

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/uY57akReUns>

## Bhakti of the Steadfast: Cultivating Selfless Devotion, Equanimity, and Friendship Towards All Beings

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.

**Vasudevasutam Devam, Kaṁsacāṇūramardanam  
Devakīparamānandam, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum**

**Yogeśam Saccidānandam, Vāsudevam Vrajapriyam  
Dharmasamsthāpakam Vīram, Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum**

श्री गुरु चरण कमलेभ्यो

- "At the lotus feet of the revered Guru."

By the abundant and auspicious grace of Bhagavān, a supreme good fortune has awakened in all of us: we have become inclined to study the Bhagavad Gītā, to learn its pronunciation, to study its ślokas, some even to commit them to memory, and to understand its sutras so we may apply them in life. This turning toward the Gītā promises to make one's human life meaningful and to help attain its highest goal, securing both worldly and otherworldly welfare, gaining progress in every sphere, and illuminating life's inscrutable riddles. Perhaps this is due to meritorious actions in the present birth, the punya of earlier births, or the merit of ancestors; for some reason, these individuals have been chosen to study the Bhagavad Gītā.

The speaker repeatedly and humbly requests that everyone hold this supreme conviction in their hearts: one does not choose the Gītā, the Gītā chooses one. This is not a statement made on the speaker's private whim; it is declared by Bhagavān Himself. From Bhagavān's own śrī-mukha, it is

said (in the eighteenth ādhyāya, verse 68) that whoever studies this Bhagavad Gītā, whoever reads it and brings its sutras into life, will attain Bhagavān.

It is not only Bhagavān who testifies to this. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, in his famous composition Bhaja Govindam, affirms the same truth:

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

**om bhagavad-gītā kiñcid adhītā,  
gaṅgā-jala-lava kaṇikā-pītā;  
sakṛd api yena mūrāri samarcā,  
kriyate tasya yamen na carcā.**

The stanza means: even a little study of the Bhagavad Gītā is like a drop of Gaṅgā's water; whoever even once worships Mūrāri (Krishna) is beyond the jurisdiction of Yamarāja. In other words, if a person sincerely takes even a small part of the Gītā into life, Yamarāja will have no claim on him; he becomes the rightful occupant of Bhagavān's abode. Thus, whoever takes to the path of the Bhagavad Gītā is assured of welfare.

When someone becomes absorbed in the study of the Bhagavad Gītā, one should understand that Bhagavān has chosen that person. The voyage is then effectively set: whether the goal is realised in this birth, the next, or ten births hence depends only on the speed of progress. How long will it take? Like travelling from Mumbai to Delhi, it depends on how fast one travels. Greater speed brings earlier arrival; slower progress takes longer. The essential point is that one is now on the correct route, the right track. If one remains on that path, one will reach the destination, that is certain. The saints thus declare that the attainment of Bhagavān for sincere practitioners is assured.

We begin the reflections on the twelfth ādhyāya. The saints have called this the gateway to the Bhagavad Gītā: it is the briefest, simplest, and most readily grasped chapter. Where should a new sādḥaka begin? From the twelfth ādhyāya, this is the tradition passed down by the ācārya. The group had already studied the twelve ślokas; the contemplation on the twelfth śloka is currently underway.

The entire Bhagavad Gītā is mantra-maya. Out of the seven hundred ślokas, 574 emerge from Bhagavān's śrī-mukha, 84 from Arjuna, 41 from Sañjaya, and one śloka from Dhṛtarāṣṭra; this is why the Gītā is called mantra-maya. Even listening to the pure recitation of these mantras brings benefit to life. Pujya Swami observes that such listening changes the brain's programming: repeated hearing leads to articulation, and even if one cannot yet speak, merely listening to the correct pronunciation transforms the mind. The listeners are now experiencing roughly two weeks of study and have attended twelve classes; if they have completed all twelve, they will have been able to bring at least some of the teaching into their lived experience. This, the speaker says, is his firm conviction, borne out by the experience of lakhs of sādḥakas. The smallest, simplest chapter, Bhakti-yoga, the twelfth, we will now continue from the twelfth śloka.

## 12.12

**śreyo hi jñānamabhyāsāj, jñānāddhyānam(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.

Bhagavān told Arjuna that practice (abhyāsa) performed without understanding the essential point is inferior to jñāna. Jñāna is superior to mere practice; yet superior even to jñāna is dhyāna, the meditation on the form of the Paramātma. From dhyāna arises the renunciation of the fruits of all actions (karma-phala-tyāga), and through that renunciation one immediately attains profound, boundless peace.

In ordinary language, Bhagavān first taught Arjuna in the sixth chapter about the means of practice. Arjuna asked: *“How is the mind to be controlled? If one is told to practise, that is fine, but how is one to practise?”* This shloka is often greatly misunderstood. When people read it by themselves or hear it from somebody casually, many think Bhagavān is saying, for example, that ritual worship (pūjā) is easy and meditation is not, or that japa is trivial while dhyāna is difficult. That is not the point.

Whether one begins japa (mālā-japa), pūjā, or dhyāna practice, all these initial actions are outward; they are carried out through the senses. How does one practise dhyāna? One may close the eyes, sit with the spine straight, assume an āsana, form a jñāna- or dhyāna-mudrā or padmāsana, fix one’s attention on a chosen form of Bhagavān, try to restrain the mind’s movements, enter a natural, settled state, avoid getting stuck in the practice, and so on. There are innumerable procedural instructions depending on the method one has learned. But these procedures themselves are not the dhyāna; they are practices that lead to dhyāna, they are performed through the senses. As such, they are the simplest, the most elementary beginning.

The point to understand is that the subtler a thing becomes, the more powerful it is. What is the most powerful bomb? The nuclear bomb, when humanity learned to split the atom and reach the smallest constituent, enormous power was released. Which is more powerful in practice: the mobile phone or its SIM card? A very advanced phone is useless if the SIM is deactivated; the tiny SIM is indispensable. Today, there are even e-SIMs that consist only of code. The principle stands: the subtler the element, the more decisive its effect. The outward senses are coarse; subtler than the senses is the inner instrument, and subtler still than the inner instrument is its master, the manas; subtler than the manas is buddhi; subtler than buddhi is citta. Bhagavān says that the practice spoken of is performed through the senses and the mind, and that is the starting point. But because jñāna belongs to buddhi (intellect) rather than to the senses, and buddhi is subtler than manas and the indriyas, jñāna is superior to mere outward practice.

Then Bhagavān says that even jñāna is surpassed by dhyāna on the form of the Paramātma. Now by dhyāna Bhagavān does not mean only the mechanical practices already mentioned. Whether one is swept into remembrance of Bhagavān during kīrtan (devotional singing), or one becomes fixed in memory while following a technical method of dhyāna, or one pauses in the middle of a japa and remains absorbed, these are all forms of dhyāna. The shloka is not denying those; it is pointing to a still subtler state. When the chitta becomes fixed in Paramātma, that chitta-state is subtler than buddhi. To put it systematically: the senses are coarse, the inner instrument (antaḥ-indriya) is subtler, from the inner instrument arises manas, from manas buddhi, and from buddhi chitta, the increasingly subtle strata of the inner being.

One encounters here the term **antaḥkaraṇa-catustaya**, the fourfold inner instrument. Just as we see the gross body outside, there is an inner subtle body, the “micro-body”, that is not visible. This inner organ has four kinds of activity or functions (the antaḥkaraṇa’s four states). First, when it formulates choices and alternatives, *“Shall I do this or that? Shall I go here or there? Shall I eat the sweet or the salty?”*, that is the manas in its saṅkalpa-vikalpa activity: the roaming, deciding mind that rehearses alternatives throughout the day. Second, when it comes to judgment, *“This is right to*

*do; that is not good; that would be wrong*”, when reasoning and evaluation are at work, that function is buddhi (intellect). Third is dhāraṇā (which the speaker treats here as holding a resolution or forming a firm determination): “I will read the Gītā daily; I will do so much japa; I will perform seva; I will once a week help poor patients at a hospital; I will give a portion of my income in charity this year; I will change certain habits in my life (practice yoga every morning; avoid sweets for a month); I will make myself better, more religious, more spiritual.” These repeated commitments and the settling of resolve are dhāraṇā, impressions or determinations that the chitta carries. Therefore, Patañjali ṛṣi said: “Yoga begins where the vṛttis of the citta are restrained” (Yogaḥ citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ), when the restless fluctuations of the mind are stilled, the way to yoga opens.

