

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 12

Bhakti Yogah:

Yoga of Devotion

Transliterated Sanskrit Text

Free Translation

&

Brief Explanation

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Bhakti Yogah: Yoga of Devotion
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Preamble

Bhagavan Sri Krishna has in many places laid stress on the importance of the worship of the formless and attributeless Brahman. In the end of the last Chapter, He declared God-Realisation as the reward of exclusive devotion to God with form and attributes and that through single-minded devotion, the Cosmic Form can be known, seen and entered into by anyone.

On hearing this advice a doubt has arisen in the mind of the Pandava hero Arjuna as to which of the two methods is better to attain the spiritual realisation. He seeks the precise knowledge regarding the techniques of devotion. He begins the chapter with the perennial question that confuses mankind. Should one worship God with a form or as a formless Reality i.e., whether the Truth is to be meditated upon as unmanifested Absolute or in its manifested form?

Sri Krishna answers by explaining the importance of both types of worship to spiritual development, one catering to the devotional while the other to the intellectual propensity of the seekers.

Krishna then presents the most pragmatic approach to God Realisation. For seekers who find it difficult to practise various spiritual disciplines (*sadhanas*), He provides a series of alternatives which cater to the needs of diverse kinds of aspirants. He concludes the chapter by enumerating thirty five qualities of a devotee (*bhakta*) of God. He emphasises that those who possess these qualities are dear to Him.

This Chapter thus deals mainly with devotion to God along with various forms of spiritual disciplines and discusses the marks of a true devotee. As the Chapter begins and ends with devotion it is titled the Yoga of Devotion.

The Text

DEVOTION AND CONTEMPLATION

arjuna uvaacha

**evam satatayuktaa ye bhaktaas twaam paryupaasate
ye chaapyaksharamavyaktam tessaam ke yogavittamaah // 12.1 //**

Arjuna said

Those devotees who, ever steadfast, thus worship You and those who worship the Imperishable and the Unmanifested - which of them have the greater knowledge of Yoga?

In the last Chapter the Lord assured that any seeker can realise the glory of the Cosmic Form if he has unfaltering devotion. Arjuna now enquires whether one should meditate upon the manifested form of the Infinite or upon the unmanifested form of the Supreme. Unmanifested is that which is not directly perceptible for the sense organs. The objects that can be perceptible to the sense organs are the manifested.

There are those who seek oneness with the Absolute, one impersonal and unrelated to the universe and others who seek unity with the Personal God manifested in the world of men and nature. The question is which of these have the better knowledge of Yoga—the one who devotes himself to the Lord manifest, Personal God, or the one who meditates on the unmanifested Infinite with complete detachment from all the external stimuli? Are we to turn our back on all manifestations and strain after the Unchanging Unmanifest or are we to be devoted to the Manifested Form and work to its service? Is it Absolute or the Personal God, Brahman or Ishwara that we should worship?

The difference between the devotion to the ‘Absolute or Brahman or the Unmanifest’ and devotion to the ‘Personal God or Ishwara or the Manifest’ is explained in the following table.

| Sr.No. | Devotion to the Unmanifest, the one without form, Impersonal, Brahman, the Absolute. | Devotion to the manifest, the one with form, Ishwara, the Personal God. |
|--------|--|--|
| 1 | Regards the object of worship or Godhead as the incomprehensible, indefinable, formless, relationless, actionless, featureless, attributeless and transcendental Absolute. | Regards the Godhead as the Lord of the universe, the Supreme Person, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, the omniscient and omnipresent Lord, endowed with the Universal Form and possessed of the great powers of Yoga. |
| 2 | The Absolute never puts on any form, abstains from all actions, enters into no relation with the universe and is eternally silent and immutable. | The Personal god is our Lord and Master, the source and Origin of all beings, immanent in all things, manifest in both nature and living beings as their inmost Self |

Both these aspects of the Godhead have been described by Krishna in the Gita, though with an emphasis on the Impersonal aspect in Chapters 2 through 10. The 11th Chapter deals with the Universal form of Godhead and ends with an exhortation to Arjuna to worship It as the Lord of the universe. Now Arjuna asks which of the two methods of worship is better; meditation on the Impersonal or worship of the Lord through work and love. However the Bhagavan will show us later on that there exists no real contrast between these two types of devotees.

