

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-6), Sunday, 08 February 2026

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/BhtY0HHstu8>

## The devotee who constantly remembers Bhagavān, and surrenders all his actions to Him, is Bhagavān's favourite devotee

The session began with the customary lighting of the lamp, followed by the recitation of the prayer below dedicated to Śrī Bhagavān.

**vāsudeva-sutaṁ devaṁ kaṁsa-cāṇūra-mardanam |  
devakī-paramānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vande jagad-gurum ||**

*I bow to Śrī Krishna Bhagavān the divine son of Vasudeva, the slayer of Kaṁsa and Cāṇūra, the source of supreme joy to Devakī, and the Guru of the entire universe.*

This was followed by chanting “Jai Śrī Krishna” and welcoming everyone warmly to the class. And then through brief Q&A, the name of the chapter, *Bhakti Yoga*, was introduced.

In Indian philosophy, there are many ways to reach Bhagavān. There are human beings on one side and Bhagavān, or Paramatma, on the other. The aim of human life is to reach HIM, to experience HIM, and to understand HIM.

Even though most of us have not seen Bhagavān, we talk about HIM, perform daily pooja, read the Bhagavad Gita, and chant shlokas in HIS remembrance. Our goal is to feel HIS presence and connect with HIM. Indian sages have explained that there are several paths to reach Bhagavan. Three important paths are Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Jnana (Gyana) Yoga.

- **Karma Yoga** is the path of action — we perform our duties sincerely, and through our actions we move closer to Bhagavān.
- **Jnana Yoga** is the path of knowledge — through learning and understanding truth, we reach HIM.

- **Bhakti Yoga** is the path of devotion — we reach Bhagavān through love and devotion.

The 12th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita focuses on Bhakti Yoga. Today, we will learn about devotion and about the qualities of true devotees.

## 12.1

### **arjuna uvāca evam(m) satatayuktā ye, bhaktāstvām(m) paryupāsate, ye cāpyakṣaRāmavyaktaṁ(n), teṣām(ñ) ke yogavittamāḥ. 12.1**

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

**Before discussing what got said in the first shloka, a brief background was given.**

The Bhagavad Gita is a sacred conversation between Arjuna and Bhagavan Shri Krishna that took place on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Arjuna was a brave warrior, but when he saw his own relatives and teachers standing on the opposite side, he became confused and sad. He did not want to fight and did not know what the right action was. The battle of Kurukshetra is called a Dharma Yuddha (a righteous war). As a warrior, it was Arjuna's duty to fight, but he felt weak and did not want to perform his responsibility.

We can understand this with a simple example. If a student is caught cheating in class, the teacher may call the parents. Some parents do their duty and correct the child so that the mistake is not repeated. But other parents may ignore the mistake because they are too attached to their child and do not want to believe the child did anything wrong. This teaches us that we should not be blinded by attachment. We must focus on doing our duty honestly. For students, this means studying sincerely and passing exams in the right way, without cheating.

At that moment of confusion, Shri Krishna, who was Arjuna's charioteer and best friend, guided him. This divine teaching is called the Bhagavad Gita. The Learn Gita program is beginning with Chapter 12, as it is one of the simplest and shortest chapters of the Bhagavad Gita.

### **Explanation**

Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Gita begins with a question from Arjuna. At this stage, the conversation between Bhagavān Shri Krishna and Arjuna has moved toward Bhakti Yoga — the path of devotion. Bhakti Yoga teaches us how to reach Bhagavān through love and devotion. Arjuna asks an important question. He says there are two kinds of devotees. Some devotees meditate quietly for a long time, sitting in solitude and worshipping the formless Divine. Other devotees sing bhajans, dance, pray in temples, and joyfully glorify Bhagavān.

Arjuna asks, *"Which type of devotee do You like more?"*

Is it the Sagun Bhakta, who worships God in a visible form and relates to HIM like a person? Or is it the Nirgun Bhakta, who worships Bhagavan as a formless, all-pervading presence? We can understand this with simple examples like:

- Air is formless, it is everywhere, but we cannot see or hold it. In the same way, it can be difficult to focus on something without form.
- Or through the act of sending letters When we want to send a message to our grandmother, we write a letter and put it in a postbox. Similarly, a Sagun Bhakta uses temples, idols, and prayers as a medium to express feelings to Bhagavan.

There is a clear method to connect. But if someone tries to meditate on the formless Divine without any visible support, it can be more difficult. Therefore, Arjuna asks Bhagavān: “Which devotees do YOU prefer, those who worship YOU in form or those who worship YOU as the formless Paramātmā?”

