

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-11), Sunday, 02 March 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/Bk2h5CyLDiM>

Various Ways to Become a Dear Devotee of Śrī Bhagavān

The 12th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Bhakti-Yoga - The Yoga of Devotion**.

The session began with the customary lighting of the lamp, followed by prayers to Śrī Bhagavān.

The young sādhaṅks were warmly welcomed to their first *vivechan* session. They were informed that in these sessions, they would understand the meaning of the *śloka*s they had learned to recite in class. This understanding would help them apply the teachings in their daily lives.

The children were encouraged to continue this journey to the end and not get intimidated by the new language. Initially Sanskrit may seem tough but gradually one gets used to it and begins to understand and enjoy it. Bhagavān loves those who study the Bhagavadgītā. So let us all promise ourselves to attend all the classes and interpretation sessions to become HIS favourites.

We may be wondering why do we commence from Chapter 12 instead of Chapter 1?

Chapter 12 is the shortest chapter with only 20 *śloka*s, and is the easiest chapter of the text. For beginners it is a great approach, as it presents a straightforward path to devotion before diving into more complex concepts found in other chapters. Just like in mathematics, where we first learn basic operations like addition and subtraction before moving on to advanced topics, beginning this journey of the Bhagavadgītā with this chapter is the best way.

To gauge the attentiveness of the class, they were asked a question. How many *śloka*s are there in chapter 12?

Most kids were eager to answer but Aarna didi got the chance to answer that there are 20 verses in chapter 12.

What is the Bhagavadgītā?

Literally, Bhagavad means "by Bhagavān," and Gītā means "song." Therefore, Bhagavad Gītā translates to "The Song Sung by Bhagavān." The Bhagavad Gītā was revealed by Bhagavān on the

battlefield of the Mahabharata war.

The children were asked another question.

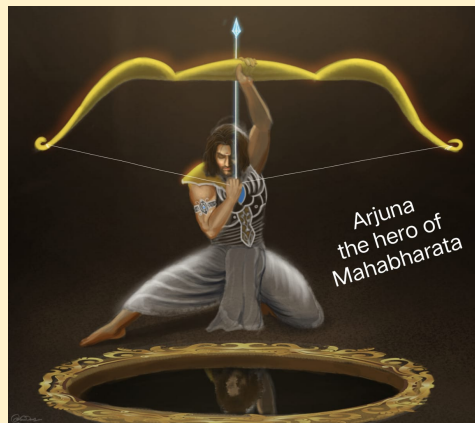
Q. Between which two parties was the Mahabharata war fought? The choices given were

- (a) between Śrī Rama and Ravana
- (b) between Śrī Krishna and Kansa
- (c) between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas
- (d) Do not know

Impressively, 82% of the children correctly answered option (c), that the war was fought between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas.

Q. Who was the hero of the Mahabharata war?

Unanimously everyone said Arjuna.



On the first day of the war, Arjuna, eager to fight valiantly, requested Bhagavān Krishna to steer his chariot to the centre of the battlefield so that he could inspect the opposing armies.



However, upon seeing his elders, Pitamah, Gurus, and other loved ones arrayed against him, Arjuna became overwhelmed, thinking how could he shoot arrows on his Pitamah, Guru and other elders of the family. He began to tremble, sweat, and feel weak. His Gāṇḍīva (bow) slipped from his hands, and

in despair, he sat down, declaring that he no longer wished to fight.



Just like our parents and teachers motivate and encourage us when we feel low and confused, this is when **Bhagavān revealed the divine teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā to dispel Arjuna's confusion and guide him towards his duty of a warrior - Kṣatriya Dharma.**

We often hear that the Bhagavadgītā is a life manual. It teaches us the art of living. This is absolutely true. Throughout its verses, **the Gītā teaches us how to lead a righteous and fulfilling life.** The do's and don'ts are thoughtfully explained across various chapters, providing clear guidance on ethical and moral living.

