

Sample Study material for Course BG-02 “Full Gita – Chanting with Meaning”

12.Chapter 12 -Session 13

ॐ श्रीपरमात्मने नमः

अथ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता – अथ द्वादशोऽध्यायः

भक्तियोगः

The Yoga of Devotion

Friends, in the last 11th chapter, we learned, Vishwaroopdarshan Yoga (The Vision of the Universal Form). We saw that the Lord showered His highest grace on Arjuna by showing him His divine cosmic form.

In 11th chapter, the Main topics were:

- 1–4 Arjuna's request for Vishwaroopadarshana-The Vision of the Universal Form
- 5–8 The Lord describes his own Vishwaroopa -the Universal form
- 9–14 Sanjaya describes Vishwaroopa to King Dhritrashtra
- 15–31 Arjuna praises the Lord after watching his Vishwaroopa
- 32–34 The Lord describes his ultimate power and encourages Arjuna for the war
- 35–46 Scared Arjuna praises God and requests him to appear in the tranquil four-armed Form.
- 47–50 The Lord describes the majesty of his Vishwaroopa and appears in the tranquil four armed Form.
- 51–55 Rare possibility of seeing the tranquil four-armed Form, without single-minded devotion and description of single-minded devotion with its fruit.

Today in 12th chapter, the Main topics are:

- 1– 12 For devotees which path is better , Saguna or Nirguna? Discussing how to achieve Liberation
- 13 – 20 Characteristics of the liberated persons(siddha purusas)

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The Yoga of Devotion

1– 12 For devotees which path is better, Saguna or Nirguna (with Form or without form)?
Dicussing how to achieve Liberation.

अर्जुन उवाच

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ १ ॥

SYNONYMS

अर्जुन उवाच – Arjuna said; एवम् – thus; सतत – always; युक्ताः – engaged; ये – those who; भक्ताः – devotees; त्वाम् – You; पर्युपासते – properly worship; ये – those who; च – also; अपि – again; अव्यक्तम् – indestructible unmanifest Brahma; अक्षरम् – beyond the senses; तेषाम् – of them; के, – who; योगवित्तमाः – the best knowers of Yoga ॥ 1 ॥

TRANSLATION

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? (1)

श्रीभगवानुवाच

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

SYNONYMS

श्रीभगवानुवाच – Sri Bhagavan said; मयि – upon Me; आवेश्य – fixing; मनः – the mind; ये – those who; माम् – Me; नित्य – always; युक्ताः – engaged, उपासते – worship; श्रद्धया – with faith; परया – ever united through meditation; उपेताः – endowed; ते – they; मे – by Me; युक्ततमाः – most perfect in yoga; मताः – are considered ॥ 2 ॥

TRANSLATION

Sri Bhagavan said : I consider them to be the best Yogis, who endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, worship Me with their mind centred on Me. (2)

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥ ३ ॥
सन्नियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ ४ ॥

SYNONYMS

ये – those who; तु – but; अक्षरम् – that which is beyond the perception of the senses; अनिर्देश्यम् – indefinable; अव्यक्तम् – unmanifested; पर्युपासते – completely engage in worshiping; सर्वत्रगम् – all-pervading; अचिन्त्यम् – unthinkable; च – also; कूटस्थम् – unchanging eternal; अचलम् – immovable; ध्रुवम् – changeless ॥ 3 ॥

SYNONYMS

सन्नियम्य – controlling; इन्द्रियग्रामम् – all the senses; सर्वत्र – everywhere; समबुद्धयः – evenminded; ते – they; सर्वभूतहिते – for the welfare of all beings; रताः – engaged; प्राप्नुवन्ति – achieve; माम् – Me; एव – certainly ॥ 4 ॥

TRANSLATION

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, omnipresent, indestructible, indefinable, eternal, immovable, unmanifest and changeless Brahma, they too come to Me. (3-4)

