

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADĠĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

2/2 (Ślōka 1-8), Sunday, 09 November 2025

Interpreter: **GĪTĀ VICAKṢAṆA DEEPAK HARSHAL JI NAGLE**

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/dClfCQ8iUEU>

Bhakti Yoga: Worship, Discipline, and Steadfast Mind

The 12th Chapter of the **Bhagavad Gītā: Bhakti Yoga – The Yoga of Devotion**

The discourse commenced with the traditional lighting of the divine lamp, a symbol of wisdom and enlightenment. As its gentle flame flickered, heartfelt prayers were offered at the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, filling the atmosphere with profound reverence and spiritual serenity.

**“Vasudeva-sutam devam, Kamsa-Chāṇūra-mardanam;
Devakī-paramānandam, Kṛṣṇam vande jagad-gurum.”**

The participants were warmly welcomed to their first Bhagavad gītā discussion session. Until now, they had been learning to recite and chant the shlokas with devotion and clarity, and some may have even started memorizing them. In this session, they shall begin to delve into the meanings of the very same verses.

The session opened with the customary lighting of the lamp, followed by the chanting of the Guru Parampara Stotram and the invocation of the Divine Source of Knowledge, The Bhagavad gītā:

This chapter, **Bhakti Yoga (Chapter 12)**, focuses on **the path of devotion**, highlighting the qualities of a true devotee and the practice of loving surrender to the Divine. The discussion aims to explore **what Arjuna and Bhagavān Krishn are actually discussing** and how we can **apply the key teachings from their dialogue** in our own lives.

THE Gītā'S WISDOM, CHOSEN FOR YOU

While moving the discussion forward, a question arose: Have we joined the Gita Learning Program because we chose to, or are we among the chosen ones? Or perhaps, has Bhagavān HIMSELF chosen us for this program?

The answer given was that we are indeed the chosen ones. It is HE who has chosen us, knowing that the knowledge of the Bhagavad gītā will guide and support us in our onward journey.

It is important that we do not let our busy schedules, be it studies, homework, or other projects, stop us

from chanting the shlokas daily. One can begin with just a single shloka and gradually increase to two, three, or more over time. Starting the day by reciting even a few verses consistently can create a meaningful routine. In today's discussion, we will explore the impact of regular chanting of shlokas, participating in bhajans and kirtans, hearing about Bhagavān, and talking about HIS teachings on our minds, hearts, and daily lives. When we incorporate such activities into our daily lives, it naturally increases our confidence and enhances our concentration. Distractions like TV, games, or social media will no longer sway us from our goals. We will remain motivated, face difficulties with ease, and develop resilience.

These are just a few of the qualities that gradually get ingrained through regular practice. As we progress, more such qualities will become evident, especially when we study Chapter 16. By following these practices, we become more energetic, joyful, and aligned with Bhagavān's grace. Over time, Shri Krishna becomes our Best Friend, a truth that will be revealed in Chapter 12. Through this chapter, we understand how to become HIS favorite and why being HIS favorite is so significant.

It is said that we are the average of our friends. If we are able to make Bhagavān our friend, then HIS qualities naturally become a part of us, and we gradually reflect HIS virtues in our own lives.

The moral is that we should never leave the Bhagavad gītā untouched, for it has come to us because Bhagavān wants us to learn from it. Secondly, by practicing HIS qualities, we gradually embody them and become one with the Divine. Today, we will explore how the Bhagavad Gita can guide us in exams, help us maintain relationships with friends, and support us in our day-to-day life.

Q-What does the word Bhagavad Gītā mean?

A: The Bhagavad Gītā literally means **"The Song of God"**.

Q-Who was standing next to Bhagavān when HE sang this song?

A: It is a sacred dialogue between Bhagavān and Arjuna.

Q-Where did the said conversation take place? OR What is that war called? It has a whole massive scripture written on it.

A: This sacred conversation took place on the **battlefield of Kurukshetra** and is part of the **vast epic, the Mahabharata**.

Q-Who were the warring sides?

A: The warring sides in the Kurukshetra battle were:

- **The Pandavas** - the five brothers (Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva) who were fighting to reclaim their rightful kingdom.
- **The Kauravas** - the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra, led by Duryodhana, who had usurped the Pandavas' kingdom.

