

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 118: Chapter 12, Summary of Chapter 12

(August 5 –August 11, 2020)

BHAKTI YOGA



**CLICK HERE
TO
LISTEN TO
THE
ENTIRE
CHAPTER-12
VERSES 1-20
OF
SHRIMAD
BHAGAVAD
GITA**

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The Summary of

Chapter 12

Bhakti Yoga

(The Yoga of Devotion)

(A) The Summary of the Summary of Chapter 12:

Lord Krishna glorifies the path of devotion to God. He describes the process of devotional service and explains different forms of spiritual disciplines. He says that “the one who doesn’t afflict the world or is afflicted by it, who is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety, who rejoices not and hates not, who grieves not and desires not, who has renounced good and evil and is full of devotion, who is alike to foe and friend, unaltered in honor and dishonor, who is the same in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, free from attachment,

unchanged by praise and blame, is silent, constant with whatever he has, and has a firm mind, is dear to Me.”

(B) The Most Important Verses of Chapter 12:

Verse 2 : *Those who, fixing their minds on Me, worship Me, ever earnest and endowed with Supreme faith, these in My opinion are perfect in Yoga.*

Verse 8: *Fix your mind on Me alone and surrender your intellect to Me. There upon, you will always live in Me. Of this, there is no doubt.*

Verse 9: *If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on Me, O Arjun, then practice remembering Me with devotion while constantly restraining the mind from worldly affairs.*

(C) The Verse-By-Verse Summary of Chapter 12:

The contents of the 20 verses of Chapter 12 can be divided into the following four sections:

The Topic

Verses

1. Arjuna's question and Kṛiṣṇa's answer.....01 to 02
2. The five stages of bhakti (prasāḍabuddhi, īśvarārpaṇabuddhi, iṣṭadevatā-upāsanā, virāḍ-upāsanā and akṣhara-upāsanā viz. jñānayoga).....03 to 12
3. Traits of parābhakta (parābaktalakṣaṇa)13 to 19
4. Glory of the teaching.....20

1. Arjuna's question and Kṛiṣṇa's answer (Verses 1-2):

The chapter begins with Arjuna's question seeking to know whether *virāḍ bhakta* (*saguṇa bhakta*) or *akṣhara bhakta* (*nirguṇa bhakta*) is superior (V1). Lord Kṛiṣṇa first answers that *saguṇa bhakta* is superior. (In fact, we cannot compare them. Everyone has to go through both and one can reach the Lord through *nirguṇa bhakti* alone, which the Lord himself points out in the 4th Verse. Still the Lord praises *saguṇa bhakta* because of the context.) (V2)

2. : The five stages of bhakti (prasāḍabuddhi, īśvarārpaṇabuddhi, iṣṭadevatā-upāsanā, virāḍ-upāsanā and akṣhara-upāsanā viz. jñānayoga) (Verses 3-12):

From the 3rd verse to the 12th verse, Lord Kṛiṣṇa gives out the entire range of bhakti which leads to liberation. In the first 3 verses (V3 - V5), Lord Kṛiṣṇa talks about *nirguṇa bhakti*, which is *jñāna yoga* and which is the direct means for liberation. But, the Lord points out that this would be difficult for unprepared people (V5). From the 6th verse to the 8th verse, the Lord speaks about the next lower stage in the form of

virāḍ upāsanā. He promises that such upāsaka would be rescued from saṃsāra by the Lord. (This does not mean that a virāḍ upāsaka can get liberation, skipping *jñāna yoga*. The idea is that he becomes fit for *jñāna yoga* and attains liberation through knowledge). In the 9th verse, the Lord comes down one more step. If one is incapable of doing *virāḍ upāsanā*, let him practice meditation on any form of the Lord (*iṣṭadevatā upāsanā*). Thus, upāsanā (on *virāḍ* or *iṣṭadevatā*) becomes the preparatory step for *jñāna yoga*. In the next verse (V10), the Lord comes down further. If a person is too extrovert to take up upāsanā, he is asked here to perform his duty (*nitya* and *naimittika*) as an offering to the Lord (*Īśhvarārpaṇam*) without expecting any reward. When a person is full of desires, he is impelled to do desire-born actions (*kāmya*) expecting results. For such a person, Lord Kṛṣṇa prescribes the last step. When he receives the result of *kāmya-karmas*, let him take it as a prasāda (graceful gift) of the Lord and avoid reaction. Lord Kṛṣṇa indicates this through the word ‘*sarvakarmaphalatyāgam*’ (V11). The above two steps come under *karmayoga*. (A *karmayogī* becomes fit for upāsanā after some time. Upāsanā makes him qualified for *jñāna yoga*. Jñāna helps him discover his own true ever-free nature). Lord Kṛṣṇa concludes this topic by praising the last step of *karmayoga* (V12).

3. Traits of parābhakta (parābhakta lakṣaṇa):

From the 13th verse up to the 19th verse (V13 – V19), Lord Kṛṣṇa gives a clear picture of the characteristics of one who has gone through all these steps and discovered fulfillment. [As a *karmayogī* and *upāsaka* he was a devotee of *saguṇa īśhvara*, seeing the Lord as distinct from him. This is only lower bhakti, because he does not know the true nature of the Lord still. His bhakti is *saguṇabhakti* or *bhedabhakti* or *aparābhakti*. Once he pursues *jñānayoga* and discovers his identity with the Lord, his bhakti becomes *nirguṇabhakti* or *abhedabhakti* or *parābhakti*, which is an end in itself]. In these verses Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the traits of a *parabhakta* who is a *sthitaprajña*. (This serves twofold purpose: Firstly, it is an inspiration for a seeker to pursue his *sādhana*. Secondly, the natural traits of a *parabhakta* serve as values for a *sādhaka* to be deliberately practised). This portion can be broadly divided into two. One referring to those virtues which a *parabhakta* spontaneously enjoys, and the second, referring to those negative traits which he is totally free from. We can enlist them as follows:

Parabhakta is endowed with: (1) *Maitrī* (Friendliness), (2) *Karuṇā* (Compassion), (3) *Samatvam* (Equanimity), (4) *Kṣhamā* (Forbearance), (5) *Santুষṭi* (Contentment), (6) *Yatātmatvam* (Self-control), (7) *Dhṛḍhaniśchaya* (Firm Self knowledge), (8) *Bhakti* (Devotion), (9) *Gentleness*, (10) *Śhuchitvam* (Purity), (11) *Dakṣhatvam* (Resourcefulness), (12) *Udāsīnatvam* (Impartiality).

Parabhakta is free from: (1) *Dveṣha* (Hatred), (2) *Mamakāra* (‘Mine’-notion), (3) *Ahaṅkāra* (‘I’ -notion), (4) *Udvega* (Anxiety), (5) *Harṣha* (Elation), (6) *Amarṣha*

(Envy), (7) *Bhayam* (Fear), (8) *Apekṣhā* (Dependence), (9) *Ārambha* (Selfish action), (10) *Śhoka* (Grief), (11) *Kāṅkṣhā* (Desire), (12)

4. *Glory of the teaching (V20):*

Lrd Kṛiṣṇa concludes the teaching by saying — “Those who follow this teaching with faith, keeping Me as the goal, are very dear to Me.” (V20).