The fourth and final function of the antaḥkaraṇa is the “aham”, the sense of I-ness. Here the speaker clarifies that by “aham” he does not mean petty egoism but the fundamental sense of self-awareness, the “I am.” Consider sleep: sometimes one awakens from many dreams and says, “I dreamt this and that.” But there is a kind of sleep in which one sleeps so deeply that on waking one takes a brief moment to orient oneself: “Was it night or morning? Where am I?” One might say, “I had such a deep sleep.” Even in deep sleep, however, there is an experiencer, someone who registers, “I slept deeply.” When the mind’s saṅkalpa-vikalpa activity has run and the buddhi has become quiet and the chitta has also become still, the state approaches suṣupta, the dreamless deep-sleep state. (Today devices such as the Apple Watch report “deep sleep” in one’s night, indicating hours spent in deep sleep; the watch measures bodily and brain indicators, but the point here is that in deep sleep the mind’s activity is largely deactivated, body sleeps and the mind too enters a state of rest.) Yet even then, there is a witness awareness. That subtle “I-am”-awareness is the fourth movement of the antaḥkaraṇa.

When, finally, the chitta is fixed upon the Paramātma, when the mind’s very core rests in the Supreme, Bhagavān says that from that meditative steadiness arises the renunciation of the fruits of action. Who is it that renounces the fruits? Who is it that ceases to claim doership? The sense “I did it” dissolves. Instead, one comes to say, “It was by Prabhu’s grace that this happened; He accomplished it through me.” The sense of aham (egoic doership) is surrendered; the feeling “I am the doer” is given up. That is the most subtle, the most excellent renunciation. Bhagavān calls this the highest because it is the subtlest and because it brings immediate peace.

But Bhagavān gives one more caution. He warns that Arjuna should not presume that because this last option, the renunciation born of chitta fixed in Paramātma, is the ultimate, he must therefore insist that it is the only way he must take. In practice, all approaches, if faithfully followed, reach the same goal. Therefore, one should not treat means as hierarchically superior or inferior in an absolutist way. If one must reach a destination, there are many routes; the “best” route depends on many parameters. A flight may be the quickest and most efficient way for many travellers, yet if it is prohibitively expensive for a particular person, that route is not useful for them, and they will not choose it. Bhagavān, therefore, tells Arjuna: Do not search endlessly for superiority among the practices themselves. Choose according to one’s suitability and circumstances. The emphasis is not to demean the earlier methods, they are the necessary beginnings, but to explain that the subtler states are more powerful, and the final renunciation yields immediate peace. Yet one should not pridefully rank means; practicalities and individual conditions matter.

Bhagavān explains that external, sense-directed practices (japa, pūjā, formal dhyāna practices) are the proper starting points. As one moves inward, from indriyas to antaḥ-indriya, to manas, to buddhi, to chitta, the practice becomes subtler and correspondingly more powerful. Jñāna, belonging to buddhi, is superior to mere external practice; dhyāna of the Paramātma, established in the citta, is subtler still; and when that dhyāna culminates in the renunciation of doership, one attains immediate and infinite peace. But Bhagavān also advises practical discernment: do not absolutise the hierarchy

of means; choose the instrument that suits one's condition, for all true means, when rightly followed, lead to the same goal.

One may ask: what should be the ideal state to attain the abhiṣṭa (the sought goal)? Bhagavān said: tyāga, the renunciation that is śānti, the state of peacefulness, the state of peace of mind, that is the best. The less a person is attached to the karma-phala (fruits of action), the more peaceful his mind will be.

Consider two people among one's acquaintances. One person always appears to be in turmoil, very restless; it is hard even to speak calmly with him because so many issues constantly arise with him. Another person in the same circle will be found to be perfectly composed and tranquil. Superficially one may perceive many differences between them, but the fundamental difference, the speaker explains, is very simple, and one can check this against experience: the more restless a person is, the more he worries about both short-term and long-term fruits. He constantly thinks: *"What if this happens? What if that happens? What if he does this to me? What if it does not work out? Will this happen this evening? Will that happen tomorrow?"* That person's life will be agitated in proportion to his clinging to the outcomes, whether those outcomes are immediate or distant.

By contrast, the person who is not bound to karma-phala responds differently. If asked, *"What do you expect? You did that action, will any result come?"* he will say, *"If Prabhu wills, it will come; if not, that too is fine."* He accepts that he performed his duty; he has done what was required, and he is not obsessed with the result. If a well-wisher tries to make him anxious, *"You worked so hard; how can you now sit idle?"*, he is not ready to be drawn into worry.

To illustrate this, the speaker recounts an anecdote of Kabīr Dās. Kabīr's cow disappeared; neighbours came to express grief and sympathy: *"Alas! This is a terrible misfortune; your cow, so valuable, has been stolen. What a wicked person must have taken it."* Kabīr Dās replied calmly: *"It will be, that is all."* The neighbours persisted: *"But now you will have trouble, how will you get milk? In those days, people did not buy milk; they used their own cow's milk or shared it. Now what will you do?"* Kabīr answered, *"It does not matter."* When the neighbours urged him to show sorrow at least once, Kabīr Dās refused to be upset. He even remarked, with a wry humour, *"Well, at least I will get a break from cleaning cow-dung; there will be no cow-dung and no mosquitoes."* The villagers were scandalised and thought, *"What sort of man is this? We came to console him and he does not even feel sorrow."* They could not understand his composure.

The next morning, while they were still dwelling on the misfortune, the cow returned on its own; it had not been stolen but only wandered off. The same neighbours who had been lamenting came to congratulate him: *"What good fortune! This is a miracle, your cow has returned. Many cows are stolen and never come back, but yours returned; it is a sign of great grace, of some power in you."* Kabīr Dās had no wealth, but he was utterly peaceful. The villagers' emotional swing, first grief, then joy, did not affect Kabīr. The lesson is clear: whether in joy or sorrow, the one who is not attached to karma-phala has a perfectly calm citta; the one who is bound to the fruits will be perpetually disturbed, however much wealth he may possess.

Bhagavān then cautions: do not look for superiority in outward signs or in the particular path. The Bhagavad-Gītā is unique among scriptures: it does not insist upon one single road as the sole valid route to the goal. In many traditions and sects there are endless disputes about method: *"Worship like this, not like that; perform rites in this manner; chant this name, not that one"* such quarrels about external practice abound. Bhagavān says that the path itself is not the point. He makes the famous point: whoever approaches Me (mām prapadyate), by whichever way he approaches, in whatever form he worships, I meet him in that way. Bhagavān does not care which path a pilgrim

follows; what matters is what change has occurred in that person's life. He cares whether a real transformation has taken place. He does not measure devotion by external tokens.

Arjuna asks: "What do you mean? We ordinarily count someone as a bhakta because he wears a conspicuous tilaka, keeps a top-knot (choṭī), wears a janeū, knows mantras, sings bhajans, and takes part in kīrtan. Are these not the marks of devotion?" Bhagavān replies: "Wait. Those are not my parameters. Those are not what I look for." People are inclined to consider those external signs as the criteria of devotion, but Bhagavān says he does not accept those as his measures. Instead, Bhagavān lists a set of inner signs, thirty-nine lakṣaṇas (symptoms or characteristics), that indicate genuine devotion. In short: Bhagavān cares not for the externals of path or ritual; he cares for the inner condition. He accepts a devotee according to the way that person truly worships, and outward marks such as tilaka, the choṭi, the janeū, knowledge of mantras, or visible singing and kīrtan are not the criteria that determine acceptance by Bhagavān.

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विस्त्रो स्मरणं पाद-सेवनम् ।  
अर्चनम् वन्दनम् दास्यम् सख्यम्-आत्म-निवेदनम् ॥

Bhagavān says, "I do not care (I do not concern Myself) which form of bhakti you adopt. What matters is, to where has your devotion brought you? What state have you reached as a result of your practice?"

Arjuna then asked: "Which states are those? Which specific states (avasthāyāḥ) are You referring to?"

## 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.

Bhagavān said: **adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānām, maitraḥ karuṇaḥ, nirmamaḥ nirahaṅkāraḥ, sama-duḥkha-sukha-kṣamī**. From the 13th to the 19th śloka Bhagavān set out these mark, there are thirty-nine signs of a bhakta. Not a single one of the outward things that people commonly take to be marks of devotion was listed. Bhagavān did not say "perform pūjā, do āratī, apply tilaka, smear sandal paste, or light agarbatti." None of those outward tokens is named. What He did say was: **adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānām**, be free from hatred toward all beings.

What does adveṣṭā mean? adveṣṭā means "I do not hate anyone." "I harbour no base feelings towards anyone. I will not belittle another's standing in order to elevate my own." People sometimes think in terms of competition: "My line should be longer; his line should be shorter."

Bhagavān does not demand that one belittle another. Even those who consider themselves sattvic and consider themselves devotees sometimes feel dislike for someone else and feel upset when that person is praised, the mind becomes agitated; one thinks, "Why are they praising that person? Where were they when I did so much?" That resentment is dveṣa (hatred, aversion). When one seeks to undercut another's reputation or standing, that is dveṣa.

