

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

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The Progressive Ascent of Bhakti: Bhagavān Śrī Krishna's Compassionate Teaching on How Every Seeker Can Advance Through Practice, Love, and Surrender

The name of **Chapter 12** of **Bhagavad Gītā** is **Bhakti Yoga - The Yoga of Devotion**

The session commenced with deep prajwalan, the customary lighting of the lamp, prayers to the Supreme, and salutations to all the Gurus.

**Vasudeva Sutam Devam, Kansa Chāṇūra Mardanam,
Devakī Parama Ānandam, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum.**

**Yogeśam Saccidānandam, Vāsudeva Rājapriyam,
Dharma Saṁsthāpakam Vīram, Kṛṣṇo Vande Jagadgurum.**

Śrī Guru Caraṇa Kamalabhyo Namaḥ.

By the supremely auspicious grace of Bhagavān, an extraordinary blessing has awakened within everyone present—an inner fortune that stirs the aspiration to make this human birth meaningful, to fulfil its highest purpose, and to bring welfare to both worldly and spiritual existence. Perhaps it is due to some noble deeds of this very life, perhaps due to the unseen meritorious actions of earlier births, or even the virtuous saṁskāras of ancestors, that such compassion of Bhagavān has touched us: we have been **chosen** to walk the path of the **Bhagavad Gītā**.

A deep conviction must arise within: **it is not we who have chosen the Gītā; we have been chosen.** As Bhagavān declares in the eighteenth chapter, “*one who becomes dedicated to this Gītā attains Me.*” If every person were to immerse themselves fully, then all would directly attain Bhagavān—and such a divine arrangement, crafted meticulously like a grand chessboard, would lose its balance. Therefore, not all are placed into this pursuit. Only those whose accumulated merit has ripened, only those who are now worthy of entering Bhagavān's **parama-dhāma**, receive the

opportunity of proximity to the Gītā. Such individuals are selected to study it.

Since this is the first discourse session, it is essential to understand the background through which these sessions have been structured—out of the boundless grace of a revered **Svāmījī**, so that the teachings may refine daily living.

After deceit and coercion forced the Pāṇḍavas into exile, they spent twelve years in the forest and one year in incognito. Though unjustly punished, they obeyed, honoring the command of their elders. Yet when the thirteen years concluded, Duryodhana declared, *“I shall not grant land equal even to the tip of a needle.”*

Bhagavān Himself journeyed as an emissary of peace, repeatedly urging that war be avoided. *“Give merely five villages,”* He said to Duryodhana. The five Pāṇḍavas—rightful rulers of Indraprastha—would relinquish even their hard-earned empire and remain content with those five villages. Bhagavān assured this personally. But Duryodhana replied, *“Forget five villages—I shall not yield land equal to the point of a needle.”* Such was the sin of Duryodhana and Dhṛtarāṣṭra.

Even then, the Pāṇḍavas hesitated to wage war. But a message came from Kuntī: *“The moment for which a kṣatriya mother births a kṣatriya son has arrived. Your people suffer; now you must no longer hesitate.”*

Months passed in preparation, for this was to be the greatest battle in history. **Eighteen akṣauhiṇī** armies were assembled—a number immense beyond ordinary imagination. A field vast enough was required; thus **Kurukṣetra** was chosen. Bridges were built across rivers, wells were dug, stables erected for horses, shelters for elephants, and granaries for food. Ministers, priests, and strategists consulted continually. And when at last the armies gathered face to face, the divine dialogue of **approximately forty to forty-five minutes** unfolded between Bhagavān and Arjuna. One who has memorized the Gītā may recite it in the same span—thus it is believed that the original dialogue did not exceed that measure.

Some wonder how such an exchange could occur on the brink of war after months of preparation. But, in that era, forty-five minutes was negligible amidst the scale of what was unfolding.

Another foundational truth must be known: the *Bhagavad Gītā* is not an independent text. It is a part of the **Mahābhārata**, which contains eighteen **parvas**. From the twenty-fifth to the forty-second chapter of the **Bhīṣma Parva**, these eighteen chapters—an extract—are known as the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Though later preserved as a separate volume, it is not originally distinct.

In the Mahābhārata, its narration appears on the **tenth day** of the war. Though the dialogue occurred before the battle commenced, the telling takes place when Bhīṣma Pitāmaha lay upon the **śaraśayyā**. Sanjaya, who had been present on the battlefield, returned to Dhṛtarāṣṭra with news and was asked:

***“dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kimakurvata sañjaya?”***

“Tell me from the beginning—what did my sons and the sons of Pāṇḍu do when they assembled with the desire to fight on the sacred field of Kurukṣetra?”

Thus begins the Gītā, recounted through the **divya-dṛṣṭi** bestowed upon Sanjaya by Bhagavān **Veda Vyāsa**.

Many who enrolled for this Gītā session may have been perplexed: *Why begin with the twelfth chapter and not the first?* Perhaps someone even wondered whether they had joined the wrong group. We are accustomed to studying lesson one in class one, lesson two in class two. How then does lesson twelve come first?

To answer this, one may imagine **Chapter One** as the *Gateway of India*, and **Chapter Twelve** as *India Gate*. The Gateway of India in Mumbai marked the entry of the British into India by sea; yet, to witness the essence of Indian civilization, one must go to Delhi—thus **India Gate** was built. One cannot enter India through India Gate; it is symbolic—a doorway to the culture itself.

