

**Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 115: Chapter 12, Verses 10-13**

(July 15 – July 21, 2020)

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**ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT**

**TRANSLITERATION**

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।

*abhyāse 'py asamartho 'si mat-karma-paramo bhava*

मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १२-१० ॥

*mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi*

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।

*athaitad apy aśhakto 'si kartuṁ mad-yogam āśhritaḥ*

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ १२-११ ॥

*sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān*

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।

*śhreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj jñānād dhyānaṁ viśhiṣhyate*

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२-१२ ॥

*dhyānāt karma-phala-tyāgas tyāgāch chhāntir  
anantaram*

अद्वेष्य सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

*adveṣṭā sarva-bhūtānām maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha*

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १२-१३ ॥

*nirmamo nirahankāraḥ sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣhamī*

## TRANSLATION

- (10)** If you cannot practice remembering Me with devotion, then just try to work for Me. Thus performing devotional service to Me, you shall achieve the stage of perfection.
- (11)** If you are unable to even work for Me in devotion, then by taking the shelter of me through *Yoga* and being situated in the self, perform all activities while renouncing the fruits of your actions.
- (12)** Better than mechanical practice is knowledge; better than knowledge is meditation. Better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of actions, for peace immediately follows such renunciation.
- (13)** Those devotees are very dear to Me who are free from malice toward all living beings, who are friendly, and compassionate. They are free from attachment to possessions and egotism, equipoised in happiness and distress, and ever-forgiving.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LGCrr5xWNZR8\\_-AHiL\\_s9bgoHx6LAW1c/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LGCrr5xWNZR8_-AHiL_s9bgoHx6LAW1c/view?usp=sharing)

## Chapter 12

### Verses 10:

In this verse, Lord Krishna explains that if one is unable to concentrate upon constantly remembering Him while restraining one's mind from pursuing other objects of the senses, then one can perform activities dedicated to Him, such as chanting His holy names, singing hymns of praise to Him alone and with others, constructing temples for His deity forms, cultivating Tulasi gardens for His worship, growing flowers and vegetables for His service, cow protection, offering *dhupa* or incense, *deepa* or ghee lamps, *pushpa* or flowers, visiting His holy pastime places and *dhama's* or abodes, etc. By performing such actions for the exclusive satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Krishna, one's mind will become steady and soon will be able to fix its focus exclusively upon the Supreme Lord. Subsequent realization of Him will manifest within the heart.

### Verse 11:

If one finds himself unable to even perform the activities of propitiation mentioned earlier (see above) to Lord Krishna in a regular manner, then there is an easier way to approach

Him by His devotees and that is with a controlled mind renounce the results of one actions and not desire for rewards for what one does. The purport is to perform all one's activities without desiring any rewards for the actions. By doing this, the mind becomes pure because it is not contaminated by fruitive desires. This will bestow spiritual knowledge and then *bhakti* or exclusive loving devotion and Lord Krishna's direct realization will follow in due course of time. The word *yatatmavan* means: of controlled mind which denotes a mind that has been trained to perform activities without desiring for rewards in the intangible form of prestige and recognition or the tangible form of gain and position. It is only to such a one entirely free from all thoughts and desires of compensation and calculation, cleansed of all sins will the Supreme Lord Krishna be his total object of affection and love. Such a person will focus the fullness of all of their love on Lord Krishna as their sole ultimate goal. All their actions are actually forms of Lord Krishna's worship as they are performed for His satisfaction or as a matter of duty without craving for any rewards.

### **Verses 12:**

In this verse, Lord Krishna lists and ranks different methods in ascending order to achieve *moksha* or liberation from the material world to attain Him. First in this order comes the *mechanical practice of worship*. For example, many people of modern era perform religious functions and rituals without really engaging their mind upon God. When they buy a new house or a new car, they call the priest to perform puja ritual for them. While the priest performs the *puja*, they sit in another room chatting with important guests over a cup of coffee. While this is still better than doing nothing, and it might even lead one to go to the next level eventually, this is certainly not a good way to attain *Moksha*. Therefore, higher than the mechanical practice is the *accumulation of spiritual knowledge*. Knowledge bestows the understanding that the goal of life is God-realization and not simply performing rituals for material gain. One who is versed in knowledge goes beyond the empty rituals and develops the desire to purify the mind. Nonetheless, mere knowledge by itself cannot cleanse the heart. So, higher than the cultivation of knowledge is the process of *engaging the mind in meditation*. By practically controlling the mind through meditation, we begin to develop detachment from worldly pleasures. When the mind is controlled through meditation, it is then possible to go to the next step, which is *renunciation of the fruits of actions*. This will help remove worldliness from the mind and strengthen the intellect for the subsequent higher stage such as self-realization. The *Shvetashvatara Upanisad I.III* states that self-realization is not achieved by simple meditation upon the abstract; but by meditation upon the Supreme Lord combined with renunciation for the rewards of actions. This is because by renouncing the desire for reward for one's activities, one no longer is forced to accept the reactions for one's actions and sins are no longer accrued.

### **Verses 13:**

In this verse (and the next few verses), Lord Krishna describes the qualities that are associated with His exclusive devotees. The word *advēṣṭa* means free from hatred for any being at any time. *Maitrah* means friendly, showing good will to all, both well-wishers and ill-wishers by the understanding that they are merely following the tendencies of the impulse imparted to them by the Supreme Lord in relation to one's own good and bad actions. *Karunah* means compassionate, to be sympathetic towards the sufferings of others, friend and foe alike. *Nirmamah* means devoid of sentiments of possessiveness and ego related conceptions mine-ness regarding the physical body, family and associated relationships and objects. *Nirahankarah* means free from egotism. The biggest enemy of devotion is pride. One can only progress on the spiritual path if one practices self-effacement. Proficient devotees naturally become humble, and eliminate pride and proprietorship from their personality, as well as the false identification of being the body. *Sama Dukhah Sukhah* means Equipoised in happiness and distress. Devotees have faith that only efforts are in their hands, while the results are in the hands of God. So whatever results come their way, they see them as the will of God, and accept them with equanimity. *Kshami* means Ever forgiving. Devotees never think of punishing wrongdoers for their emotional satisfaction. Harboring such negative thoughts toward others ruins one's own devotion. So accomplished devotees refuse to harbor unforgiving thoughts in all circumstances and leave the task of punishing wrongdoers upon God.