Satsangis will even quarrel over who has the better guru: "My guru is superior to yours." Activists or sevaks quarrel: "I do more service than you", even that breeds dveṣa. Bhagavān says: if one aspires

to be a true bhakta, there must not be a spirit of dveṣa in the heart toward anyone. Everyone has faults, the speaker stresses this plainly: “We all have faults; why then should I cultivate hatred for another because of one fault?”

Bhagavān’s injunction is wider: adveṣṭā means no hatred not only toward other humans but toward all creatures, sarva-bhūtānāṃ. One should harbour no hatred in one’s heart for any living being.

The speaker then brings illustrative devotional injunctions from the bhakti tradition:

रूठे सुजन मनाइए , जो रूठे सौ बार।

रहिमन फिरि-फिरि पोहिए, टूटे मुक्ताहार॥

“Console the estranged beloved (rūṭhe sajan manāīe), whoever is offended, go and reconcile them, even a hundred times.” Poets like Rahīm and the bhakti poets say: if a friend or beloved is displeased, bring them back, whether they are a lover (priya), a family-member (svajan), or a virtuous person (sajjan). The counsel is: reconcile them again and again.

The poet’s image is instructive: if you possess a garland of pearls that is strung on cotton thread, it will eventually snap. When it breaks, what do you do? You pick up the pearls and re-string the garland. Do not count how many times it will break; whenever it breaks, mend it and re-string it. Treat relationships like a pearl necklace: whenever they fray, repair them; do not fret over how often you must do it

Patañjali, the yoga master, gives four practices for the purification of the citta (citta-śuddhi): maitri toward the happy, karuṇā toward the suffering, muditā toward the virtuous, and upekṣā toward the sinful. The speaker notes that later teachers simplified or emphasised subsets: Bhagavān’s teaching (and later in some readings, the Buddha’s emphasis) can be rendered practically as twofold guidance, befriend and show maitri toward the happy and the virtuous; show karuṇā toward the suffering and toward those who have fallen into sin. If a person is sinful, remember that sin usually accompanies suffering; our heart should respond with compassion.

What is karuṇā, and how does it differ from dayā? People often conflate them. Dayā (pity) is situational , one feels pity in a particular circumstance and it may come and go. Karuṇā is a deeper, constant disposition of the heart. In pity there is often a subtle sense of superiority: “I pity that person.” Karuṇā, by contrast, makes one share the other’s suffering; it is an inward participation: one’s food will not go down if one truly sees another’s misery. Karuṇā is therefore more profound and abiding than ephemeral pity.

The speaker emphasises that :

दया धर्म का मूल है, पाप मूल अभिमान।

तुलसी दया न छाँड़िए, जब लग घट में प्राण॥

Dayā (compassion) is the root of dharma; pāpa (sin) arises from abhimāna (pride). Compassion is a virtue of the powerful, rulers, officials, and wealthy persons can and ought to manifest dayā because they have the means and authority to alleviate suffering. Thus, befriend the happy and virtuous (maitri toward the fortunate and the good), and be compassionate toward the suffering and the sinful, this is given as the devotee’s second and third characteristics in Bhagavān’s description.

Then Bhagavān prescribes: **nirmamaḥ**, **nirahaṃkāraḥ**. **Nirmamaḥ**, free from possessiveness, free from the thought “mine”; **nirahaṃkāraḥ**, without egoism, without the aggrandising sense “I, mine.” People think “my son, my wife, my husband, my mother” , possessions and relations become objects

of possessiveness; and similarly, they cling to objects: “my mobile, my degree,” etc. Bhagavān teaches that a true bhakta is free from these possessive and egoistic identifications.

Once, a husband and wife went to a store to buy a new refrigerator. There were many models displayed. They examined each one carefully, checking all the features. Finally, they selected one and decided, “We will take this model.” The salesman said, “There is only one piece of this model. I will tag it with your name so that no one else selects it before billing.” He labeled it: “Sold to Mr. and Mrs. Gupta.”

While the couple stood there, the salesman went to complete the billing. Meanwhile, store employees began carrying another refrigerator to install inside. Mr. Gupta noticed from afar that the four men were passing by the refrigerator he had selected. Feeling a sense of ownership, he exclaimed, “Brother, careful! That is my fridge!” Although the billing had not yet been completed and no payment had been made, Mr. Gupta’s attachment and sense of belonging made him feel the fridge was already his. It mattered little which refrigerator they installed elsewhere, but the one he had claimed, his, should not be touched.

This is the human condition: when we feel something belongs to us, any disturbance to it causes distress. If someone dies in Ukraine, it may evoke sympathy. But if something disrupts what we consider “ours,” our personal sense of attachment causes immediate sorrow. If trouble occurs in India, or in Kashmir, or if a Hindu is harmed in Bengal, the sense of belonging makes one feel pain. This attachment is the root of both pride and suffering.

From this awareness emerged a beautiful song:

मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।  
जो भी अपने पास है, वह धन किसी का है दिया।  
देने वाले ने दिया, वह भी दिया किस शान से।  
"मेरा है" यह लेने वाला, कह उठा अभिमान से  
"मैं", 'मेरा' यह कहने वाला, मन किसी का है दिया।  
मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।  
जो मिला है वह हमेशा, पास रह सकता नहीं।  
कब बिछुड़ जाये यह कोई, राज कह सकता नहीं।  
जिन्दगानी का खिला, मधुवन किसी का है दिया।..  
मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।  
जग की सेवा खोज अपनी, प्रीति उनसे कीजिये।  
जिन्दगी का राज है, यह जानकर जी लीजिये।  
साधना की राह पर, साधन किसी का है दिया।  
मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है द  
जो भी अपने पास है, वह सब किसी का है दिया।  
मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।  
जो भी अपने पास है, वह धन किसी का है दिया।  
मैं नहीं, मेरा नहीं, यह तन किसी का है दिया।

This song teaches that nothing is truly ours. All possessions, relationships, and even our own bodies are ultimately gifts from Paramātmā. Recognising this cultivates nirahaṅkāra, freedom from ego, and diminishes attachment to pride, wealth, or personal status.

Bhagavān then elaborates: a devotee is one who attains equanimity (sukha-duḥkha-samā), remaining

steady in happiness and sorrow. A true devotee does not panic in adversity, nor boast in pleasure. The husband-wife story reflects this principle: attachment causes disturbance, but renunciation and detachment bring peace.

Bhagavān emphasises: joy and sorrow are inherent to life.

This can be illustrated with a simple principle:

कभी धनवान है कितना, कभी इन्सान निर्धन है।  
कभी सुख है, कभी दुःख है, इसी का नाम जीवन है॥  
जो मुश्किल में न घबराये, उसे इन्सान कहते हैं॥  
किसी के काम जो आये, उसे इन्सान कहते हैं।  
पराया दर्द अपनाये, उसे इन्सान कहते हैं॥

This poem is central because it captures the essence of life's dualities and the human responsibility to remain balanced. It shows that equanimity is not indifference; rather, it is the conscious regulation of emotional intensity (duration and intensity of reaction) in both joy and sorrow.

Bhagavān continues, teaching that the intensity of happiness and sorrow can be controlled. Those who dance excessively in pleasure will inevitably cry equally in adversity. Awareness and moderation in emotional responses are essential.

He further explains the importance of forgiveness (kṣamā), which is necessary for all. Mistakes happen daily, and one must forgive both oneself and others repeatedly, just as pearls from a broken necklace must be carefully restrung again and again. Similarly, relationships must be tended with patience and compassion.

In essence, Bhagavān's teaching through these stories, songs, and principles is: life alternates between joy and sorrow. True humans are those who remain calm, useful, and compassionate; who do not cling to ego, possessions, or pride; and who forgive repeatedly. Attachment creates disturbance; renunciation and detachment bring peace.

### **Maharāja Rañjīt Singh and the Lesson of Forgiveness**

Once, Maharāja Rañjīt Singh, the celebrated ruler of Punjab, was passing through the streets in a royal procession. He was widely admired as an excellent king, and naturally, large crowds had gathered along the roadside to catch a glimpse of their beloved sovereign. People stood with reverence and excitement, whispering, "It is the Maharāja's procession!"

In the midst of this atmosphere of dignity and admiration, a sudden and shocking incident occurred. A stone came flying from the crowd and struck Maharāja Rañjīt Singh directly on the head. Blood began to flow. At once, an uproar broke out among the people: "*Someone has attacked the Maharāja!*" The royal soldiers rushed forward to find the culprit.