Similarly, the Gītā may begin at the boundary with **Chapter One**, but to behold its **heart**, sages have long begun with **Chapter Twelve**. This is not a modern custom; it is an ancient tradition. The elders declared: *“If one desires to study the Gītā, first read the twelfth chapter, then the fifteenth.”* Scriptures are not read like novels—from page one to the last. One begins where the **guru** instructs, based on the seeker’s readiness.

For the ordinary seeker, the appropriate doorway is Chapter Twelve—thus this chapter has been taught first.

A brief tale further illuminates this principle. During that era lived a deeply devoted seeker named **Nārāyaṇa Svāmī**. His close friend **Śravaṇa** was an exceptionally learned scholar. One day, Śravaṇa approached Nārāyaṇa Svāmī—not as a friend, but with folded hands, seeking instruction in **bhakti**.

Nārāyaṇa Svāmī welcomed him, saying, *“It is good you have come for this.”* He asked Śravaṇa to sit while he fetched water. Though such formalities had never existed between these two friends, Śravaṇa accepted. A small glass of water was brought. He took only a sip.

“Do not drink more,” Nārāyaṇa Svāmī said, *“I shall bring śarbat.”*

Śravaṇa felt puzzled. Why such courtesy today? Soon Nārāyaṇa Svāmī returned with a *lotā* of sweet sherbet—but without a fresh vessel. Without hesitation, he began pouring the sherbet into the glass that still contained water.

Śravaṇa watched silently, astonished. *Why pour sherbet into a glass already filled with water?* Yet Nārāyaṇa Svāmī continued pouring. The liquid rose, overflowed, and spilled onto the ground—still Nārāyaṇa Svāmī remained unmoved, continuing to pour as though nothing were amiss.

Unable to restrain himself any longer, Śravaṇa rose abruptly.

“What are you doing? What has come over you?”

His voice carried disbelief. *“How can this sherbet possibly enter a glass that is already full?”*

Nārāyaṇa Svāmī gently set the vessel aside and replied, *“Exactly this is what I wished to show you. Your mind is already filled to the brim—with knowledge collected over years, with conclusions formed long ago. Into such a full vessel, **bhakti** cannot enter. You came directly and said—teach me bhakti. But you have read much, known much. **Until you undo all that, you cannot learn anew.**”*

This principle was carried forward for those entering *Gītā Parivār* as well. When one comes to learn the *Bhagavad Gītā* yet carries the notion, *“I already know this, I already know that,”* the process of learning becomes slow. The deeper that assumption sits within, the longer it takes to learn. Yet those who come with the thought, *“I knew nothing, and whatever I knew was confused; now what I shall learn will be right,”* such seekers grasp swiftly. One must release previous assumptions.

When the morning adornment of Bhagavān is prepared, the **nirmālya** of the previous day must first be removed. Without taking off yesterday's offerings, today's fresh adornment cannot be placed. Even in a beauty parlour—*cleansing* is done before applying any decoration. Without cleansing, makeup cannot be applied. In the same way, without setting aside earlier notions, learning something new becomes difficult.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* contains **700 shlokas**.

Of these:

- **1 shloka** is spoken by **Dhṛtarāṣṭra**,
- **41 shlokas** by **Sañjaya**,
- **84 shlokas** by **Arjuna**,
- and **574 shlokas** arise from the **śrī-mukha of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa**.

For this reason the entire *Gītā* is regarded as **mantra-maya**—each shloka a mantra. As Pūjya Svāmījī often say, *if one understands the meaning of a mantra, it is excellent; even if not, its mantra-svarūpa yields benefit regardless*.

Just as entering the correct password connects a device to Wi-Fi—without needing to understand frequencies, channels, or the underlying technology—so too the mantra-svarūpa of each shloka connects one to the intended benefit, whether the meaning is fully grasped or not.

Before commencing the twelfth chapter, one more insight was offered.

Generally, in pictures and imagination, both Arjuna and Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa appear youthful, around thirty or forty years of age. But those who have not studied their chronological timeline are surprised to learn—after extensive research done by many scholars and historians—that **Arjuna was around eighty-four years old** at the time of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, while **Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's age is given as either eighty-seven or eighty-nine**, with differing accounts showing Him three or five years older than Arjuna.

Arjuna, however, was no ordinary warrior. His life held **thousands of battles**, never once defeated. His might was such that even **Bhagavān Mahādeva** could not overpower him in **malla-yuddha** for ten days—an astonishing event, for who can conquer Mahādeva? Arjuna also ascended **svarga-loka in his physical body**, residing there for a year and receiving divine astras.

He turned away **Urvāśī**, the most enchanting apsarā, refusing every suggestion of misconduct. When she threatened a curse, he accepted willingly, choosing honour over desire—embracing celibacy for a full year and living as **Bṛhannalā** in **Virāṭa-nagara**, teaching **Uttarā** the art of dance. A character equal to Arjuna is rare indeed.

After years of studying the *Mahābhārata*, admiration naturally turned toward Arjuna—not because Bhagavān needs admiration, for His divinity stands beyond comparison—but because Arjuna's life embodied extraordinary **paurusha, strength, diligence, integrity, and utter humility**.