**sri bhagavan uvaacha
mayyaaveshya mano ye maam nityayuktaa upaasate
shraddhayaa parayetaaste me yuktaatmaa mataah // 12.2 //**

Sri Bhagavan said

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

Sri Krishna starts His discourse explaining the path of meditation on a form representing the Divine (Idol or Symbol). He emphasises three important conditions to be fulfilled by a seeker to enable his devotion to The Lord bear fruit.

Fixing mind on Me: ‘Me’ means the Universal form, which reveals the Godhead as the Supreme Lord of the universe. Thought is the source of activity for the mind and

intellect. Thought should not only revolve around the concept of The Lord but it should be of so much depth that it is able to merge itself with and dissolve into the ideal of perfection represented by The Lord.

Ever-steadfast and worship Me: One should have sufficient self-balance while worshipping The Lord. Mind by its very nature will try to wander away from the object of meditation and hence self-control is necessary to keep it focussed on the point of contemplation. 'Worship Me' means devotion to the Lord as the omniscient, free from attachment, aversion and other evil passions. This has a reference to the last verse of the 11th Chapter.

Supreme faith: Faith is not blind belief. It is that by which one understands the exact import of the scriptural text and the advice of the teacher and by which alone the reality of things i.e., seeing God in all beings and all beings in God. can become clear to him.

If these conditions are accomplished by any one he is considered as the sincere devotee by The Lord because such a devotee spends his whole time in the uninterrupted thought of the Lord.

FEATURES OF THE UNMANIFEST

**ye twaksharamanirdeshyamavyaktam paryupasate
sarvatragamachintyam cha kootasthamachalam dhruvam // 12.3 //**

Those who worship the Imperishable, the Indefinable, the Unmanifest, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchangeable, the Immovable and the Eternal

**samniyamendriyagraamam sarvatra samabuddhaya
te praapnuvanti maameva sarvabhootahite rataah // 12. 4 //**

Having restrained all the senses, even minded in all conditions, rejoicing ever in the welfare of all beings - indeed they also come to Me (just like the others).

The nature of the Unmanifest specified in the Verse 3 and their explanations are given in the following table.

| Sr. No. | Nature of the Unmanifest | Meaning |
|---------|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Imperishable | All those which have forms and qualities are substances and all substances are perishable. That which has no quality or form cannot be perceived by sense organs and hence It is imperishable. |
| 2 | Indefinable | Definitions are always in terms of what is perceived. That which cannot be perceived is indefinable |
| 3 | Omnipresent | All pervading. The Infinite that has no qualities, that is not manifest and therefore that is not definable should necessarily be everywhere and all pervading. |
| 4 | Unthinkable | That which can be conceived by mind and intellect will become objects of feelings and thoughts which will always be perishable. That which cannot be conceived or comprehensible will naturally be imperishable. |
| 5 | Unchangeable | The Self or Consciousness remains unchanged although It is the substratum on which all changes takes place. |
| 6 | Immovable | Motion is a change in time-space mechanism. Movement is a change of a thing from one place and time to another place and at a different time where it is not there. As the Infinite is all pervading there cannot be a place or time where It is not there and hence It is immovable. |
| 7 | Eternal | That which has a change is conditioned by time and space. The Supreme being the substratum for all, at all times and all places, supports the very time and space and hence eternal |

The seeker who meditates upon the unmanifest which is of the above mentioned nature has to fulfil the following three conditions mentioned in the Verse 4.

1. Having restrained all the senses - He has to avoid dissipation of his energies through the sense organs and redirect his energies so conserved in pursuit of higher thoughts. The senses are to be restrained but not rejected.
2. Even-minded in all conditions or Always equanimous - Intellectual equanimity in all conditions and situations while living in the world is a fundamental requisite for successful meditation. Maintenance of one's own balance in spite of his favourable and unfavourable experiences while living in contact with world is called equanimity.
3. Intent on the welfare of all - He should be the one who is ever ready to serve others to the best of his abilities.

Sri Krishna says that they also who meditate on the unmanifest in the aforesaid manner reach Him; they too reach the same goal, the Supreme Self. But the Lord adds a rider here.

CONCENTRATION ON THE UNMANIFEST, A DIFFICULT TASK FOR THE WORLDLY

**klesho'dhikatarasteshaam avyaktaasaktachetasaam
avyaktaa hi gatirdukkham dehavadbhiravaapyate // 12.5 //**

Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the Unmanifested; for, the goal - the Unmanifested - is very hard for the embodied to reach.