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्विरवाप्यते ॥ ५ ॥

SYNONYMS

क्लेशः – strain; अधिकतरः – is greater; तेषाम् – of them; अव्यक्ता – to the unmanifested; असक्त – attached; चेतसाम् – of those whose minds; अव्यक्ता – toward the unmanifested; हि – certainly; देहवद्विः – by the body-conscious; गतिः – progress; दुःखम् – with difficulty; अवाप्यते – is achieved ॥ 5 ॥

TRANSLATION

Of course, the strain is greater for those who have their mind attached to the Unmanifest, as attunement tuning with the Unmanifest is attained with difficulty by the body-conscious people. (5)

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्पराः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ ६ ॥
तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ ७ ॥

SYNONYMS

ये – those who; तु – but; सर्वाणि – all; कर्माणि – activities; मयि – unto Me; सन्न्यस्य – giving up; मत्पराः – being attached to Me; अनन्येन – without division; योगेन – by practice of such bhakti-yoga; माम् – upon Me; एव – certainly; ध्यायन्तः – meditating; उपासते – worship ॥ 6 ॥

SYNONYMS

तेषाम् – of them; अहम् – I; भवामि – I become; समुद्धर्ता – the deliverer are who hits up; मृत्यु – of death; संसार – in material existence; सागरात् – from the ocean; न – not; चिरात् – after a long time; पार्थ – O son of Prtha; मयि – upon Me; आवेशित – fixed; चेतसाम् – of those whose minds. ॥ 7 ॥

TRANSLATION

On the other hand, those depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me with single-minded devotion, them, Arjuna, I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me. (6-7)

मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवसिष्यसि मय्येव अत ऊर्ध्वं न संशयः ॥ ८ ॥

SYNONYMS

मयि – upon Me; मनः – mind; आधत्स्व – fix; मयि – upon Me; एव – certainly; बुद्धिम् – intelligence; निवेशय – apply; निवसिष्यसि – you will live; मयि – in Me; एव – certainly; अतः ऊर्ध्वम् – there after; न – never; संशयः – doubt ॥ 8 ॥

TRANSLATION

Therefore, fix your mind on Me, and establish your intellect in Me alone; thereafter you will abide solely in Me. There is no doubt about it. (8)

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥ ९ ॥

SYNONYMS

अथ – if, therefore; चित्तम् – mind; स्थिरम् – steadily; समाधातुम् – to fix; न – not; शक्नोषि – you are able; मयि – upon Me; अभ्यासयोगेन – Yoga of practice; ततः – then; माम् – Me; आप्तुम् – to get; इच्छ – desire; धनञ्जय – (O winner of wealth), Arjuna ॥ 9 ॥

TRANSLATION

If you cannot steadily fix the mind on Me, Arjuna, then seek to attain Me through the Yoga of practice. (9)

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।
मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ १० ॥

SYNONYMS

अभ्यासे – in practice; अपि – even if; असमर्थः – unable; असि – you are; मत्कर्म – My work; परमः – dedicated to; भव – become; मदर्थम् – for My sake; कर्माणि – work; कुर्वन् – performing; अपि – even; सिद्धिम् – perfection; अवाप्स्यसि – you will achieve ॥ 10 ॥

TRANSLATION

If you are unequal even to the pursuit of such practice, be intent to work for Me; you shall attain perfection (in the form of My realization) even by performing actions for My sake. (10)

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।
सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् ॥ ११ ॥

SYNONYMS

अथ – even though; एतत् – this; कर्तुम् – to perform; अपि – also; अशक्तः – unable; असि – you are; मत्तः – unto Me; योगम् – in devotional service; आश्रितः – taking refuge; सर्वकर्म – of all activities; फल – of the results; त्यागम् – renunciations; ततः – then; कुरु – do यतात्मवान् – self-situated. ॥ 11 ॥

TRANSLATION

If, taking recourse to the Yoga of My realization, you are unable even to do this, then, subduing your mind and intellect etc., relinquish the fruit of all actions. (11)

