

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

# **BHAGAVAD GEETA – 12**

## *The Yoga of Supreme Devotion*

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***“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”***

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**TEXT  
28.12**

Reflections by  
**SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA**







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4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
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This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

***– The Author, February 2019, Shivaratri Day***



Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text  
**28.12**



भक्तियोगः

# THE BHAGAVAD GEETA - 12

*"The Yoga of Devotion"*

*Sri Veda Vyasaji*

## Reflections

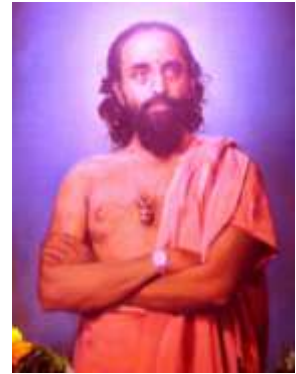
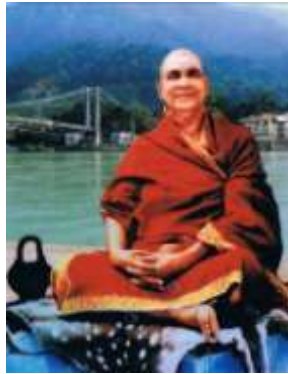
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on the 7 Lectures delivered by *Swami Advayanandaji*

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**4th July – 10th July, 2013**



*Adi Shankaracharya*

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## **Personal Dedication**

### **1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan**

*who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;*

### **2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj**

*the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;*

### **3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)**

*for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;*

### **4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji**

*my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.*

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# ***BHAGAVAD GEETA – 12***

***“Yoga of Supreme Devotion”***

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# ॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

अथ द्वादशोऽध्यायः

भक्तियोगः

## THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

Discourse – 12 (20 Verses)

*“The Yoga of Supreme Devotion”*

### INTRODUCTION

DISCOURSES 7 TO 12 OF the Geeta form the “TAT” Pada, describing “That” or the nature of the Supreme Lord. This portion, also called **Bhakti Yoga**, introduces the aspirant to devotion to the Lord by informing him of the Higher Nature of the Lord. We have come to the last Chapter of this portion, where we culminate with a most enlightening discussion on the best means to realize the Lord in His Higher Nature.

The Chapter begins with a question from Arjuna. For the third time in the Geeta, Arjuna has come to a ‘fork’ in his spiritual journey, and desires to know which road to take.

From Chapter 7 to 10 there are instances here and there when the Upasana of Nirguna Brahman (the Lord without any form or attributes) was advocated. However, there are an equal number of instances when the path of Saguna worship of Brahman (the Lord with Form and attributes) was also pointed out.

The concluding section of Chapter 11 brought to the fore the difference between these two practices. Vishwa-Roopa was compared with Nirguna Bhakti, and Vishnu-Roopa with Saguna Bhakti. The last verse brought out Nirguna as the ultimate state of Bhakti:

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मद्भक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव

॥ ११-५५॥

matkarmakṛnmatparamō madbhaktaḥ saṅgavarjitaḥ |

nirvairāḥ sarvabhūtēṣu yaḥ sa māmēti pāṇḍava || 11-55||

**Meaning:** “Who does actions for Me, takes Me as Supreme; who is devoted to Me, and free from attachment; who bears no enmity towards any creature; such a person attains Me, O Pandava.”

When Sri Krishna uses ‘Me’ it is to be understood to mean Brahman, i.e. Nirguna worship of the Lord. This Chapter goes into detail with the discussion.

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**BHAGAVAD GEETA – 12**  
*“The Yoga of Supreme Devotion”*

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## 12.1 SAGUNA & NIRGUNA WORSHIP

(Verses 1-2, 2 No.)

**WE** BEGIN BY DEFINING the term **Upasana** or worship. The prefix *Upa* means “being near to”. Upasana means “focussing on an object of contemplation”. In Upasana the object contemplated on is not the Reality Itself, but a symbol of that Reality. It is a powerful interim exercise by which the seeker gains one-pointedness of mind.

There are two components in Upasana: ‘going near or comprehending’ and ‘abiding in a single thought’. In Saguna worship, the thought is of the Form or attribute of the Lord. In Nirguna worship, there is no form. In its place the student does Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana on the formless and attributeless Brahman.

Arjuna’s question is: “Of these two, which devotee has a better grasp over the means to liberation?”

### Verse 1:      **Who is Better Prepared?**

अर्जुन उवाच ।  
एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।  
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः      ॥ १२-१॥  
arjuna uvāca |  
ēvaṁ satatayuktā yē bhaktāstvām paryupāsātē |  
yē cāpyakṣaramavyaktam tēṣāṁ kē yōgavittamāḥ      ॥ 12-1॥

	<i>Arhuna uvaacha:</i>	<i>Arjuna said:</i>
1	<i>Evam satata yuktaah ye,</i>	<i>Thus, ever steadfast, those</i>
2	<i>bhaktaah tvaam paryupaasate;</i>	<i>devotees who worship You;</i>
3	<i>ye cha api aksharam avyaktam,</i>	<i>as also those (who directly worship) the Imperishable and the Unmanifested –</i>
4	<i>teshaam ke yoga vittamaah.</i>	<i>which of them is better versed in Yoga?</i>

### The Meaning of Arjuna’s Question:

**1-2 Evam Satata Yuktaah:** “thus, ever steadfast” – those who worship the Lord in His **Vishnu-Roopa** form. The pronoun ‘You’ could mean either the Lord as the Supreme Reality or the Lord as one’s personal God. Here, it is taken as the ‘Personal God’, since the alternative specifically deals with the ‘Reality’. A form of the Lord, with four arms, etc., is used by the devotee to focus his mind. Saguna worship is intended here.

