

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 16: Daivāsura-Sampad-Vibhāga-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/v8XiOoW8F6g>

## Daivī Sampatti: The Path to Divine Nature & Liberation from Samsāra

The **16th Chapter** of the Bhagavad Gītā is **Daivāsura Sampad Vibhāg Yoga - Yoga through Discerning the Divine and Demoniatic Natures.**

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

***vasudevasutaṁ devaṁ kaṁsacāṇūramardanam .  
devakī paramānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vande jagadgurum***

The discourse begins by extolling the profound fortune of those who have been drawn to the study of the Bhagavad Gītā. It emphasizes that such an opportunity does not arise merely by chance but is the result of accumulated merits from past lives, the blessings of ancestors, or the divine grace of saints and enlightened beings. The Bhagavad Gītā stands unparalleled in its ability to guide humanity towards righteousness and fulfillment, a truth acknowledged by sages, seers, and scholars over the past 5300 years.

The founder of Gītā Press, the revered **Brahmaleen Jaidyal Goyandka ji**, asserted in his preface that, after extensive study of all scriptures, he reached the conclusion that no other scripture is as beneficial and accessible for human welfare as the Bhagavad Gītā. Despite its concise form, it holds immense power. Throughout history, every sect and tradition in India has revered the Bhagavad Gītā without exception, making it a uniquely respected scripture. Unlike other texts that may be debated or preferred selectively, the Bhagavad Gītā transcends sectarian divisions, gaining universal acceptance due to its non-sectarian nature.

Some mistakenly consider the Bhagavad Gītā as merely a Hindu religious text, but such a notion arises from ignorance. Nowhere does the Gītā dictate specific rituals, forms of worship, or sectarian practices. Rather, it delineates the qualities of an ideal being. In the twelfth chapter, where devotion is elaborated upon, Bhagavān enumerates thirty-nine characteristics of a true devotee, such as "**adveṣṭā sarva-**

**bhūtānām maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha**"—one who harbors no enmity towards any being and embodies friendship and compassion. Nowhere does it mention that devotion is determined by external markers like tilak, sacred thread, shikha, or ritualistic worship. Instead, Bhagavān focuses solely on virtues and inner transformation.

The Bhagavad Gītā does not prescribe a singular path but emphasizes the ultimate goal. Just as one may travel to Delhi by train, bus, car, airplane, or even on foot, Bhagavān does not concern Himself with the mode of journey but rather with reaching the destination. Similarly, various spiritual paths exist, yet the ultimate truth remains one.

Bhagavān provides checklists in the Gītā for self-evaluation. In the second chapter, He describes the characteristics of a **Sthitaprajña (one of steady wisdom)**. In the twelfth chapter, He outlines the **traits of a true devotee**. The fourteenth chapter details the attributes of a **Guṇātīta (one who has transcended the three gunas)**. And in the sixteenth chapter, Bhagavān distinguishes between divine and demonic qualities. If one considers themselves to be pious, they must measure themselves against these divine qualities.

Many take pride in their religious identity, declaring themselves as Hindus or Sanatanis. While such pride is understandable, Bhagavān clarifies that a true Sanatani is one who embodies divine virtues. Religious observances, prayers, and rituals hold significance, but their real value is in the transformation they bring within. The ultimate criterion set by Bhagavān is inner evolution.

Thus, the Bhagavad Gītā is universally accepted among all sects, precisely because it focuses on the unchanging essence rather than differences in practices.

Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya, in his Bhaja Govindam stotra, extolled its greatness, stating:

**भगवद् गीता किञ्चिदधीता गङ्गा जललव कणिकापीता ।  
सकृदपि येन मुरारि समर्चा क्रियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ॥**

If a person reads a little from Bhagavad Geeta, Drinks a sip of water from Ganges. Worships Murari (Krishna) for a little moment, for them there is no arguments with Yama, [the lord of death].

Even a little study of the Bhagavad Gītā, a single sip of the sacred Ganga water, or chanting Bhagavān's name even once ensures liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Those who engage in these acts need not fear the judgment of Yama, the god of death.

The greatness of five sacred entities **panch 'Ga'—Gau mata, Ganga mata, Gayatri mata, Gītā mata, and Govind.**—is repeatedly affirmed.

When the glories of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā was written, then Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya ji says -

**sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopāla nandanah|  
pārtho: vatsa sudhīrbhoktā dugdham gītāmṛtaṃ mahat||**

All the Upanishads are the cows and Krishna is the one who milks them, Arjuna is the calf, the devotees are the consumers of the great nectar of Gita.

Bhagavān Himself states in the tenth chapter:

**स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्वी' ॥10.21॥**

Among rivers, He is the Ganga. He further declares in the same chapter,

**"गायत्री छंदसामहम्' ॥10.35॥"**

Among chandas (meters), He is Gayatri. The Gītā itself is the essence of all Upanishads, likened to a divine cow milked by Śrī Krishna, the Supreme Cowherd.

The Bhagavad Gītā is not merely a scripture but a divine manual for righteous living, universally applicable and eternally relevant. It does not bind one to a particular sect or ritual but offers wisdom for the spiritual elevation of all mankind.

In Chapter 18, verses 68-69, the glory of the Bhagavad Gītā reaches its pinnacle. Bhagavān proclaims that one who studies and imbibes the teachings of the Gītā attains Him. He emphasizes that reading and sharing the wisdom of the Gītā is not a matter of choice; rather, it is a divine selection.

य इदं परमं गुह्यं मद्भक्तेष्वभिधास्यति ।

भक्तिं मयि परं कृत्वा मामेवैष्यत्यसंशयः ॥ 18 - 68 ॥

For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me.

