

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 12: Bhakti-Yoga

1/2 (Ślōka 1-5), Sunday, 22 March 2026

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/qqlfh21w708>

## Bhagavān tells Arjuna about two ways to reach HIM

The 1st chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is **Bhakti-Yoga - Yoga of Devotion**.

This was the first of the two-part interpretation session of the 12th chapter of Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, specially adapted for the young and enthusiastic Kid Sadhaks of Geeta Pariwar.

As per Geeta Pariwar's tradition, the session started with prayers offered to Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the auspicious lamp, asking for guidance on the path of Dharma, under the blessings of the Paramātmā, our Guru, and the illuminating light of true knowledge.

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

*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.*

The session started by asking a set of questions to the Sadhaks which contained important information on the Bhagavadgītā.

**Q1:** What is the name of the twelfth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā?

**A1:** Bhakti Yoga. Anay Ji was first to answer correctly

**Q2:** What was the name of the place where the battle of Mahabharata took place and where the Bhagavadgītā was narrated?

**A2:** Kurukshetra. This war was fought between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. Janya Ji was quick to give the correct answer.

**Q3:** How many days did the Mahabharata war last?

**A3:** Eighteen Days. The correct answer was given by Soumya Ji.

**Q4:** How many chapters are there in the Bhagavadgītā?

**A4:** There are 18 chapters consisting of 700 Ślokas in the Bhagavadgītā.

A question may come to our mind as to why we are starting our learning of the Bhagavadgītā from the twelfth chapter and not the first.

The reason for this is because Chapter - 12 has the least number of ślokas which is 20. Though an important chapter, it is the easiest to learn. Hence, we commence with this chapter in L1 and then move on to the other chapters. It is noteworthy to know that the longest chapter of the Gītā is Chapter - 18 comprising of 78 Ślokas. The book is like a manual and teaches us how to live our life in a good and righteous way.

We now proceed by recalling the setting of the Mahābhārata war through a quick Quiz.

It was heartening to see most of the young Sadhaks were well aware of the Mahabharata and the battle that was fought between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.

**Q5:** How many armies were present on the battlefield?

**A5:** There were **18 akṣauhiṇī armies**. Out of these, **11 akṣauhiṇī armies** stood on the side of the Kauravas and **7 akṣauhiṇī armies** on the Pāṇḍavas.

The number 18 is itself significant—18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, 18 days of war, and 18 akṣauhiṇī armies.

**Q6:** Can anyone name the five Pāṇḍavas?

**A6:** Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. The correct answer was given by Vihaan Ji.

When we see there are two sides—one larger, one smaller, we may logically think that the larger side will win.

But the Gītā gives us a deeper vision in the last Śloka of the book:

***yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pāṛtho dhanur-dharaḥ  
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir dhruvā nītir matir mama***

It says wherever there is Shree Krishna and wherever there is Arjuna, there will also certainly be unending opulence, victory, prosperity, and righteousness.

So, even though the Pāṇḍavas had fewer soldiers and resources, victory belonged to them—because Bhagavān Śrī Krishna was with them.

In the first chapter of Mahabharata, we see the battlefield come alive with conches being blown, drums sounding, instruments playing. All around, the eyes can only see armies, elephants, horses, chariots, weapons and mighty warriors. Dust rises, winds begin to blow, and a powerful, tense atmosphere is created. There is fear, anticipation, and uncertainty as no one knows what is about to unfold.

Arjuna brimming with confidence says,

***senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthāpaya me 'chyuta  
yāvadetān nirīkṣhe 'ham yoddhu-kāmān avasthitān***

requesting Śrī Krishna to place the chariot between the two armies so that he can assess the opponent against whom he was supposed to fight. Just as we assess our competition, Arjuna, the great warrior too

wanted to observe who stood against him in war.

Śrī Krishna takes the chariot and places it between the two opposing armies. Arjuna looks around he does not see enemies, but he sees **his own people**. He sees his **guru Droṇācārya**, his **grandfather Bhīṣma Pitamah**, his **brothers (Kauravas)**, his **friends and relatives**.

Though Arjuna was a very powerful warrior, invincible and never defeated but after seeing the army array consisting of his family members, he becomes dejected and completely loses his will to fight. Now the question for him was no longer about winning but on how can he fight and possibly kill his own family and friends.

His mind begins to waver, and he feels that it is better to lose the battle, better to die, even to be called a coward rather than fight his own people.

His condition changes and he says to Śrī Krishna, ***gāṇḍīvaṁ sraṁsate hastāt tvak caiva paridahyate;*** that his bow slips from his hand, his skin begins to burn.

We all can relate to his condition when we think of when we go to an exam unprepared; our mind goes blank, hands tremble, we cannot write. At that moment, Arjuna too was experiencing a similar inner turmoil. However, we must note that his fear was not about losing but was about harming those he loved so dearly.