**3 Aksharam Avyaktam:** “the Imperishable, the Unmanifested” – those who worship the Lord in His **Vishwa-Roopa** form. The words ‘Aksharam Avyaktam’ exclude the Personal



very entrance of God, takes it to mean that there is no need for him to do anything but simply wait and remain steadfast in Nirguna worship.

If at all the Lord makes a choice as to the Path to be taken, He will see who is asking the question and answer accordingly. Here, the person asking is Arjuna. Arjuna is 'far away' in terms of his spiritual evolution. He has just begun the spiritual path. So the reply tailored for him is, "*Saguna worship* for you, Arjuna – that is the best path in Yoga."

The Lord also adds that Arjuna's path is the better one. This, too, is a tailored answer. He dares not to say the other path is better, for that will make Arjuna's mind waver.

### **General Rules for Worship**

The pre-conditions for both types of worship are given in this verse:

- i) **Mayi Manah**: The mind must be totally fixed on 'Me', the Form of the Lord;
- ii) **Nitya Yuktaah**: The devotee should be ever steadfast in remembering the Lord;
- iii) **Shraddhayaa**: He should have full faith in the Lord's directions to reach him.

Such a person is a **Yukta-Tamaah**, "the best in Yoga". (cf. with Arjuna's **Vitta-Tamaah**, "better-versed in Yoga"),

Worship could be done on the Vishwa-Roopa or the Vishnu-Roopa of the Lord. The former is the form which filled Arjuna with fear, and is therefore not ideal for him, and not ideal for the majority of mankind. The latter is the more pleasing and acceptable form of the Lord and should be adopted by Arjuna and the majority among man. The Lord is depicted in it with Chaturbhuja (four arms).

However, whichever type of worship is adopted, the three general rules apply to both types of worship.

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**THE LORD'S "VISHNU-ROOPA"**



## 12.2 TWO APPROACHES IN SADHANA

(Verses 3-7, 5 No.)

THERE ARE TWO approaches in Bhakti Yoga Sadhana:

- i) *The Direct or **Nirguna** Route*: Verses 3-5 represents this approach.
- ii) *The Indirect or **Saguna** Route*: Verses 6 and 7 represent this approach. This is the route recommended by Sri Krishna to Arjuna, the beginner.

### Verse 3 & 4: *The Nirguna Worshippers*

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।

सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यञ्च कूटस्थमचलन्ध्रुवम्

॥ १२-३॥

yē tvakṣaramanirdēśyamavyaktaṁ paryupāsate |

sarvatragamacintyañca kūṭasthamacalandhruvam

॥ 12-3॥

1	<i>Ye tu aksharam anirdeshyam,</i>	Indeed, the <sup>1</sup> <i>Imperishable</i> , the <sup>2</sup> <i>Indefinable</i> ,
2	<i>avyaktaṁ pary-upaasate;</i>	and the <sup>3</sup> <i>Unmanifested</i> – those who worship these;
3	<i>sarvatra-gam achintyam cha,</i>	as well as the <sup>4</sup> <i>Omnipresent</i> , the <sup>5</sup> <i>Unthinkable</i> ,
4	<i>kootastham achalam dhruvam.</i>	the <sup>6</sup> <i>Unchangeable</i> , the <sup>7</sup> <i>Immovable</i> and <sup>8</sup> <i>Eternal</i> ;

सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।

ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः

॥ १२-४॥

sanniyamyēndriyagrāmaṁ sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ |

tē prāpnuvanti māmēva sarvabhūtahitē ratāḥ

॥ 12-4॥

5	<i>Sam-niyamya indriya-graamam,</i>	<sup>9</sup> <i>Having restrained the aggregate of the senses;</i>
6	<i>sarvatra samabuddhaya;</i>	<sup>10</sup> <i>even-minded everywhere, in all conditions;</i>
7	<i>te praapnuvanti maam eva,</i>	<i>verily, they also come unto Me,</i>
8	<i>sarva-bhoota-hite rataah.</i>	<sup>11</sup> <i>rejoicing in the welfare of all beings.</i>

These two verses give the details of Nirguna Upasana followed by advanced seekers.

**1-8** These two verses have 11 technical Vedanta terms which are used specifically in Nirguna worship of the Lord. A beginner on the spiritual path will find these terms themselves quite daunting – and perhaps that is their purpose here. Acharyaji's view was that they will 'scare' away the unprepared seeker. That is the only significance of these terms at this stage. We need not take each word and elaborate on it in the present context.

However, **5** refers to giving one's hands to God; **6** to giving one's head; and **8** to giving one's heart. Nirguna is thus seen to be an integrated method.

**7 Praapnuvanti:** Pra + Aa + Ni + root Av = “come away closer to the higher”. There is a sense of urgency indicated by the construction of this verb with 3 Upasargas (prefixes). The point being brought out by these grammar devices is that Nirguna devotees are serious in their spiritual journey and wish to accomplish it in the shortest possible time. They certainly reach the Lord. The path they take is more direct, steep and grueling. It is virtually impossible for the beginner to be on this path. Why is this so?