Q-Who was the hero of the battle? Or amongst the Pāṇḍavas, who was most heroic?

A: While all pāṇḍavas showed valor, Arjuna's **central role in the battle and his dialogue with Bhagavān** on the battlefield is what makes him the primary hero of the war. If one sees the whole Mahabharat, Arjuna has lived it like a hero, like an ideal person. That is why he got to know about Bhagavad gītā from Bhagavān.

Q-How many Adhyayas are there in Bhagavad gītā?

A: The Bhagavad gītā has 18 chapters, which are called Adhyayas.

Q-How many shlokas are there in Bhagavad gītā?

A: The Bhagavad gītā contains 700 shlokas (verses) in total.

Q-Why did Bhagavān start telling the Bhagavad gītā to Arjuna?

A: The reason was:

- The Kauravas were unjust to the Pandavas, even though the kingdom rightfully belonged to the Pandavas. The Kauravas cheated them in a game of dice, took away their kingdom, and banished them to the forest for 13 years. After completing their exile, the Pandavas requested only a small portion of land to rule, even just five villages, but the Kauravas refused to give them even that much.
- It was not that the Pandavas desired the kingdom out of greed for wealth or power. Their intention was to restore righteousness and protect the welfare of the people, who were suffering under the unjust rule of the Kauravas.
- To bring back goodness, justice, and dharma, the Pāṇḍavas had to fight this war. And when Arjuna became overwhelmed with emotion and confusion at the start of the battle, Bhagavān began to speak the Bhagavad gītā, guiding him, and through him, all of humanity, on the path of righteousness, duty, and devotion.

Q-Why are we learning the 12th Adhyaya first?

A: Because it is the shortest and sweetest chapter, consisting of just 20 shlokas. They say that if one learns the 12th Adhyaya, one learns the essence of the entire Bhagavad gītā. That is why, if we listen to this discussion wholeheartedly, we will end up learning some of the most important lessons of life.

Q-What is the name of the 12th Adhyaya?

A: It is called Bhakti Yoga.

Q: What does *Bhakti* mean?

A: *Bhakti* means devotion or love towards Bhagavān.

Q-What does *Yoga* mean?

A: *Yoga* means connection. So, *Bhakti Yoga* together means connecting with Bhagavān through love.

Q-What kind of connection do we want to make with Bhagavān?

A: We want to make HIM our Best Friend.

Q-Why should we aim for His friendship?

A: For example, if we have a classmate who is smart, kind, and loving, we naturally want to become friends with them. But Bhagavān is the smartest, kindest, and most loving of all. Since He loves us so much, we too wish to reciprocate that love, just like how we lovingly care for our parents as they grow older. There is no greater achievement than becoming Bhagavān's best friend, and through this Adhyaya, we will learn how to do that.

Q-There are many different ways to make this most kind, most intelligent, most loving, and most powerful BEING our Best Friend. What are some of the things we can do for Bhagavān?

A: We can practice meditation, prayer, pooja, Archana, reciting shlokas, chanting HIS name, and visiting the temple. Even eating prasada offered to Bhagavān is a form of worship. Taking HIS name is the simplest and best way to connect. In the 10th Adhyaya, Bhagavān HIMSELF says that remembering and chanting HIS name is one of the greatest forms of devotion. When we chant, we are remembering HIM, and HE knows we are calling out to HIM — just like calling a dear friend who is away on vacation makes him happy. Similarly, Bhagavān becomes happy when we chant HIS name and showers HIS love and blessings upon us.

There are even more ways to connect with **Bhagavān**, which we will learn in this *Adhyāya*.

Bringing HIM into Our Daily Life:

Sometimes we feel we don't have enough time to pray or chant, or it may not be possible to visit the temple every day. But we can still keep Bhagavān with us in everything we do. For example, many of us know how to make *Maggi* noodles. The company says it can be made in just 2-5 minutes, and that's true! While preparing *Maggi*, if we dedicate the activity to HIM, stirring and cooking while keeping HIM in our mind — it becomes an act of devotion. When we offer the food to HIM before eating, it becomes *prasādam*.

The same applies to our hobbies and daily work. If we like cooking, we can simply think that we are cooking for Bhagavān. If we love painting, we should paint for HIM. If we enjoy singing, we can sing for HIM. Even while studying, working, or helping others, if we keep the thought that "I am doing this for Bhagavān," then all our actions become offerings to HIM.