- Never once did Arjuna praise his own abilities.
- Never once did he speak ill of another.
- Not a single moment shows him committing *pāpa* or violating *nīti*.

Such was his greatness.

Yet even Arjuna—so steadfast, so accomplished—faced **moh** on the battlefield. His study of the śāstras was profound. He was a knower of the Vedas.

Still, he faltered. In truth, Bhagavān could have resolved Arjuna’s confusion with a mere gesture—a tap on the shoulder—and Arjuna would have risen instantly. His devotion to Bhagavān was absolute.

Duryodhana and Arjuna approached Bhagavān seeking support. Bhagavān offered a choice—on one side, **His entire Nārāyaṇī-senā**, and on the other side, **Himself**, but **without weapons**. Arjuna did not hesitate for even a moment.

“Whether You are armed or unarmed, it makes no difference. If You stand beside me, I shall triumph even against Indra. Without You, not even the armies of the three worlds will be of use.”

Such unwavering **niṣṭhā** bound Arjuna to Bhagavān, and such devotion bound Bhagavān to Arjuna. Yet instead of merely lifting Arjuna from confusion, Bhagavān chose to make him **the instrument (nimitta)** through which the supreme essence would be spoken—for the welfare of all humanity.

सर्वो उपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।

The nectar of all the **Vedas and Upaniṣads** was distilled into the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

A unique quality of the Gītā is this: **it negates no spiritual path**.

Its teachings revolve around **lakṣaṇas—symptoms and characteristics**.

Religious disputes arise over methods—*how one worships, what ritual one follows*. Bhagavān shows no concern for mode; He addresses **what transformation each method brings within the seeker**.

Thus, in the twelfth chapter alone, **thirty-nine lakṣaṇas of a bhakta** are presented.

If one wishes to call oneself a bhakta—*do these thirty-nine lakṣaṇas reflect within?*

Throughout the Gītā:

- **Chapter 2** presents the **lakṣaṇas of sthita-prajña**,
- **Chapter 12** the **lakṣaṇas of a bhakta**,
- **Chapter 13** the **lakṣaṇas of a jñānī**,
- **Chapter 14** the **lakṣaṇas of a guṇātīta**,
- **Chapter 16** the **lakṣaṇas of daivī and āsurī sampad**.

Each is a **checklist**—not to examine others, but to **self-assess**.

The twelfth chapter begins with **Arjuna’s direct question**:

12.1

arjuna uvāca

**evaṁ(m) satatayuktā ye, bhaktāstvāṁ(m) paryupāsate,
ye cāpyakṣaRāmavyaktaṁ(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 inquires with clarity:

“Those bhaktas who remain ever engaged in Your bhajana and dhyāna, worshipping You as the supreme—on one side; and those who devote themselves to the imperishable, unmanifest Brahma—on the other. Among these two kinds of upāsakas, who is superior?”

His request is straightforward—like standing before a chemist’s shop lined with countless medicines. “*You describe them all,*” Arjuna implies, “*but tell me plainly—which one tablet must I take? Why must I know every detail?*”

Up to the end of the eleventh chapter, Bhagavān had essentially conveyed two central paths—**jñāna-yoga** and **bhakti-yoga**. In **bhakti-yoga**, the seeker worships **saguṇa-sākāra paramātmā**—the divine in manifested form. A picture of **Murli-Manohar Bhagavān** placed behind evokes this very presence. Devotees worship **Rāma, Śiva, Durgā**—all expressions of **saguṇa-sākāra paramātmā**. Alongside this stands the worship of **nirākāra parabrahma**, the unmanifest Absolute present everywhere, whose adoration requires no visible form.

Arjuna’s question, thus, was simple yet profound: *between these two, which path is superior for him?* And truly, who could answer better than Bhagavān—the **best orator**, one who first responds concisely in a single line, and then expands that very reply with depth and clarity.

In the **second śloka**, Bhagavān directly answered Arjuna’s query; from the **third through the twentieth**, He elaborated upon that response. The essence was immediate—spoken in a single śloka:

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.

Those who concentrate their mind upon Bhagavān, remain **nitya-yukta**, and worship with **parā-śraddhā**, are regarded as the most accomplished among yogīs. In other words, Bhagavān affirmed clearly that *those who worship in saguṇa-upāsana are considered superior*, provided two qualities remain steady—**nitya-yuktatā** and **śraddhā**.

Arjuna, too, had used the word **satata-yukta**; Bhagavān responded with **nitya-yukta**. Though many engage in devotion, it often remains confined to the few minutes of morning worship—after which its presence disappears amidst the day’s movements. Devotion, however, is not meant to be limited or intermittent. **Bhakti is continuous**, a state where the mind does not detach from the remembrance of Bhagavān.

A story illustrates this constancy of thought:

A young man’s marriage was fixed, and he had to distribute invitation cards. He wondered who to accompany him. Just then, his closest friend arrived. Overjoyed, he said, “*You came at the perfect time! Come with me to distribute the cards.*”

But the friend had come casually dressed. He hesitated, saying he was not prepared for formal visits. Time was short, so the groom offered him one of his newly stitched shirts—his **most favourite shirt**. Their measurements matched, so the friend wore it and they set out.