**8 Sarvabhootahite Rataah:** “rejoicing in the welfare of all beings”. This is the main qualification for this path. It implies that one has to be substantially out of his ego and think of the wellbeing of other people in order to succeed in this path. Any narrow thinking of oneself only means a strong ego. To get offended easily, to get angry when denied, to have irrepressible lust, etc., are unworthy of one who attempts Nirguna Sadhana.

### **Verse 5**      *Difficulty of Nirguna Upasana*

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते

॥ १२-५॥

klēśō:'dhikatarastēṣāmavyaktāsaktacētasām |

avyaktā hi gatirduḥkham̐ dēhavadbhiravāpyatē

|| 12-5||

9	<i>Kleshah adhikatarah teshaam,</i>	<i>Greater is their <u>trouble</u></i>
10	<i>avyakta-aasakta-chetasaam;</i>	<i>whose minds are set on the <b>Unmanifested</b>;</i>
11	<i>avyaktaa hi gatih duhkham,</i>	<i>for the goal, the “Unmanifest” is <u>very hard</u></i>
12	<i>dehavadbhih avaapyate.</i>	<i>for the <u>embodied</u> to reach.</i>

For the above reason, if unprepared people do Nirguna worship, they will have great difficulty in progressing. Their own unregenerate nature will drag them back. They will get more frustrated as there will be no progress. Thus the Lord has wisely advised Arjuna to choose the Saguna option.

Acharyaji gave some examples to illustrate this:

i) **Learning Cycling:** Cycling is learnt first by having people to help support the bicycle. Gradually, one begins to learn in the backyard, then in the playground, then in the small lanes, then the larger road and then the main roads with heavy traffic.

A ten-year-old kid had just learnt cycling. He was quite good. He used to cycle with his hands off the handlebars. Once he whizzed past his mother shouting, “Look, Ma, no hands!” A few days later, he improved his skills, and whizzing past his mother again, he shouted, “Look, Ma, no legs, too!” The next day his luck had run out. Dragging his cycle to the front gate, he explained to his mother, “Look, Ma, no teeth!”

ii) **Learning Swimming:** Similarly, swimming is learnt by first using a swimming pool, then a larger pond, then a lake, then the sea-shore and finally the ocean.

iii) **Mental Worship:** Pujya Gurudev used to find Poojas boring as a child. He would rather close his eyes and visualize the form of Lord Shiva and do mental worship of the Lord. He was already quite advanced to do so as a child, which is why he found Pooja boring! Not all are able to do mental Pooja at once.

iv) **Meditation:** This is a Sadhana in which people are always in great haste to see results. The beginner wants to see visions, lights and go into trances. Once a beginner asked his teacher what he should *do* to meditate. He was bewildered by the reply the teacher gave: “Not to *do* anything is meditation!”

The interest may be there, but it is not sufficient. Ability and capacity are also needed. The teacher then explained the correct approach of starting with a form to focus on, then some chanting, then focus on breath, etc., until finally the student could meditate without the aid of all these.

Pujya Gurudev’s advice in such cases is, “Hasten slowly!”

Acharyaji finally re-emphasised that the student should be able to “rejoice in the joys of others” before attempting Nirguna worship. The second key quality is that one should be substantially free from body-consciousness or slavery to one’s senses.

### **Verse 6 & 7:**      *The Saguna Worshippers*

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।  
 अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते      ॥ १२-६॥

yē tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi saṁnyasya matparāḥ |  
 ananyēnaiva yōgēna mām dhyāyanta upāsatē      ॥ 12-6॥

1,2	<i>Ye tu sarvaani karmaani mayi sannyasya matparaah</i>	<i>Those devotees who renounce all actions in <b>Me</b>, regarding <b>Me</b> as their supreme goal;</i>
3	<i>ananyena eva yogena,</i>	<i>with single-minded devotion (to <b>Me</b>);</i>
4	<i>maam dhyayantah upaasate.</i>	<i>meditating upon <b>Me</b>, and worshipping <b>Me</b>;</i>

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।  
 भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम्      ॥ १२-७॥

tēṣāmaham samuddhartā mṛtyusaṁsārasāgarāt |  
 bhavāmi nacirātpārtha mayyāvēśitacētasām      ॥ 12-7॥

5	<i>Teshaam aham samuddhartaa,</i>	<i>For them (the Saguna worshippers) the <b>Saviour</b></i>
6	<i>mrityu samsara saagaraat;</i>	<i>from the ocean of <u>Samsara</u>, or births and deaths,</i>
7	<i>bhavaami na chiraat paartha,</i>	<i>do I become, <u>without delay</u>, O Partha,</i>
8	<i>mayi aaveshita chetasaam.</i>	<i>for their <u>minds</u> are set on <b>Me</b>.</i>

These verses have the “signature” of Saguna worship, viz. *Mayi, Maam, Aham*.

This verse indicates how to start with our worship of the Lord. Three steps are pointed out as the feature of Saguna worship:

- 1 i) Dedication of actions:** All actions have to be dedicated to the Lord.
- 2 ii) Supreme Goal:** The Lord becomes the supreme goal of the devotee.

**3-4** iii) *Single-minded devotion*: is developed towards the Lord. The devotee uses Japa, Kirtan and chanting to keep his mind as much as possible on the Lord. The aim is to bring his mind to a single focus on the Lord.