Scanning the area quickly, they saw a young boy of about ten or eleven years of age. He had a few stones in his hand and, noticing the sudden commotion, looked frightened and restless. The soldiers seized him immediately. "It was he!" they declared. "*This boy threw the stone at the Maharāja!*"

The commander gave a stern order: "*Behead him at once! Such insolence against the Maharāja cannot be tolerated.*"

But Maharāja Rañjīt Singh, though wounded and bleeding, raised his hand and said calmly, "*Wait. Do*

*not be hasty. First ask him, why did he throw the stone?"*

The boy was brought trembling before the king. Rañjīt Singh looked at him with gentle eyes and asked, *"My child, did you throw this stone at me?"*

The boy stammered, *"Maharāja, I was not aiming at you. But yes... it did strike you. I admit it."* Rañjīt Singh inquired further, *"Then what were you doing with stones in your hand?"*

The boy explained, *"I was trying to knock down some mangoes from that tree over there. The mango did not fall, but the stone flew and accidentally struck you. I did not even know you were passing this way."*

Though his head was bleeding, Maharāja Rañjīt Singh smiled at the child's honesty. He then turned to his minister and said, *"Send two baskets of mangoes immediately to this boy's house."*

The minister was astonished. *"Maharāja! He struck you with a stone! You are bleeding! How can you reward him?"*

Rañjīt Singh replied with profound wisdom:

*"You have not yet understood. Reflect on the ways of nature. When we throw a stone at a mango tree, does it punish us? No, it gives us fruit. If even a tree returns sweetness in response to being struck, should not a king rise higher than a tree? If the tree responds with generosity, should I, as a ruler, not respond with even greater generosity?"*

Then he added, *"We humans are quick to find reasons to punish. But one must also learn to find reasons to forgive. Just as one can search for excuses to condemn, one can also search for excuses to show mercy. Today, I choose to look for an excuse to forgive."*

Thus, Maharāja Rañjīt Singh turned a moment of potential cruelty into a profound lesson in compassion. He demonstrated that a true ruler, and indeed a true devotee of Bhagavān, is one who knows the higher art, not of vengeance, but of forgiveness.

The teaching was clear: ***A bhakta learns to forgive. Forgiveness should not be a reluctant act but a conscious choice, a higher virtue. Just as trees teach us to give fruit in return for stones, a devotee learns to respond with kindness even when harmed. This is the true spirit of kṣamā.***

**12.14**

**santuṣṭaḥ(s) satataṁ(ṅ) 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.

***"Saṁtuṣṭa, satata, saṁyogī, one who is always content is truly wealthy."***

In worldly terms, people often count their wealth as cows (godhān), elephants (gajdhān), hawks (bājīdhān), or jewels (ratan dhān). Yet, when true contentment (saṁtuṣṭi) arrives, all these forms of wealth are like mere dust in comparison.

गोधन, गजधन, बाजिधन और रतनधन खान।  
जब आवे सन्तोष धन, सब धन धूरि समान।।

This idea is beautifully illustrated in the Mahābhārata, in the famous Yakṣa-prashna episode. The Yakṣa posed one hundred questions to Yudhiṣṭhira. Among these was a profound question: “Who is truly poor (daridra)?”

Ordinarily, we might answer: “The one without money, the one who is financially destitute, the poor.” Yet Yudhiṣṭhira, the Dharmarāja, responded with remarkable insight. Smiling at the Yakṣa’s gaze, he said:

यक्ष असंतुष्ट सा दरिद्र

“The truly poor is the one who is discontent.”

In other words, daridra is not the one who lacks wealth, but the one who is never satisfied with what they have.

Think about it: no matter how much one possesses, the mind that is discontent always wants more. Someone with one lakh rupees desires ten lakhs; ten lakhs, a crore; one crore, ten crores; ten crores, a hundred crores; a hundred crores, five hundred crores. Even after acquiring enormous wealth, people still stand in line at banks or before powerful authorities, asking, demanding, never satisfied.

True poverty is therefore not measured by material scarcity but by the lack of contentment. Even the wealthiest, if dissatisfied, remain daridra. Conversely, a person with modest means who is content (saṃtuṣṭa) is truly rich, for their wealth of heart surpasses all worldly riches.

Lesson: **Contentment is the ultimate wealth. Discontentment, not scarcity, defines true poverty.**

*Saṃtuṣṭa, satata, saṃyogī, one who is always content is ever steadfast in union with the Divine.”*

Such a person is yatātmā, one with firm self-discipline and control over their mind, intellect, and consciousness. Their mind is not easily swayed; their will is resolute. An illustrative example comes from Japan: schoolchildren are taught to focus on their studies while walking. They are instructed that if something happens behind them, they must not turn their necks to look. Curious about this discipline, American observers asked to test the children. They set off a small firecracker outside the classroom. Remarkably, not a single child turned to look. This demonstrated the power of yatātmā: firm control over the mind and intellect.

Similarly, in life, one must learn not to be distracted by attachment. Even in small matters, such as observing the world or people, the mind should remain steady. Just as the Japanese children did not turn their necks, so too the disciple maintains focus on the Prabhu.

The Mahābhārata provides another vivid illustration of steadfast resolve (dṛḍha-niścaya): the story of Pārvatī. Born as the daughter of the Himalayas after her self-immolation as Sati, Pārvatī was destined to reunite with Bhagavān Śiva through intense penance. When Narada Muni informed her of her destiny, she accepted it with full awareness and began severe austerities.

The austerities were not ordinary; they tested her mind, body, and soul. Pārvatī lived in the mountains, enduring harsh conditions, no comfortable clothes, only a tiger skin; she subsisted on minimal food, coexisted with strange creatures, and even wore the sacred Ganga within her jata. Her austerities were so extreme that conventional understanding cannot grasp them. Meanwhile, sages,

including the Saptarṣi, came to test her devotion. They inquired about her purpose, and Pārvatī explained that she sought Bhagavān Śiva as her lord and consort. The sages elaborated the magnificence of Vishnu and other celestial truths, yet Pārvatī, patient and unwavering, listened with full concentration, realizing that achieving her goal might take hundreds of lifetimes.

तजउँ न नारद कर उपदेसू। आपु कहहिँ सत बार महेसू।।  
मैं पा परउँ कहइ जगदंबा। तुम्ह गृह गवनेहु , भयउ बिलंबा।।

“Tajau na Narada kara upadeshu,  
Apu kahahi sat bār Maheshu;  
Mai pā parau kahi jagadamba,  
Tum grha gavanehu, bhayau bilamba.”

Even if it took a hundred lifetimes, she resolved, she would not accept anyone but Śiva. She endured immense austerities until she reached the point where even simple breathing became a deliberate, controlled act. Only after a thousand years of penance did Śiva finally manifest. This exemplifies a devotee of steadfast resolve (dṛḍha-niścaya bhakta): one who commits the mind and intellect fully to the Prabhu, refusing to waver, even across countless obstacles or lifetimes.

The teachings of Sutikṣaṇī reinforce this principle:

नहिँ सतसंग जोग जप जागा। नहिँ दृढ चरन कमल अनुरागा ॥  
एक बानि करुनानिधान की। सो प्रिय जाकेँ गति न आन की ॥4॥

“Nahi satsang joga jap jāgā,  
Nahi dṛḍha charana kamal anurāgā;  
Eka bāṇi karunānidhāna kī,  
So priya jāke gati na ānī.”

Even if one lacks extensive satsang, yoga, or external ritualistic devotion, yet their mind and intellect remain entirely absorbed in Bhagavān, their devotion is supreme. When Paramātmā manifests before such a devotee, the soul remains absorbed in divine contemplation, even as the Prabhu Himself stands waiting.

This story emphasises that Bhagavān values:

- Equanimity in joy and sorrow (**sukha-duḥkha sama**), a mind balanced in pleasure and pain.
- Universal compassion and friendliness (**maitrī-karuṇā**) towards all beings.
- Renunciation of ego and possessiveness (**nirmaṃsa, nirahaṃkāra**).
- Forgiveness (**kṣamā**) is a central virtue.
- Contentment (**saṃtuṣṭi**) is the highest wealth.
- Steadfast resolve (**dṛḍha-niścaya**), once committed, the mind acts in alignment with its resolve.
- Complete dedication of mind and intellect to Bhagavān (**manobuddhi samarpita**).

Thus, a devotee whom Bhagavān loves is not merely one who applies tilak, performs kīrtan, or engages in ritual worship. Rather, it is the one who:

- Maintains equanimity in pleasure and pain,
- Exercises discipline and self-control,
- Has abandoned ego and possessiveness,
- Acts with compassion and friendliness towards all,
- Has unwavering devotion and steadfast resolve,
- Has an entirely dedicated mind and intellect to the Prabhu.

Such a devotee, like Pārvatī, becomes supremely dear to Bhagavān, not by external displays, but by the perfection of inner surrender, discipline, and steadfast love.