Bhagavān states unequivocally that whoever spreads the message of the Gītā becomes dearest to Him.

न च तस्मान्मनुष्येषु कश्चिन्मे प्रियकृत्तमः ।

Among men there is none who does Me a more loving service than he

Thus, propagating and living by the Gītā is the highest service to the divine. Param Pujya Swamiji gave a guiding principle:

"गीता पढ़े, पढ़ाए, जीवन में लाए।"

This means to read the Gītā, teach it, and most importantly, live by its teachings.

Listening to discourses on the Gītā provides invaluable insights, and even if one cannot grasp everything, taking away even a single key lesson can transform life. The real essence of spiritual wisdom is not merely appreciating a lecture but applying its teachings in daily life.

Bhagavān categorizes humanity into two types, as detailed in Chapter 16: **those of divine nature (Daiviya pravṛtti) and those of demonic nature (āsurī pravṛtti)**. Those consumed by selfish desires, greed, and material gains belong to the demonic nature, constantly driven by personal benefit. In contrast, individuals inclined towards virtue, selflessness, and higher purpose belong to the divine nature.

A person dominated by **Rajoguṇa and Tamoguṇa (modes of passion and ignorance)** seeks worldly pleasures—wealth, status, and material success—without concern for the greater good. However, one who embraces **Satoguṇa (the mode of goodness)** realizes that human life has a higher purpose beyond mere survival and worldly acquisitions.

**True wisdom lies in selfless service.** Some people constantly complain about how much they have done for others without receiving anything in return—this is a sign of ego and attachment (**Rajoguṇa**). In contrast, those in **Satoguṇa** feel blessed to have had the opportunity to serve without expecting gratitude or recognition.

Bhagavān highlights the virtue of serving without expectation, as described in

"सर्वभूतहिते रताः"

Being dedicated to the welfare of all living beings.

This selfless attitude extends beyond human interactions to include animals, nature, and society at large. While some complain about issues such as pollution and disorder, others take proactive steps to improve the situation, embodying the true spirit of selflessness.

An example from the Kumbh Mela illustrates this: while some complain about inefficiencies, others dedicate themselves to service without expecting anything in return. This selfless service is a reflection of divine nature.

"जैसी दृष्टि, वैसी सृष्टि।"

The world appears as one perceives it.

A person steeped in darkness sees only negativity, while one who has embraced divine qualities sees beauty and order in life. **Bhagavān provides a checklist of divine qualities to cultivate, marking the beginning of an insightful journey into Chapter 16.**

Thus, **the Bhagavad Gītā is not merely a text but a guide to transformation. By understanding and applying its teachings, one moves from ignorance to wisdom, from selfishness to selflessness, and ultimately, from the transient to the eternal.**

## 16.1

### **śrībhagavānuvāca abhayaṃ(m) sattvasaṃsuddhiḥ(r), jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ, dānaṃ(n) damaśca yajñaśca, svādhyāyastapa ārjavam 16.1**

Śrī Bhagavān said : Absolute fearlessness, perfect purity of mind, constant fixity in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of self-realization, and even so, charity in its Sāttvika form, control of the senses, worship of God and other deities as well as of one's elders including the performance of Agnihotra (pouring oblations into the sacred fire) and other sacred duties, study and teaching of the Vedas and other sacred books as well as the chanting of God's names and glories, suffering hardships for the discharge of one's sacred obligations and uprightness of mind as well as of the body and senses.

The Bhagavad Gītā, in its profound wisdom, presents a classification of human nature into two categories—Daivi (divine) and Asuri (demonic). Bhagavān Himself provides a comprehensive list of twenty-six divine qualities over three verses, urging individuals to introspect and assess how much of each quality they embody. No one possesses these virtues to an absolute 100%, nor are they entirely absent. Instead, they exist in varying degrees, requiring a conscious effort to enhance divine traits and diminish negative ones.

The first virtue listed is:

**Abhayam (fearlessness)**. This virtue can be understood both positively and negatively. The negative definition, derived by **adding 'a' (negation) to bhaya (fear), signifies the absence of fear**. A well-known verse from **Hitopadesha** states:

आहारनिद्राभयमैथुनं च सामान्यमेतत्पशुभिर्नराणाम् ।  
धर्मो हि तेषामधिको विशेषो धर्मेण हीनाः पशुभिः समानाः ॥

("Āhāra, nidrā, bhaya, maithuna—these are common to both humans and animals. The distinguishing factor for humans is dharma; without it, they are no different from animals.")

**Fear has two dimensions—one that restrains a person from wrongdoing and another that enslaves the mind.** A necessary form of fear is the reverence one holds for elders, teachers, and scriptures, as it prevents moral degradation. However, unrestrained fearlessness (**nirankushata**) is detrimental. True fearlessness should not be mistaken for reckless disregard. For instance, there is a difference between **laparwah (careless)** and **beparwah (detached)**. Carelessness is negative, indicating neglect where attention is needed, whereas detachment can be positive, reflecting an attitude of acceptance and inner peace.

A person who claims, **“I fear no one—I do as I please,”** disregarding parents, society, scriptures, or moral consequences, is on the path to self-destruction. A disciplined fearlessness, rooted in righteousness, is desirable.

This sentiment is beautifully captured in a dohā by Kabir:

**“काल पकड़ चेला किया भय के कतरे कान।  
समरथ गुरु सर पे खड़े का को करे सलाम।”**

(“If one has a true Guru standing behind them, why should they fear anything?”)