When these three steps are perfected, however long that may take, one may progress to the next level, which is Nirguna worship.

God Himself steps in to assist the devotee and take him to the next stage.

**5-6** In Vedanta, when any mention is made about going beyond the cycle of Samsara, or births and deaths, it is understood that the prerequisite Sadhana is Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. This is Nirguna Sadhana. The Lord Himself ensures that His devotee gets the capacity for Nirguna worship. This is implied here, since only through Nirguna can one's God-experience be complete.

Acharyaji made us understand that Saguna Upasana should not be "looked down upon". It is not inferior; it is the training ground for the higher stage, in the same way as the 12<sup>th</sup> standard is reached via the LKG class.

Returning to Arjuna's question, Lord Krishna completes the fine detail of his answer at this point. Who is better equipped? – ***the one who arrives at Nirguna worship via Saguna worship***. This is the final answer to the question.

**7-8 Na Chirat**: "without delay" or speedily. We see that the Lord Himself takes the responsibility for the devotee's progress. He ensures that knowledge is received by the devotee to enable him to do the Nirguna worship in due course. This is His assurance to the devotee.

When a person does his Saguna Sadhana sincerely, then God does His bit for that person and leads him forward, due to the surrender of the devotee to Him.

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**SRI HANUMAN**  
*The Ideal Devotee o the Lord*



## 12.3 A “SCALE” FOR SADHANA

(Verses 8-12, 5 No.)

**T**HE LORD GIVES A helpful “measuring scale” to the devotee to help him to choose his own level of practice. This is useful to devotees, since each one can tell where he is currently on the ladder of growth, and choose his appropriate level of practice.

Four stages are identified, and for each stage the required Sadhana that is applicable is explained. The stages are (in descending order):

- i) Stage 4: (8) **Dhyana Yoga** – mind and Intellect fixed on Me (Saguna Dhyana);
- ii) Stage 3: (9) **Abhyasa Yoga** – use a form to assist focus (Saguna Upasana);
- iii) Stage 2: (10) **Vachika Sadhanas** – perform Japa, etc, for Lord’s sake;
- iv) Stage 1: (11) **Karma Yoga** – begin by renouncing the fruits of actions.

This is the minimum that is expected of one desirous of attaining union with God.

### Verse 8:      ***Stage 4: Dhyana Yoga – No Senses Used***

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।

निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः

॥ १२-८ ॥

mayyēva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhim nivēśaya |

nivasiṣyasi mayyēva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ

॥ 12-8 ॥

1	<i>Mayi eva manah aadhatsva,</i>	<i>Fix your mind on Me alone;</i>
2	<i>mayi buddhim niveshaya;</i>	<i>place your intellect in Me;</i>
3	<i>nivasishyasi mayi eva,</i>	<i>then you shall live in Me alone;</i>
4	<i>ata oordhwam na samshaya.</i>	<i>of this have no doubt hereafter.</i>

The Lord begins with **DHYANA YOGA** or meditation. This is at the upper level of the “Measuring Scale”. One meditates with Saguna Niralamana, i.e. meditation on qualities but without an external form. Two things are essential at this level; they form the entrance qualifications for Nirguna Sadhana:

**1 i) Mayi Manah:** This means “Give your heart to Me.” This is LOVE. The mind is to be fixed on the Lord. Mind represents one’s power of emotions or one’s heart.

**2 ii) Mayi Buddhim:** This means “Give your head to Me.” This is TRUST. The intellect is placed in the Lord. Intellect represents one’s power of reasoning or one’s head.

The Lord wants our Love and our Trust. Devotion is both of these together. One without the other means that it is not Devotion:

**DEVOTION = LOVE + TRUST**

Devotion means seeing God in the people around us. It means that we divinize our relationships.

**3 Mayi Eva:** The culmination of this stage is union with the Lord. This is assured.

**4 Ata Oordhwam** means “hereafter” or “in good time”. In due course, one who practices this supreme stage of surrender to the Lord, will certainly be united with the Lord. Of this there is no doubt. The idea is to say that this is the highest level of Bhakti.

Acharyaji gave the example of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In his intense love for God, he used to say, “I do not want to become sugar, I only want to taste its sweetness.” This is a position in Dualism. In spite of that, the Lord found a way to make him ‘sugar’, which in Vedanta is termed Non-dualism or oneness with the Lord.

**Verse 9: Stage 3: Abhyasa Yoga – One Sense Used**

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।

अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय

॥ १२-९॥

atha cittam samādhātum na śaknōṣi mayi sthiram |

abhyāsayōgēna tatō māmicchāptum dhanañjaya

|| 12-9||

1	<i>Atha chittam samaadhaatum,</i>	<i>If the fixing of your mind</i>
2	<i>na shaknoshi mayi sthiram;</i>	<i>on Me you are not able to steadily do,</i>
3	<i>abhyaasa yogena tatah,</i>	<i>then by the Yoga of <b>constant practice</b></i>
4	<i>maam icchaa aaptum dhananjaya.</i>	<i>seek to reach Me, O Dhananjaya.</i>

**1-2** If Stage 4 is not possible, then we come one notch down in the scale.

**3-4** Stage 3 is called **ABHYASA YOGA**, and can be:

either i) **Saguna Nirakara** Bhakti (with qualities, but without form);

or ii) **Saguna Sakara** Bhakti (with qualities, as well as form).

