

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

2/2 (Ślōka 12-20), Saturday, 15 November 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/95OyDuUcT1M>

## 39 qualities of a devotee- Practice the good qualities to be favourite of Bhagavan

The 12th Chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā is about **Bhakti Yoga - the Yoga of Devotion**, and describes the various steps to get to the Divine. The session started with the lighting of the lamp and prayers to the Almighty.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।  
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ १ ॥

*I bow to Bhagwan Krishna, the son of Vasudev, the Supreme Lord Himself, the destroyer of Kansa and Chanura, and the one who brings supreme bliss to His mother Devaki – the Jagadguru (teacher of the world).*

We learnt about **Bhakti** (devotion) and the types of Bhakti in the previous session.

In a classroom, there are back benchers who will not be serious in studying, the first benchers are very studious, and the middle ones are average.

Likewise, there are different types of devotees.

- **The Saguna upasaka-** The devotee who worships Bhagavān in a form with all the material attributes
- **The Nirguna upasaka-** The devotee who worships Bhagavān as a formless Brahman.

Which of these is the most favourite devotee of Bhagavān is the doubt in the mind of Arjuna, and he wanted to know which of these two was considered a good devotee.

**Eg:** Even in school, the student who studies well, completes homework on time, and behaves sincerely becomes the teacher's favourite. In the same way, when we sincerely learn and live the teachings of the Gītā, we naturally benefit, we grow, we become better, and we become truly happy.

**Bhagavān answered Arjuna's question and further elaborated to explain the type of devotion which is easy and which is difficult to practice. HE also gave different methods to worship. A devotee who worships with complete devotion should have some integral qualities that they should possess.**

**Eg:** In school, some students are very good and study well, do not quarrel with others, listen and are obedient to teachers. These are some qualities of a good student.

In the Gītā, Bhagavān explained the qualities of a good devotee like whether he is good to others, does not trouble others and is always good natured and many more such qualities which a devotee should possess.

**Eg:** In school, to become a favourite of teachers, students put in a lot of effort by being good and obedient.

A devotee can certainly be a favourite of Bhagavān just like Arjuna who was a close friend to HIM.

If we can put efforts to please the teacher why not to please Bhagavān. He is the ultimate whom we should worship and please, and hence it is all the more important to know how good to be to please HIM. We should be aware of what we should do and what we should not do.

## 12.12

### **śreya hi jñānamabhyāsāj, jñānāddhyānaṁ(ṽ) viśiṣyate, dhyānātkarmaphalatyāgaḥ(s), tyāgācchāntiranantaram.12.12.**

Knowledge is better than practice without discernment, meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even superior to meditation; for, peace immediately follows from renunciation.

#### **A. Knowledge is superior to mere practice**

For example, if we study a topic and only keep memorising it, we may remember the lines, but we have not understood anything.

Such practice may help in writing exams, but without understanding, it becomes useless for real-life judgement.

Practice can be of two kinds, with understanding or without understanding. Only practice with full understanding leads to true knowledge.

For instance, Mathematics cannot be learned by memorising; it must be understood and applied practically.

#### **B. Meditation is superior to knowledge**

When we sit for meditation, the mind must be turned only towards Him. Such single-pointed focus is deeper than intellectual knowledge.

#### **C. Renouncing the fruits of action is superior to meditation**

When our efforts, whether in practice, knowledge, or meditation, are tied to expectations of results, the purity of the action is lost. True peace comes only when we are not attached to outcomes and dedicate all actions to Bhagavān.

For example, in exams, the marks should not matter as long as sincere effort and learning have taken place. Results must be accepted gracefully. Once we practice this attitude, the mind remains steady and free from disappointment.

Leave the results to Bhagavān; whatever He decides is ultimately for our well-being. Our only learning is to improve our efforts for better results.

**Question: In the first śloka, how many types of devotees were mentioned?**

Options: 4, 2, 3, 6

Most participants correctly answered 2, except a few who may have been present but not fully attentive.

Next, we will learn about the qualities that make a devotee a close friend of Bhagavān. All participants should note these qualities carefully, reflect honestly, and assess which qualities are present in themselves. This self-evaluation will help each one grow spiritually.

## 12.13

**adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānām(m), maitraḥ(kh) karuṇa eva ca,  
nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ(s), śamaduḥkhasukhaḥ kṣamī. 12.13**

He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, and Free from the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', balanced in joy and sorrow & forgiving by nature.