Similarly, **Ramcharitmanas** narrates a profound incident from Sita Ji’s **swayamvara**. When Prabhu Rama broke the great bow, an enraged Parashurama confronted him. He was consumed with fury, reminding Rama and Lakshmana that he had annihilated Kshatriyas twenty-one times. Despite his anger, Lakshmana remained undeterred and even provoked him further. Finally, Parashurama asked Prabhu Rama, “Are you not afraid of me?” To which Śrī Ram, with hands folded, humbly replied:

**“बिप्रबंस कै असि प्रभुताई।  
अभय होइ जो तुम्हहि डेराई।।”**

(“If fearing a Brahmin is a sign of respect, then let it be so.”)

**The concept of "Abhayam" or fearlessness is profound, touching upon both its necessity and its potential to be misinterpreted.** Fearlessness is not about recklessness or arrogance but about a deep-seated confidence rooted in righteousness and divine faith. True fearlessness comes from discipline, respect for elders, and adherence to dharma. A person who follows the guidance of teachers, parents, and scriptures naturally attains fearlessness because they are aligned with a higher truth.

Many people suffer from an undefined fear, a persistent anxiety despite having wealth, family, and comfort. This "fear of the unknown" or "fear of uncertainty" stems from two primary causes. First, the burden of sin—one who engages in wrongdoing is perpetually fearful. Even the mighty Ravan, despite his strength, had to resort to stealth and deceit while abducting Sita. His fear was not external but internal, rooted in his own guilt and misdeeds. The second cause of fear is excessive attachment to the world and insufficient faith in the divine. Those who depend solely on worldly possessions and relationships for security are prone to fear.

Whereas those who surrender to the Almighty find peace.

**हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो किस बात की चिन्ता।  
शरण में रख दिया है जब माथ तो किस बात की चिन्ता।**

As **Tulsidas** beautifully states:

"होइहि सोइ जो राम रचि राखा। को करि तर्क बढ़ावै साखा।।"

(Whatever happens is as per Śrī Rama's will; why should one worry or speculate?)

When this faith strengthens, fear diminishes. Worrying about losing wealth, fearing death, or grieving over a loved one's passing all stems from a lack of realization that everything is temporary. This is precisely why, when Yudhishtir was asked about the greatest wonder of the world, he replied that despite witnessing death every day, people continue to believe they are immortal and behave as if they will never die.

Only when such firm spiritual understanding is developed does one attain true fearlessness. Without this, all other virtues become compromised. Fear makes a person abandon their principles, succumb to dishonesty, and act against dharma. Hence, "Abhayam" is the first among the 26 divine qualities listed by Bhagavān in the Bhagavad Gītā.

The next virtue, "**Sattva-samshuddhi**", refers to **the purification of the inner self**. Many people engage in worship, rituals, and prolonged meditation, yet their actions remain tainted by dishonesty, greed, or jealousy. They continue to lie, manipulate, or harm others while maintaining an external facade of devotion. The scriptures emphasize that Bhagavān cannot be attained by those who engage in deception, as the Bhagavān Himself declares:

"निर्मल मन जन सो मोहि पावा। मोहि कपट छल छिद्र न भावा।।"

(I do not like deceit, trickery, or manipulation.)

This is why He blessed Vibhishan, who was pure-hearted and devoid of deceit. Those who engage in manipulation, dishonesty, and scheming distance themselves from Bhagavān. Many mistake cunningness for intelligence, but in reality, the more a person manipulates, the further they drift from divine grace.

**The journey toward divine virtues begins with cultivating fearlessness through faith, purifying one's heart, and abandoning deceit. Only then can one progress on the path of righteousness and experience true peace and divine connection.**

The third virtue is **Jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ—steadfastness in the pursuit of knowledge**. The knowledge that wavers is of little use. Often, people experience what is known as **śmaśāna-vairāgya**—the detachment that arises in a cremation ground. Witnessing death, one temporarily realizes the futility of worldly possessions and desires. In such moments, people contemplate reading scriptures, chanting holy names, and leading a righteous life. However, as soon as they leave the cremation ground, their worldly attachments take over once more. This fleeting detachment does not lead to true wisdom.

Bhagavān emphasizes that divine knowledge should be steadfast. A mind that oscillates between devotion and distraction does not attain true spiritual elevation. One must cultivate consistency in their pursuit of knowledge, devotion, and self-discipline. Spiritual wisdom should not be a temporary inclination but a well-established practice that strengthens over time.

This steadfastness is followed by **Dānam (charity)**. The fourth virtue, Dāna—charity, emphasizes the practice of giving. **Devat iti devata**—a divine being is one who has mastered the art of giving. True divinity manifests when one learns to give without attachment or expectation. Often, people regard charity as an act of benevolence, assuming they are doing others a favor. However, the scriptures highlight that life is structured in two ways—some hands are created to receive, while others are meant to give. **Fortunate are those whom the Divine has placed in the position of giving.**

Yet, many remain preoccupied with acquiring more, even when they have enough.

One can observe this behavior even in the simplest of settings. For instance, during a religious discourse, if prasād is being distributed, people may hesitate initially, but soon they begin to collect more—one for themselves, one for home, and then perhaps even more if possible. Despite being blessed with abundance, the tendency to seek more persists, whereas the heart should instead rejoice in giving.

Charity should not be reserved for special occasions such as festivals, full moons, or religious days alone. It should be a part of daily life. **Dāna extends beyond monetary contributions—it includes knowledge, time, and service.** In spiritual communities, thousands dedicate themselves to selfless service without seeking recognition or rewards. For example, in our Gītā Pariwar, trainers dedicate their time to imparting wisdom without expecting a word of thanks. There are countless unseen volunteers who translate, transcribe, and distribute knowledge across languages—Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali—working silently behind the scenes and other 13 departments with 12000 volunteers.

