my soul,
Guide my unruly, restless mind with steady caution.
Let my mind be ever aware that the all-seeing Divine dwells within,
And when sinful desires arise, let them burn in the fire of shame.

The constant noise of worldly life that reaches my ears each day,
May my heart hear it as Your praises and find great joy and peace.
You are present everywhere, O Hari! The entire universe resides in You.
May I meet everyone with this awareness, seeing You in all.

Each moment, whatever actions I perform through my senses,
May they be done solely to please You, in the spirit of pure devotion.

In the upcoming verses, Bhagavān describes the qualities of an ideal devotee, outlining 39 attributes that serve as a valuable guide for self-reflection on one's spiritual progress. These traits act as a checklist, helping us assess where we stand on our journey toward spiritual realization. We will delve into these attributes in the next session.

The session concluded with a heartfelt *Hari Sankirtan*—"Hari Sharanam..."

Question and Answer Session:

B. M. Agrawal Ji

Q: We can understand *Sakar* (with form) and *Nirakar* (formless), but how can we comprehend *Nirguna* (without attributes)? Since *Paramatma* possesses all qualities (*Gunas*), how do we differentiate between

Saguna and Nirguna?

A: When we refer to *Paramatma* as *Sat-Chit-Anand* (Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss), He is seen as *Saguna*—endowed with attributes. However, when we perceive Him beyond even *Sat-Chit-Anand*, He becomes *Nirguna*, transcending all qualities. Since *Paramatma* is omnipotent, the same *Nirguna* manifests as *Saguna* to relate to the world.

Raksh Khania Ji

Q: What is *Antaḥkaraṇa Chatuṣṭaya*?

A: *Antaḥkaraṇa Chatuṣṭaya* refers to the fourfold inner instrument or faculties of the mind, which govern our internal experiences and responses to the world. These four components—*Manas* (mind), *Buddhi* (intellect), *Chitta* (memory), and *Ahaṅkāra* (ego)—together form the core of our inner self or consciousness.

1. **Manas** – The Mind (Cognitive Mind)

Manas is responsible for processing sensory inputs, managing day-to-day thoughts, emotions, and desires. It is the reactive part of the mind that deliberates based on perceptions and sensations.

- **Function:** It deals with doubt, imagination, and basic thought processes, often oscillating between choices.
- **Example:** When you're deciding between two options, it's *manas* that reflects and hesitates before making a decision.

2. **Buddhi** – The Intellect (Discriminative Intellect)

Buddhi is the higher faculty of reasoning, discernment, and decision-making. It analyzes situations, makes judgments, and arrives at conclusions with clarity and logic.

- **Function:** It provides wisdom, logic, and discrimination (*viveka*), guiding final decisions.
- **Example:** When you reach a conclusion after reflection, it's the *buddhi* that makes the final decision.

3. **Chitta** – The Memory (Storehouse of Impressions)

Chitta is the aspect of consciousness linked to memory and the repository of impressions (*samskāras*) from past experiences. It stores subconscious tendencies that influence our reactions.

- **Function:** It recalls past experiences, shaping how we respond to current situations.
- **Example:** When an old memory or automatic reaction surfaces, it's *chitta* retrieving past impressions.

4. **Ahaṅkāra** – The Ego (Sense of Identity)

Ahaṅkāra is the sense of "I" or self-identity. It fosters the notion of individuality, leading to feelings of personal ownership and self-importance.

- **Function:** It identifies with thoughts, emotions, and experiences, forming one's sense of self.
- **Example:** When you think "I am successful" or "This is my achievement," it's *ahaṅkāra* that creates that sense of pride or possessiveness.

These four faculties work together to shape our thoughts, emotions, and actions, forming the complex experience of human consciousness. Understanding and refining the *Antaḥkaraṇa Chatuṣṭaya* is essential for spiritual growth and self-realization.

Deepika Narain Ji

Q: Which reference books are recommended for understanding the meaning of the Bhagavad Gita?

A: We are immensely grateful to Geeta Press for their contributions. The following books are recommended:

1. **Anvay Gita No. 17** (Geeta Press) – For word-by-word meaning.
2. **Sadhak Sanjivani No. 6** (Geeta Press) – For detailed explanations.
3. **Saral Pathaniya Gita** (Geeta Pariwar) – For correct pronunciation.

These resources provide comprehensive guidance for studying and understanding the Bhagavad Gita.



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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

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