With consistent study and reflection, these teachings can be adapted into our daily lives. By doing so, **we can cultivate wisdom, make better decisions, and become smarter and more intelligent individuals.**

Bhakti can be expressed in various ways, such as singing bhajans, reciting prayers, performing āratī, engaging in japa (chanting), yajña (sacrificial offerings), meditation, offering prasād or flowers, or simply by remembering HIM with love and sincerity.

Before delving into the verses, the children were asked which method of *Bhakti* they preferred. The responses were as follows:

- 54% practiced a mix of all the methods mentioned above.
- 18% performed āratī only.
- 10% enjoyed singing bhajans.
- 1% offered prasād.
- 10% offered flowers.

When Bhagavān revealed the profound knowledge of the Bhagavadgītā, Arjuna, seeking clarity, asked HIM numerous questions. The 12th chapter, Bhakti Yoga, begins with one such important question posed by Arjuna.

12.1

arjuna uvāca
evaṁ(m) satatayuktā ye, bhaktāstvām(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 asked Bhagavān whether HE preferred *Saguna* devotees or *Nirguna* devotees.

Saguna devotees are those who worship Bhagavān in HIS manifested form. They express their devotion by visiting temples, offering prayers, performing *puja*, *arti*, and presenting flowers and *prasad* to HIS idols.



Nirguna devotees, on the other hand, worship the indestructible, unmanifest Brahmān. They go to serene places like mountains and meditate on the formless Divine, remaining unaffected by external conditions such as hunger or cold.



Bhagavān began to answer Arjuna's question by describing the qualities of both Saguna and Nirguna devotees.

12.2

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

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

Śrī Bhagavān said that HE likes those devotees who worship HIM every day with utmost faith and devotion.



We often limit ourselves to worshipping Bhagavān only once a week, but this is not the right approach. One must remember HIM always (**nityayuktā**) and offer every work done to HIM. Remembering HIM inconsistently or only when we desire a wish to be granted is wrong.

Often, when we sit down to study, our mind gets distracted by thoughts of playing. However, true devotees keep their focus and contemplation constantly on Bhagavān. Whatever they do, they always remember HIM. **Such devotees are dear to Bhagavān.**

While walking to school we usually sing bollywood songs which is not right. Instead we should chant HIS name or sing HIS bhajans.

12.3

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

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

In this verse, Bhagavān described the unmanifested **Nirguna Swaroop** (formless aspect) of the Divine. HE is not visualised or seen in the form of idols or photos like we see Bhagavān Vishnu with a Shankha, chakra, lotus and mace. HE used eight adjectives to explain HIS unmanifested swaroop.

- **Akṣara:** means indestructible or imperishable. Bhagavān is not destroyable. HE transcends all forms of destruction.
- **Anirdeśyaṁ:** means that which cannot be described. Things that we have not seen or experienced cannot be fully described by us. Similarly, since no one has seen Bhagavān in HIS true form, we cannot accurately describe HIM. This was illustrated with the following story.

A child once asked his mother why he should believe in God since no one has seen HIM. The mother, in response, slapped the child. The child cried, saying his cheek was hurting. The mother, however, refused to believe his pain, saying, "I cannot see your pain." The child tried to explain that pain is something he is feeling, but the mother persisted, saying, "I cannot see 'feeling'." Eventually, when the child became frustrated, the mother gently explained, "Just like pain is something you can feel or experience, Bhagavān too can be felt or experienced through faith and devotion. You may not see HIM, but you can experience HIS presence in your heart through sincere devotion.



- **Avyaktaṁ:** means that which cannot be seen. Just like pain HE is invisible.
- **Sarvatra:** Who is present everywhere - all pervading, omnipresent. Bhagavān is in every particle of this creation.
- **Acintyaṁ:** means the unthinkable. One does not think or contemplate on that we do not know of. Since we have not seen the *Nirakar* Bhagavān, we do not think about HIM.
- **Kūṭasth:** the unchanging. Remains the same at all times.
- **Acalaṁ:** is immovable
- **Dhruvam:** the eternal

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.

Devotees of Bhagavān are those who practice self-discipline over their senses. There are five sense organs such as the eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and skin. **To become HIS devotee we need to learn to control**

our sense organs.