At the same time, Dharma was at stake as injustice would prevail if Arjuna did not fight in the battle. Arjuna, however, was blind to this and lost in his confusion.

And it is here that the teaching of the Bhagavadgītā begins.

It was time for another quick Quiz as we moved towards the discussion on **Bhakti Yoga**.

**Q7:** What is Bhakti Yoga?

**A7:** It is **getting connected to Bhagavān** through devotion by performing Bhakti activities such as Puja, Arti, Kirtan, Bhajan etc. The answer was correctly given by Soumya Ji.

Here, Bhagavān explains

- Who is a true devotee?
- Who is dear to HIM?
- Who is HIS best devotee?

We should continue to perform our Bhakti activities every day without fail so that we continue to receive positive energy from Bhagavān and get connected to HIM.

## 12.1

**arjuna uvāca**  
**evaṁ(m) satatayuktā ye, bhaktāstvām(m) paryupāsate,**  
**ye cāpyakṣaRānavyaktāṁ(n), teṣāṁ(ñ) ke yogavittamāḥ. 12.1**

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

types of worshippers who are the best knowers of Yoga?

In this Śloka, Arjuna raises a very important question to Śrī Krishna. Arjuna's asks Bhagavān that among the two types of devotees, who is the superior one.

Here he is speaking about the two types of devotees as below:

- **Saguṇa, sākāra bhakti means worshipping Bhagavān in a form**—recognizing HIM as Śrī Krishna, Rāma, Durgā, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Śiva and so forth, offering him Puja, Prasad, and devotion to a visible form.
- **Nirguṇa, nirākāra bhakti** means worshipping Bhagavān without form—no shape, no color, no body—feeling HIS presence everywhere, meditating inwardly, often in solitude, like sages in the Himalayas. Here, **Bhagavān is understood as formless, without attributes, infinite and beyond sensory perception.**

Let us see what Bhagavān's answer is in the next Śloka.

## 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.

Now Bhagavān begins answering the question. HE does not give the answer in just one śloka but explains through five to six ślokas.

HE says that those who always think about him with total devotion, even while performing their daily activities are his favourite disciples. We know our mind wanders while doing something. Like we start thinking about some movies, game or food while sitting down to do Puja. Likewise, **a true Bhakta or devotee will always think about Bhagavān even when he is doing his daily chores and duties** like studying, eating, even sleeping. **Bhagavān says that he likes such devotees who always think about HIM with unwavering faith.**

HE says, such devotees are considered to be superior who

- Worship Bhagavān in form - see Him as Krishna, Rāma, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā
- Perform Puja with faith
- Keep their mind steadily fixed on HIM

But Bhagavān does **not** say that the other type of devotees are not superior. That clarification comes in the next śloka.

## 12.3

**ye tVākṣaRāmanirdeśyaṁ(m), avyaktaṁ(m) paryupāsate,**  
**sarvatragamacintyaṁ(ñ) ca, kūṣasthamacalaṁ(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,

Bhagavān now begins to describe those devotees who follow the **nirguṇa, nirākāra path**, those who meditate upon the formless, hidden but present reality.

He uses the words **akṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktam** to describe them.

To understand this, we first reflect on what *avyakta* means. It means something that is present, yet not visible. To further understand this, let us consider a simple example.

Fire exists all around us, yet we do not see it. It becomes visible only when it is brought out; like when we strike a matchstick, the fire that was unseen suddenly appears. Before that, it was present but unexpressed; that is *avyakta*. We could neither see it, nor touch it, nor show it, and yet it existed.

In the same way, Paramātmā is always present, everywhere and at all times but not visible to our senses. When one sits in deep meditation, in a state of inner stillness, that unmanifest presence begins to be experienced within the heart. Thus, through meditation, the *avyakta* becomes inwardly realized.

Bhagavān then uses the word *anirdeśyam* meaning that which cannot be pointed out or described. To explain this, a simple story was shared.

A young boy once asked his mother, “Does Bhagavān really exist, or do you just say so? I cannot see HIM—can you show HIM to me?”

The mother did not respond immediately. After some time, when the child was being mischievous, she slapped him. The child immediately began to cry, saying, “Why did you hit me? It is hurting!”

The mother then calmly asked, “Where is the pain? Show it to me.”

The child replied, “How can I show pain? It is something I feel, but I cannot point to it or show it.”

At that moment, the mother explained, “Just as this pain cannot be seen or shown, yet is clearly experienced, in the same way Bhagavān cannot be shown outwardly, but can be experienced within.”

Thus, Bhagavān is *anirdeśyam*—not something that can be indicated or demonstrated, but something to be realized.

Next comes the word *akṣaram* meaning that which is eternal and never destroyed. Unlike pain, which fades away, Paramātmā remains forever, unchanged and indestructible.