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।
ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ १२ ॥

SYNONYMS

श्रेयः – better; हि – certainly; ज्ञानम् – knowledge; अभ्यासात् – than practice; ज्ञानात् – than knowledge; ध्यानम् – than meditation; विशिष्यते – is considered better; ध्यानात् – than meditation; कर्मफलत्यागः – renunciation of the fruit of actions; त्यागात् – by such renunciation; शान्तिः – peace; अनन्तरम् – thereafter ॥ १२ ॥

TRANSLATION

Knowledge is better than practice without discernment, meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is even superior to meditation; for, peace immediately follows renunciation. (12)

13 – 20 Characteristics of the liberated persons(siddha purusas)

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

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

SYNONYMS

अद्वेष्टा – nonenvious; सर्वभूतानाम् – toward all beings; मैत्रः – friendly; च – also; करुणः – kindly; एव – certainly; निर्ममः – free from the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', balanced; निरहङ्कारः – without false ego; सम – equal; दुःख – sorrow; सुखः – joy; क्षमी – forgiving ॥ 13 ॥

SYNONYMS

सन्तुष्टः – satisfied; सततम् – always; योगी – one engaged in devotion; यतात्मा – self-controlled; दृढनिश्चयः – with determination; मयि – upon Me; अर्पित – subdued; मनः – mind; बुद्धिः – and reason; सः – he; यः – one who; मद्भक्तः – My devotee; मे – to Me; प्रियः – dear ॥ 14 ॥

TRANSLATION

He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, and free from the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever-contented and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me-that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (13-14)

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

SYNONYMS

यस्मात् – from whom, न – never; उद्विजते – are agitated; लोकः – people; लोकात् – from people; न – never; उद्विजते – is disturbed; च – also; यः – anyone who; हर्ष – from delight; अमर्ष – envy; भयात् – fear उद्वेगैः – and anxiety perturbation; मुक्तः – freed; च – also; यः – who; सः – anyone; मे – to Me प्रियः – very dear ॥ 15 ॥

TRANSLATION

He who is not a source of annoyance to his follow-creatures, and who in his turn does not feel vexed annoyed with his follow-creatures, and who is free from delight and envy, perturbation and fear, is dear to Me. (15)

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

SYNONYMS

अनपेक्षः – He who expects nothing; शुचिः – pure; दक्षः – expert; उदासीनः – free from care;
गतव्यथः – risen above all distractions; सर्वारम्भ – of all endeavors; परित्यागी – renouncer; यः
– anyone who; सः – he; मद्भक्तः – My devotee; मे – to Me; प्रियः – very dear. ॥ 16 ॥

TRANSLATION

He who expects nothing, who is both internally and externally pure, is wise and impartial and has risen above all distractions, and who renounces the sense of doership in all undertakings - such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (16)

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न कांक्षति ।
शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

SYNONYMS

यः – one who; न – never; हृष्यति – rejoices; न – never; द्वेष्टि – hates; न – never; शोचति –
laments; न – never; कांक्षति – desires; शुभ – good; अशुभ – evil; परित्यागी – renouncer;
भक्तिमान् – full of devotion; यः – one who; सः – he is; मे – to Me; प्रियः – dear ॥ 17 ॥

TRANSLATION

He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, and who renounces both good and evil actions and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. (17)

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥
तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी सन्तुष्टो येन केनचित् ।
अनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

SYNONYMS

समः – equal; शत्रौ – to an enemy (foe); च – also; मित्रे – to a friend; तथा – so; च – also;
मान– in honor; अपमानयोः – and dishonor; शीतः – in cold; उष्ण – heat; सुख – pleasure दुःखेषु
– and pain; समः – equipoised; च – also; सङ्गविवर्जितः – free from attachment ॥ 18 ॥

