

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-11), Sunday, 08 June 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/fGoCBEnie3Q>

## Paths of the Devout: Meditation, Surrender, and Renunciation

The 12th chapter of Bhagavad Gītā is **Bhakti Yoga - Yoga of Devotion**.

The session started with the customary deepa prajwalan, lighting of the divine lamp, and prayers to the divine and gurus.

As many of us know, Geeta Parivar conducts *Bhagavad Gītā* recitation classes from Monday to Friday, focusing on the correct and soulful chanting of the shlokas. On weekends, we shift our focus to deeply explore the meanings and interpretations of the verses we've learned during the week.

These weekend sessions help us uncover the timeless wisdom hidden in each shloka, understand how to apply it in our daily lives, and reflect on how it can help us grow as individuals. Just as we draw lessons from motivational stories in our curriculum, the shlokas of the Gītā offer profound, life-transforming insights. Exploring them week after week will add clarity, peace, and purpose to our lives.

We are truly blessed to be part of this sacred journey. While lakhs of people register for this program, only a few remain consistently committed. If we are still walking this path, let us remember, we are among the chosen ones, selected by Bhagavān Himself. Let us not let this divine opportunity pass us by.

Let's commit ourselves to learning, reflecting, and evolving. As we do, we will begin to experience incredible changes:

- Our confidence will grow
- Our energy will rise
- Our focus will sharpen
- Our communication and behavior will improve
- And we will feel a deep sense of inner peace

Most importantly, we get a priceless chance to become dear to Bhagavān by learning and living the eternal wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. So, let's stay fully dedicated and never think of leaving this journey.

Before we begin our study of Chapter 12, let's first understand: **What does the name *Bhagavad Gītā* truly mean?**

The *Bhagavad Gītā*, which means "Song of God", is a conversation between Bhagavān Krishna and Arjuna, a warrior prince. This sacred dialogue takes place on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, just before a great war is about to begin. Arjuna is confused and emotionally troubled about fighting his own relatives, teachers, and friends. At that moment, Bhagavān Krishna, who is his charioteer, imparts deep spiritual wisdom to him. The *Gītā* is composed of 18 chapters and contains a total of 700 shlokas.

A natural question might arise: **Why are we starting from Chapter 12 instead of the beginning?**

The answer is simple: Chapter 12 is the shortest and one of the easiest chapters to understand. Just like in mathematics, we don't begin with complex equations or calculus. We start with basics like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Similarly, it's helpful to start our journey with a chapter that presents key spiritual concepts in a clear and accessible way.

Chapter 12 lays a strong foundation by introducing the Path of Devotion (Bhakti Yoga), making it an ideal starting point for beginners. Once we build comfort and understanding here, we can gradually explore the deeper and more complex chapters with greater clarity and confidence.

## **Chapter 12: Bhakti Yoga – The Path of Devotion**

In this chapter, Bhagavān Krishna teaches Arjuna about bhakti (devotion), and how loving and sincerely worshipping the Supreme (Paramātmā) with unwavering faith can help one attain HIM. It describes what a true devotee does to become dear to Bhagavān. Just like we try to win the heart of a close friend by sharing our homework, class notes, food, sweets, and even secrets, forming a deep friendship with Paramātmā also requires devotional actions such as:

- Worshipping regularly
- Studying the *Bhagavad Gītā*
- Practicing meditation
- Performing Aarti
- Offering food with love
- Singing His glories
- Offering salutations

This chapter is short, simple, and heart-touching, making it perfect for beginners to understand the beautiful essence of spiritual love, devotion, and surrender.

### **Interactive Questions**

**Q1:** *In our daily routine, are we able to perform any of the devotional acts discussed earlier?*

- Approximately 15% of participants said they perform Aarti
- 5% mentioned they sing bhajans
- 4% said they offer prasād to Paramātmā

**Q2:** *The Mahabharata battle was fought between whom?*

- About 89% answered correctly by selecting Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas

### **Final Note to Students**

At this stage of the discussion, the children were gently reminded that this subject is new and unfamiliar to them. They were encouraged to listen with full attention, as it will take time to become comfortable with the terms and concepts. However, by attending the sessions regularly, they will gradually build understanding and eventually develop a genuine interest in the subject.

Bhakti Yoga means connecting with Bhagavān through sincere devotion, and by doing so, one can directly become dear to Him. This chapter begins with Arjuna's question, and in response, Bhagavān clears his doubt by explaining:

- the different types of devotees,
- the varieties of Bhakti, in terms of what is easier or more difficult, and
- the various ways one can practice Bhakti.

Through this, Bhagavān guides Arjuna, and all of us, on how to walk the path of devotion and grow closer to HIM.