When we include HIM in our everyday life, HE becomes a part of it — and that is the real meaning of Bhakti Yoga, the *Yoga of Connection*.

Talking to HIM:

We can even talk with Bhagavān like a friend. In the morning, we can share our plans for the day with HIM. Throughout the day, we can tell HIM how we feel, what we are doing, and ask for HIS guidance.

All these activities help make Bhagavān our Best Friend. When we bring HIM into our lives, HE too reciprocates with love and care. In this way, we grow closer to HIM, and this *Adhyāya* will teach us even more ways to deepen that friendship and understand why it is so important to be HIS best friend.

The first *shloka* of this chapter begins with a question from Arjuna, marking the start of this beautiful dialogue on devotion.

12.1

arjuna uvāca
evam(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?

In this first *shloka* of the 12th Chapter, Arjuna asks a very interesting question to Bhagavān: "Which type of devotee is most connected to HIM? Which one among the two is HIS favorite?" Here, Arjuna is curious to know which path of devotion HE should choose to attain HIM?.

Why Do We Want to Be Bhagavān's Devotees?

Before understanding Arjuna's question, let us reflect — why do we want to be Bhagavān's devotees? OR, Why do we love HIM and wish to have HIM in our lives? Because HE is the most kind, the most loving, the smartest, and the strongest of all. We wish to have those divine qualities in ourselves. And because HE loves us so much, we naturally want to reciprocate that love. That is why Arjuna asks this question, to know which kind of devotion can help him connect more deeply with HIM.

Two Types of Devotees

Arjuna refers to two kinds of devotees or two groups of people who reach Bhagavān:

- **Saguṇa Bhaktas** — those who worship Bhagavān *with form*
- **Nirguṇa Bhaktas** — those who worship Bhagavān *without form*

Worship Through Form

Saguṇa Bhaktas worship Bhagavān in a visible or physical form, like that of Bhagavān Krishna, Bhagavān Śhiv, Bhagavān Ganeśh, or other deities. They see Bhagavān, sing for HIM, offer food to HIM, chant HIS name, and talk to HIM as a friend or guide. In this form of worship, there is a personal relationship; we can see the *mūrti* or picture, decorate it, and offer prayers with love. This makes it easier to connect, especially for beginners, because we have something we can see and relate to.

Worship of the Formless

The second type are Nirguṇa Bhaktas, who worship Bhagavān in HIS formless existence. Formless means there is no specific image, shape, or figure. It is like the air or the sky, present everywhere, inside and outside us. This kind of worship is more philosophical and inward. In ancient times, many sages and yogis followed this path. They would go to forests or the Himalayas, practice meditation, and perform intense austerities (*tapas*). They would see everything around them as *Māyā*, an illusion, and focus only on the Divine Presence that exists everywhere. To them, only Bhagavān is real, and everything else is temporary.

Discussion with Participants

A question was raised to the participants: “Which type of worship would they choose, with form or formless?” Some participants said they would prefer the formless. However, as was said earlier, that path is not easy. It requires deep meditation, detachment, and great control over one’s senses, something that takes years of discipline. So, for beginners, it is easier and more natural to worship Bhagavān in form, to see, feel, and serve HIM with love and devotion. This is what Bhagavān mostly says in the next shloka.

12.2

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

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

In this *shloka*, Bhagavān answers Arjuna’s question. HE says that those devotees who continuously think of HIM, remember HIM, and keep their minds and hearts fixed on HIM — they are the ones most connected to HIM.

The important word here is “continuously.” Bhagavān does not say “once in a while” or “only during prayer.” HE says those who remember HIM all the time are the dearest to HIM.

How Can We Remember Bhagavān Continuously?

This might sound difficult at first. We may wonder, *How can we think of Bhagavān all the time?* What about when we are studying, writing an exam, or walking to school? How can I remember HIM then? That’s exactly what we will learn through this chapter — how to stay connected with Bhagavān even while doing

our daily activities.

But for now, we can start in simple ways:

- Remember HIM in the **morning** when we wake up.
- Remember HIM during **free time** or while walking to school.
- Think of Him before **meals** or **before starting any work**.