It is an Upasana whereby one practises fixing one’s mind on an external Alambana or Pratika (an idol) of the Lord. The form is needed to pin the mind to the Lord. The form can be of any Deity such as Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna, Devi, and others. One should learn to focus on this form intently. After some time the eyes can be closed and the form kept in the mind.

When one is able to fix one’s mind on the idol with eyes closed for a long time, it amounts to Dhyana Yoga or Stage 4.

By using an idol, the focusing power of the mind is increased, distractions to the mind are limited.

**Verse 10: Stage 2: Japa Yoga & Kirtan –More Senses Used**

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।

मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि

॥ १२-१०॥

abhyāsē:'pyasamarthō:'si matkarmaparamō bhava |

madarthamapi karmāṇi kurvansiddhimavāpsyasi

|| 12-10||

1	<i>Abhyaase api asamarthah asi,</i>	<i>If you are unable to practice this Yoga also,</i>
2	<i>mat-karma-paramah bhava;</i>	<i>be intent on performing <b>actions</b> for My sake;</i>
3	<i>mad artham api karmaani,</i>	<i>if for My sake, even actions</i>
4	<i>kurvan siddhim avaapsyasi.</i>	<i>are done (by you), you shall attain perfection.</i>

Stage 2 is called **JAPA YOGA** or **KIRTAN**. Focusing on an idol requires the organ of sight to function, i.e. only one sense. If this is difficult, then the use of additional senses can be added. The term used here is **Karmaani**, “actions”. The actions referred to are as follows:

i) **Vachika Sadhanas**: One can add sound, thus two senses become active. These are Japa, chanting of Mantras, Kirtans, Bhajans, or listening to stories of the Lord.

ii) **Kayika Sadhanas**: Additional senses may be added to make the Sadhana easier. Pooja requires hands also; Yatra or pilgrimage requires legs, too.

At whichever point we start, the ultimate aim should be to become independent of the senses, and make the practice a mental effort alone.

Nama-Sankirtan is very effective and enjoyable to arrest the attention of the mind.

However, there are rules: the person has to do it seriously as a Sadhana to control his mind. Socializing at Bhajan events should be avoided. Talking during Kirtan should also be avoided. There should be a **silence** break in between the Kirtans to help the mind to let go of the senses.

#### **Verse 11:**     **Stage 1: Karma Yoga – All Senses Used**

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान्

॥ १२-११॥

athaitadapyaśaktō:'si kartuṁ madyōgamāśritaḥ |

sarvakarmaphalatyaḡam tataḥ kuru yatātmavān

|| 12-11||

1	<i>atha etad api ashaktah asi,</i>	<i>If even this you are unable</i>
2	<i>kartum mat yogam aashritah;</i>	<i>to do, then, taking refuge in <b>Me</b>,</i>
3	<i>sarva-karma-phala-tyaagam,</i>	<i>the <u>renunciation of the fruits</u> of all actions</i>
4	<i>tatah kuru yat aatmavaan.</i>	<i>you do, with your mind under control.</i>

This is called **KARMA YOGA**, and is the starting point for most aspirants. If even the above addition of two or more senses is not enough to capture the Sadhaka's attention, then more space and movement has to be allowed to the Sadhaka. He can be placed in a wider field of work. His work becomes his offering to the Lord. The person can move about and do active work for the good of society. This is easy for all.

**1 Etad Api**: The singular is used here to indicate the activity suggested in the previous verse. The devotee in Stage 2 focuses on one choice from many different actions; hence the plural word **Karmaani** was used. Now the devotee is not so restricted. He is allowed maximum freedom to use all his sense and do a variety of acts in Karma Yoga. The standard of control has dropped to minimal level.

Karma Yoga is Sri Krishna's favourite prescription for mankind in general. It requires one's whole personality to participate in it. It is within the reach of anyone to do. The basic rules to be observed are given in Chapter 3.

**2 Mat Aashritah:** "take refuge in Me." This is known as Ishwararpana Buddhi in *Upadesh Sara*, and as *Vyavasaayaatmika Buddhi* in the *Geeta*. At the beginning and the end one should offer a prayer to offer the action to the Lord. The person should restrict himself to actions that are approved by the scriptures. These are "acts of sacrifice, austerity and charity." They should be done in simplicity and humility, with no desire for name and fame.

**3-4 Karma Phala Tyaga:** The mind should not be on the fruit of the action. The *renunciation of the fruits of the action* is a key component in Karma Yoga. It is a defining point. It is also called Prasada Buddhi, i.e. accepting whatever result the Lord ordains for the action performed as His Prasada. The term for it in the *Geeta* is *Samatwam Buddhi*.

In the above classification of the Saguna worship of the Lord, Karma Yoga is placed last on the list. This may have deflated Arjuna a bit, since that is the Sadhana chosen for him by Sri Krishna. Perhaps to give encouragement to Arjuna, the next verse sees the same Sadhana – i.e. renunciation of fruits of actions – raised to the very top!

**Verse 12: The 4-Steps of Nirguna Sadhana**

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम्

॥ १२-१२॥

śrēyō hi jñānamabhyāsājñānāddhyānam viśiṣyatē |

dhyānātkarmaphalatyāgastyāgācchāntiranantaram

|| 12-12||

1	<i>Shreyah hi jnaanam abhyaasaat,</i>	<i>For knowledge is better than practice;</i>
2	<i>jnaanaat dhyaanam vishishyate;</i>	<i>than knowledge meditation is better;</i>
3	<i>dhyanaat karma-phala-tyagaat,</i>	<i>than meditation, renunciation of fruits;</i>
4	<i>tyagaat shaantih anantaram.</i>	<i>and renunciation is followed at once by <u>PEACE</u>.</i>

We immediately notice that *renunciation of the fruits of actions* is given the highest place. That is the most striking thing about this verse. But before we look at that, let us see the context of the whole verse.