## 12.1

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

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

Arjuna asks a very important question. He wants to know which path is better:

1. Worshipping Bhagavān in HIS personal form with love and devotion (like ŚrīKrishna, Śrī Rama, etc.),
2. Worshipping the formless, invisible, and unmanifested aspect of Paramātmā (called Brahman). Eg. the spiritual practices which yogis or sanyasis adopt while meditating on Himalayas.

This question helps begin the discussion on Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion. Arjuna is curious because people worship in different ways, and he wants clarity on which path leads more directly to spiritual success.

## 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.

Bhagavān says that those who always keep HIM in their minds and engage in daily devotional practices with complete faith and energy are the best yogis (spiritual seekers).

This shows that devotion filled with love and trust toward the personal form of Bhagavān is a very powerful and beautiful path. It is much easier to build a connection with HIM when we can relate to HIS form, qualities, and divine pastimes.

So, Bhakti (loving devotion) is praised as a strong and effective way to reach and become dear to Bhagavān.

### 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,

Bhagavān speaks about devotees who follow HIS formless form (called *Brahman*).

This formless Brahman is:

- **akṣharam:** the imperishable
- **anirdeśhyam:** the indefinable
- **avyaktam:** the unmanifest
- **achintyam:** the unthinkable

Bhagavān says that even these sincere seekers, who worship with faith and discipline, also reach HIM.

So, both paths are valid, worshipping the personal form of Bhagavān (with love and devotion), and worshipping the formless aspect (with discipline and control). However, the next verse will explain which path is easier and more suitable for most people.

#### **Avyaktam / The unmanifest -**

A small child once asked his mother, "How does Bhagavān look? Why can't we see HIM?"

The mother didn't answer immediately. Instead, she gently tapped the child, and he began to cry, feeling the pain. Surprised and upset, he asked, "Why did you hit me, Mama? It hurts!"

The mother calmly replied, "Can you see the pain?"

The boy said, "No... but I can feel it."

Then the mother lovingly explained, "Exactly, my child. Just like how pain cannot be seen but can be deeply felt, **Bhagavān too cannot always be seen with the eyes, but HE is all around us and can be felt in our hearts.**"

### 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.

### **Q: How many sense organs do we have?**

A: We have five sense organs, which help us receive information from the world around us:

- **Eyes** – for seeing (sight)
- **Ears** – for hearing (sound)
- **Nose** – for smelling (smell)
- **Tongue** – for tasting (taste)
- **Skin** – for touching (touch)

### **Q: How can we control the sense organs?**

A: By regular practice, we can slowly learn to control them.

#### **For example:**

If you're studying and someone turns on the TV, you may feel a strong urge to stop studying and watch TV. Or, if you study while listening to music, it might divide your attention and reduce focus.

In this shloka Bhagavān says that His devotees:

- Control their senses
- Remain calm and balanced in both happiness and sorrow
- Work for the welfare of others
- Worship with steady minds and full faith

Even though their path is difficult, if they are sincere and disciplined, they can also reach Him.

So, Bhagavān is saying that both Bhakti (devotion) and the path of knowledge and meditation can lead to HIM, but each requires commitment and self-control.

## **12.5**

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

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

Bhagavān explains that worshipping the formless (nirākār) aspect of Paramātmā is very difficult for most people.

Why? Because:

- We live in a world full of forms and relationships.
- It's easier to connect with something we can see, feel, or relate to.

- The formless has no image, no qualities, so it's hard to focus the mind.

So, for people living in the physical body (*with senses, emotions, and thoughts*), it's challenging to worship something they cannot see or imagine.

That's why Bhagavān gently encourages the path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga), where we can relate to HIM in HIS beautiful form, remember HIS stories, chant HIS names, and offer love with faith.

## 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 says that all our actions should be dedicated to HIM. This does not mean we should stop studying or leave everything to HIM passively. Instead, He is teaching us to put in our full effort and do our best, but to remain detached from the outcome.

Often, when we get good marks, we feel happy; but when we get low marks, we feel sad or even depressed. **A true devotee, however, remains calm and balanced, accepting the result as Prasāda, a gift from Paramātmā.** This attitude helps us stay focused, reduce stress, and grow both spiritually and academically.

## 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.

Bhagavān assures that for those who are absorbed in Bhakti (devotion), HE blesses them with divine protection and support. While living in this world, we all face various challenges and struggles, like sickness, conflicts, and emotional pain. But for the one who follows the path of Bhakti Yoga, Bhagavān promises freedom from the cycle of birth and death. Such a person will not have to return to this world again.

**So, if we truly engage in Bhagavān's bhakti, HE will uplift us (do our uddhār) and lead us to eternal peace.**

In the next few shlokas, we will learn about the different ways of practicing Bhakti, so we can choose a path that brings us closer to HIM.

## 12.8

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

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

Bhagavān is explaining the inner conflict we often experience between the mind (mana) and the intellect (buddhi). For example, when we sit down to study, the mind may distract us with thoughts of playing or watching TV, even though our intellect knows that studying is the right thing to do. This constant tug-of-war between the mind and the intellect can lead to confusion and lack of focus.