Bhagavān further describes that HE is also **sarvatragama** that is HE is present everywhere, in our homes, outside and even within us. Though Bhagavān is present everywhere, we can neither see HIM nor touch HIM.

HE is **sarvatra-gam acintyam ca kūṭastham acalam dhruvam**.

Śrī Krishna says that **Paramātmā is present everywhere—within every home, every being, every part of existence. He is beyond thought (acintya), unchanging (kūṭastha), unmoving (acala), and constant (dhruva).**

In this way, Bhagavān explains the nature of the formless reality that such devotees meditate upon. Each of these qualities is introduced gradually and will be understood more deeply step by step.

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

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

In this śloka, Bhagavān explains the qualities of those devotees who worship HIS **nirguṇa** form.

Bhagavān says that such devotees are those who have control over their senses.

A question may arise that how many senses do we have?

We have five **jñānendriyas** (organs of knowledge) and five **karmendriyas** (organs of action), making ten. Along with these, the **mind** is sometimes counted as the eleventh. Thus, we may say there are ten or eleven senses in total.

Bhagavān is referring to those who keep all these senses under control—our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, as well as our actions and the mind.

This control is explained through experiences in our daily life. We all like to watch television, use mobile phones, and listen to music. However, control means knowing how much and when. If someone continues using the phone for long hours, even late into the night, it shows a lack of control. A disciplined person knows when to stop, when to sleep, and when to wake up. Even when the mind says, “just five more minutes,” control means not giving in to that impulse.

Similarly, when it comes to listening and focusing, if someone is trying to solve a math assignment while also listening to music at the same time, the mind gets divided and cannot concentrate properly. Control means doing one thing with full attention, rather than scattering the mind.

The same applies to food. Though simple food like dal, rice, roti, and vegetables may be available, one may still crave only outside or fancy food like noodles, burgers, or snacks. But discipline means choosing appropriately and not being driven by constant cravings.

Thus, Bhagavān is describing those who regulate what they see, what they hear, what they eat, and how they live. Such people are steady and disciplined. Those who do not follow any discipline—who sleep late, eat anything at any time, and do not regulate their habits—are not aligned with this path.

**In order to succeed** in the activities, we perform, be it studies or sports or any other activity, **it is very important to have control over the actions of our sense organs.**

Bhagavān further says, **sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ**. He says such devotees have equal vision. They do not think in terms of “this is my friend, so I like them more,” or “this is not my friend, so I do not like them.” Instead, they see all with the same attitude and are ready to help everyone.

HE then adds, **te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ** saying those who are engaged in the welfare of all beings attain HIM.

Let us take some simple examples. Helping others may include assisting friends in studies, feeding animals, or caring for them. Some may feed a pet dog milk and biscuits; others may give food to cows. But this help should not remain limited. It should extend to all beings like feeding street animals, keeping water for birds especially in the summer, placing grains for them, watering plants and so forth. All these actions are forms of sewa.

Gradually, this understanding that all beings are created by Bhagavān deepens and therefore, helping

anyone is, in fact, serving Bhagavān.

In this way, worship is not limited to performing āraṭi alone. Along with that, **helping others, thinking good for everyone, and living with compassion and discipline also become essential parts of true devotion.**

**Thus, such devotees, who are disciplined, balanced, and engaged in the welfare of all, ultimately attain Bhagavān.**

## 12.5

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

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

Bhagavān says that those who fix their mind on HIM and worship HIM with faith, seeing HIM in a **saguṇa form**, such as Bhagavān Śrī Krishna, Vishnu, Gaṇeśa are devotees who attain HIM. At the same time, those who meditate upon HIS **nirguṇa, nirākāra form**, worshipping HIM through inner contemplation, also attain HIM.

So, both types of devotees - those who worship the form and those who meditate on the formless ultimately reach Bhagavān.

However, Bhagavān makes an important distinction. HE says, **kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsaktacetāsām** meaning for those who are attached to the unmanifest, the path involves greater difficulty.

This is because in this path there is no form to hold on to. One has to sit in deep meditation for a long time and contemplate on that which has no shape, no name, no visible presence. To remain steadily absorbed in such meditation is not easy.

When we reflect on our own practice, we may find that some may sit for 10 minutes, some for 20 or 30 minutes, and some even longer in meditation. With practice, this duration can increase. But still, to constantly remain absorbed in the formless, unmanifest reality requires great effort and steadiness of mind.

Therefore, Bhagavān says that this path of **nirguṇa, nirākāra upāsanā** is relatively more difficult. At the same time, He does not reject it. HE clearly states that both types of devotees are dear to HIM and both ultimately reach HIM.

This is the conclusion Bhagavān gives in this Śloka.

We will take up the next part in the following session next week.

The session concluded with a Questions and Answers session and chanting of Hanuman Chalisa.