## 12.15

### **yasmānodvijate 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.

#### **The Strength of Forbearance - “Harṣa, Amarṣa, and Abhaya in Bhakti**

Bhagavān here gives a very beautiful and profound instruction:

*“One should neither agitate anyone, nor be agitated by anyone. I will never disturb another, and no one can disturb Me.”*

Now, at first glance, we may agree with the first half, *“I will not disturb anyone,”* which seems reasonable. But the second part appears more difficult – *“no one can disturb me.”* How is that possible? Surely others’ words, actions, or behaviour can trouble us?

*Bhagavān’s teaching is subtle: no one has the power to disturb us unless we ourselves give them that power through our expectations. Disturbance arises not from external events but from within, from the desire that “things should go according to my will.”*

Example from Śatakātṛaya

In Bhartrhari’s Śatakātṛaya, a verse is found:

**मृगमीनसज्जनानां तृणजलसन्तोषविहितवृत्तीनाम्।**

**लुब्धकधीवरपिशुना निष्कारणवैरिणो जगति ॥**

*“Mṛgaḥ sajjano nāma-tṛṇa-jala-santoṣitaḥ, lubdhaḥ piśunaḥ niṣkāraṇam jagati.”*

Just as the deer and fish are content with grass and water, so too are sādhus content with little. Yet, hunters and fishermen still attack them without cause. Similarly, the wicked sometimes create enmity even against the blameless.

So, what should one do?

A beautiful bhajan:

**“To kis bāt kī cintā, hamāre sātha Śrī Raghunāth...”**

Why should we worry, when Śrī Raghunāth Himself is with us?

हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो किस बात की चिंता।  
शरण में रख दिया जब माथ तो किस बात की चिंता।

किया करते हो तुम दिन रात क्यों बिन बात की चिंता ।  
तेरे स्वामी, तेरे स्वामी को रहती है, तेरे हर बात की चिंता ॥1 ॥

हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो...॥

न खाने की, न पीने की, न मरने की, न जीने की।  
रहे हर स्वास, रहे हर स्वास में भगवान के प्रिय नाम की चिंता ॥2 ॥

हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो...॥

विभीषण को अभय वर दे किया लंकेश पल भर में।  
उन्ही का हाँ, उन्ही का कर रहे गुणगान तो किस बात की चिंता ॥3 ॥

हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो...॥

हुई भक्त पर किरपा, बनाया दास प्रभु अपना।  
उन्ही के हाँ, उन्ही के हाथ में अब हाथ तो किस बात की चिंता ॥4 ॥

हमारे साथ श्री रघुनाथ तो...॥



If we are truly accepted as His servant (dāsa), then He Himself takes our burden.

But the key condition is this: handing over the rope of our boat into the hands of Bhagavān. We often say “Bhagavān, please take care,” yet we do not surrender the rope; we keep trying to steer ourselves. Real security comes only when the rope is placed fully in His hands.

Harṣa and Amarṣa

Two great obstacles to Bhakti are Harṣa (excessive elation) and Amarṣa (intolerance).

- **Harṣa:** When something favourable happens, we get carried away, overexcited, and lose steadiness.
- **Amarṣa:** When something unfavourable happens, we lose tolerance and burst out in irritation.

Bhagavān points out that the greatest decline in society over the past fifty years has been the loss of sahana-śakti (forbearance). Even small children now cannot tolerate the slightest discomfort. Adults too quickly say, “I cannot bear this person,” or “I cannot deal with that behavior.” But the truth is: without forbearance, there can be no Bhakti.

To be a devotee means to develop the capacity to endure all opposites:

- heat and cold,
- hunger and thirst,
- sweet and bitter,
- favourable and unfavourable behaviour of others,
- even a little too much salt or too little sugar in food,
- even if a daughter-in-law ignores us,
- Or if a son does not inquire about our well-being.
- The one who can bear with equanimity is truly a bhakta.

### **Abhaya - Freedom from Fear**

Bhagavān also promises **abhaya** – fearlessness. Yet many people live in fear even when they have no real problems. Doctors often hear: “Doctor, I feel anxious. Something bad might happen.” When asked, “What might happen?” they reply, “I don’t know, but something...” This habitual fear is not

external; it is a disturbance of the mind.

But if the devotee can hold firmly in the heart the line:

**“Hamāre sātha Śrī Raghunāth, to kis bāt kī cintā?”**

**“Śrī Raghunāth is with me, then what is there to fear?”**

Then all fear vanishes. In that remembrance, anxiety cannot exist.

**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.

**The Devotee Who Lets Go of Expectations**

**Anapekṣa, dakṣa, udāsīna , sarvārambha parityāgī:** the devotee who is non-expectant, competent, indifferent, and who renounces attachment to every beginning is dear to the bhakta’s ideal. In short: one who is constantly content (saṁtuṣṭa satata saṁyogī).

He who has controlled his longings, who has disciplined his apekṣā, is the true renunciant. Most quarrels in families and societies arise from expectations. Any quarrel or dispute you have with someone traces back to expectations. Note carefully: if you dislike your daughter-in-law, or your husband, or your wife, or your children, or your parents, or your neighbour, or your boss, or an employee, wherever expectations are higher, there discord will occur. Expectation is the chief source of hurt; suffering (kleśa) arises because of expectation.

Prajñā-cakṣu Swami Śaraṇānanda, one of the century’s foremost thinkers among the sants, formulated a sharp rule in satsang: *“Others’ duties are not my rights.”* (Others’ duties, not my rights.) We habitually convert another person’s duty into what we consider our right, and then we get entangled. The other person will do what they will do; yet we become deeply saddened because they did not fulfil what we presumed they ought to fulfil. Indeed, our expectations often have nothing to do with the other’s duties. Occasionally, someone hears us and acts, but mostly people act according to their own choices. Let them think; their demands are never complete. How can we keep meeting an endless list of demands? The other person will take their own stand.

An anapekṣa devotee is one who reduces expectations. “I will not sit before everyone with a shopping list of demands. I am passing through the market of the world; I am not a buyer here. I live in the world, but I am not entitled to keep demanding.” This is the spirit.

There is also the difference between external cleanliness and inner purity. The speaker uses the word śucitā (inner purity), a concept for which ordinary English has no perfect single word; combine *“hygiene”* and *“sacredness”* to approach it. Since the coronavirus pandemic, people have started using hand rubs and sanitisers. The speaker observed even some mahapurush who applied hand-rub and immediately sat to eat as if their hands were rendered completely germ-free, without reflecting that the germs are still present on their hands until they are actually removed. They do not think twice: what will happen when they touch food? This reveals a confusion between mere visible cleanliness (svacchatā) and inner sanctity (śucitā). The pandemic did some good by reminding people: do not touch others without cause; do not put your hands everywhere without reason. Earlier,

these cautions were dismissed as superstition or backwardness; now even Western medicine recognises the wisdom in the old Indian practice of avoiding needless touching. Life should be pure outwardly and inwardly. What are the thoughts in my mind? What are the feelings of my heart?

**Śucitā** is a force of character: it is the discipline to practise purity even when no one watches. Everyone has an obsession with external cleanliness, but śucitā is something more, a higher discipline.

A widespread misunderstanding prevails: *“Good people are always troubled,”* or *“God tests the good severely,”* or *“Those who live a religious life must endure great suffering.”* This confusion looms in many minds. Pūjya Svāmī-ji clarified: pay attention, one does not lose by following truth or by being naturally humble in temperament. A person falls because of lack of vigilance, not because of virtue itself. Bhagavān does not favour foolish devotees; He prefers vigilant devotees. If one is careless and suffers loss because of one’s carelessness, one should not say, “I was good, therefore people cheated me.” No, you were careless, and therefore you were deceived. Being good does not mean being careless.

How should one be? One should be dakṣa, competent, prudent, watchful. To illustrate, let's see a story.

### **The Sarpanch’s Judgment , A Tale of Anapekṣā, Dakṣatā, and Śucitā**

This is an old, true tale.

In earlier times, when there were no restaurants and travellers carried their own meals, three merchants from different villages arrived at a sarāy (inn) at dusk. After washing and freshening up, they sat outside the sarāy to meet and converse. As night fell, they agreed to eat. Two of the three opened their tiffin boxes, but the third said, “I am not very hungry, I will sleep. I’ll just have some water.” The other two were surprised. These merchants had travelled all day from their villages, and they thought, “How could he not be hungry? Perhaps he forgot his meal.” They pressed him, and finally he admitted, “The truth is, I forgot my lunchbox at home. My wife packed it, but it must have been left behind. One day without food will not hurt; I sometimes fast.”