Giving in its purest form is when one shares knowledge, devotes time, and serves without expectation. The wealth of wisdom, the time spent guiding others, and the selfless service rendered—these are all forms of dāna. Those who embody this virtue uplift themselves and the world around them.

Our honorable PM Modiji launched the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan with the vision of a cleaner India, and it is the responsibility of every citizen to uphold this mission. Rather than criticizing the government for unclean surroundings, one should take the initiative to clean up any litter encountered—be it a discarded wrapper or peel. Cleanliness is a form of donation, and it requires no monetary expense, only personal effort. **If each individual contributes, the collective impact can be profound.**

Beyond cleanliness, there are many other invaluable donations one can offer. One of the simplest yet most profound is the donation of happiness. A genuine smile, a warm greeting, or a compassionate word can lighten another person's burdens without costing anything. A smile has the power to heal, bringing peace to both the giver and the receiver.

Among the many schools of healing, including allopathy and homeopathy, the greatest of all is 'sympathy.' **True sympathy means offering a shoulder to the sorrowful, lending an ear without judgment, and allowing them to express their pain freely.** Sometimes, all a distressed person needs is someone who listens without offering unsolicited advice or rebuke. Providing this kind of support is an act of great kindness.

Donation is not confined to material wealth. However, financial charity is also essential. **According to Brihaspati Niti, one should allocate 10% of their pure earnings to charity and another 10% to help needy relatives.** If one earns two lakh rupees annually, twenty thousand should be set aside for these purposes. If one earns a crore, ten lakhs should be given away. This practice is not merely a recommendation; it is a duty. Failing to do so is not just a missed opportunity for merit but incurs the sin of neglect.

Charity extends beyond wealth—it includes donating time, talent, and efforts towards noble causes. Cleanliness, joy, and kindness are also forms of charity. There is a well-known song:

**"देश हमें देता है सब कुछ, हम भी तो कुछ देना सीखें।"**

Nature bestows life-giving air and resources upon us, and in return, we should cultivate the habit of giving. Giving should not be seen as a favor to others but as an opportunity for self-growth. The true

spirit of giving lies in expecting nothing in return. A maid receiving a saree should not be viewed as an act that binds her to additional work or obligations. Giving with expectations is not charity—it is a transaction. **True charity is free from any form of return.**

The scriptures emphasize:

"दानं दम यज्ञः।"

**'Dama' refers to self-restraint—the control of the senses.** Every sense must be disciplined: what one sees, hears, smells, speaks, eats, and touches should be done with awareness and moderation. Many people are constantly restless—fidgeting with their clothes, adjusting their hair, or tapping their feet. Stability in life comes with discipline of the senses.

Some people behave like human scanners—wherever they go, they analyze everything: the décor, the furniture, the clothing, even the air conditioner brand. At weddings, they recall what someone wore at a previous event and remark upon it. This tendency reflects a lack of restraint. Similarly, curiosity about irrelevant matters—such as gossiping with household help about neighborhood events—is another form of unchecked sensory engagement.

Dama teaches that not everything needs to be observed or known. Restraining the senses from unnecessary distractions cultivates inner peace and discipline. Practicing such control helps one focus on what is truly important, leading to a more harmonious and purposeful life.

The concept of **Yajna** is often understood as fire sacrifices or Agnihotra rituals. However, in the Bhagavad Gītā, particularly in the fourth chapter, twelve different types of Yajnas are described.

In the eighteenth chapter, it is stated,

**यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि।।10.25।।**

indicating that the recitation of the Bhagavān's name is also a form of Yajna. Yajna is not merely an offering into the fire but any action performed with a sense of duty and for the welfare of all. When one performs actions selflessly, without expecting anything in return, those actions become Yajna. If a task is done with an expectation of a reward, it ceases to be Yajna.

There are many types of Yajnas, including the dissemination of spiritual wisdom, such as the "**Gītā Jnana Yajna**" and "**Srimad Bhagavat Katha Jnana Yajna.**" These Yajnas do not involve fire rituals but are acts of imparting knowledge for the benefit of society. Thus, "**Danam Yajna Swadhyaya Tapah**" are essential principles to be followed.

**Swadhyaya** is commonly interpreted as reading, but in the spiritual sense, it goes far beyond that. **The term "Swadhyaya" is composed of "Swa" (self) and "Adhyaya" (study), meaning the study of the self.** It is an inquiry into "Who am I?" This search for self-awareness includes reading, questioning, observing, listening, and contemplating. It is a path of self-discovery and spiritual introspection, leading to deeper knowledge of one's true identity beyond the material existence.

Similarly, **Tapasya (austerity)** is often visualized as extreme penance, such as standing on one leg or meditating in freezing waters. However, Tapasya encompasses much more—it is the endurance of hardship for the sake of righteousness, undertaken with joy. Observing a small vow and joyfully enduring any associated difficulties constitutes Tapasya. For example, during the Karva Chauth fast, mothers eagerly anticipate the moonrise despite enduring hunger and thirst throughout the day. Their perseverance is an expression of Tapasya.

Observing Ekadashi fasting is another example, which Vaishnavas consider essential. Fasting, abstaining from certain foods, and following spiritual practices joyfully all fall under Tapasya. Simple vows such as not drinking tea before offering prayers or not speaking untruths are also forms of Tapasya. If an individual commits to reading the Gītā before drinking water, they should uphold that commitment, even if delayed. Such self-discipline cultivates inner strength.