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **Avni Ji**

**Q:** For the video that we have to record and send of the ślokas, can we send fewer than 20, like 5-6?

**A:** For exam submission (for certificate), you must send all 20 ślokas. For practice (pair practice), you may send even 5.

**Q:** What type of questions will come in the exam?

**A:** There will be no such questions. In the next session, the exam format will be explained. It will be a surprise exam.

**Q:** What if someone does not want to give the exam?

**A:** That is fine. There is no compulsion. You can choose not to give the exam.

**Q:** If we recite only 5 ślokas, will that be acceptable?

**A:** Yes, but you will not get a certificate. For a certificate, all 20 must be recited.

### **Ananya / Rudraash Ji**

**Q:** For the exam video, which chapter do we have to prepare?

**A:** Chapter 12. After that, when Chapter 15 is taught, that will also be included.

### **Anay Ji**

**Q:** When is the exam?

**A:** The date will be shared in the group. You can record and send your video from home within the given time.

**Q:** Should we send the video after Chapter 12 is completed?

**A:** Yes, send it after Chapter 12 is completed.

### **Ketaki Ji**

**Q:** How many days will the exam be available?

**A:** You will get about one week to submit the video. Dates will be shared in the group. First send Chapter 12, then Chapter 15.

**Q:** What happens if we do not give the exam?

**A:** Nothing happens. You will move to the next level, but you will not receive a certificate.

**Q:** Will the certificate be sent on WhatsApp?

**A:** Yes, if details are shared, it can be received via WhatsApp as well.

### **Vihaan Ji**

**Q:** Should we make a video or audio?

**A:** You have to make a video.

### **Parth Ji**

**Q:** If I cannot memorize fully, how should I record?

**A:** Record as much as you remember. It is not necessary to record everything perfectly.

### **Himanshu Ji**

**Q:** Will those who do not give the exam get a certificate?

**A:** No. The certificate is only for those who give the exam.

### **Satvik Ji**

**Q:** Will meanings also be asked in the exam?

**A:** No. Only śloka recitation is required.

### **Navya Ji**

**Q:** Do we have to learn and then record?

**A:** Yes, learn and record. If you can read, you may read; otherwise, memorize.

### **Niyansh Ji**

**Q:** Should we only read or memorize?

**A:** You may read, but memorizing is better.

### **Aryan Ji**

**Q:** How many chapters are there in Level 1?

**A:** There are two chapters - Chapters 12 and 15.

**Q:** Can we read while recording the video?

**A:** Yes, you can read while recording. Memorizing is optional.

### **Sahasra Ji**

**Q:** Can we send two separate audios (1-10 and 11-20)?

**A:** No. You must send one complete video from 1 to 20. You may pause in between.

### **Soumya Ji**

**Q:** What are the names of the karmendriyas?

**A:** Hands, feet, speech (vānī), reproductive organ (upastha), and excretory organ (gudā).

### **Puneet Ji**

**Q:** Why did the war between Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas happen?

**A:** The Kauravas took away all the property and were not giving anything to the Pāṇḍavas. They were also committing injustice. Therefore, the Pāṇḍavas had to fight to protect everyone.

### **Lasya Ji**

**Q:** Please recite Arjuna's line once.

**A:** You should listen to the audio shared in the group.

### **Suryatej Ji**

**Q:** What is the meaning of "bhūtanām"?

**A:** It is in ṣaṣṭhī vibhakti (genitive case) and means "of all living beings".

### **Janya Ji**

**Q:** What was Gandhari's curse? How did Krishna die? Why did HE not stop the war?

**A:** Gandhari cursed that just as her sons perished, Krishna's entire lineage would also be destroyed. Krishna left HIS body when a hunter shot a poisoned arrow at HIM, mistaking HIS foot for an animal. As for not stopping the war, that context relates to larger dharma and events.

### **Atharva Ji**

**Q:** After Level 1, what comes next?

**A:** Chapter 16.

### **Rehansh Ji**

**Q:** Why did Arjuna kill Karna, even though he was his brother?

**A:** It was a war situation. Karna had tried to kill him earlier. In war, such relations are not considered. Karna also supported adharna.

### **Mayank Ji**

**Q:** On which dates did the Mahabharata war take place?

**A:** It is associated with Ekadashi, especially Mokshada Ekadashi. Some traditions say it began around Kartik Shukla Ekadashi, but there are different views.

**Q:** Can we visit Kurukshetra?

**A:** Yes, you can visit and see the place.

### **Aizel Ji**

**Q:** Why did the Mahabharata war happen?

**A:** Because Duryodhana and Dushasana were unjust and oppressive, and the war was fought to protect dharma.

### **Arshita Ji**

**Q:** In which month did the Mahabharata war begin?

**A:** Kartik month.



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### **Thank you-For reading the summary**

You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

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### **Jai Shri Krishna!**

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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