This verse gives Nirguna Sadhana in four stages. Now Nirguna Sadhana is what follows Saguna Sadhana, so that means that these steps sit at the top of the above 4 steps of Saguna Sadhana.

We notice that Sri Krishna places renunciation of fruits again at the very top of the pile. There are several ways to interpret this.

i) **Just An Encouragement:** The simple but unconvincing way is to just see it as an encouragement to Arjuna not to feel too bad about being placed at the bottom of the pile. However, merely to please Arjuna would not be a good enough reason to do so.

ii) **Renunciation is Honoured:** The placement at the top is due to the scriptural references that Renunciation (of anything) is the highest Sadhana, and that it is followed once by Peace. This is supported by a verse from the *Katha Upanishad*: 'Yadaa Sarve



Pramuchyante....’ – “When all the desires that dwell in his heart are destroyed, then the mortal becomes immortal, and he attains Brahman even here.”

iii) **The Level of Renunciation is Increased:** The two steps 1 and 8 are taken to mean different levels of the same Sadhana of renunciation. The higher stage includes renunciation of all desires, not just the fruits of one’s actions.

iv) **Renunciation Common to All Stages:** Extending the idea of iii) above, is another interpretation which Acharyaji favours greatly: The renunciation of the fruits of actions is a Sadhana **common** to all the steps. At no stage is an aspirant relieved from this Sadhana. As he progresses step by step, the renunciation intensifies. By the time he nears realisation, it is very intense, and include all desires that lie latent in the heart.

The full picture is seen in the following table:

	STEP	VERSE	SADHANA	
NIRGUNA	8	v 12	<i>Karma Phala Tyaga</i>	<i>Renunciation of Fruits of Actions</i>
	7		<i>Nididhyasana</i>	<i>Nirguna Meditation (Formless)</i>
	6		<i>Manana</i>	<i>Reflection on the Knowledge</i>
	5		<i>Sravana</i>	<i>Practice of Listening to Knowledge</i>
SAGUNA	4	v 8	<i>Saguna Dhyana Yoga</i>	<i>Saguna Meditation</i>
	3	v 9	<i>Abhyasa Yoga</i>	<i>Meditation on a form / idol</i>
	2	v 10	<i>Japa Yoga Sadhanas</i>	<i>Repetition of Name, Singing, Chanting, Hearing Stories, Poojas, Yatras, etc.</i>
	1	v 11	<i>Karma Phala Tyaga</i>	<i>Renunciation of Fruits of Actions</i>

**TABLE OF STEPS IN NIRGUNA & SAGUNA SADHANA**

This is the most comprehensive and logical interpretation of repeating the lowest step again as the highest. This interpretation includes the purposes of all the previous three interpretations. The whole analysis just shows how deep the *Geeta* text really is!

#### **Conclusion On Sri Krishna’s Answer:**

The answer to Arjuna’s question has been comprehensively given. It is both Truthful and Helpful, the two main criteria for a good answer. This is also the most tactfully right answer. It does not deflate Arjuna’s enthusiasm, but encourages him to strive harder.

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## 12.4 FORTY QUALITIES OF A BHAKTA

(Verses 13-20, 8 No.)

**WE NOW MOVE ON** to a set of verses which describe 40 characteristics of the ideal devotee. Such an ideal devotee, according to what we have seen in v.12 is the Nirguna Dhyana Sadhaka. These qualities come to this ideal Bhakta naturally, due to his realisation. However, they have a general application also. Sadhakas in all the other steps from 2 to 8 would also be benefitted by consciously cultivating them.

At the end of the Chapter, in v.20, the Lord Himself states that all those who develop these qualities earnestly are very dear to Him.

### Verse 13:      *Qualities – 1 to 7*

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।  
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी      ॥ १२-१३॥

advēṣṭā sarvabhūtānāṁ maitraḥ karuṇa ēva ca |  
nirmamō nirahaṅkāraḥ samaduḥkhasukhaḥ kṣamī      || 12-13||

1	<i>Adweshtaa sarva bhootaanaam,</i>	<sup>1</sup> He who hates no creature;
2	<i>maitrah karunah eva cha;</i>	<sup>2</sup> who is friendly and <sup>3</sup> compassionate to all;
3	<i>nir-mamah nir-ahamkaarah,</i>	<sup>4</sup> who is free from “mine”-ness <sup>5</sup> and “I”-ness;
4	<i>sama-dukhha-sukhah kshamee.</i>	<sup>6</sup> balanced in pain and pleasure, <sup>7</sup> and forgiving;

### Verse 14:      *Qualities – 8 to 12*

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।  
मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः      ॥ १२-१४॥

santuṣṭaḥ satatam yōgī yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ |  
mayyarpitamanōbuddhiryō madbhaktaḥ sa mē priyaḥ      || 12-14||

5	<i>Santushtah satatam yogee,</i>	<sup>8</sup> Ever content, <sup>9</sup> steady in meditation,
6	<i>yataatmaa dridha-nishchayah;</i>	<sup>10</sup> self-controlled, <sup>11</sup> possessed of firm conviction,
7	<i>mayi-arpita-manah-buddhih,</i>	<sup>12</sup> with mind and intellect dedicated to Me –
8	<i>yah mad-bhaktah sah me priyah.</i>	he, My devotee, is dear to Me.