Bhagavān advises us to dedicate both our mind and intellect to HIM. When we do this, we become more centered and free from inner conflict. To help align the mind and intellect, devotees often practice meditation. Meditation strengthens concentration and helps us stay committed to what is right, rather than being led by momentary desires of the mind.

It's important to remember that we are the master of our mind, not the other way around. Unfortunately, in today's world, it often feels like the mind is the master, and we simply follow its impulses. But through regular practice and devotion, we can regain control.

So, in this shloka, Bhagavān is teaching us that **through meditation and surrendering the mind and intellect to Him, we can walk the path of Bhakti (devotion) and live a focused, purposeful life.**

**12.9**

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

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

In this shloka, Bhagavān offers a practical solution for those who struggle with meditation. Often, when a person sits to meditate, they may experience drowsiness, restlessness, or a constant flow of distracting thoughts. This can make meditation feel difficult or even impossible at times.

To help with this, Bhagavān advises us to take up regular practice. Just like learning any new skill, consistent effort in meditation will gradually bring improvement. Over time, the mind will settle, and focus will increase. So, even if we can't meditate perfectly in the beginning, **the key is to keep practicing.**

In the next shloka (12.10), Bhagavān addresses those who find it hard even to maintain a regular practice. He provides yet another compassionate path for them, showing how Bhakti can be cultivated in different ways based on one's capacity.

**12.10**

**abhyāse'pyaśamartho'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.

Bhagavān here has further simplified the path of devotion. HE says that even if one is unable to meditate or practice regularly, simply dedicating all actions wholeheartedly to HIM can lead to salvation.

The key here is sincere devotion, doing all duties as an offering to Bhagavān, without expecting a favorable outcome or worrying about the results. Such selfless surrender helps purify the heart and brings us closer to Him.

Bhagavān is showing that **anyone, at any stage, can walk the path of Bhakti if there is genuine dedication and love.**

## 12.11

### **athaitadapyaśakto'si, kartum(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.

Bhagavān in this shloka provides yet another compassionate step for those who are unable to follow the earlier methods. HE says that if meditation, regular practice, or wholehearted dedication are difficult, then **one can still attain HIM by practicing self-control and renouncing desires.**

This means controlling the senses and giving up attachment to the results of actions. The focus is on doing one's duties sincerely, but without worrying about success or failure, offering both the effort and the outcome to Paramātmā.

For example, a student should study diligently but not get anxious about marks. The effort should be wholehearted, and the result should be surrendered to Bhagavān.

This path encourages self-discipline, detachment, and devotion, making spiritual progress accessible to everyone, no matter where they are on their journey.

## Question & Answers

### Harika Ji

**Q:** What is the main thing Bhagavān teaches us in Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Gītā?

**A:** This chapter is purely focused on Bhakti (devotion). It begins with a discussion on the types of devotees (bhaktas), followed by an explanation of the various acts that qualify as bhakti. Finally, it describes the qualities of a true devotee who is dear to Bhagavān.

### Duaa Ji

**Q:** Who wrote the Bhagavad Gītā?

**A:** The Bhagavad Gītā was written by Sage Ved Vyasa.

**Q:** How did Sage Ved Vyasa get to know everything?**A:** Sage Ved Vyasa was a divinely gifted rishi (sage) and a seer of truth. He had deep spiritual realization and was blessed with divine vision (divya drishti) by Bhagavān. Through intense meditation and devotion, he could see past, present, and future clearly. That's how he was able to compose great scriptures like the Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gītā with such deep wisdom and truth.

## Ojal Ji

**Q:** How can we control the thoughts that keep coming while we study?

**A:** Bhagavān says in the Gītā, "*Give your mind and intellect to Me.*" One powerful way to begin controlling your thoughts is to meditate daily, even for a few minutes. Meditation helps train the mind to stay calm and focused.

**Q:** How can we control the thoughts that keep coming while we study?

**A:** Bhagavān says in the Gītā, "***Give your mind and intellect to Me.***" One powerful way to begin controlling your thoughts is to **meditate daily**, even for a few minutes. Meditation helps train the mind to stay calm and focused. Also, notice that when we enjoy something or are fully engaged, random thoughts don't disturb us. That's because our mind is completely focused on the activity. The same can happen with studies.

How do we build that interest? Through practice and learning. As we start to understand the subject better, our confidence grows, and so does our interest. When we enjoy what we're studying, distracting thoughts naturally reduce.

So, the key is: meditation, consistent practice, and developing interest in the subject.

It all depends on how we choose to spend our time. If we spend most of our time on TV, games, or YouTube, then studies are left behind. But if we reduce distractions and give more time to studying, we naturally become better at it.

Thus, the key to success in studies is practice and devotion. Just like in devotion to God, we need regular effort and focus to grow in our learning.



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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.

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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