The embodied: Those who identify themselves with or attached to their bodies (*Dehabhimana*).

Those who seek the Manifested Lord and those who seek the Unmanifested Lord reach the same goal. But the path taken up by the latter is arduous because the aspirant has to practise utmost self-control, renounce the world outwardly and inwardly, wipe out all human emotions and desires and still the mind in the contemplation of the Absolute. It is also extremely difficult to fix the restless mind on the formless and attributeless Self. Such a method of contemplation demands a sharp, one pointed and subtle intellect. The Immutable does not offer an easy hold to the mind and the path is more arduous.

For a majority of the seekers meditation upon The Lord as expressed in the Universe, a Personal God (manifested form) is easier because they have a tangible ideal of the Lord to whom they can direct their feelings, emotion, love, will, energies and knowledge.

WORSHIP OF THE QUALIFIED ASPECT OF THE LORD IS EASIER

**ye tu sarvaani karmaani mayi sannyasya matparaah
ananyenaiva yogena maam dhyaayanta upaasate // 12.6 //**

But those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme goal, meditating on Me with unswerving devotion;

**teshaamaham samuddhartaa mrtyusamsaarasaagaraat
bhavaami nachiraat paartha mayyaaveshitachetasaam // 12.7 //**

For them whose minds are set on Me, verily I become ere long, O Partha, the saviour out of the ocean of finite experiences, the samsara.

Later on in this Chapter the way of life prescribed for the worshippers of the unmanifest Lord has been dealt with. Now the discipline in life for a seeker through his devotion on the manifest lord is described.

Sri Krishna lays down certain conditions to be followed by those who want to meditate upon the Form of The Lord and concludes that those who follow these instructions fully and sincerely will be saved from their mortal limitations by Himself on whose form they have been contemplating. These instructions are:

1. Renouncing all actions in Him - renouncing one's individual ego and limitations and identifying oneself with Him by complete surrender before The Lord.
2. Regarding Him as the supreme goal - directing one's energy and dealings for achieving the goal of self perfection symbolised in the form of The Lord.
3. Meditating on Him with unswerving devotion - Lifting the mind from agitation prone thoughts to a greater goal with single-pointed attention.

Thus Upasana is not merely meditation upon the goal but becoming one with the goal contemplated upon. Sri Krishna assures such a devotee that He will be his saviour from all imperfections, agitations and sorrows of the mortal life and that too ere long.

For the one whose nature is not steeped in *vairagya* or renunciation, for the one who is neither very tired of nor very attached to the world, the path of devotion is the most suitable one (*Bhagavata XI.20.7*). It is a matter of temperament whether we adopt the *pravritti dharma*, the path of works or *nivritti dharma*, the path of renunciation.

THEN WHAT SHOULD ARJUNA DO? HE SHOULD TAKE UP THE WORSHIP OF GOD WITH ATTRIBUTES.

**mayyeva mana aadhatswa mayi buddhim niveshaya
nivasishyasi mayyeva ata oordhwam na samshayah // 12.8 //**

Fix your mind on Me alone, place your intellect in Me; thereafter you shall, no doubt, live in Me alone.

Fix your mind on Me - By meditation, mind can be made to concentrate on the form of The Lord giving up all thoughts of sense objects.

Place your intellect in Me - Also the intellect, which discriminates and determines, should be made to focus itself on The Lord.

Live in Me alone - If the mind rests on The Lord and the intellect understands the Infinite, the individuality ends and one merges with the Infinite, the All Pervading. There is no doubt about this says Sri Krishna.

IF THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS OPEN? THE LORD EXPLAINS:

**atha chittam samaadhaatum na shaknoshi mayi sthiram
abhyaasayogena tato maamicchaaptum dhananjaya // 12.9 //**

If you are unable to fix your mind steadily on Me, then by the Yoga of constant practice you do seek to reach Me, O Dhananjaya.

If one is not able to fix his mind and intellect wholly on the Lord without any break then Sri Krishna advises that by constant practice to steady the mind and fix it on one point one can achieve realisation. The practice of withdrawing the mind from all sorts of sensual objects and fixing it again and again on one particular ideal or a tangible symbol or the Self with the help of discriminative intellect which rules over and directs the mental energies is known as *Abhyasa*. By such constant practice, Divinity takes gradual possession of our nature.