Yet, the groom’s heart felt uneasy; his favourite shirt adorned someone else. When they reached the first home, and relatives asked, “*Who is this?*”, he replied, “*My closest friend—and he is wearing my clothes too.*” The friend felt humiliated. A quarrel followed. Apologies were exchanged, and they proceeded. But at the next house, the groom again mentioned the clothes; the conflict repeated. His

concern was not pride—his **mind remained fixed on the shirt**. Even while performing other tasks, the mind stayed attached to that one thought.

This example reveals the principle: whatever occupies the mind most deeply continues to accompany all actions.

When two young hearts are newly engaged, even while fulfilling various responsibilities, each remains continuously present in the other’s thoughts. **Bhakti should resemble that unwavering remembrance—whether cooking, readying children, working in an office, or driving a vehicle, the mind keeps repeating “Rāma Rāma Rāma...” or silently flows through the ślokas of the Gītā.**

As expressed beautifully:

"कर से कर्म करो विधि नाना, मन राखो जहां कृपा निधाना"

"kar se kar vidhi nānā, mana rākh jahāñ kṛpā-nidhānā"

—with hands performing many tasks, the mind remains where the treasure of compassion resides.

Param Śraddheya Rāma Sukhdās Jī Mahārāja gave a tender instruction:

हे मेरे नाथ, मैं तुझको भूलूँ नहीं।"

"he mere nātha, main tujko bhūlūñ nahim"

Just keep whispering this prayer: "O Bhagavān, may I not forget You." In doing so, the seeker places responsibility upon Bhagavān—to remind the heart whenever forgetfulness approaches. **This continuity—nitya-yuktatā—is essential in bhakti.**

The second indispensable quality is **śraddhā**. Śraddhā is like a **rasa**, a subtle flavour that completes what is lacking, filling the gaps within devotion. In the **seventeenth chapter**, Bhagavān explains:

"śraddhā-mayoyam puruṣo yo yac-chraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ"

A person becomes shaped by the nature of his śraddhā.

Observe the world:

one who spends the day absorbed in mobile games is called a *mobile-keedā*; one who watches films incessantly is known as a *picture-bāz*; one who talks endlessly is known for *gappe sajanā*. Whatever one is deeply invested in, **that becomes one’s identity**. Thus, when śraddhā is placed in Bhagavān, devotion naturally blossoms, and the seeker becomes a **bhakta**.

Without śraddhā, worship becomes mere ritual—mechanical, time-bound, emotionless. One may sit for ten or fifteen minutes, chant a mala, recite *Hanumān-Cālīsā*, read a chapter of the Gītā, perform *ārati*, and depart. For some, devotion becomes an item on a checklist, "Tea is ready? Good. I will finish worship in five minutes before leaving for work."

In the absence of *śraddhā*, worship becomes merely mechanical. The actions remain, but the *bhāva* evaporates; and without *bhāva*, no taste of devotion arises. It is *śraddhā* that fills every gap and gives life to practice. Thus, when Bhagavān answered Arjuna in a single *śloka*, the response clearly established that *saguṇa-sākāra upāsanā* — devotion to Bhagavān’s manifest form — is superior, accessible, and truly beneficial.

Yet Bhagavān also ensured that no one feels He rejects *nirākāra upāsanā*, nor dismisses it. Therefore, in the third and fourth verses, He described the characteristics of *nirākāra upāsanā*, and in the fifth verse, He revealed why *saguṇa upāsanā* is considered more suitable.

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 the third and fourth śloka, the traits of the *nirākāra* are delineated:

- *acintya* — that which cannot be conceived
- *anirdeśya* — that which cannot be pointed out or indicated
- *avyakta* — that which is never manifest in form
- *sarvatraga* — present everywhere
- *kūṭastha* — unchanging, unmoving like solid iron
- *acala* — motionless
- *dhruva* — constant, unwavering

Bhagavān described eight qualities in all. Truly, *nirākāra* itself cannot be defined — and yet, by stating what cannot be grasped, the nature becomes suggestively indicated.

One may contemplate *Murli-manohar Kṛṣṇa*, *Rāmalalā* of Ayodhyā, *Maheśvara* of Kāśī, or *Bāṅke Bihārī* of Vṛndāvana — all *saguṇa-sākāra* forms can be mentally visualized. But the *acintya* cannot be imagined. The *anirdeśya* cannot be pointed out — for that which pervades all directions leaves no single direction toward which the finger may turn. *Avyakta* — never revealed, never appearing — cannot be described. When speaking of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, one may refer to the peacock feather; of *Bhagavān Rāma*, the bow; of *Śiva*, the serpents around the neck — some description is possible. But for the *nirākāra*, there is no form to describe, no features to express.

Kabīr Dās offers a subtle distinction:

एक राम दशरथ का बेटा, एक राम घट घट में बैठा,
एक राम का सकल पसारा, एक राम जगत से न्यारा
“*ek rām daśaratha kā beṭā, ek rām ghaṭ ghaṭ meṁ leṭā*
ek rām kā jagat pasārā, ek rām in sab se nyārā.”

The same truth appears in two dimensions — the *saguṇa-sākāra paramātmā* as *Daśaratha-nandana Śrī Rāma*, and the *nirguṇa-nirākāra paramātmā* pervading all.