Slowly, this practice becomes natural. We begin to feel HIS presence everywhere — as if He is sitting beside us in class, walking with us to school, or helping us during exams.

Focusing on Bhagavān Instead of Distractions

These days, our attention easily goes to our phones, TV, or social media, even while studying or eating. Now imagine if we gave that same kind of focus to Bhagavān, thinking of HIM with love and joy. The result would be beautiful; HE would become our Best Friend! So, Bhagavān says, “Those who continuously remember HIM with love — they are the ones most dear to HIM, or they are the ones who have HIM in their lives forever.”

In the next two *shlokas*, Bhagavān continues answering Arjuna’s question. Here, HE explains the pros and cons of both types of devotees — those who worship HIM with form (**Saguṇa Bhaktas**) and those who worship HIM in the formless way (**Nirguṇa Bhaktas**).

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,

So now, Bhagavān begins to explain what HIS formless existence truly is. When we think of Bhagavān Shri Krishna's form, we often picture HIS peacock feather, flute, beautiful crown, or divine smile. This is one of HIS many lovely, personal forms that devotees adore and easily relate to. But here, Bhagavān describes HIS formless (*nirguṇa*) nature — which goes far beyond what we can see or imagine.

HE says HIS formless existence is:

- **Akṣharam** — the *imperishable*, which never decays or ends.
- **Anirdeśhyam** — the *indefinable*, beyond words and descriptions. It same as someone asking how to show the air. Air is everywhere; one cannot point it out.
- **Avyaktam** — the *unmanifest*, invisible to our eyes, formless.
- **Sarvatra-gam** — *all-pervading*, present everywhere. Imagine how space is. No matter how far one goes, space never ends. The entire universe is in space. In the same manner, space, we humans, the universe, planets etc., are present inside the formless existence of Bhagavān. HE is everywhere.
- **Achintyam** — *unthinkable*, beyond human imagination. For example, if there is a blind person, how can one tell him what is yellow, what is blue? What does red look like?
- **Kūṭa-stham** — HE is present in all of us.
- **Achalam** — *immovable*, steady and constant. It's not moving from one place to another. It's everywhere

- **Dhruvam** — *eternal*, always existing.

On becoming friends with Bhagavān, the likelihood of understanding HIS formless form increases. In the next shloka, HE further talks about HIS formless existence.

12.4

sanniyamyendriyagrāmam(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, also called the five jñānendriyas (organs of knowledge or perception).

- **Eyes** — for seeing (sight /vision)
- **Ears** — for hearing (sound)
- **Nose** — for smelling (fragrance /odor)
- **Tongue** — for tasting (flavors)
- **Skin** — for touching (feel / temperature /texture)

Q: Are we able to control all of them?

For example, if the TV is on, are we able to study without getting distracted?

Q: When we hear children playing outside while we are trying to focus, does our mind stay steady?

A: Not always. We are not always able to control our senses.

That is why Bhagavān says that by learning to control our senses, we can become more focused — both in our work and in our connection with HIM. Those who worship the formless Bhagavān especially follow this path of sense control and discipline.

Bhagavān also says that such devotees see everyone equally. For instance, in school, we may have some classmates we like more than others. But the person who treats everyone kindly and equally — without favoritism — is truly dear to Bhagavān.

Thus, Bhagavān explains that such devotees attain HIM through deep control and discipline. They restrain their senses (*sanniyamya indriya-grāmam*) and remain calm and balanced in all situations (*sama-buddhayaḥ*). They meditate upon the unseen and unmanifest form of Bhagavān, who exists everywhere and in everything.

Till now point to note is that Bhagavān has said both types of Devotees can reach HIM.

In the next *shloka*, Bhagavān explains that worshipping HIM in a form is easier than worshipping Him in His formless nature.

12.5

**kleśo'dhikatarasteṣām(m), avyaktāsaktacetāsām,
avyaktā hi gatirduḥkham(n), dehavadbhiravāpyate. 12.5**

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

In the next *shloka*, Bhagavān explains that worshipping HIM in a form is easier than worshipping HIM in HIS formless nature.

HE says that the path of formless worship is difficult because the human mind finds it hard to focus on something that cannot be seen, touched, or imagined. It requires great concentration, discipline, and control over the senses. For some of us, this may take years or many births to achieve this.