Tapasya is not limited to physical austerity; it extends to speech and mind as well. The Bhagavad Gītā (Chapter 17) describes three types of Tapas—physical, verbal, and mental. Physical Tapasya includes acts of service and discipline. Mental Tapasya involves maintaining a peaceful and content mind under all circumstances:

**"मनः-प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं"**

—always keeping the mind calm and happy. Those who master this are true ascetics of the mind.

Verbal Tapasya entails speaking only what is truthful, pleasant, and beneficial:

**सत्यं प्रिय-हितं च यत् ।**

—truthful, kind, and beneficial speech is the essence of verbal Tapasya. Avoiding speech that causes pain to others is an act of great discipline. One who practices Tapasya in body, speech, and mind leads a life of true self-mastery and spiritual fulfillment.

**Arjavam, the virtue of simplicity**, signifies being genuine and transparent in one's conduct. It stands in contrast to deceit and pretense. An exemplary illustration of this virtue is found in the story of Shabari, a revered devotee of Śrī Rama.

Shabari, originally named Shramana, belonged to the Bhil community and was also associated with the Shabar tribe. She was the daughter of the tribal chief. Her childhood was spent in a small village near present-day Raipur, where a temple dedicated to her still exists.

At the age of ten or eleven, Shabari formed a deep bond with a small lamb. The two were inseparable, spending every moment together. However, as she grew older, her parents arranged her marriage, in accordance with the customs of their tribe. Just three days before her wedding, Shabari awoke one morning to find her beloved lamb missing. Frantic, she searched everywhere and questioned her parents, but they remained silent.

Distressed, she spent the entire day in anguish, refusing even a drop of water. By evening, a kind-hearted friend finally revealed the truth—her lamb, along with others from the village, had been taken to be sacrificed for the wedding feast. In their tribe, it was customary to slaughter animals to provide a grand meal for the wedding guests.

Upon hearing this, young Shabari was devastated. The idea that her wedding would lead to the loss of so many innocent lives was unbearable. She realized that no one would listen to her pleas to stop the practice. However, she was determined not to be the cause of such cruelty. She resolved to flee before the wedding, ensuring that the feast would not take place and the animals would be spared.

That very night, she mustered the courage to leave her village, something no child of the tribe had ever done. The tribal boundaries were strictly adhered to, as stepping beyond them posed risks from wild animals and unknown dangers. Yet, Shabari, with an unwavering sense of righteousness, ran as far as she could, whispering prayers and determined to prevent the sacrifice. Without a second thought, she ran away from her home, crossing rivers, mountains, and forests with a single determination: to prevent harm to any living being due to her. For three days and nights, she walked tirelessly, neither eating nor drinking, until exhaustion overtook her.

Unbeknownst to her, she collapsed near the ashram of Sage Matanga, a great rishi living in deep meditation within a dense forest, far from human settlements. His disciples were the only ones who visited him for spiritual learning. When Sage Matanga went to bathe in the river that evening, he noticed the unconscious girl lying on the path. Compassion filled his heart as he sprinkled water on her face and gently touched her forehead. His divine presence revived her, and as she awoke, he asked with great kindness,

"Child, who are you? How did you come here? What brings you to this lonely forest?"

With tears streaming down her face, Shramana narrated her story—her home, her father's position as the tribal chief, her impending wedding, and her flight to save the innocent animals. Sage Matanga listened intently, his eyes welling up with emotion. He admired her courage and selflessness.

"You are a brave soul, my child," he said. "You risked your own life for the sake of helpless creatures. You possess a heart of true dharma."

He then offered to take her back to her home and speak to her family so that they would spare the animals. However, when he asked for the location of her village, she hesitated.

"I do not know, Gurudev. I have been walking for three days without direction. I crossed rivers and mountains aimlessly. I no longer know where I came from."

Sage Matanga realized that she had wandered far from her home. Her dialect did not match the local speech, which changed every few regions, indicating that she had traveled a great distance.

"Then stay here in the ashram, my child," he said with kindness. "If your family searches for you, they may find you here. Until then, you can remain in my shelter."

Touched by his compassion and wisdom, a deep devotion for the sage was awakened in her heart. Though uneducated, she had an innate inclination for devotion and service. In the ashram, she performed small tasks with great love—cleaning, arranging, and serving with sincerity. However, some of the sage's disciples were displeased with her presence. They murmured among themselves, questioning why a girl from an unknown background was allowed to stay in their hermitage.

Shabari overheard their words. Though their remarks stung, her primary concern was Sage Matanga's peace. She feared that if they complained to him, it would trouble his heart. She could not bear the thought of causing even the slightest distress to her guru. So, without informing anyone, she silently left the ashram.

Yet, her heart remained tethered to her guru. She longed to serve him but dared not disturb his disciples. Then, an idea took root in her mind. Since she was from the Bhil tribe, she was skilled in living among trees. She decided to stay hidden in the dense forest and serve from afar.

At night, when the ashram was asleep, she would quietly emerge and clear the path leading to the river, removing stones and thorns so that her guru could walk without discomfort in the morning. She swept the surroundings of the ashram and performed other tasks, making sure no one saw her.

A few days later, Matanga Rishi noticed that the path had become exceptionally clean. He remarked to his disciples, "Have you noticed how the path is unusually clear these days? Someone must be sweeping it regularly." The disciples admitted that they had not done it, nor did they know who was responsible. Some speculated that perhaps celestial beings were tending to the sage's path. Though

Matanga Rishi found it peculiar, he did not dwell on the thought.

Six months passed, and Shabri's devotion only deepened. She felt she could serve her guru even better. She observed that the disciples often had to travel far into the forest to collect firewood for sacred rituals. To ease their burden, she began gathering wood during the day and discreetly placing it near the ashram so that the disciples would find it readily available.