The other two protested: *“We are merchants and brothers in trade; three men can share two meals. Surely we can manage.”* After some insistence, he agreed to share. The first opened his tiffin: there were three rotīs. The second opened his: there were five rotīs. They agreed on a fair method: cut each rotī into three pieces. Eight rotīs times three pieces each is equal to twenty-four pieces. If each man ate eight pieces, everyone would be satisfied. They divided and ate contentedly and went to sleep.

Early next morning, the man who had no food rose and left quietly. When the other two woke and found him gone, they worried that perhaps he had been a thief or that their goods were taken. Checking the bedding, they found a small bundle left where the traveller had slept. Inside the bundle were eight gold ginnīs. They were astonished: “He who had no food was so wealthy!” The two merchants, by conversation, had not guessed his wealth; they had shared out of brotherhood and kindness. Now, with the unexpected treasure, they decided: “We will each keep four ginnīs.” They agreed to carry on.

But when the time came to divide the coins properly, a dispute arose. One of the two said, *“I brought five rotīs; you brought three. My share ought to be five parts and yours three.”* The other argued, *“No, we agreed to split everything equally, four and four.”* They could not reconcile their logic. Neither truly coveted the coins, yet both clung to their argument. Who should get how many coins? The sarāy-owner could not settle the question: *“Only the man who left the coins can say how many rotīs*

he thought were contributed.” So they went to the village sarpanch, reputed to be the most discerning judge across twenty nearby villages, a man whose decisions were considered sound and final.

They solemnly swore before him that they would accept whatever decision he gave. The sarpanch accepted the eight ginnīs and asked each how many rotīs he had brought. “Five,” said one. “Three,” said the other. The sarpanch then performed a simple arithmetic of contribution and consumption:

- The first man’s five rotīs produced 15 pieces ( $5 \times 3$ ). He ate eight pieces. So his net contribution =  $15 - 8 = 7$  pieces.
- The second man’s three rotīs produced 9 pieces ( $3 \times 3$ ). He also ate eight pieces. So his net contribution =  $9 - 8 = 1$  piece.

Thus, of the twenty-four pieces, one man had contributed seven pieces net and the other only one. Therefore, the sarpanch distributed the eight ginnīs in the proportion 7 : 1, seven ginnīs to the one who had effectively contributed seven pieces, and one ginnī to the other. The two merchants and the sarāy-owner were astonished: “We argued about four-and-four, but your judgment is seven-and-one. How did you arrive at this?” The sarpanch simply explained his accounting of contribution versus consumption.

The lesson astonished them and those who heard the story. Great men’s prajñā (discriminating wisdom) often cannot be grasped by ordinary minds. It is easy to comment from the outside, to say “Gandhiji should have done this,” or “Krishna should not have acted so.” But to understand a mahāpuruṣa’s wisdom, one must think from his level; otherwise, even a correct decision will seem unjust.

From this short tale, several spiritual lessons for life and for bhakti can be drawn:

- **Anapekṣā** (freedom from unreasonable expectations): quarrels arise from expectations. If one constantly expects particular behaviour from others, disputes follow. The anapekṣa devotee reduces demands upon others; he does not sit in the world with a list of claims.
- **Dakṣatā** (competence and vigilance): goodness is not an excuse for carelessness. One may be compassionate and virtuous, but one must also be alert and prudent. Bhagavān does not favour the foolish devotee; He is pleased by the vigilant, competent bhakta. Carelessness is what brings loss, not virtue itself.
- **Śucitā** (inner purity, distinct from mere hygiene): there is a difference between outer cleanliness (svacchatā) and inner sanctity (śucitā). The pandemic taught people to avoid needless touching; such restraint reflects an old Indian wisdom about purity, not superstition but practical insight. True śucitā is the discipline of inner cleanliness even when no one is watching.
- **Prajñā and bhakti**: a true bhakta develops life-skill wisdom (prajñā). Devotion ripens the intellect into discrimination and practical intelligence; devotees’ judgments are often subtle and far-reaching.
- **Anapekṣā as freedom from entitlement**: “I am not the buyer in the world-market”, the anapekṣa person lives among people without claiming endless rights. Many disputes arise because we treat others’ duties as our rights; understanding “others’ duties are not my rights” prevents much suffering.

The tale concludes with the reminder: the devotee beloved of Bhagavān is not merely outwardly pious. Bhagavan prefers those who are practical, vigilant, and wise, who practice anapekṣā, who are dakṣa in life, who cultivate inner purity, and who can discern correctly. Such a bhakta’s decisions and conduct will reflect a wisdom that ordinary reasoning may not immediately comprehend.

He instructs plainly: do not cause agitation in anyone, and do not accept agitation from anyone. Be constantly vigilant about this: neither provoke others nor allow yourself to be disturbed by them.

Remain always in a state of udāsīnatā Here udāsīna does not mean “sad.” Clarification is important: udāsīna means to sit above situations , to be detached, impartial, and non-partisan. It describes one who does not take sides, who speaks and judges with neutrality. Do not mistake this for dullness or apathy; it is dispassionate clarity.

अगर वो पूछ ले मुझसे कि तेरा हाल क्या है?

अगर वो पूछ ले मुझसे कि किस बात का गम है तो किस बात का गम है?

अगर वो पूछ ले मुझसे।

हम इंतजार ही करते रहते हैं।

People often misunderstand their own inner moods. They say, “My mood is bad; don’t speak to me.” If others oblige by avoiding them, they turn and complain, “No one asked how I am, no one cares.” They sit silently all morning and wait for someone to notice them. If someone would simply ask, “How are you? What is the sorrow?” then the matter would be resolved. The point: do not make emotional withdrawal into a claim on others; do not cultivate passive expectations that cause friction.

12.17

**yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi, na śocati na kāṅkṣati,  
śubhāśubhparityāgī, 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.

### Renouncing Every New Beginning

Sarvārambha-parityāgī refers to a consummate, final state, it is not an injunction for beginners. It describes the one who has become a siddha-yogī: such a person continues to perform duty (kartavya) but does not initiate fresh actions from personal desire. He fulfils what must be done, yet does not set in motion new karmic projects out of personal craving. This teaching properly belongs only to the perfected.

For a great mahāpuruṣa like a Svāmī-ji, action is not for self-interest. Such a one neither laments nor hates, neither clings nor covets: **na śocati, na dveṣṭi, na kāṅkṣati**. He is **śubha-aśubha-parityāgī**, renounced of both auspicious and inauspicious things. Praise and blame, gain and loss, pleasure and pain do not determine his inner state. If wealth is stolen or a dear person departs, his life is not over; he rises above the sorrow and moves on.

A simple image explains the inner work: walking barefoot in the forest, one may get a thorn (kaṅṭha) stuck in the foot. To extract it one may use another thorn; when the first thorn is out, one either pockets or discards the second, in any case both thorns are removed. Spiritually, this means: first, the unwholesome tendencies (the aśubha “thorn”) must be uprooted from life; later, even attachment to the wholesome (the śubha “thorn”) must be relinquished. One must not spend life simply hoarding merits and comforts (bhaṅḍāra). Accumulating good deeds at the outset is appropriate, but in the culmination, one renounces both good and bad, even the fruits of spiritual practice. That final renunciation is the hallmark of the highest stage.

Thus, the path moves from effortful practice and gathering of merit to a subtler freedom: the ākāṅkṣā-rahita (desireless) devotee. The devotee who no longer lives by a ledger of claims on others, who has relinquished craving and expectation, is most dear to Bhagavān.

## 12.18

### **ṣamaḥ(ś) śatrau ca mitre ca, tathā mānāpamānayoḥ, śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu, ṣamaḥ(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.

#### **Equanimity toward Friend and Foe**

The teaching is simple and precise: cultivate **samatā**, equal-mindedness, toward friend and foe, and remain unmoved by insult. Learn to be indifferent to praise or abuse; keep your balance in śītoṣṇa (cold and heat) and in sukha-duḥkheṣu (pleasure and pain). Practice dispassion and non-attachment so that external disturbances do not unseat the mind.

If someone does not like you, that is their problem, not yours. You need not classify them as an enemy. If a person criticises or censures you, that alone does not make them your enemy; you do not need to return the same attitude. Yet what do people typically do? If someone utters two harsh words about us, we immediately place them in the “enemy” category. Bhagavān warns that such a response blocks bhakti: “*You cannot become a bhakta if you carry enemies.*” A true devotee has no enemies. Maintain the same intelligence (buddhi) toward both śatru (enemy) and mitra (friend).

This equanimity must be cultivated on both levels, body and mind. Learn to remain balanced in heat and cold, in pleasure and pain, in health and illness. Practically: do not let bodily discomfort, or a sudden insult, or praise, or small slights turn the mind unstable. The ideal is a mind that neither clings nor repels, that sees friend and foe without taking sides, and that carries itself with steady impartiality in all conditions.