For example, when we are told to stop using the phone and focus on studying, we often delay, saying, "Five more minutes." This leads to hours spent on the phone. This shows a lack of control over our senses, and it is something we should avoid. When it is time to play, we should play; when it is time to study, we should focus on studying. It is seen that many children listen to music while studying maths. This means they do not have control over their ears. This leads to poor concentration like the cartoon character Lobita who got poor marks due to poor concentration.

If we want to achieve success in any area, we need to have control over our senses. Also if we lack control over our senses, Bhagavān may not be pleased with us.



Further Bhagavān advised **Sārvabhūtahite ratāḥ**. This means to help others, wish well for everyone, and be of service to all.



When asked who all are helpful to others, most of the children raised their hands in the affirmative.

The verse can be summarised as Bhagavān advising to fully control the senses and engage in actions that benefit the welfare of everyone.

A question was asked to the children:

Q. How many types of devotees are mentioned in the first verse?

The options were: **two, three, four, and six.**

Only 71% children gave the right answer i.e., **Two types of devotees** are mentioned in the first verse.

12.5

**kleśo'dhikatarasteṣāṁ(m), avyaktāśaktacetasām,
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 says that worshiping the *Nirguna* (formless) aspect is difficult for an ordinary devotee. Performing intense penance without food or water for long periods or meditating in the cold

Himalayas is a challenging task. For us, even bathing with cold water in the winter feels tough.



Therefore, first, we should try to become *Saguna* devotee, as it is easier and more accessible. For this we should pray to Bhagavān Rama or Krishna or Ganesh ji, go to temples, chant HIS name, sing bhajans etc. Through *Saguna bhakti*, we can gradually build the strength to move toward the higher practice of *Nirguna* worship.



12.6

**ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi, mayi sannnyasya 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.

The following few verses show the path to become a devotee of Bhagavān easily.

In this verse, Bhagavān advised that whatever we do throughout the day - whether eating, studying, playing, sleeping, watching TV, etc., we should do it with the remembrance of Bhagavān. We should constantly speak to HIM and share our actions with HIM. We must thank HIM for everything we have. This too is a form of remembrance and devotion to HIM.



Further Bhagavān advised to surrender all actions to HIM. This means we should only focus on our actions and not worry about the results. We need to put in our maximum effort in any situation, and then trust that Bhagavān will take care of the outcome, even if it's not exactly what we hoped for.

Say for example, if one aims to get 90% marks in a class test and ends up with 85%, one should not be upset. We need to accept what we get as the will of Bhagavān and be happy and satisfied. At the same time, one should not be jealous of the other classmates who scored 90% and above. Jealousy is a quality that is disliked by Bhagavān.

The following shloka from chapter 2 also explains that we should focus on action only and not worry about the results.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन।

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि॥2.47॥

Bhagavān tells Arjuna, You only have a right to action (karma) and not to the fruits of your karma. Do not become a person who constantly meditates upon (gets attached to) the results of one's karma.

12.7

**teṣāmaham(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 said those who dedicate all their actions to HIM, and worship and meditate on HIM with faith and devotion; HE frees them from the cycle of birth and death and also blesses them with special attributes like more intelligence, increased concentration, energised mind etc. These increased attributes make us a better individual.

Therefore we should strive to become good devotees of Bhagavān so that we are blessed by HIM.