### 1. Adveṣṭā — Free from hatred

A true devotee does not hate anyone. Even if one does not openly express hatred but secretly harbours negative thoughts towards others, it is still unacceptable.

Example: Feeling jealous when someone scores good marks and dismissing their achievement by saying, "It's nothing great," reflects inner negativity. A devotee must not cultivate such feelings.

### 2. Maitraḥ — Friendly

A devotee maintains a friendly attitude towards everyone.

Example: In school, forming groups and treating another group as rivals or enemies is not friendly behaviour. We should maintain goodwill with all and avoid clashes.

Participants may introspect: Do I have more friends or adversaries?

To become dear to Bhagavān, we must cultivate goodness in relationships.

### 3. Karuṇa — Compassionate

A devotee is kind-hearted and empathetic towards all beings. One should not harm others or ignore someone in need.

Compassion means helping others, understanding their feelings, and responding with kindness.

### 4. Nirmama — Free from 'mine-ness'

A devotee does not carry the feeling of "this is mine." The ego-based sense of ownership must be reduced.

Example: Not wanting to share one's books, clothes, or belongings because of attachment shows possessiveness. This must be overcome.

### 5. Nirahaṅkāraḥ — Free from ego

A devotee avoids pride and excessive self-importance.

Example: Jumping with excitement and boasting, "I won! I scored so much! I did it!" reflects ego. As we study the Gītā, we learn to distance ourselves from such self-centred attitudes.

### 6. Sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ — Balanced in happiness and sorrow

A devotee remains steady in both good and bad situations.

Example: If this balance is missing, a person becomes overly upset, locking themselves in a room, refusing to eat, not speaking to anyone, and expecting others to console them. Such reactions show instability.

To be dear to Bhagavān, one must practice emotional balance. With effort and discipline, this equanimity can be cultivated, so that both pleasant and unpleasant situations are faced calmly.

### **7. Kṣamī — Forgiving**

A devotee forgives easily and wholeheartedly.

Example: If someone apologises, but we refuse to accept it and respond with anger or harsh comments, it shows a lack of inner control.

The right approach is: forgive and forget. The quicker we forgive, the greater our inner strength and the better we reflect this divine quality.

## **12.14**

### **santuṣṭaḥ(s) satataṁ(ṽ) yogī, yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ, mayyarpitamanobuddhiḥ(r), yo madbhaktaḥ(s) sa me priyaḥ.12.14.**

The Yogī who is Ever-concentrated and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me—that devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

### **8. Santuṣṭaḥ — Contented**

A devotee remains satisfied with what they have. Even when all basic needs are fulfilled, some constantly feel inadequate.

Desires keep multiplying, wanting a new bag, a new dress, a new gadget, and so on. Instead of buying repeatedly, why not use the bag until it actually wears out?

#### **Illustration from Doraemon:**

In the cartoon, Shizuka (Sonia) often had new gadgets. Nobita's desires kept getting triggered, and he would run to Doraemon, crying for more gadgets.

Doraemon could produce endless things from his pocket, yet Nobita was never truly satisfied.

Similarly, we already have so much, yet still feel dissatisfied. Only when we control our desires and feel content with what we have can we experience true happiness.

### **9. Yatātmā — Self-controlled (mastery over senses)**

A devotee has control over the senses and does not act impulsively.

Examples: At home, if several people want the TV remote, getting angry and throwing the remote shows a lack of self-control.

Feeling tempted to watch TV during study time also reflects poor discipline. Only through steady practice can we train the senses and prevent the mind from indulging in undesirable behaviour.

### **10. Dṛḍha-niścayaḥ — Determined**

A devotee is firm in resolve.

Example: Deciding to wake up for yoga but sleeping in due to laziness shows a lack of determination. Nothing improves by mere intention; persistence is required.

A saint humorously said “tomorrow” as “two maro”, meaning “slap your cheek twice if you postpone something to tomorrow.”

This was a playful method to overcome procrastination.

Strong determination is a mark of a true devotee.

## **11 & 12. Mayyarpita-mano-buddhiḥ — Mind and intellect surrendered to Him**

A devotee keeps both mind and intellect aligned with Bhagavān.

If the mind wants one thing and the intellect advises another, confusion results. Bhagavān says, *“Surrender your mind and intellect to Me, and I will guide you.”*

Example:

When sitting to study, if the mind wanders to playing or watching TV, the intellect becomes weak.