**abhyaase'pyasamartho'si matkarmaparamo bhava
madarthamapi karmaani kurvansiddhimavaapyasi // 12.10 //**

If you are unable even to seek by practice, then you be intent on doing actions for My sake; even by performing actions for My sake, you shall attain perfection.

If concentration is found difficult on account of the outward tendencies of the mind or external circumstances, then do all actions for the sake of The Lord. Thus the individual with the purity of mind achieved becomes aware of the Eternal Reality.

**athaitadapyashakto'si kartum madyogamaashritah
sarvakarmaphalatyaagam tatah kuru yataatmavaan // 12.11 //**

If you are unable to do even this, taking refuge in Me, self controlled, surrender the fruits of all actions.

Renouncing the fruits of action - Every action culminates in a result or fruit at a future date. Generally individuals waste their energies in worrying about the future results of their present actions. Sri Krishna urges here to curb these wasteful anxieties and fears about the future and do the work without desire of the fruit by surrendering all the fruits of actions to Him. He says that even this act can integrate one's personality and make him single pointed and strong.

In the preceding four verses, the concentration of the mind on The Lord is enjoined first; in case of inability to do that, three alternatives have been put forward to achieve the same goal. They are:

1. Abhyasa Yoga, constant practice to still the mind.
2. Performance of actions for the sake of The Lord alone.
3. Giving up the fruits of actions to The Lord i.e. the Yoga of desireless action, *nishkamakarma*.

YOGA OF DESIRELESS ACTION IS COMMENDED

**shreyo hi jnaanamabhyaasaat jnaanaaddhyaanam vishishyate
dhyanaat karmaphalatyaagas tyagaadcchaantir anantaram // 12.12 //**

Better indeed is knowledge than practice; meditation is better than knowledge; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruits of action; peace immediately follows such renunciation.

The order of importance given in this Verse is as under:
Renunciation of the fruits of action > Meditation > Knowledge > Practice.

Knowledge is better than practice - Spiritual practices mean listening to discourses on scriptures, performing rituals etc in a routine manner without understanding the significance behind them. Knowledge means acquiring discrimination and discipline at mental and intellectual levels. A correct knowledge of the implications of the spiritual practices and the scriptures is necessary to make them fruitful.

Meditation is better than knowledge - More important is the meditation on the knowledge so acquired than the mere knowledge. This means long pondering over the meaning of spiritual terms and declarations which can take place only through meditation. Meditation based on knowledge is considered superior to mere knowledge.

Renunciation of fruits of action is better than meditation - Meditation is an attempt by the intellect towards a better understanding of the knowledge acquired. Anxiety about the future causes agitation in mind. An agitated mind is not suitable for meditation.

Renunciation of the fruits of actions while practising self-control and seeking refuge in the Lord destroys the desire in the seeker which is the source of unrest and brings about the inner calm and peace. For one tranquil in heart the cessation of ignorance comes without delay.

We have seen two methods of worship viz., the one of the manifested form and the other of the unmanifested Absolute in the foregoing verses.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE GOD-REALIZED DEVOTEE

In the following eight Verses (from 13 to 20) Sri Krishna paints the picture of a true devotee and his relationship with the world around him. These verses answer the question posed by Arjuna in the opening verse of this Chapter.

**adweshtaa sarvabhootaanaam maitrah karuna eva cha
nirmamo nirahankarah samaduhkhasukhah kshamee // 12.13 //**

He who has no ill will to any being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism (feeling of 'I'ness and 'My'ness) even-minded in pain and pleasure and forgiving,

**santushtah satatam yogee yataatmaa dridhanishchayah
mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa me priyah // 12.14 //**

Ever content, steady in meditation, possessed of firm conviction, self-controlled, with the mind and intellect dedicated to Me - he, who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

These two verses give 10 noble qualities of a true devotee viz.

1. Hatred towards none
2. Friendly and compassionate to all
3. Freedom from attachment and egoism
4. Balanced in the pairs of opposites
5. Forgiving nature
6. Always with contentment
7. Steadfast in meditation
8. Self-controlled
9. Firm in conviction and
10. Mind and intellect always centered on the Lord.

**yasmaannodwijate loko lokannodwijate cha yah
harshaamarshabhayodwegairmukto yah sa cha me priyah // 12.15 //**

He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, who is freed from joy, anger, envy, fear and anxiety - he too is dear to Me.

Three more characteristics of a real devotee are enumerated.

11. He by whom the world is not agitated - where there is sun there can be no darkness; similarly where there is a man of equanimity and perfection an atmosphere of divinity, serenity, joy and peace prevails.