## 12.2

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

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

Bhagavān says: “**mayyāveśya mano ye mām**” — those who place their mind in Me. In simple words, it means absorbing the mind in Bhagavān and staying connected to HIM. We can understand this with the example of a smartphone. Through a smartphone we can do many things, like attend meetings, play games, watch videos etc. — but all of this works only because it has network connectivity in the background. In the same way, Bhagavan teaches us to remain connected with HIM at all times, whether through Sagun Bhakti or Nirgun Bhakti.

The words “*nitya-yuktā upāsate*” mean devotees who are constantly connected and remember HIM regularly. Just as our mind gets distracted when we study and starts thinking about pizza or games, there are many distractions in life. A true yogi learns to overcome these distractions and keeps the mind connected with Bhagavān. Even while eating or doing daily activities, they remember HIM.

The words “*śraddhayā parayopetāḥ*” mean worshipping with deep faith and devotion. Bhagavān says that such devotees, who stay connected with HIM with strong faith, are the best yogis and reach HIM quickly.

## 12.3

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

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

Now Bhagavān describes the formless nature of Paramātmā. Imagine a superhero who has no visible body, no face, and no mask, yet is present everywhere and protects everyone. The word “anirdeśyam” means something that cannot be pointed to or described exactly. It is beyond shape and form. Bhagavān says that Paramātmā is everywhere at the same time — this is called being omnipresent.

The word “**avyaktaṁ**” means unmanifest or invisible. Even though this divine presence cannot be seen with our eyes, it still exists everywhere. In the same way, Paramātmā is like an invisible superhero — present in all places, watching over everything, and supporting the whole universe, even though we

cannot see HIM with our eyes.

We can understand the idea of the formless Paramātmā with a few simple examples.

First, a child once asked his mother, “How does God look? We cannot see HIM.” To help him understand, the mother lightly slapped his hand. The child said, “It hurts!” The mother then asked, “Can you see the pain?” The child said no. She explained that pain cannot be seen, but it can be felt. In the same way, Bhagavān may not be seen with our eyes, but HE can be felt in our heart.

Another example is sugar dissolved in water. We cannot see the sugar after it dissolves, but we can taste it and know it is there. Similarly, Paramātmā may be invisible, but HIS presence can be experienced.

A person who worships this formless Paramātmā is called a Nirgun Upasak. We can compare Sagun and Nirgun devotion to two ways of connecting to a device. A Sagun Bhakta connects to Bhagavān like using a charging cable, something visible and easy to use. A Nirgun Bhakta connects like using Wi-Fi — invisible and harder to understand.

Bhagavān says that both kinds of devotees are dear to HIM. However, for children and beginners, using the “cable”, Sagun Bhakti, is often easier than searching for the “Wi-Fi password.” To reach the formless Bhagavān through Nirgun Bhakti requires deep meditation and steady practice, like great saints such as Swami Vivekananda did.

That is why it is important to practice meditation regularly and slowly increase our effort over time.

## 12.4

### **sanniyamyendriyagrāmam(m), sarvatra śamabuddhayaḥ, te prāpnuvanti māmeva, sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ. 12.4**

Controlling all their senses, equal-minded towards all, and devoted to the welfare of all beings, assuredly they come to Me only.

The second shloka talks about the Sagun Bhakta — devotees who worship Bhagavān in a visible form. In the third and fourth shlokas, Bhagavān describes the Nirgun Bhakta — devotees who worship the formless Paramātmā.

Bhagavān says that Nirgun devotees must have strong control over their senses. We have five sense organs of action, five sense organs of knowledge, and the mind. controlling them is very important.

We can understand this with a simple example. When we use a television, we need a remote control. Without the remote, the channels would keep changing and we would not be able to watch properly. In the same way, we need a “self-control remote” for our mind and senses.

If we leave our senses uncontrolled, then while studying we may start looking outside, thinking about food, or getting distracted. But when we fix our attention, all our senses — eyes, ears, nose, and mind — stay connected to the task we have chosen.

The word “**sanniyamyendriyagrāmam**” means controlling all the senses together. Everyone wants to do well and get first rank, but this becomes possible only when we learn to overcome distractions. Sense control develops through practice and regular meditation. When we meditate daily, our power of concentration becomes stronger.

## 12.5

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

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

Bhagavān tells us here that both Sagun devotees (who worship HIS form) and Nirgun devotees (who worship HIM without form) will reach HIM. But for children and for most people, HE suggests following Sagun Bhakti, because it is easier. The word "**kleśo**" means difficulty. Nirgun Bhakti is more difficult because it is hard to focus on something without form. This can be understood with an example.