**Verse 15: Qualities – 13 to 18**

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः

॥ १२-१५॥

yasmānnōdvijatē lōkō lōkānnōdvijatē ca yaḥ |

harṣāmarṣabhayōdvēgairmuktō yaḥ sa ca mē priyaḥ

॥ 12-15॥

9	<i>Yasmaat na udvijate lokah,</i>	<sup>13</sup> He by whom the world is not agitated,
10	<i>lokaat na udvijate cha yah;</i>	<sup>14</sup> and who cannot be agitated by the world,
11	<i>harsha-aamarsha-bhaya-udvegaih,</i>	<sup>15</sup> who from joy, <sup>16</sup> envy, <sup>17</sup> fear, <sup>18</sup> anxiety
12	<i>muktah yah sah cha me priyah.</i>	is freed; such a one is dear to Me.

**Verse 16: Qualities – 19 to 24**

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः

॥ १२-१६॥

anapēkṣaḥ śucirdakṣa udāsīnō gatavyathah |

sarvārambhaparityāgī yō madbhaktaḥ sa mē priyaḥ

॥ 12-16॥

13	<i>Anapekshah shuchih dakshah,</i>	<sup>19</sup> He who is free from wants, <sup>20</sup> pure, <sup>21</sup> alert,
14	<i>udaaseenah gatavyathah;</i>	<sup>22</sup> unconcerned, and <sup>23</sup> untroubled,
15	<i>sarva aarambha parityaagee,</i>	<sup>24</sup> renouncing all undertakings, commencements –
16	<i>yah mad-bhaktah sah me priyah.</i>	he, My devotee, is dear to Me.

**Verse 17: Qualities – 25 to 30**

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः

॥ १२-१७॥

yō na hr̥ṣyati na dvēṣṭi na śōcati na kāṅkṣati |

śubhāśubhaparityāgī bhaktimānyaḥ sa mē priyaḥ

॥ 12-17॥

17	<i>Yah na hrishyati na dveshti,</i>	<sup>25</sup> He who neither rejoices <sup>26</sup> nor hates,
18	<i>na shochati na kaankshati;</i>	<sup>27</sup> nor grieves, <sup>28</sup> nor desires,
19	<i>shubha-ashubha-parityaagee,</i>	<sup>29</sup> renouncing both good <sup>30</sup> and evil –
20	<i>bhaktimaan yah sah me priyah.</i>	he, full of devotion, is dear to Me.

**Verse 18: Qualities – 31 to 35**

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः

॥ १२-१८॥

samaḥ śatrau ca mitrē ca tathā mānāpamānayōḥ |  
 śītōṣṇasukhaduḥkhēṣu samaḥ saṅgavivarjitah

|| 12-18||

21	<i>Samah shatrau cha mitre cha,</i>	<sup>31</sup> <i>He who is the same to foe and friend;</i>
22	<i>tathaa maana-apamaanayoh;</i>	<sup>32</sup> <i>and in honour and dishonor;</i>
23	<i>sheet-ushna sukha-dukkheshu</i>	<sup>33</sup> <i>in cold and heat;</i> <sup>34</sup> <i>in pleasure and pain –</i>
24	<i>samah, sanga vivarjitah.</i>	<i>ever the same;</i> <sup>35</sup> <i>who is free from attachment;</i>

**Verse 19: Qualities – 36 to 40**

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः

|| १२-१९||

tulyanindāstutirmaunī santuṣṭō yēna kēnacit |

anikētaḥ sthiramatirbhaktimānmē priyō naraḥ

|| 12-19||

25	<i>Tulya-nindaa-stutih maunee,</i>	<sup>36</sup> <i>to whom censure and praise are equal,</i> <sup>37</sup> <i>who remains silent (in both);</i>
26	<i>santushtah yena kenachit;</i>	<sup>38</sup> <i>who is content with whatever comes (to him),</i>
27	<i>aniketah sthira matih,</i>	<sup>39</sup> <i>homeless,</i> <sup>40</sup> <i>and steady-minded,</i>
28	<i>bhaktimaan me priyah narah.</i>	<i>that man, full of devotion, is dear to Me.</i>

**Verse 20: “The Immortal Dharma” – Conclusion**

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

श्रद्धाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः

|| १२-२०||

yē tu dharmyāmṛtamidaṁ yathōktaṁ paryupāsatē |

śraddadhānā matparamā bhaktāstē:tīva mē priyāḥ

|| 12-20||

29	<i>ye tu dharmya-amritam idam,</i>	<i>This ‘Immortal Dharma’ – they indeed</i>
30	<i>yathaa uktam paryupaasate;</i>	<i>who follow it as described above,</i>
31	<i>shradda-dhaanaa mat-paramaa,</i>	<i>endowed with <b>faith</b>, regarding Me as <b>Supreme</b>,</i>
32	<i>bhaktaah te ateeva me priyaah.</i>	<i>such devotees are exceedingly dear to Me.</i>

In Padas **30**, **31** and **32**, there are 8 words with Deergha notes (long vowels). These indicate a greater depth of love. The Lord’s love is exceedingly abundant towards His devotees. Even in English we have long vowels to stress an emotion, e.g. “you, too”. And if there is no long vowel, we will force it in, e.g. “you are so-ooooo sweet!”; “it was a very lo-ooooong day”.