Over time, Matanga Rishi noticed another odd occurrence. His disciples, who previously took long hours to collect firewood, were returning in much less time. Upon questioning them, they explained that they found firewood conveniently placed near the ashram every day. This piqued the rishi's curiosity further. How could these things happen so seamlessly without anyone knowing who was behind them?

A year passed, and Shabri continued her silent service. But one night, Matanga Rishi resolved to uncover the mystery. He instructed his disciples to hide and watch who was responsible for cleaning the path and gathering the firewood. As midnight approached, they saw a faint figure sweeping the path. Matanga Rishi stepped forward and called out, "Who is there?" Stunned and unable to respond, Shabri froze in place. The rishi moved closer and recognized her instantly.

"You are the same girl who once stayed in my ashram! Where have you been all this time? Why did you leave?" he asked with great compassion.

Overwhelmed with emotion, Shabri bowed at his feet and wept. Though she remained silent, Matanga Rishi, being a great sage, understood everything. When he turned to his disciples, one of them confessed their mistake—they had spoken ill of her, and she had overheard their words. Realizing she might have hurt her guru, she had left the ashram to spare him any sorrow.

Matanga Rishi was deeply moved by her devotion. "My child, you have endured so much hardship, yet your love and service never wavered. Do not think yourself unworthy; you have performed the greatest form of service. Come, return to the ashram."

With newfound reverence, Sumana's devotion only grew stronger. Her guru's words filled her heart with immense joy. She resumed her service at the ashram with even greater dedication.

However, soon after, all the disciples completed their studies and returned to their homes. One day, Matanga Rishi announced, "The time has come for me to depart for the Himalayas. My body's journey is nearing its end, and I wish to leave it in deep meditation."

Hearing this, Shabri was overcome with sorrow. "Gurudev, if you leave, what will I do? I have no purpose without you. Who will I serve?" she wept.

Matanga Muni, deeply moved by her unwavering devotion, reassured her, "Do not grieve, Shabri. Your pure heart and selfless devotion have earned you a divine blessing. One day, Bhagavān Ram Himself will come to give you darshan." Saying this, he departed, leaving Shabri with his parting words etched in her heart.

As the days passed, Shabri held onto her Guru's promise with unshakable faith. But then, a thought troubled her—she had forgotten to ask which direction Bhagavān Ram would come from! Resolute in her devotion, she began sweeping the paths in all four directions—one day to the north, another to the south, then to the east, and the west—ensuring that wherever Bhagavān Ram chose to come from, the path would be ready for His arrival. She prepared fresh water daily, plucked fruits, and set

up an asana, believing that when He arrived, she would offer Him all her love and service.

Matanga Muni had also assured her that no wild animal would harm her, and she would not be troubled by the forces of nature. Thus, unshaken by time and worldly distractions, she waited with pure devotion. Days turned into years, and years into decades. The young, innocent Shabari, once a girl of fifteen, grew old, her back bent with age, her hair turned white, and her face wrinkled. Yet, her eyes retained their unwavering radiance, constantly fixed on the path, awaiting Bhagavān Ram's arrival. Decades passed, but her faith remained unbroken. She never wavered, never doubted. Every morning, she would repeat to herself, "Guruji said that Bhagavān Ram will come. Bhagavān Ram will surely come."

And one day, Bhagavān Rama, in search of Mata Sita, changed His route and arrived at Matanga Rishi's ashram, drawn by the power of the Guru's blessing.

"ताहि देइ गति राम उदारा। सबरी के आश्रम पगु धारा।।  
सबरी देखि राम गृहँ आए। मुनि के बचन समुझि जियँ भाए।।

As soon as Shabari beheld Bhagwan Ram and Lakshman approaching, her heart overflowed with ecstasy. The very first thought that arose in her was, "My Guruji's words have come true!" She had never doubted his promise, and now, standing before her, was the Bhagavān Himself, proving his words right.

"सरसिज लोचन बाहु बिसाला। जटा मुकुट सिर उर बनमाला।।  
स्याम गौर सुंदर दोउ भाई। सबरी परी चरन लपटाई।।"

She saw the divine brothers, Bhagavān Ram and Lakshman, with their broad shoulders, majestic presence, matted locks adorned with crowns, and garlands on their chests. Overcome with devotion, she ran forward and fell at their feet, holding onto them tightly, as though fearing that this moment might slip away.

She had imagined countless times how she would greet Bhagavān Ram, what she would say, how she would express her love and devotion. But now, standing before Him, her voice failed her.

प्रेम मगन मुख बचन न आवा। पुनि पुनि पद सरोज सिर नावा।।

Her heart was brimming with love, yet words refused to form. Again and again, she bowed at His feet, tears streaming from her eyes. She hurried to bring water and washed His feet with utmost reverence.

"सादर जल लै चरन पखारे। पुनि सुन्दर आसन बैठारे।।"

The Ramayana describes that she washed His feet with water, but the saints say she first washed them with her tears and then again with the sacred water she had kept for Him. She lovingly prepared an asana for Bhagavān Ram to sit upon and invited Him to rest.

Lakshman, seeing her aged hands reaching for Bhagavān's feet, was momentarily alarmed, thinking it improper. But before he could speak, Bhagavān Ram gestured to him to remain silent. He allowed Shabari to serve Him as she wished, letting her devotion flow unhindered. Overwhelmed with love, Shabari kept washing His feet, lost in the bliss of touching the divine. **She wept, she washed, she wept, and she washed again.** For her, this was no ordinary act—it was the culmination of a lifetime of devotion. She was absorbed in the sacred joy of serving her Prabhu.