The term *kūṭastha* becomes vivid when remembered through the blacksmith’s solid iron block — *kūṭa* — unchanged across generations, as countless tools were shaped upon it. That which never shifts — *kūṭastha*, *acala*, *dhruva* — points to the unchanging nature of the *nirākāra paramātmā*.

Gosvāmi Tulasīdāsa warns against comparing forms and sizes:

“*choṭā baḍā mat kahana, nāma rūpa ke akatha kahānī*
samajha para naī jāī bakhānī, ko baḍa choṭu kaheta aparādhu.”

रमन्ते सर्वत्र इति रामः

The essence remains unaltered whether one beholds *Sītāpati*, *Girijā-śaṅkara*, *Lakṣmīkānta*, or *Kauśalyānandana Raghupati*.

Just as a shopkeeper may call out, “*lāl sārī vālī bahen jī*” or “*chāisme vāle bhāī sāhab*” to return

forgotten change, and the person turns without offense — understanding the intent — in the same way, any name uttered with genuine invocation reaches Bhagavān. The name does not define the devotee, yet it conveys meaning to the one being called. Bhagavān, too, understands whom the devotee seeks — whether addressed as *Rāma*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Govinda*, *Īśvara*, or even through one's own chosen expression — the *āhvāna* must be sincere.

At the time of *Kalyāṇa's* centenary, *Bhai-jī*, the original editor, once asked *Seth-jī Jayad Dās Goenka*: “If Bhagavān is *acintya*, how can one contemplate Him?”

Seth-jī replied: “Contemplate His *līlā* — Bhagavān revealed *līlās* in His *Rāma-avatāra* and *Kṛṣṇa-avatāra*. Through *nāma*, *rūpa*, *līlā*, and *dhāma*, contemplation becomes possible.”

Thus, remembrance arises through Bhagavān's:

- *nāma* — divine name
- *rūpa* — divine form
- *līlā* — divine play
- *dhāma* — divine abode (*Ayodhyā-dhāma*, *Vṛndāvana-dhāma*, *Kāśī-dhāma*, *Citrakūṭa-dhāma*, *Prayāgarāja-dhāma*)

Bhagavān affirms in the *eighth adhyāya*:

अंतकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मद्भावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥

“*antakāle ca mām eva smaran muktvā kalevaram*

***yaḥ prayāti sa mad-bhāvaṁ yāti nāsty atra saṁśayaḥ.*”**

Whoever, at the final moment, leaves the body remembering Bhagavān undoubtedly attains Him. But remembrance at life's end does not arise suddenly. One may imagine living heedlessly and, upon death, uttering “*Rāma Rāma*” — yet experience proves otherwise. As is said:

जन्म जन्म मुनि जतनु कराहीं। अंत राम कहि आवत नाहीं।।

जासु नाम बल संकर कासी। देत सबहि सम गति अविनासी।।

“*janam janam muni jatan karā, ant Rām ka āvata nāhī.*”

At the final moment, *Rāma* does not arise easily. The most difficult truth is this: the *vṛtti* present throughout life returns in the last breath.

The Upaniṣads state that a wall leaning north will always fall north — whether it collapses today or after fifty years. Similarly, if the mind leans toward *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas*, at the moment of departure it inclines the same way. A lifetime spent in sincerity, *bhajana*, *satvikata*, truthfulness, and harmlessness gives rise to noble *vṛttis* at the end. A lifetime spent in deceit, attachment, greed, and unrestrained indulgence draws the mind toward wealth, family, possessions, and desires when the body falls. Therefore, practice must begin early — throughout life — so that remembrance becomes natural at the final moment.

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.

After acknowledging the arduous nature of the *nirākāra-mārga*, Bhagavān further describes the

qualities of those who remain steadfast on this subtle path. Such seekers **restrain the entire group of senses — *indriya-grāma*** — preventing them from scattering outward. Through disciplined self-mastery, they ensure that the senses no longer dictate their direction; instead, inner awareness governs their movement.

Their vision becomes **equanimous — *sarvatra sama-buddhi*** — unshaken by praise or blame, gain or loss, affection or hostility. They perceive the same divinity pervading all beings and situations. Because of this inclusive vision, their lives naturally incline toward **the welfare of every being — *sarva-bhūta-hita***.

Not through external activism alone, but through an inner disposition that refuses to harm, refuses to divide, and quietly nurtures goodwill for all.

Bhagavān affirms that **such seekers, through unwavering balance, disciplined senses, and universal benevolence, ultimately attain Him alone — *mām eva prāpnuvanti***.

Even though their journey is subtle and demanding, when these conditions ripen, the destination remains none other than Bhagavān Himself.

12.5

kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāṃ(m), avyaktāsaktacetāsām, avyaktā hi gatirduḥkhaṃ(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.

Bhagavān now explains the inherent difficulty in approaching the *nirākāra* Brahman.

Those who meditate upon the *avyakta*, the unmanifest, ultimately reach Bhagavān Himself; yet in that path lies immense effort. Why? Because for one absorbed in bodily identity — *dehābhimāni* — the pursuit of the unmanifest becomes exceedingly difficult and filled with inner strain.

The ordinary person depends on timely food, sufficient sleep, and carries continuous anxieties — of the body, of children, of parents, of household responsibilities. Such an individual constantly repeats within: *“If I do not manage everything, what will happen? Without me, nothing will function.”*

This attitude weighs upon the mind like an unnecessary burden. The world was functioning before one arrived, and it will continue after one departs — yet the mind clings to the illusion that without *me*, nothing will sustain.