But when the mind is focused on Bhagavān, He strengthens the intellect.

Whatever goals we have, good marks, success, progress, we should surrender them at His feet, without worrying about the fruits of our actions. With complete dedication, we never forget Him, and He takes care of us.

## **12.15**

**yasmānnodvijate loko, lokānnodvijate ca yaḥ,  
harṣāmarṣabhayodvegaiḥ(r), mukto yaḥ(s) sa ca me priyaḥ 12.15**

He who is not a source of annoyance to his fellow-creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed with his fellow creatures, and who is free from delight and envy, perturbation and fear, is dear to Me.

## **13 & 14. yasmān nodvijate loko / lokān nodvijate ca yaḥ**

One who does not disturb others, and one who is not disturbed by others. A devotee neither troubles others nor allows others to trouble them. Examples: Calling others names, mocking, or taunting them are behaviours Bhagavān does not approve of. Sometimes we complain that others are troubling us. But the more visibly irritated we become, the more they enjoy provoking us. If we stop reacting, they lose interest and eventually stop. A devotee remains calm even when taunted and does not let others disturb their peace.

## **15. Harṣa — Free from extreme delight**

A devotee remains balanced and does not swing to extremes, neither excessive excitement nor excessive sorrow. Emotional control reflects inner stability.

## **16. Amaṣa — Free from envy**

A devotee does not feel jealous of others' achievements.

Example: If someone gets the first rank or excels in some activity, speaking about them dismissively or belittling their achievement shows envy. Instead, we should appreciate their success and take it as motivation to improve our own efforts.

## **17. Bhaya — Free from unnecessary fear**

A devotee works to overcome useless fears.

Example: Jumping and screaming after seeing a mouse or a cockroach disturbs everyone at home unnecessarily. Such situations do not require fear. This does not mean we should show no fear before genuine danger. If a tiger stands before us, fear is natural; we must be cautious and sensible. But in small, harmless situations, fear should be controlled.

## **18. Udvegaiḥ — Free from mental agitation**

A devotee avoids intense reactions. Even if one internally feels the urge to react, it should be moderated. One should not express anger or agitation vehemently. Calmness is essential to spiritual progress.

## **12.16**

**napekṣaḥ(ś) śucirdakṣa, udāsīno gatavyathaḥ,  
sarvārambhaparityāgī, yo madbhaktaḥ(s) sa me priyaḥ. 12.16**

He who wants nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is wise and impartial and has risen above all the distractions, and who renounces the sense of doership in all undertakings—such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

**19. Anapekṣaḥ — Free from expectations**

A devotee does not hold expectations from others. Often we feel, “They didn’t do this for me,” and keep expecting more. This leads to disappointment. A true devotee reduces expectations and learns to be content.

**20. Śuciḥ — Clean (externally and internally)**

Cleanliness is not only about the body; the mind also must remain pure.

Example:

Not washing hands after returning from school and immediately starting to eat shows lack of external cleanliness. Similarly, the mind should stay clean, free from negativity, bitterness, and wrong thoughts.

Both inner and outer purity are essential qualities of a devotee.

**21. Dakṣaḥ — Diligent**

A devotee is attentive, responsible, and sincere in all tasks. Whatever duty is taken up must be done with care and effort, not lazily or half-heartedly.

**22. Udāsīnaḥ — Neutral and undisturbed**

A devotee remains calm and does not get caught in extremes. Being udāsīna means staying neutral, balanced, and unaffected by unnecessary disturbances.

**23. Gatavyathaḥ — Free from mental distress**

A devotee does not remain disturbed by what has happened or what is happening around them. They are not distracted by every small incident, nor do they keep lamenting about past events. Their mind remain steady and peaceful.

**24. Sarvārambha-parityāgī — Free from unnecessary initiative driven by desire**

A devotee does not start actions merely to fulfil personal desires. All actions are surrendered to Bhagavān, not initiated for self-indulgence.

Example: Feeling like eating a samosa or chocolates and immediately rushing out to get them shows acting out of impulsive desire.

A devotee learns to pause, reflect, and not act instantly on every craving.

**12.17**

**yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi, na śocati na kāṅkṣati,  
śubhāśubhaparityāgī, bhaktimānyaḥ(s) sa me priyaḥ. 12.17**

He who neither rejoice nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who renounces both good and evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to Me.