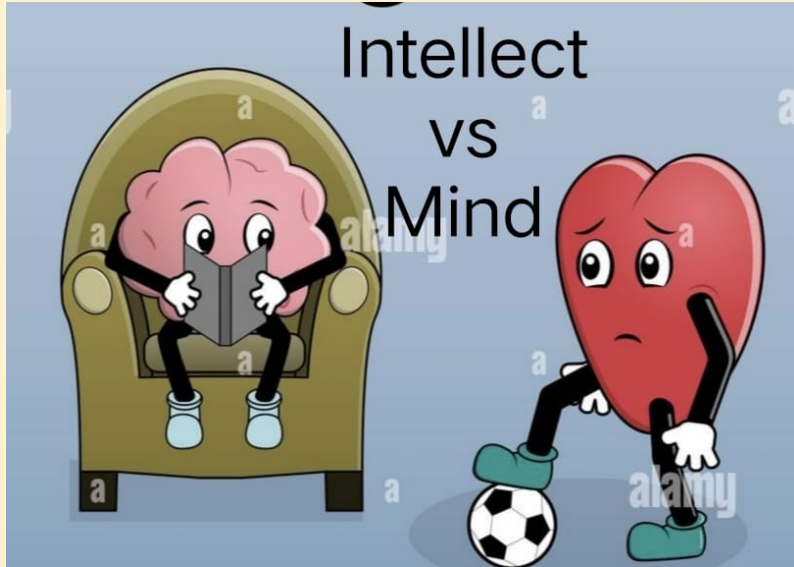


12.8

**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.

There is often a conflict between the mind and the intellect. Whenever we try to do virtuous things, the mind tends to pull us toward more appealing, often distracting actions. For example, if one needs to study and complete the homework, the mind gets distracted towards play, or music, or some snacks. The intellect urges us to focus on studying, but the mind is drawn to the distractions.



Bhagavān advises us to offer both the mind and intellect onto HIM. By doing so, the mind will not lead us astray, concentration will improve and we will be able to focus on our goal better.

This is called meditation and is a way to come closer to Bhagavān and become HIS favourite.



For those who are unable to meditate upon HIM, HE showcases another way to concentrate on HIM in the next shloka.

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.

For those who find meditation to be a difficult option Bhagavān put forth another way of worshipping HIM.

HE said if meditation was a difficult option then **one can attain HIM through the yoga of practice (abhyāsayogena)**. Through practice, we can try to improve our meditation.

As they say - "**Practice makes a man perfect**". With constant practice, we will be able to meditate upon Bhagavān and eventually become a devotee who is dear to HIM.



For those who are lazy and are unable to practice meditating on HIM, HE gives yet another way to come closer to HIM in the next verse.

To keep the children engaged they were asked

Q. What is the name of the 12th chapter? Options being

- (a) Purushottam Yoga
- (b) Bhakti Yoga
- (c) Karma Yoga
- (d) Sāṃkhya Yoga

94% children gave the right answer - Bhakti Yoga

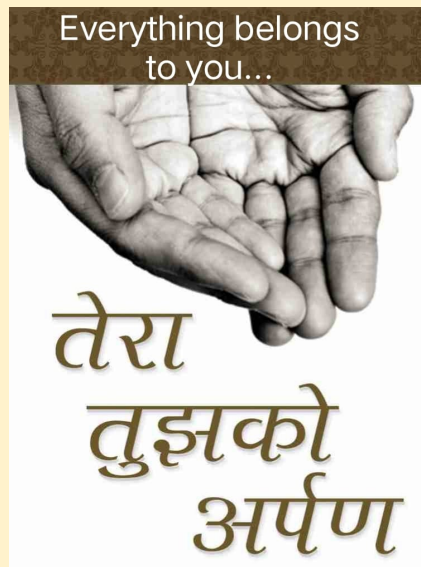
12.10

**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 said that if you are unable to practice meditation, even then do everything with complete surrender to HIM. This too is a form of devotion.

We are advised to perform all actions with the attitude that everything belongs to HIM, and you are doing it for HIM. Do everything as an offering to HIM, with the feeling that you are dedicating it to the Divine.



Say for example, while doing homework, we need to believe that it is Bhagavān who is helping us complete the homework. During play time, we need to believe that it is Bhagavān who has helped us to play. Before we eat, we need to believe that it is by the grace of Bhagavān that we are blessed with food. In a nutshell, we need to see HIS grace in every small or big activity that we do.

12.11

**athaitadapyaśakto'si, kartuṁ(m) madyogamāśritaḥ,
sarVākarmaphalatyaḡam(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 now presents the last option to become HIS dearest devotee if all the methods suggested until now are difficult to adopt and follow.