This *dehābhimāna* — the conviction *“this body is me and all connected to it is mine”* — obstructs eligibility for the unmanifest path. As long as one identifies with the body, the basic qualification for *nirākāra upāsana* does not arise.

Just as the **Bhagavad Gītā** exists, in the same way the **Aṣṭāvakra Gītā** stands as a timeless dialogue given to King Janaka. Before imparting knowledge, Aṣṭāvakra asked Janaka to describe his inner state. Janaka responded: ***“jīvanecchā nāsti, maraṇe bhayaṃ nāsti.”***

— *“There is no desire to live, and no fear of death.”*

Such a state alone transcends bodily attachment, and only then is one qualified for the pursuit of knowledge.

Who among us can genuinely say so? If one cannot, then Bhagavān gently directs towards *bhakti* — towards remembrance and devotion — for that path nurtures the soul where austerity of knowledge

cannot yet be sustained.

In **Uttarakāṇḍa**, Śrī Rāma describes the *jñānī* as His mature son:

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The *jñānī* stands steady and discerning like a mature child, whereas the devotee — tender-hearted and easily unsettled — resembles a small child.

And to whom does a mother offer deeper care? The one who may forget to eat, who remains unaware of hunger or thirst, whose attention wanders.

In the same way, *bhaktas* become recipients of Bhagavān’s loving concern; the *jñānī* manages alone, but the devotee is held and nourished. Thus, for most, *bhakti* remains the most compassionate and suitable path.

From here, Bhagavān begins to speak of devotion in depth.

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.

Bhagavān describes the devotee who **offers every action to Him**, keeping **Bhagavān alone as the supreme focus**, and **remembers Him with unwavering, exclusive devotion**.

Such a devotee does not carry the burden of life alone; instead, **all responsibilities, concerns, and actions are surrendered to Bhagavān**, and life is lived in **constant loving remembrance**.

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.

To such *prema bhaktas*, Bhagavān becomes the liberating force, swiftly ferrying them across *saṁsāra*.

The word “**ananya**” is often misunderstood. It does not mean *abandon all other forms of Bhagavān*. Many fear that honouring Bhagavān in the form of Kṛṣṇa might be disloyalty to Śiva, or devotion to Rāma might neglect Kṛṣṇa. But *ananya* does not speak of excluding forms; it speaks of **exclusive longing of the heart**, directed towards one’s chosen form — the *Iṣṭa*.

The scriptures — including the Upaniṣads and teachings of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya — prescribe **pañcāyatana pūjā** for a householder:

one **Viṣṇu tattva** form (Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu),

one **Śiva** form,

one **Devī** form (such as Durgā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, or Lalitā),

one **Gaṇeśa**,

and daily **ārghya to Sūrya**.

Neglecting these, the scriptures say, becomes symbolic “theft” — for one receives from the cosmos

yet fails to offer gratitude.

Among these deities, one's **Iṣṭa** must be placed in the centre, while the remaining forms stand alongside. Throughout the year — during Navarātri, during Śrāvaṇa, during Gaṇeśa Caturthī, during Janmāṣṭamī — one worships many forms. Yet after every worship, one asks solely for the deepening of devotion to one's *Iṣṭa*.

If one's *Iṣṭa* is Śrī Rāma, then at Ayodhyā's Rāmalalā one prays, "May my devotion to Rāma grow."
If one's *Iṣṭa* is Kṛṣṇa, then at Vṛndāvana's Bāṅke Bihārī one prays, "May my devotion to Kṛṣṇa deepen."

This is **ananya** — not exclusion of deities, but **exclusive seeking of devotion to the Iṣṭa through all deities**.

Yet the great confusion of the age is that many do not even know their *Iṣṭa*. They approach the divine not to seek Bhagavān, but to seek worldly gains — marriage, employment, examinations, children, possessions. When one stands before Bhagavān yet asks for everything but Bhagavān, then the objects desired become the *iṣṭa*, not Bhagavān.

True prayer remains:

जेहि बिधि नाथ होइ हित मोरा। करहु सो बेगि दास मैं तोरा॥

निज माया बल देखि बिसाला। हियँ हँसि बोले दीनदयाला॥

**"tujhe vidhi hoi nātha hita morā
karahu suhegi dāsa maim torā."**

— "O Nātha, grant only what brings my upliftment; I, Your servant, seek not my demands but Your grace."

To make **Bhagavān the Iṣṭa** — unchanging, unwavering, unbroken — in name, in mantra, in remembrance — **this alone is ananya**, and this alone safeguards one's spiritual welfare.

In authentic devotion, **one does not demand; one entrusts**. When Bhagavān becomes one's *iṣṭa*, the welfare of life naturally unfolds. With such *ananyatā*, there remains **no need to keep changing one's chosen deity, one's mālā, or one's mantra**. Once *guru*, *iṣṭa*, *mālā*, and *mantra* are wholeheartedly accepted, **they should not be abandoned**. Until acceptance is final, one may explore—but once chosen, there should be **no wavering**. This steadfastness alone sanctifies life.