The Lord wishes to make the point that these virtues, grouped under the heading “**Immortal Dharma**”, are vital to one’s spiritual progress. He makes it more tempting for aspirants to practise them by offering them a ‘reward’ – His precious Love!



These virtues are selected with such care that by practising them, one becomes unconsciously prepared to move from Saguna to Nirguna Sadhana. It is perfect preparation for the Nirguna stage, which all aspirants have to go through in order to get liberated.

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु  
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे  
भक्तियोगो नाम द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥ १२॥

ōm tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu  
brahmavidyāyāṁ yōgaśāstrē śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvādē  
bhaktiyōgō nāma dvādaśō:'dhyāyaḥ || 12||

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Om Tat Sat!

END OF DISCOURSE 12

**“THE YOGA OF SUPREME DEVOTION”**



**TABLE OF 40 VIRTUES**  
(EXHIBITED BY THE “PERFECT DEVOTEE”)

The following table lists all 40 qualities, with Acharyaji’s comments in the class:

VERSE	ITEM	QUALITY	MEANING & REMARKS	
13	1	<b>Adveshtaa</b>	free from hatred towards an antagonist.	
	2	<b>Maitrah</b>	friendliness towards a protagonist seeking knowledge of Self.	
	3	<b>Karunah</b>	compassion towards a protagonist who does not seek knowledge, who is lost in Samsara.	
	4	<b>Nirmamah</b>	freedom from “mine”-ness or possessiveness; having a love that does not enslave others.	
	5	<b>Nirahamkarah</b>	freedom from “I”-ness or ego-centredness; no haughtiness towards others; not taking offence .	
	6	<b>Sama-Duhkha-Sukha</b>	balanced in sorrow and joy, by seeing beyond it.	
	7	<b>Kshamee</b>	forgiving others easily.	
14	8	<b>Santushtah</b>	contentment; having a sense of sufficiency in life.	
	9	<b>Satatam Yogee</b>	steady in meditation.	
	10	<b>Yata-Atmaa</b>	self-controlled; having the senses under control.	
	11	<b>Dridha-Nischaya</b>	with firm conviction.	
	12	<b>Arpita Mayi</b>	who has dedicated mind and intellect to Me.	
15	13	<b>Loka Na Udvijate</b>	by whom the world is not agitated.	
	14	<b>Lokaat Na Udvijate</b>	who is not agitated by the world.	
	15	<b>Muktah Harsha</b>	who is free from paltry joys.	(In passive voice): whom joy, etc have given up as they do not find in him one they can control.
	16	<b>Muktah Aamarsha</b>	who is free from envy.	
	17	<b>Muktah Bhaya</b>	who is free from fear.	
	18	<b>Muktah Udbegaih</b>	who is free from anxiety.	
16	19	<b>Anapeksha</b>	covets no desires; abandoning fruits of actions.	
	20	<b>Shuchih</b>	having purity; habits of cleanliness.	
	21	<b>Dakshah</b>	who is dexterous and very intelligent; alert.	
	22	<b>Udasinah</b>	who is impartial, unconcerned, indifferent.	
	23	<b>Gatavyathah</b>	who is untroubled.	
	24	<b>Sarva-Aarambha Parityagi</b>		who has renounced every undertaking.
17	25	<b>Na Hrishyati</b>	does not rejoice on getting a coveted object.	
	26	<b>Na Dveshti</b>	does not fret on getting an undesirable object.	
	27	<b>Na Sochati</b>	does not lament on losing a dear one.	
	28	<b>Na Kankshati</b>	does not hanker after an object not acquired.	
	29	<b>Subha Parityagi</b>	who gives up good actions.	
	30	<b>Asubha Parityagi</b>	who gives up bad actions.	





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**KAPWING**



18	31	<b>Sama Shatrau/Mitre</b>	<i>same towards friend or enemy.</i>	He has no Raga-Dwesh (likes & dislikes)
	32	<b>Sama Mana-Apamana</b>	<i>same in honour and dishonour.</i>	
	33	<b>Shita-Ushnah</b>	<i>same in cold and heat.</i>	
	34	<b>Sukha-Duhkha</b>	<i>same in joy and sorrow.</i>	
	35	<b>Sanga Vivarjitah</b>	<i>free from attachment, but not out of sorrow.</i>	
19	36	<b>Tulya Ninda Stutih</b>	<i>equal in meeting with denunciation or praise.</i>	
	37	<b>Mauni</b>	<i>who remains silent (in praise or censure).</i>	
	38	<b>Santushthah</b>	<i>contented with whatever comes of its own accord.</i>	
	39	<b>Aniketah</b>	<i>who has no fixed place of residence (not homeless).</i>	
	40	<b>Sthirah Matih</b>	<i>steady-minded with regard to the Reality.</i>	
20		<b>Dharmya-amritam</b>	<i>who follow the above "Immortal Dharma".</i>	
		<b>Shraddadhaanaah</b>	<i>who seeks with <b>faith</b> the above virtues.</i>	
		<b>Mat-Paramaa</b>	<i>who accepts Me as the <b>Supreme Goal</b>.</i>	

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***The Divine Child Krishna with Mother Yashoda***