Then, with great reverence, she brought fruits for Bhagavān Rama.

**"कन्द मूल फल सुरस अति दिए राम कहूँ आनि।**

**प्रेम सहित प्रभु खाए बारम्बार बखानि।।"**

She had carefully tasted each fruit before offering it to ensure only the sweetest ones were given. Seeing this, Lakshman was again startled—how could she offer half-eaten fruits to Bhagavān? But before he could object, Bhagavān Ram, with great love, took the fruits and ate them joyfully.

Lakshman was astonished. For fourteen years, he had painstakingly gathered the best fruits of the forest for Bhagavān Ram, yet never had Bhagavān expressed such delight. But today, with every bite of Shabari's offering, He repeatedly praised their sweetness.

When Bhagavān Ram finally returned from exile and later visited Janakpur, King Janak welcomed Him with an elaborate feast, offering the most exquisite dishes. Bhagavān Ram ate them, yet He turned to Lakshman and remarked, "These dishes are wonderful, but they do not compare to Shabari's fruits." Similarly, when He returned to Ayodhya and the noble citizens hosted a grand banquet in His honor, Bhagavān Ram again said, "Lakshman, I still remember the taste of Shabari's fruits. Nothing can match the love with which they were offered."

Such was the devotion of Shabari that even when Lakshman had once discarded the fruits she offered, it was later said that those very fruits, infused with her devotion, held the power to revive him.

After serving Bhagavān Ram, Shabari stood before Him with folded hands, unable to speak. She wanted to express so much but was overcome with emotion. Finally, after a long pause, she spoke, "How can I praise You, O Prabhu? I am of the lowest birth, my intellect is dull, and I know nothing of scriptures. How can someone like me offer You a proper prayer?"

**"केहि बिधि अस्तुति करौ तुम्हारी। अधम जाति मैं जड़मति भारी।।**

**अधम ते अधम अधम अति नारी। तिन्ह महुँ मैं मतिमंद अघारी।।"**

With utmost humility, she confessed her unworthiness. "I am not learned, nor do I belong to a noble lineage. I am nothing, yet You have graced me with Your presence."

Hearing this, Bhagavān Rama smiled gently and took Shabari's hands in His own.

**"कह रघुपति सुनु भामिनि बाता,"**

He said, "Listen, Shabari. Do not think of yourself as lowly. For Me, there is only one bond that matters—the bond of devotion.

**"जाति पाँति कुल धर्म बड़ाई। धन बल परिजन गुन चतुराई।।**

**भगति हीन नर सोहइ कैसा। बिनु जल बारिद देखिअ जैसा।।"**

"A person may belong to the highest caste, possess the greatest wealth, have immense strength, intelligence, and family prestige, but without devotion, he is like a cloud without water—of no use."

This was an extraordinary moment, for Bhagavān Ram was giving direct spiritual instruction without being asked. Normally, divine teachings were given only when a disciple posed a question, like Arjun in the Bhagavad Gītā. But here, Shabari had not asked for knowledge. She had simply stood with folded hands, overwhelmed with love. Yet, Bhagavān Ram, moved by her devotion, imparted these profound truths.

In a rare and exceptional moment, Prabhu Rama, without being asked, gave Shabari the highest

spiritual teaching: **the Navadha Bhakti**. He instructed her to listen attentively and explained the nine forms of devotion:

नवधा भगति कहउँ तोहि पाहीं।  
सावधान सुनु धरु मन माहीं।।

- **prathama bhagati samtanha kara samgā** – The first form of devotion is associating with saints.
- **dūsari rati mama kathā prasamgā** – The second is having deep attachment to hearing the Divine's pastimes.
- **gura pada paṃkaja sevā tisari bhagati amāna** | – The third is selfless service to the Guru's lotus feet.
- **cauthi bhagati mama guna gana kari kapaṭa taji gāna**|| – The fourth is singing the Divine's glories with sincerity, free of deceit.
- **maṃtra jāpa mama dṛḍha bisvāsā** | **paṃcama bhajana so beda prakāsā**|| – The fifth is chanting the Divine's name with unwavering faith.
- **chaṭha dama sila birati bahu karamā** | **nirata niraṃtara sajjana dharamā**|| – The sixth is practicing self-control and engaging in righteous deeds.
- **sātavaṃ sama mohi maya jaga dekhā** | **motem samta adhika kari lekhā**|| – The seventh is seeing the Divine in all beings and revering saints above even the Lord Himself.
- **āṭhavaṃ jathālābha samtoṣā** | **sapanehuṃ nahim dekhi paradoṣā**|| – The eighth is being content with whatever one receives and never finding fault in others.
- **navama sarala saba sana chalahinā** | **mama bharosa hiyaṃ haraṣa na dīnā**|| – The ninth and dearest form of devotion is pure simplicity and an honest heart, devoid of deceit.

Prabhu Rama assured Shabari that anyone—be it man, woman, or even an animal—who possesses even one of these nine forms of devotion becomes dear to Him. "**Sakal prakār bhagati dridha tore,**" He certified that Shabari possessed all nine forms, making her exceedingly beloved to Him.

He then bestowed upon her a state of spiritual liberation that even great yogis could not attain in countless lifetimes. "**jogi bṛṃda duralabha gati joī to kahūṃ āju sulabha bhi soī**||4||" declaring that what was rare even for ascetics was now easily achieved by Shabari.

After receiving the Prabhu's blessings, Shabari, who had never studied scriptures or practiced rigorous austerities, attained the highest spiritual state through the power of her devotion. She chose the path of yogic fire to dissolve her body, merging her consciousness into the divine lotus feet of Bhagavān. "Taja jog pāvak deha, haripada līn bhāi," she renounced the material body in the sacred fire and became eternally united with Śrī Rama.