12. Who cannot be agitated by the world - not only serenity is spread around him but such a devotee cannot also be agitated or his inner equipoise disturbed by the chaotic conditions of the world around him.

13. He who is completely freed from joy, anger, envy, fear and anxiety which are all the causes for inner agitations.

Such a devotee, who is ever peaceful with himself and the world, is not a source of grief to any and none can make him feel grief.

**anapekshah suchirdaksha udaaseeno gatavyathah
sarvaarambhaparityaagee yo madbhaktah sa me priyah // 12.16 //**

He who is free from expectation, pure, skilful in action, unconcerned and untroubled, renouncing all undertakings - he who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me.

In this verse six more subtle qualities of a perfect devotee are added. They are:

14. Free from expectation - A true devotee is independent of the world outside drawing equanimity from within himself.

15. Who is pure - pure externally and internally – External purity is cleanliness of physical body and things around. Internal purity is friendship, compassion, nobility and virtuous dealings with others.

16. Skilful - swiftness and enthusiasm in all actions and in decision making.

17. Unconcerned - It means not squandering away the mental energies by avoiding exaggeration of small difficulties in life and being impartial.

18. Untroubled - who never allows himself to be disturbed by agitations caused by desire.

19. Renouncing all undertakings - This does not mean abandoning all undertakings or productive efforts. It means renouncing the egoistic sense of self importance in undertaking any venture. All our undertakings are controlled by many external factors and our role is thus limited. Hence there is no place for self-importance in any work we undertake.

The devotee who has all these six qualities is dear to The Lord.

**Yo na hrishyati na dweshti na shochati na kaangkshati
shubhaashubhaparityaagee bhaktimaan yah sa me priyah // 12.17 //**

He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who has renounced good and evil, he who is thus devoted is dear to Me.

The ideas spelt out in verse 13 are dealt with in more details. The devotee who does not

20. Rejoice when he attains desirable objects,

21. Hate or fret and fume on getting undesirable objects,
22. Grieve over parting with beloved and cherished objects and
23. Who has a complete sense of fulfilment and has no desire for anything that he has not attained, (he having attained the Self, attained everything).
24. Renounces good and evil - none of the dualistic experiences can be of any consequence to him and
25. Who is of full devotion to the Lord, is dear to Him.

The import of this verse is that when a devotee has awakened to the God-consciousness and evaluates life from his new experience, he cannot rejoice at or hate, grieve at or desire anything in this world and he comes to renounce totally the very concepts of good and evil.

**samah shatrau cha mitre cha tathaa maanaapamaanayoh
sheetoshnasukhaduhksheshu samah sangavivarjitah // 12.18 //**

He who is the same to friend and foe, in honour and dishonour, in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment,

**tulyanindaastutirmaanee santushto yena kenachit
aniketah sthiramatirbhaktimaan me priyo narah // 12.19 //**

To whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent (restrained in speech), content with anything that comes, has no fixed abode, steady minded, full of devotion - that man is dear to Me.

That man who is

26. Equal to friend and foe,
27. In honour and dishonour,
28. In heat and cold,
29. In pleasure and pain -
30. Equal to censure and praise - To a true devotee the worldly praise or censure has no meaning and significance because of his experiences of the Divine.
31. Who is silent - He is a man of few words both physically and mentally.
32. Content with anything - Contentment in anything that reaches him unasked for and unexpected of. Entertaining demands and to strive for their satisfaction is the never ending game of life. The policy of contentment is the only way to seek and achieve the divine goal of life.
33. Homeless - Home indicates a sense of possession and belonging. Homeless means the absence of such sense. As these souls exist not for any family or social

group but live for mankind as a whole, they do not have a settled home. They are not chained to one place or community. They are free to move wherever their inspiration takes them.

34. Steadfast in understanding of the goal and

35. Always with full devotion to The Lord,

is dear to The Lord.

These terminologies indicate the entire possibilities in life at physical, mental and intellectual levels. In all of these situations a true devotee remains unagitated because he is free from attachment which is the cause for all agitations,

Sri Krishna has thus given the complete picture of a Man of Perfection, his relationship with the outside world, his psychological life and intellectual evaluation of the world of beings and happenings. This enumeration concludes the various moral, ethical and spiritual qualities of a true devotee.