## 12.19

### **tulyanindāstutirmaunī, santuṣṭo yena kenacit, aniketaḥ(s) sthīRāmatih̄(r), bhaktimānme priyo naraḥ. 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.

#### **Equanimity, Contentment, and the Beloved Bhakta**

The principle of tulya-nindā, equal-mindedness toward both praise and criticism, is central to understanding true devotion. A devotee who remains unaffected whether someone criticizes or praises them embodies the highest ideal of equanimity.

A beautiful song:

चाहे कोई गुण गान करे, चाहे करे निंदा कोई ।  
फूलों से कोई सत्कार करे, कांटे चुभो जाए कोई ।  
मान और अपमान ही दोनों, जिसके लिए सामान है,  
वो सच्चा इंसान, अरे इस धरती का भगवन है ॥

Sant Eknāth Maharaj illustrated this beautifully: he would carry a handful of dust from those who praised him and discard it, while giving no attention to criticism. He would say:

*"I take nothing from praise, and I take nothing from criticism. I hold neither in my mind. Those who*

*praise remain near; those who criticise remain distant."*

This approach reflects the essence of contentment and detachment. It is not influenced by external validations, fleeting emotions, or worldly perceptions of honor and insult. Even the simplest events, a garland being offered, or someone failing to offer tea, do not disturb the true devotee. One smiles in quiet joy without being dependent on others' actions or attention. This attitude exemplifies the heart of a bhaktimān, a devotee beloved to Bhagavān.

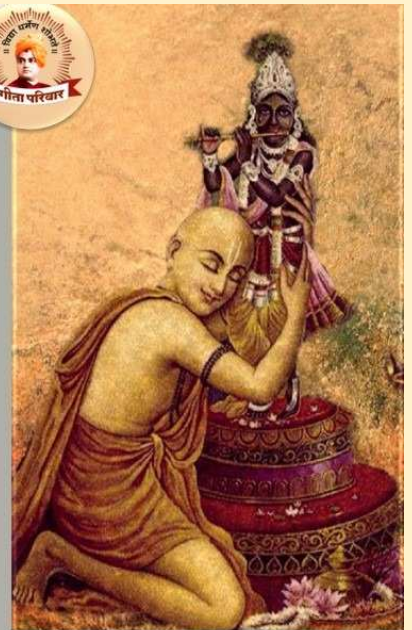
Bhagavān further teaches the principle of Santushto yena kinchit, contentment with whatever is present. A true bhakta is satisfied with the current circumstances, the people around them, their possessions, their family, and their work. They do not ask Prabhu to change anything to make them happy. They do not say, "Change this, and then I will serve You" or "Change that, and then I will read the Gītā." Such conditional devotion is false. Many have made such statements for decades, yet nothing changes outside; the mind must remain steady. A genuine bhakta accepts what exists and remains satisfied: I don't want to change anything, neither objects, nor people, nor situations. I am content as I am.

True contentment extends to every facet of life. A bhakta does not insist on specific seats, a particular side of the bed, or a preferred spot at satsang or during a discourse. Bhagavān calls this sthiramati, a mind established firmly, free from attachment, insistence, or preference. This does not develop overnight. The 39 spiritual traits described by great saints are not immediately permanent in most people; they appear and disappear. However, when the mind stabilises in these qualities and some traits become permanent rather than fluctuating, the devotee reaches a higher level of spiritual maturity.

### श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता के 12वें अध्याय में श्रीभगवान् द्वारा वर्णित भक्त के 39 लक्षण

1 अद्वेषा	- द्वेषभाव रहित	21 दक्षः	- कुशल/सावधान
2 सर्वभूतानाम् मैत्रः	- सबका मित्र	22 उदासीनः	- पक्षपात रहित
3 सर्वभूतानाम् करुणः	- दयालु	23 गतव्यथः	- किसी भी परिस्थिति में व्यथित नहीं होना
4 निर्ममः	- मैं की भावना से रहित	24 सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी	- नये उपक्रमों में अहंता की भावना का त्याग
5 निरहङ्कारः	- अहंकार रहित	25 न हृष्यति	- अत्यंत हर्षित न होना
6 समदुःखसुखः	- सुखदुःख की प्राप्ति में सम	26 न द्वेष्टि	- द्वेष न करना
7 क्षमी	- क्षमाशीलता	27 न शोचति	- शोक न करना
8 सततं सन्तुष्टः	- निरन्तर सन्तुष्ट	28 न काङ्क्षति	- कुछ न चाहना
9 यतात्मा	- स्वयं पर नियन्त्रण	29 शुभ परित्यागी	- शुभ कर्मों में राग-द्वेष का त्याग
10 दृढनिश्चयः	- दृढ़-संकल्प	30 अशुभ परित्यागी	- अशुभ कर्मों में राग-द्वेष का त्याग
11 अर्पितमनः	- मन का समर्पण	31 समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च	- शत्रु और मित्र में समभाव
12 अर्पितबुद्धिः	- बुद्धि का समर्पण	32 समः मान-अपमानयोः	- मान और अपमान में समभाव
13 यस्मात् लोकः न उद्विजते	- किसी को उद्विगित नहीं करना	33 शीतोष्णयोः समः	- सर्दी-गर्मी (अनुकूलता-प्रतिकूलता) में संतुलित
14 यः लोकात् न उद्विजते	- किसी से उद्विगित न होना	34 सुखदुःखयोः समः	- सुख-दुःख में संतुलित
15 हर्षे मुक्तः	- हर्ष रहित	35 सङ्गविवर्जितः	- विषयों में आसक्ति रहित
16 अमर्षे मुक्तः	- ईर्ष्या रहित	36 तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिः	- निन्दा-स्तुति में समभाव
17 भये मुक्तः	- भय रहित	37 मोनी	- मननशील
18 उद्वेगे मुक्तः	- उद्वेग रहित	38 सन्तुष्टः येन केनचित्	- जो मिला है उसमें सन्तुष्ट
19 अनपेक्षः	- अपेक्षा रहित	39 अनिकेतः	- स्थान में आसक्ति का त्याग
20 शुचिः	- पवित्रता		

जो उपरोक्त लक्षणों में स्थिरमति (स्थायीभाव) हैं वह भक्त भगवान् को अत्यंत प्रिय हैं ।



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Bhagavān emphasizes that a devotee who embodies these qualities, equanimity toward praise and criticism, contentment in every circumstance, detachment from external validations, is truly beloved: bhaktimān me priyah. Such a bhakta's heart is steady, their mind unshaken, and their devotion sincere. They experience neither elation at honour nor sorrow at insult, recognising both as transient.

They rejoice in flowers without clinging to them and endure thorns without complaint.

This ideal represents the pinnacle of spiritual practice: contentment and equanimity are not merely internal virtues but active states of mind that guide a devotee's conduct in all situations. They exemplify the permanent qualities of a true bhakta, whose devotion is cherished by Bhagavān.

### **The Beloved Devotee: Hanumān Ji and His Love for Bhagavān**

A beautiful story of devotion highlights why Hanumān Ji is so beloved to Bhagavān. After the rajyābhisheka, the grand coronation of Bhagavān, following His return from Vanavāsa, Bhagavān bade farewell to all, sending them back to their homes. Yet Hanumān Ji declared:

*"I will not go. I wish to remain at Your feet and serve in whatever way I can."*

While residing in the palace, an incident unfolded involving Sītā Mātā, Jānaki Mātā. One day, she was applying sindūra. Observing this, Hanumān Ji inquired:

*"Mātā, every day you apply sindūra. Why do you do this?"*

Jānaki Mātā paused, pondering how to explain to Hanumān Ji, a Vanara who was unmarried, the reason for this ritual. Hesitating at first, she then said:

*"It is because Bhagavān likes it. He enjoys seeing me wear sindūra."*

Upon hearing this, Hanumān Ji immediately disappeared. Sītā Mātā called out: *"Where have you gone?"* He had reached the royal storehouse of Ayodhyā, where bags of sindūra were kept. Without delay, he lifted an entire bag of sindūra onto himself and rushed back to Sītā Mātā. He exclaimed:

*"Mātā, now I too will look pleasing to Bhagavān!"*

Sītā Mātā was astonished and asked: *"What have you done, my son?"*

Hanumān Ji explained: *"Some of it fell on the way, but the rest remains. I want to be pleasing to Bhagavān, just as You are."*

Jānaki Mātā instructed him: *"To apply sindūra properly, it must be mixed with ghee."* Following her guidance, Hanumān Ji poured two measures of ghee over himself and then applied the sindūra, transforming himself into a radiant sindūrī form, fully devoted to becoming dear to Bhagavān.