To illuminate the meaning of **satatā** — **steadfast continuity**, the discourse recalls a scene:

Once there were two sisters-in-law—the **elder (jethānī)** and the **younger (devarānī)**. The elder had taken a vow: every day she would visit **Śiva's temple** and light a *dīpa*. The younger secretly nurtured envy; she wished that her sister-in-law's wish should never be fulfilled. And so, after the elder lit the lamp, the younger would slip in quietly and **extinguish the flame**.

This continued for months. Then came the monsoon—rains so heavy that **three to four feet of water flooded the paths**. The elder was torn: the saint who had guided her had instructed that **not a single day be missed**, yet the waters were dangerous, full of hidden holes. So she resolved, "Today, I shall offer my reverence from home itself and light the lamp here, for the path is impassable."

Meanwhile, at the usual hour, the younger proceeded as always. Not seeing the elder, she imagined she must have gone early. Entering the temple, she found the **previous day's lamp already extinguished**. Assuming the flame had succumbed to rain, she **lit the lamp first—just to**

extinguish it again, as per her persistent habit. But the moment she bent to blow out the flame, **Bhagavān Śiva manifested before her.**

Startled, she trembled: “*Bhagavān, there is some confusion. I do not come here to light the lamp—I come to extinguish it.*”

Yet the response arose from the unseen:

“teri nitya-yuktatā, terā satatā, terā sātatyā—adbhut hai.”

Your continuous engagement, your unbroken consistency—this alone has pleased Me.

Hearing this, she wept in remorse, acknowledging her own pettiness. In that moment of grace, **the ill-feeling in both hearts dissolved.**

This story reveals: steadfastness (*satatā*), once embraced, becomes transformative. **In bhakti, comfort-seeking destroys depth.** One must not carve out a “comfort zone” and call it devotion; **true tapas does not mean fleeing to the Himalayas, but joyfully upholding one’s vows even amidst difficulty.** What is taken up with commitment must be pursued with perseverance.

12.8

**mayyeva mana ādhatsva, mayi buddhiṁ(n) niveśaya,
nivasiṣyasi 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.

Entrust your mind to Me, devote your intellect to Me. Then, without doubt, you shall dwell in Me.

Arjuna reflects: “*This is arduous; not easy for the mind.*”

Bhagavān then offers possibilities—**a compassionate progression of paths.**

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.

*If the mind cannot remain firmly established, then seek Me through repeated practice—**abhyāsa.***

Constant repetition—“**he mere nātha, he nātha**” spoken again and again, gradually awakens a connection.

As the saying goes:

राम नाम रटते रहो, जब तक घट में प्राण ।

कभी तो दीन दयाल के भनक पड़ेगी कान ॥

“rāma rāma raṭate raho, jab lagi ghaṭ meṁ prāṇa;

kabhi to dīnadayāl ke bhaṅak paṛegī kāna.”

Keep repeating the name as long as there is breath; one day the compassionate Bhagavān shall surely hear.

Yet achievements do not come merely by effort; **they ripen through grace**, and grace descends in

a moment—**but upon the one who calls repeatedly.**

Even if the name is remembered imperfectly:

तुलसी अपने राम को, रीझ भजो या खीज।

उलटो सीधो जामिहैं, खेत परे जो बीज।।

“bhāva kubhāva anak ālasahu, nāma japat maṅgala dis dasa.”

Whether with devotion, error, abundance, or laziness—the Name sanctifies all directions.

12.10

**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.

If even continuous practice feels overwhelming, then:
Engage in actions performed for Bhagavān—*mat-karma*.

Every role—student, parent, worker, soldier, leader—**let all be performed to please Bhagavān.**
What pleases Bhagavān, that I shall do; what displeases, I shall not.

12.11

**athaitadapyaśakto'si, kartuṁ(m) madyogamāśritaḥ,
sarVākarmaphalatyāgaṁ(n), tataḥ(kh) kuru yatātmavān. 12.11**

If, taking recourse to the Yoga of My realization, you are unable even to do this, then, subduing your mind and intellect etc., relinquish the fruit of all actions.

If acting solely for Bhagavān still seems unattainable, then:
Renounce attachment to the fruits of actions.

This is the highest discipline—**perform fully, strive wholeheartedly, yet remain unattached to outcome.**

Cultivate crops, yet do not cling to yield.

Study diligently for the first rank, yet if marks fall short, remain composed.

The modern child who attains **96%** and leaps in despair because it was not **100**—such is misplaced fixation, not mature intellect.

Thus, the graded path becomes clear:

Fix the mind → Practice → Offer actions → Renounce results.

Through whichever doorway one enters, **steadfastness, practice, dedication, and non-attachment** ultimately lead toward **Bhagavān**.

A gentle reminder echoes through the devotional bhajan:

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

नैया तेरी राम हवाले, लहर लहर हरि आप सम्हाले ।

हरि आप ही उठायें तेरा भार, उदासी मन काहे को करे ॥1॥

काबू में मँझधार उसी के, हाथों में पतवार उसी के ।

तेरी हार भी नहीं है तेरी हार, उदासी मन काहे को करे ॥2॥

सहज किनारा मिल जायेगा, परम सहारा मिल जायेगा ।

डोरी सौंप के तो देख एक बार, उदासी मन काहे को करे ॥3॥

तू 'निर्दोष' तुझे क्या डर है, पग पग पर साथी ईश्वर है ।

सच्ची भावना से कर ले पुकार, उदासी मन काहे को करे ॥4॥

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



***“Tera Rāma jī karenge beṛā pār,
udāsī man kāhe ko kare.
Doṛī saup ke to dekh ek bār,
udāsī man kāhe ko kare.”***

Why should the mind fall into despondency? **Bhagavān Rāma** will carry the boat across. Hand over the rope just once and witness what unfolds.