Through the grace of her Guru and the simplicity of her heart, Shabari reached the ultimate state of divine love. Her story remains an eternal testament to the power of devotion, proving that true bhakti transcends all worldly barriers.

### Question and Answers

#### Veena Ji

**Q:** I had a request. Earlier, we used to get the link for the Ekadashi recitation of the Bhagavad Gita, but now we are unable to find it. We would like to receive it.

**A:** You can join the Ekadashi group, where all the links are shared. Right now, we can send it in the Zoom chat, and the coordinators can also share it in the group.

## Nalini Ji

**Q:** After a person passes away, should the body be cremated, or is it appropriate to donate the body? I feel inclined towards body donation.

**A:** There is no scriptural provision for donating the body after death, so it should not be done. Many people ask about organ donation—such as donating eyes or other organs. That can be done, and any potential drawbacks will be balanced by the merit gained. However, donating the entire body is not recommended.

## Meena Ji

**Q:** In Sundarkand, there is a verse by Tulsidas: "**ḍhola gaṃvāra śūdra paśu aura nārī saba tāḍanā ke adhikārī.**" Can you clarify its meaning?

**A:** This is a very common question. The essence of any scripture is conveyed either by its main character or by its author. The words of the protagonist or the writer hold significance, while statements made by negative characters do not represent the scripture's message.

This particular chaupai was spoken by Samudra Dev (the ocean deity). When Bhagavān Rama asked the ocean to give way for three days, it did not comply. Eventually, when Bhagavān Rama, in anger, prepared to dry up the ocean with his bow, the ocean god became frightened and appeared before him.

In fear and guilt, he said:

**"ḍhola gaṃvāra śūdra paśu aura nārī saba tāḍanā ke adhikārī"**

He was referring to himself, acknowledging that without strict discipline, he would not understand or act correctly.

This statement was made by a **kupatra (negative character)**. If villains like Ravana, Kumbhakarna, or Meghnath say something, that does not mean it is an ideal teaching. Such statements should not be considered the core message of the scripture. Have you ever heard any saint quoting this verse to justify discrimination? The words of Prabhu Rama or Tulsidas hold value, but the statements of negative characters like Ravana or the ocean deity do not carry scriptural authority.

For instance, Ravana once called Prabhu Rama a mere wandering ascetic boy. Does that mean we accept it as truth? Of course not! Similarly, this statement by the ocean deity should not be considered an ideal or philosophical teaching.

## Rajkumari Ji

**Q:** You talked about knowledge, not about sharing it. When we read the Gītā and attend discourses, we learn something from it and share it within our circle. However people might perceive it as an attempt to display knowledge. Who has the right to donate knowledge? If I hear something and simply pass it on, is that truly donating knowledge? Did I qualify myself as its rightful recipient? Did I undergo formal training? Was I granted the authority to share it? Simply copying and pasting what we hear is not donating knowledge.

**A:** True knowledge donation means possessing knowledge that is rightfully ours—something we have acquired and practiced. When instructors teach the Gītā, they do so after formally studying it, taking exams, and earning the qualifications to teach. Only after passing such tests do they gain the right to share that knowledge. Merely hearing something and passing it along is not knowledge donation. If you haven't internalized or practiced it, it isn't yours to give.

## Kamna Ji

**Q:** Are there any specific rules for keeping Laddu Gopal at home?

**A:** The only rule is service. Offer food daily, give Him a proper bath, and take care of Him with devotion. If you are not performing a ritualistic vow (**Anushthana**) or seeking a specific outcome, then there are no rigid rules in devotion to God. Worship Him with pure love, and He will be pleased. However, if you seek something in return, then many rules apply. If you have no desires, devotion has no restrictions.

**SP Ji**

**Q:** The story of Mata Shabari that you narrated was truly inspiring. She performed penance and waited for Prabhu Rama for so many years. But when I think about real life, such as jobs, we make commitments, but when a better opportunity arises, we leave for something else. Sometimes, I feel like I might be betraying someone. Is making false promises to God similar?

**A:** It is human nature to make commitments and then shift when situations change. But this very nature traps us and doesn't bring real benefit. That is why true devotion is done without expectations. Worshiping God with desires is not wrong—Śrī Krishna Himself describes four types of devotees in the fourth chapter:

- 1. **The distressed (Aarto)** - Those who seek God in times of suffering.
- 2. **The curious (Jigyasu)** - Those who seek to know Him.
- 3. **The wealth-seeker (Artharthi)** - Those who worship for material gain.
- 4. **The wise (Jnani)** - Those who worship with pure knowledge and love.

The first three are beginner devotees, whereas the last one is a supreme devotee. Even devotion with desires is accepted by God, but true devotion is without conditions.

**Priyanka Ji**

**Q:** When I perform worship, random, irrelevant thoughts enter my mind. How do I stop them?

**A:** This happens to everyone—it is natural. The reason is that our mind reflects on whatever we have done throughout the day. If we are awake for 16 hours, whatever we have engaged in during that time will surface when we try to focus.

If we spend the day watching reels, gossiping, or engaging in distractions, then when we sit for worship, those same things will flood our thoughts. If we haven't spent the day in a sattvic (pure) manner, it is nearly impossible for the mind to concentrate on God in just 10 minutes. The key is to regulate your entire day and make it sattvic; only then will meditation and worship become focused.

The session concluded with prayers and chanting Hanuman Chalisa. Jai Śrī Krishna.



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as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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