Whatever action we do, we expect good results / fruits. Herein, **Bhagavān advised to detach from the results of action.** HE said that one needs to dedicate the results of all actions to HIM. Any small or big task that we do, we need to put in our best efforts with sincerity and hard work. However, if the results are not as per our expectations, then we should not be disheartened.

When we take exams we expect good results. Now if we do not get 80% marks which we were expecting, we should not get angry or sad. We should detach from the results and work harder the next time to achieve better marks. Whatever we do we must do with full dedication, giving our 100%. However we must not attach to the result of the action.

Whatever the result, offer it to HIM. Just as one does not worry about a pen once it has been gifted to someone else, similarly, when we dedicate our actions to Bhagavān, we remain unaffected by their outcomes.



Today we have seen how we can become a favourite devotee of Bhagavān. In the next session 39 qualities of a devotee (Bhakta) will be discussed. This we will understand with the help of an activity. A questionnaire will be shared. It will be designed with each question or quality (of a Bhakta) carrying ten marks. In this activity we will self-analyse to determine whether we possess that quality or not.

So please come prepared with a pen and paper. This will be a first of its kind test you will sit for where you yourselves will award marks. The intent of the activity is to self analyse, so that you improve on the qualities you lack.

The session concluded with Hari Sankirtan.

Question and Answer Session

Prisha Didi

Question - When will the quiz you talked about take place?

Answer - It will be held next Sunday.

On Sunday, there will be a discourse, and on that day, you will also have to assign yourself a score to your answers.

Poonam Didi

Question - What is the meaning of the prayer "Yogesham Sachchidanand"?

Answer - It means we are offering our salutations to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, who is

Yogesham : The Master of Yoga, meaning the one who has mastery over Yoga.

Sachchidananda : Existence (*Sat*), Consciousness (*Chit*), and Bliss (*Ananda*).

Brajapriyam : HE is deeply loved by the residents of Braj and HE also loves them immensely.

Dharmasthapakam Veeram : HE is the valiant one who establishes Dharma.

I bow to such Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, who is **Jagat Gurum** : The Guru of the entire world.

Ravish Bhaiya

Question - I have a Bhagavad Gita book with me; can I read from it?

Answer - Yes, you can read from it, but you should primarily read from the PDF we provide. You can use your book to read the *shlokas*, but when you use the PDF, it contains grammatical rules that guide how to study the text, making it easier for you to understand.

Namasvi Didi

Question - Are *Saguna* and *Nirguna* classifications of Bhakti, or are they types of Bhagavān?

Answer - *Saguna* and *Nirguna* are types of Bhagavān.

When Bhagavān manifests in a tangible form, HE is called *Saguna*.

When HE transcends physical forms, and all attributes, HE is referred to as *Nirguna*.

Kunal Bhaiya

Question - In the forthcoming quiz, how can we assign scores to ourselves?

Answer - After listening to the discourse, you have to reflect and decide the score for yourself.

Atharva Bhaiya

Question - What is the meaning of the prayer:

"*Vasudevasutam Devam Kansa-Chanur-Mardanam*

Devaki-Paramanandam Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum"

Answer -

- **Vasudeva sutam** - The son of Vasudeva, i.e., Bhagavān Śrī Krishna.
- **Devaki-Paramanandam** - The supreme joy of Mother Devaki, just as every mother finds her greatest happiness in her child.
- **Kansa-Chanur-Mardanam** - The one who destroyed Kansa and Chanur.
- Shri Krishna, who is the **Jagadguru** (Teacher of the Universe), I bow to HIM.

Robinson Bhaiya

Question: Do spirits (bhoot) actually exist?

Answer: Yes they do. They are however not the kind shown in the movies. Humans are made of 5 elements (Earth, Air, water, ether, and fire). Spirits are made of only 2 or 3 elements and so are weaker than us. They are not visible and are not harmful.

Kush Bhaiya

Question: Why is it said that we should say Ram Ram at the time of death?

Answer: Chanting the name of Ram Bhagavān is considered to give a thousand times more *punya* than chanting any the name of any other deity. That is why we are advised to chant Ram Ram.



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

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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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