***“Udāsī man kāhe ko kare,
teri Rām hawāle lahar lahar Hari āp sambhāle,
Hari āp hī uṭhāye terā bhār.”***

Wave after wave is upheld by **Hari**; He alone bears the weight entrusted to Him. Why grieve then?

The imagery deepens:

***“Kābū mẽ majh dhār usī ke,
hāthō mẽ patwār usī ke,
teri hār mẽ bhī nahī terī hār.”***

Even in the midstream of life’s uncertainties, the **oars remain in His hands**. Apparent defeat is not truly defeat, for the reins rest with **Bhagavān**.

Thus the assurance resounds:

***“Sahaj kinārā mil jāegā,
param sahārā mil jāegā,
doṛī saup ke to dekh ek bār.”***

The bank is near, the supreme support awaits—offer the rope once, and see.

But the challenge lies here: **the rope is not surrendered**.

Bhagavān is ready to uphold, yet one refuses to entrust.

The narrative of Draupadī illustrates this truth. She first sought help from her five husbands, then looked toward Dhṛtarāṣṭra, then Bhīṣma, then Vidura. She still relied on her own strength, reminding herself: *“I am the queen, I can manage.”* Bhagavān was called, but not yet entrusted.

Only when Draupadī realised **her own effort could not prevail**, she released her garment **with both hands**, crying out:

“He Kṛṣṇa! bachāo mujhe!”

At that moment — **“doṛī saup ke to dekh ek bār”** — Bhagavān appeared. The moment of surrender became the moment of divine intervention.

Again, the verse reassures:

**“Tū nirdosh tujhe kyā ḍar hai,
pag pag par sāthī Īśvar hai,
sacchī bhāvanā se kar le pukār.”**

The sincere call brings presence; fear fades when **Bhagavān** is acknowledged as the true companion.

Yet the hesitation persists: *we do not surrender.*

Instead of taking refuge in **Bhagavān**, one relies on personal intellect, strength, wealth, influence, family, sons, grandsons. But **Bhagavān** gently reminds that **His refuge alone** is complete — **“sarva kām maĩ kartā hū”** — **He** carries the work through when entrusted.

How the next step unfolds will be explored in the forthcoming session — a list of “39 lakṣhaṇ” will be taken up. For now, the request remains:

maintain the Gītā discipline daily.

Forty minutes belong solely to this pursuit; the rest of the world’s affairs will continue regardless. **But these forty minutes must not be abandoned.**

The session concludes with **nāma-saṅkīrtana**, offered with the inner feeling that **Bhagavān listens:**

**“Hari śaraṇam, Hari śaraṇam,
Hari śaraṇam, Hari śaraṇam...”**

After the chanting, gratitude is expressed: through this illuminating discourse, the hidden essence of Gītā has been gently established in the heart.

Questions and Answers

Vinodkumar Ji

Q1: You explained the third verse, but something from the fourth verse seemed missing. Could you clarify?

A: The fourth verse speaks of those who steadily contemplate the formless, eternal Brahman, having mastered their senses and risen beyond the mind and intellect. Such a person remains equal-minded and committed to the welfare of all living beings — not by withdrawing from life, but by wishing that every action brings benefit to every form of life: earth, trees, rivers, all beings.

Q2: Should we leave the formless and choose the form? Is one better?

A: It is not about superiority; it is about suitability. If one truly knows “I am not this body,” the formless path is accessible. If one still identifies with the body, worship of the divine with form is recommended. Meditation on a form is easier for most; meditation on pure formlessness demands rare steadiness.

Divyanshi Ji

Q1: Can we worship multiple deities besides our chosen deity (iṣṭa-devatā)?

A: Yes, worship all. Honour Devī during Navarātri, Gaṇeśa during Chaturthī, Śiva in Śrāvaṇa, and Rāma on Rāmanavamī. But seek your deepest devotion from your chosen deity.

Q2: Then what is dharma?

A: To perform one’s duties in every role of life—child, citizen, sibling, friend, mother, and so on.

Q3: If Draupadī had acted instead of surrendering, would Bhagavān still have protected her?

A: The Draupadī episode teaches surrender, not action. Bhagavān waited until she released all other supports and called upon Him alone. Where complete surrender is required, action is not the point. Action and surrender are different.

Kamlesh Ji

Q1: What about old pictures of deities in the temple? Can we immerse them and place new ones?

A: No. Images worshipped across generations are deeply sacred and should remain.

Q2: How many pictures of the same deity should be kept in the home temple?

A: There is no fixed rule for pictures. But do not turn the temple into a storage space. Only keep forms personally installed, inherited, or received from saints/Guru.

Q3: What types of mūrtis are traditionally prescribed?

A: Stone, metal, or wood. POP idols should not be placed in the temple.

The session concluded with a heartfelt prayer followed by the chanting of the Hanumān Chālīsā.



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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

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