**25. yo na hr̥ṣyati — One who does not rejoice excessively**

A devotee does not get carried away by extreme excitement. Even when something good happens, they accept it with balance and gratitude, not with uncontrollable delight.

### **26. na dveṣṭi — Free from hatred**

A devotee does not entertain strong feelings of dislike or hatred towards anyone. Disliking someone intensely blocks inner peace and distances one from Bhagavān.

### **27. na śocati — Free from sorrow**

A devotee does not grieve unnecessarily. Most sorrow arises from unfulfilled desires, “I didn’t get this... this didn’t happen the way I wanted...”

A devotee learns to accept outcomes calmly and not suffer emotionally.

### **28. na kāṅkṣati — Free from desires**

A devotee gradually rises above constant wanting. Instead of endlessly craving new things or situations, they cultivate contentment and inner fulfilment.

### **29. subhāśubha-parityāgī — One who gives up both good and bad actions rooted in personal motive**

A devotee rises above actions driven by personal gain, ego, or desire. Both “good” and “bad” actions done for selfish reasons are to be surrendered.

Example: Taking money from a mother’s purse without informing is a bad action and unacceptable to Bhagavān.

A devotee must act with honesty and purity of intention in every situation.

## **12.18**

### **śamaḥ(ś) śatrau ca mitre ca, tathā mānāpamānayoḥ, śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu, śamaḥ(s) saṅgavivarjitaḥ. 12.18**

He who deals equally with friend and foe, and is the same in honour and ignominy, who is alike in heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other contrary experiences, and is free from attachment.

**30. śamaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca-** To treat both friends and enemies in the same balanced manner. One must not hate a person or love a person in extreme measure. Neither dislike a person nor overtly like another person.

**31. mānāpamānayoḥ-** Balance the feeling of being very elated when someone praises and feel sad when someone humiliates. Take them in the same balanced manner and do not feel extreme emotions.

**32. śītoṣṇa-** Experience cold or hot weather with a balanced approach.

**Eg:** When it is very cold, covering ourselves completely and complaining about the cold and in hot weather and going to complaining about the heat.

One should take both in and not keep complaining.

**33. sukhaduḥkheṣu-** Balanced approach to pain and pleasure

**34. śamaḥ saṅgavivarjitaḥ-** Free from attachment.

**Eg:** We get attached to toys and start feeling bad about losing such a toy. Not being attached and not exhibiting the feeling of sorrow due to attachment is a good quality of a devotee.

## **12.19**

**tulyanindāstutirmaunī, santuṣṭo yena kenacit,  
aniketah(s) sthīRāmatiḥ(r), bhaktimānme priyo narah. 12.19**

He who takes praise & criticism alike, and is given to contemplation and is contented with any means of subsistence available, entertaining no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of his dwelling-place and is full of devotion to Me, that person is dear to Me.

**35. tulyanindāstutir-** Balanced response to praises or reproaches.

**Eg:** When someone praises us, we are very happy and beaming, but if someone chides us, we start getting bad thoughts about the person. Such feelings should be balanced.

**36. maunī-** To silently contemplate. If we can listen in silence, we can understand better, and we can try to implement good things heard in our lives. We should hence think calmly and silently.

**37. santuṣṭo-** Contented. One must not be greedy but should be satisfied.

**38. aniketah-** Free from the sense of attachment to one's own house.

**Eg:** Some children do not want to go to school and leave the house. This indicates attachment to the house, which is not a good quality of a devotee.

**39. sthīRāmatiḥ-** Stable-minded. One who has a focused mind and does any action with full concentration and does not get distracted.

**12.20**

**ye tu dharmyāmṛtamidaṁ(ṅ), yathoktaṁ(m) paryupāsate,  
śraddadhānā matparamā, bhaktāste'tiva me priyāḥa.12.20.**

Those devotees, however, who partake in a disinterested way of this nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to me.

The words spoken by Bhagavan should be adopted with full faith, and such a devotee will be HIS favourite and close friend. If these 39 qualities are followed with full faith in HIM and without doubting about the benefits, it will bring in all good qualities, and such a person can become the best devotee and be in the favourite list of Bhagavan.

All these slokas are very important for us to improve ourselves in this life. This is the path to be closer to HIM as a devotee. Everyone should endeavour to follow and adopt the qualities one by one and improve themselves.

The **Pushpika** is at the end of every chapter. It gives us an introduction to the Gita when Arjuna and Bhagavan Sri Krishna had this conversation and also gives the name of the Chapter.