CONCLUSION AS TO WHO IS EXTREMELY DEAR TO THE LORD

**ye tu dharmyaamritamidam yathoktam paryupaasate
shraddhadhaanaah matparamaa bhaktaaste'teeva me priyaah // 12.20 //**

But those with faith, holding Me as their supreme aim, follow this nectar of pious wisdom, those devotees are exceedingly dear to Me.

The Sanatana Dharma is summarised in the Verses 13 through 19 above. To realise the Self and live in that wisdom at all levels - physical, mental and intellectual - is the fulfilment of human existence. By following the ideal set in the above seven Verses the devotee is freed forever from the grasp of the cycle of birth and death and succeeds in realizing God who is immortality itself. It is in order to bring out this idea that the marks of a true devotee described above are spoken as 'Dharmyamrita' or the nectar of pious wisdom.

It is not enough that one gets the knowledge of Dharma (Law of Life) but such knowledge should be lived. He should be able to digest it properly and become perfect in life. Therefore Sri Krishna says he must be endowed with faith - the capacity to assimilate spiritual ideas through subjective personal experience. Such devotees are supremely dear to The Lord.

When we see the One Self in all things, virtue like equal mindedness, freedom from selfish desires, surrender of our whole nature to the Indwelling Spirit and love for all sprouts in us. When these qualities are manifested, our devotion is perfect and we are God's own men. Our life then is guided not by forces of attraction and repulsion, friendship and enmity, pleasure and pain, but by the single urge to give oneself to God and therefore to the service of the world which is one with God.

**om tat sat iti srimadbhagavadgeetaasu upanishatsu brahma vidyaayaam
yogashaastre sri krishnaarjuna samvaade bhakti yogo naama
dwaadasho'dhyaayah ||**

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the twelfth discourse entitled : The Yoga of Devotion

Concepts and Issues

Arjuna questions Sri Krishna as to which of the two types of devotees is better - those who worship The Lord in a manifest form or those who worship the unmanifest Reality. Sri Krishna replies that those who worship Him with faith and devotion keeping their mind centered only in Him are better.

However, even those that control their senses and contemplate on the unmanifest Reality will ultimately reach Him only. But their path is more difficult. Those who offer all their actions unto Him and meditate on Him with a concentrated mind will cross over the *samsara* beset with sorrows.

He then advises Arjuna to establish his mind and intellect in Him. Then he will live in Him. If he cannot do this he should try to reach Him through repeated practice failing which he can try doing work for the sake of The Lord. If doing this also is not possible he can practise self control and offer the fruits of all his actions to Him.

The Lord says that spiritual knowledge is better than spiritual practices. Meditation is better than theoretical knowledge. Renunciation of the fruits of action is better than meditation. Sri Krishna says that by renunciation of desires one can attain Supreme Peace - Universal Consciousness.

Sri Krishna then describes the characteristics of a true devotee. Such a devotee does not hate anyone. He is friendly to all and compassionate and free from egoism and possessiveness. He is equanimous in pain and pleasure, ever forgiving and contented. Having mastered his passions he has dedicated his mind unto The Lord. He is never the cause of unrest for the world nor can the world upset him.

He is free from joy and anger, fear and anxiety. He is beyond pleasure and hatred, sorrow and desires and has abandoned all actions, good and bad. He has devotion and looks equally upon friend and foe and balanced in honour and dishonour. Ever contented, having no particular place as his home, he has steadiness of mind. Such a devotee is ever dear to The Lord. Those who follow this immortal Dharma with faith considering Him as the Supreme goal of life are exceedingly dear to Him.

Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

In this Chapter Sri Krishna teaches the humanity at large to follow the immortal Dharma which leads one nearer to God. To follow Dharma is to live in harmony with every thing else in the world. In order to achieve this end a scheme of practices are prescribed in this Chapter - Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Karma Phala Tyaga. Thus the 35 qualities mentioned in the Verses 13-19 are the goal of the aspirant, his *Dharma* and the methodology suggested to attain that goal has been given in the Verses 8-11. By following these techniques one becomes an ideal devotee who is exceedingly dear to The Lord.

Points to Ponder

1. Distinguish between the worship of the manifest and the unmanifest.
2. Why worship of the unmanifest is difficult?
3. What are the characteristics of a true devotee?
4. Write short notes on:
 - Meditation
 - Knowledge
 - Work for the sake of The Lord
 - Renunciation of the fruits of action and its practice.

Next time we will proceed from the Chapter 13

Harih Om