Imagine you want to reach the 20th floor of a building. There are two ways: One way is to climb the stairs. This is tiring and difficult. Some people may even give up halfway. This is like Nirgun Bhakti, where a person has to put in a lot of personal effort. The other way is to use the elevator. It helps you go up more easily. This is like Sagun Bhakti, where devotees stay connected with Bhagavān and reach HIM with HIS support. However, Bhagavān helps both kinds of devotees. HE gives extra strength even to those who choose the difficult path. The choice depends on a person's nature. Some people like to climb stairs and accept challenges, so they may choose Nirgun Bhakti. Others prefer the elevator and choose Sagun Bhakti. Both will reach Bhagavān, but both need strong concentration and a kind, helpful nature.

#### **Story**

A sage once asked Bhagavān Vishnu where the best place for concentration was. Bhagavān sent HIS Sudarshan Chakra spinning across the world and said that wherever it stopped would be the perfect place. The chakra finally stopped at a forest called Naimisharanya. Bhagavān teaches that we do not need to search for a magical forest. We can create our own *Naimisharanya* at home. When we clean our space and sit calmly to study or meditate, our home becomes a place of focus. Our mind is like a spinning wheel. It keeps running toward video games, television, and mobile phones. But when the mind stops spinning and becomes calm, our home turns into a temple of learning. We should gently tell our mind: "*This is my place for knowledge and meditation. Distractions are not allowed here.*"

Bhagavān reminds us that although Nirgun Bhakti has more difficulties, both paths lead to HIM. What is most important is a focused mind and sincere effort.

## 12.6

### **ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi, mayi sannyasya matparāḥ, ananyenaiva yogena, mām(n) dhyāyanta upāsate. 12.6**

On the other hand, those depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me with single-minded devotion.

#### **Essence of the shloka:**

**Bhagavān says that when we do our work for HIM, it becomes joyful and helps us connect with HIM.** Imagine you write a letter and throw it in the dustbin. It becomes trash. But if you put the same letter in an envelope, add a stamp, and mail it, it becomes an important message. In the same way, our daily activities, like homework, cleaning our room, studying, or playing — are like letters. If we do them just because we have to, they feel boring. But if we add a "love stamp" and say, "*Bhagavān, I am doing this for YOU,*" then every activity becomes a prayer and feels joyful. And sometimes we feel lazy to clean our room

at home. But if it is our best friend's birthday and we are helping with the preparations, we do it happily. Why? Because we are doing it for someone we love. Similarly, if we think of Bhagavān as our best friend, then everything we do, eating, studying, playing, or sleeping, becomes joyful and connects us to HIM.

*Bhagavān also teaches us to be single-minded while praying.* When the phone signal is weak, people keep saying, "Hello, can you hear me?" It becomes frustrating. In the same way, to connect with Bhagavān we need a strong and clear signal, like a 5G connection — with no distractions or bad thoughts in between. Even if our mind wanders, Bhagavān asks us to give HIM one minute of pure attention, talking to HIM like a best friend standing right next to us.

*We should do all our work with care, but we should not become proud of it.* A pen writes a beautiful poem, but it never says, "I did it!" It knows it is only a tool in the poet's hand. In the same way, we should become the favorite pen of Bhagavān Shri Krishna, remembering that our talents and abilities come from HIM. If we succeed, we thank HIM. If we fail, we tell HIM we will try again.

### Summary of Today's Shlokas:

- Arjuna asks Bhagavān who is the better devotee — one who worships HIM with form (Sagun) or without form (Nirgun).
- Bhagavān replies that both are HIS devotees and both will reach HIM.
- However, Nirgun Bhakti is more difficult, while Sagun Bhakti is easier for most people.
- HE teaches us to do all our actions for HIM and stay connected to HIM. When we live like this, HE helps us at every moment. We should also slowly improve our meditation and good habits. For example, if we meditate for 30 minutes today, we can try for 35 minutes next time.

### Question & Answer

#### Abhinav Bhaiya

**Question:** What does Bhagavad Gita Chapter 12, Shloka 5 teach us?

**Answer:** This shloka teaches that praying to Bhagavān without any form (called *Nirgun Bhakti*) is more difficult for most people. It is hard for our minds to focus on something we cannot see or imagine easily. *Nirgun Bhakti* needs a lot of patience, practice, and effort. **It is like climbing stairs** — you have to work step by step to reach the top. Praying to Bhagavān with a form (called *Sagun Bhakti*) is easier for many people. When we can imagine Bhagavan in a form, it is easier to love and remember HIM. This is like using an elevator, which helps us go up more easily. Both paths lead to the same goal, reaching Paramātmā — but *Nirgun Bhakti* takes more effort and discipline.



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### Thank you-For reading the summary

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**Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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