This incident reflects the essence of true devotion: the devotee lives entirely to please Bhagavān. Hanumān Ji's every action, even applying sindūra in imitation of Sītā Mātā, exemplifies a life wholly dedicated to Bhagavān's pleasure.

The teaching is clear: who is a true bhakta? A bhakta is one whose life is lived entirely to please Bhagavān. One who is partially divided between worldly attachments and Bhagavān is not yet a full bhakta. A devotee fully united with Bhagavān, detached from worldly concerns, embodies the highest state of devotion. Hanumān Ji is the living example of such complete surrender and devotion, inspiring all who seek to understand what it truly means to be beloved to Bhagavān.

**सीताराम सीताराम सीताराम कहिए।  
जाहि विधि राखे राम ताहि विधि रहिए।।**

In essence, the devotee's life is not measured by ritual alone but by the heart's singular aim to delight Bhagavān in all thoughts, actions, and intentions.

## 12.20

### **ye tu dharmyāmṛtamidaṁ(ṽ), yathoktaṁ(m) paryupāsate, śraddadhānā matparamā, bhaktāste'tīva 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 Power of Śraddhā: Devotion Beloved to Bhagavān**

Bhagavān shared a profound teaching with Arjuna regarding the supreme value of śraddhā (faithful devotion) in spiritual life. He said:

*"Arjuna, this principle I am giving you, if you truly understand this sūtra, it will bring welfare to your life. Those who possess śraddhā, faithful, unwavering trust, toward Me, who listen to the immortal words of the scriptures or their guru with full devotion and without argument, they are exceedingly dear to Me."*

The term śraddhā dhāna mat paramā refers to supreme faith placed in the words of the śāstras and the instructions of a guru, without subjecting them to debate or rationalisation. When a disciple listens to these teachings with love and devotion, accepting them fully, they receive immense spiritual benefit.

Śraddhā does not mean critically analysing every point for correctness. Rather, it is the recognition that if something is beyond one's understanding, it is a limitation of one's own intellect, not the truth itself. Bhagavān illustrated this through a simple story, the "seven and one" tale, which some might not understand logically at first. The point is not to dismiss it as wrong, but to trust the guidance of a teacher or the scriptural statement, even when reason seems insufficient.

Śraddhā acts as a bridge across paths where reason would otherwise halt progress. Whatever one has faith in, that becomes the focus of their energy and action. For example, a child who is deeply devoted to a mobile game will spend hours practising, striving to reach higher levels and collecting achievements. Logically, these achievements may have no ultimate value, yet faith in the pursuit drives mastery. In the same way, a devotee's faith in Bhagavān guides them toward spiritual excellence.

Arjuna then asked: "Bhagavān, what is the nature of yogī who is truly established in yoga?"

Bhagavān responded:

*"Arjuna, one who acts solely for My pleasure, dedicating every thought, word, and deed to Me, that is the highest form of yoga. This yoga of devotion, motivated entirely by love for Bhagavān, is superior to all other pursuits. The śraddhā-filled soul does not merely perform actions mechanically but aligns their entire being with divine will, and such a devotee is extremely dear to Me."*

Thus, the teaching emphasises that faithful devotion (śraddhā), coupled with loving action for Bhagavān, is the surest path to spiritual fulfillment. It transcends rational doubt, intellectual debate, and worldly distraction. A soul immersed in such devotion becomes aligned with Bhagavān, and their actions, though simple or small, acquire supreme significance.

This sūtra highlights the transformative power of śraddhā: it channels energy, cultivates perseverance, and elevates the devotee to the highest spiritual plane, making them eternally beloved to Bhagavān.

The session concluded with **Harinām Sankīrtan**, followed by an engaging Question and Answer segment, where thought-provoking queries were addressed with practical insights and deep spiritual wisdom.

## **QUESTION AND ANSWERS**

**Yatharth ji**

**Question: How should one determine their goals?**

**Answer:** In life, there are short-term goals, long-term goals, and a final goal. Short-term goals depend on one's age and stage of life. For a student, preparing for exams is a short-term goal. For a householder, the short-term goals may differ. Goals change at different stages of life. Maintaining good health through careful attention to diet and lifestyle is a long-term goal.

The final goal is to answer the questions: Who am I? Why have I come here? This ultimate goal can be understood as self-realisation or mokṣa (liberation). While short-term and long-term goals may vary from person to person, the final goal remains the same for all.

**Question: How can one achieve this final goal?**

**Answer:** Spirituality provides the answer, through the study of the Self, or svādhyāya. If you ask me how a rasgulla tastes, I can describe my experience, but that alone will not convey the taste to you. You must eat the rasgulla yourself to experience it. Similarly, if I give you the answer to "Who am I?", it will only reflect my experience. You must realise it through your own experience.

**Question: You spoke about advēṣṭā (non-enmity). I feel proud to be Indian and am optimistic about India. But how should I deal with those who are pessimistic?**

**Answer:** There is no need to harbour hatred toward them. Hatred accomplishes nothing. If someone from another religion speaks ill of India, responding with hatred will achieve nothing. Instead, one should strengthen one's own capabilities. Promote the teachings of the Gītā, the dharma, and positive ideas. This will protect and strengthen Hindu Dharma. Hatred toward another religion does not safeguard your own dharma. Increase your own strength, expand your sphere of influence, and do not diminish others to elevate yourself.

**Question: How should one choose a guru?**

**Answer:** Remember these four principles:

1. The guru should not be self-proclaimed; avoid those who call themselves gurus without recognition.
2. The guru should have a lineage (paramparā), preferably from thousands of years of tradition, not just a few generations.
3. The guru should have knowledge of the Vedas, Upanishads, and scriptures.
4. The guru should guide one in the worship of Bhagavān. Avoid gurus who ask you to worship them instead of Bhagavān.

These guidelines ensure that one follows a genuine teacher capable of guiding the seeker toward spiritual realisation.

**Sanjana ji**

**Question: I am studying law. Can I ask your guidance on which specialisation to choose for further legal studies? I need guidance on how to make this choice.**

**Answer:** I am not an expert in the field of law. For any subject you do not fully understand, it is best to consult an expert in that domain. The Mahābhārata itself emphasizes this principle.

For guidance, approach someone with 20–25 years of experience in the specific field. A trusted, close

individual's advice is usually sufficient. Asking too many people can create confusion, so limit yourself to one or two reliable sources. If confusion still arises, sit before Bhagavān, carefully consider all options, and seek divine guidance. Proceed with faith and sincerity.

**Question: I have been learning in the Gītā Pariwār for the past few months. Currently, I am studying at the second level of Gītā recitation. During this period, my contact with people has reduced. I do not enjoy idle gossip, but this makes me feel lonely. What should I do?**

**Answer:** Friendship and compassion are essential. One should maintain practical and necessary relationships with everyone. There should be love for all beings. Just because you study the Gītā, a feeling of being "different" from others may arise in your mind. Do not let this feeling take root. While others engage in casual chatter, this does not mean you should avoid interacting with them entirely. Cultivate love for all those around you, even if they appear selfish.

Every person has some flaws; every community has shortcomings, including yourself. Do not focus on the faults of others. Instead, blend in with everyone and develop universal love. This approach nurtures harmony, humility, and balanced social interaction, even while maintaining your spiritual focus.

**Vardhini ji**

**Question: I do not have a Guru. Can I consider Śrī Krishna as my Guru?**

**Answer:** You may consider anyone as your Guru, but it is essential that the person you regard as your Guru accepts you as a disciple. A lone disciple like Ekalavya is an exception, where he progressed through his own effort, but such cases are extremely rare. Without the grace of a Guru, true guidance is not possible.

Pray to Bhagavān daily for guidance, but also attend the discourses of various Gurus, study their teachings carefully, and select a Guru according to the previously discussed criteria. This ensures that the Guru you choose is authentic and capable of guiding your spiritual journey.

**Devayani ji**

**Question: If I practice Nishkāma Bhakti (selfless devotion), will Bhagavān remove the deficiencies in my life?**

**Answer:** Bhagavān fulfils your needs, not your desires. As Bhagavān says, "Yoga kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham", "I uphold your welfare and protection." This means your essential requirements are taken care of, but your personal desires or wishes are not automatically granted.

If you engage in Nishkāma Bhakti, you do not need to ask Bhagavān to fulfill your personal needs; the devotion itself is selfless and sufficient. However, if you wish to satisfy your personal desires, then you would need to make a direct request, which is a different principle from Nishkāma Bhakti.

This distinction emphasises that true devotion is not transactional; it is about loving and serving Bhagavān without expectation of personal gain.

The discourse concluded with a prārthanā (prayer) at the padakamala (lotus feet) of Śrī Hari, followed by the recitation of the **Hanumān Chalisa**.

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

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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