The participants had scored themselves on the 39 good traits and the results were:

All have answered well, and all are good children.

- 8 said 250 marks
- 5 said 100 marks

- 7 said 390 marks full marks
- 11 said 300 marks

Whatever the marks gained, they are relevant only to know how to improve by adopting all the good qualities and having understood while introspecting. Whatever we do, win or lose, we must know our own self from within.

We all should have the goal of improving our behaviour like the good qualities of a devotee, as explained by Bhagavan.

### **Question and Answer:**

#### **Prisha ji**

##### **Question: Why was Kamsa cruel?**

**Answer:** Anyone can be bad if they think being bad is ok. It depends on the individual to choose good deeds or bad deeds. If we know it is a bad deed we must not accept, but Kamsa did not realise, and he became cruel. If we learn the Gītā, we can understand the difference between good and bad

#### **Navya ji**

##### **Question: Why do we read the Pushpika?**

**Answer:** It is the introduction where we know what happened, who was speaking what is in the chapter.

#### **Nivedita ji**

##### **Question: Why do we read the Ramayan?**

**Answer:** Like Gītā, there are good learnings in there. We can learn a lot of good things in the Ramayana to improve our knowledge. Sri Rama was called '**Maryada Purushotham**' (**The person with the ultimate priority in conduct**). This helps us to know how he used to think, behave, and conduct himself in a good manner, how to be good to youngsters and obedient to elders. There are also many other scriptures, like the Vedas, from which we can learn good things.

#### **Laira ji**

##### **Question: What is the meaning of Srikrishnarpanamasthu?**

**Answer:** It means whatever we have read and chanted, we offer it to Bhagavan Sri Krishna. He has said, 'mayyarpithamano buddhir' (One who has surrendered the mind to HIM). So we dedicate everything to HIM. Whatever we do, we do it for HIM, not for self.

#### **Ishani ji**

##### **Question: When Sri Krishna was born, why did Kamsa want to kill him?**

**Answer:** The divine voice said that in future, Kamsa will be killed. This was at a time when Devaki, his sister, got married and was leaving with Vasudeva to go to his house. Kamsa listened to the divine voice predicting that Devaki's 8th child would kill him. Hence, Kamsa puts Devaki and Vasudeva into jail to ensure that all the children who were born to her would be killed. However, he was not able to kill Bhagavān Sri Krishna, who later finally killed Kamsa as predicted by the divine voice.

#### **Naitri ji**

##### **Question: When Arjuna asked Bhagavan who was a better devotee, the one who follows nirguna upasaka or the saguna upasaka, what did HE answer?**

**Answer:** Bhagavān said that he likes those who have faith in HIM and have steadfast devotion to worship HIM with a determined mind, with full concentration. The mode of devotion was not relevant.

#### **Charvi ji**

##### **Question: How did Gandhari have 100 children?**

**Answer:** Those times, they had special powers. If Gandhari removed the blindfold from her eyes it made Duryodhana have the power of steel just by her eye sight. In those days, they had some special powers, and such matters happened.

## Manikarnika ji

**Question: What is 'paryupasate', which is in many slokas?**

**Answer:** To be engaged in constant devotion to Bhagavan.

## Vaibhav ji

**Question: In Pushpika, what does Omtatsaditi mean?**

**Answer:** Om is the sound of the universe, the energy,  
Tat is the divinity HIMSELF  
Sat is the truth

As described in the Vedas. It represents Bhagavan and what he has given, and we should do.

## Rugved ji

**Question: Who wrote Bhagavad Gītā?**

**Answer:** Maharshi Ved Vyas wrote the Gītā. He took the help of Ganesh ji to write, but it was Maharshi Ved Vyas's creation and hence attributed to him.

## Kanha ji

**Question: I don't feel like studying. Why does this happen so?**

**Answer:** It happens sometimes because we are not giving a definite time to study. Whether good or bad, if we allot time, then it will become our natural habit.

When we did not give time, we did not learn Gita; when we started giving time, we started learning Gita. If we regularly start studying, it will become a habit, and you will be able to study with concentration. Day by day, you can give more and more time, and it will improve the habit, and you will start liking to study.

**om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu  
brahmavidyāyām(ṽ) yogaśāstre śrīkrṣṇārjunasaṁvāde  
bhaktiyogo nāma dvādaśo'dhyāyaḥ.**



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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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