On the other hand, worship through form — like remembering Śhrī Krishna, Śiva, or any visible form of Bhagavān — is simpler and more natural. We can see the *mūrti* or picture, offer prayers, sing, chant, and feel a personal bond with Him.

That is why Bhagavān encourages Arjuna, to start with the path of devotion through form — where love and remembrance can easily grow in the heart.

Further, Bhagavān lovingly explains in next two shlokas what happens when we bring HIM more and more into our lives.

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.

12.7

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

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

Those who dedicate all their activities to Bhagavān — such as studying, painting, playing, or helping others — are the ones who truly live in HIS presence. If one loves painting, then one needs to paint for HIM. If one is studying, then one needs to dedicate that study to HIM, thinking, "*Bhagavān is his true Teacher.*"

We can imagine that HE is sitting beside us in class, guiding us as we read, write, and learn. When we prepare for exams, we can think that HE is helping us remember everything we have studied, supporting us in writing our answers calmly and correctly. In this way, when we involve Bhagavān in all our activities and remember that every effort is for HIM, our life itself becomes an offering — an act of devotion.

And then, Bhagavān lovingly tells when we bring HIM into our day-to-day life — HE says that HE personally takes care of such devotees, removes their difficulties, and helps them cross over all challenges in life with ease.

Not only that, HE also saves them from the endless cycle of birth and death, granting them peace and union with HIM forever.

In the next few shlokas, we will learn how we can bring Bhagavān more and more into our daily life — through our thoughts, actions, and feelings — so that we can ultimately reach the stage where HE is always with us, guiding, protecting, and loving us at every step.

12.8

mayyeva mana ādhatsva, mayi buddhirñ(n) niveśaya, nivasīṣyasi mayyeva, ata ūrdhvañ(n) na sañśayaḥ. 12.8

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

In this *shloka*, Bhagavān says that if a devotee fixes their mind and intellect on HIM, HE will take care of us at all times. Of course, this is not easy to do initially. For example, if children are playing in our building compound, it may be very difficult to keep our minds fully focused on HIM at that time.

But Bhagavān encourages us to start small. We can begin by remembering Him for 5 minutes, then gradually increase it to 10 minutes, and slowly train our mind to stay fixed on HIM for longer periods. There are also many other ways to remember and connect with HIM, like singing for HIM, cooking for HIM, etc., which we will discuss in the next session.

In the next session, we will also cover the 39 qualities that Bhagavān's dear devotees should possess. Everyone should bring a pen and paper to note down these qualities and give a personal rating to each of them. At the end of the exercise, each participant will reflect and share how many of these qualities they already possess and which ones they would like to cultivate further. This activity will help us understand ourselves better and see how we can grow closer to Bhagavān through daily practice and devotion.

Questions and Answers

Nishtha ji

Question: Why is it important to read the Bhagavad gītā?

Answer: Just like a doctor must go through years of education before treating patients, or a pilot must train thoroughly before flying, we too need guidance to live life well. Without proper knowledge, our efforts may not be effective or safe. Similarly, if we want to excel in life, succeed in studies, be more confident, stay focused, and most importantly, become Bhagavān's favorite, the Bhagavad gītā serves as our manual for life. Just as every device, like a TV — comes with a manual explaining how it works, the Bhagavad gītā shows us the best way to live, act, and think. By studying and applying its teachings, we become stronger, wiser, more focused, and most importantly, close to Bhagavān, earning HIS love and friendship.

Question: How can we memorize the Bhagavad gītā?

Answer: We already memorize many songs and poems in school. We can use the same approach for the Gita. Repetition is key. And also through practice. The more we recite, chant, or write the verses, the more naturally they stay in our memory. With patience and consistent effort, memorizing the Bhagavad gītā becomes easier and even enjoyable.



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:

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/feedback/>

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

Har Ghar Gītā, Har Kar Gītā !

Let's come together with the motto of Geeta Pariwar, and gift our Geeta Classes to all our Family, friends & acquaintances

<https://gift.learngeeta.com/>

Geeta Pariwar has taken a new initiative. Now you can watch YouTube videos and read PDFs of all the interpretation sessions conducted earlier. Please use the below link.

<https://vivechan.learngeeta.com/>

Learn Geeta, Spread Geeta, Live Geeta

|| OM ŚRĪKṚṢṆĀRPAṆAMASTU ||