SYNONYMS

तुल्य – equal; निन्दा – reproach; स्तुतिः – and repute; मौनी – silent; सन्तुष्टः – satisfied; येनकेनचित्
– with anything; अनिकेतः – having no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of
his dwelling-place; स्थिर – fixed; मतिः – determination; भक्तिमान् – enagaged in devotion;
नरः – a man; मे – to Me; प्रियः – dear ॥ 19 ॥

TRANSLATION

He who deals equally with friends and foe, and is same in honor and ignominy (dishonor), who is alike in heat and cold, pleasure and pain and other contrary experience, and is free from attachment, he who takes praise and reproach alike, and is given to contemplation and is contented with any means of subsistence available, entertaining no sense of ownership and attachment in respect of his dwelling-place and is full of devotion to Me, that person is dear to Me. (18-19)

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।
श्रद्धावान् मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ २० ॥

SYNONYMS

तु – but; ये – those; धर्म्याम् – of pious wisdom; अमृतम् – nectar; इदम् – this; यथा – as; उक्तम्
– said; पर्युपासते – completely engage partake; श्रद्धावान् – with faith; मत्परमाः – devoted to
Me, the Supreme Lord, as everything; ते – they; भक्ताः – devotees; मे – to Me; अतीव –
very, very; प्रियाः – dear ॥ 20 ॥

TRANSLATION

Those devotees, however, who partake in a disinterested way of this nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me. they are extremely dear to Me. (20)

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

Thus, in the Upanisad sung by the Lord, the Science of Brahma, the scripture of
Yoga,

the dialogue between Sri Krsna and Arjuna, ends the Twelfth chapter entitled

"The Yoga of Devotion"

Chapter 12 - Saguna and Nirguna Bhakti

Summary :

Importance of Bhakti

This is a small Chapter with only twenty verses; but it is as sweet and life-giving as a spring of nectar. The Lord has Himself eulogized (praised) here the greatness of bhakti.

Sagun Bhakta and Nirgun Bhakta

Arjun asks Lord Krishna, "Some devotees worship you in saguna form while others worship you in nirguna form. Whom do you like more?"

Both bhaktas are identical. Both are equally loved by Lord Krishna.

In 5th Chapter Arjuna had asked a similar question. He asked which yoga is superior between Karma Yoga and Sanyas Yoga? Bhagawan answered, "both of them reach the same destination of the Moksha. However Karma Yoga is easier to practice for common people so it is slightly better."

The question of choice between saguna and nirguna is similar. The saguna devotee serves the Lord through his organs, whereas the nirguna devotee thinks of the good of the whole world. The former appears absorbed in outward service, but his mind is absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord. The latter does not appear to be rendering any concrete service, but he is certainly rendering a great service from within. Which one of these two devotees is superior? These two types of devotees may appear outwardly different, but they are intrinsically one and the same. Both of them are dear to the Lord. But saguna bhakti is easier. The answer given here is similar to the one given in the Fifth Chapter

Saguna is easy and Safe

For the saguna devotee, his organs are the means (to realize the Lord). They are like flowers that are to be offered to the Lord. With his eyes he beholds His form; with his ears, he listens to His praise and His edifying stories; with his mouth, he chants His Name. He uses his legs for pilgrimage and hands to render service. In this way, he dedicates all the organs of perception and action to the Lord. For him, they are no longer the means for enjoyment. The flowers are there to be offered to the Lord; one should not put garlands around one's own neck. Likewise, the organs should be used in the service of the Lord. This is the outlook of the saguna devotee.

But to a nirguna devotee they appear to be a hindrance. He restrains them, starves them, keeps a watch over them. The saguna devotee feels no need to do so. He surrenders them at the feet of the Lord. Both these are methods of controlling the organs. Whatever be the way, it is imperative to restrain them and prevent them from wallowing in the pleasures of the senses. But one way is easier while the other one is difficult.

Nirguna devotees are dedicated to the good of all. This is no ordinary thing; it is easier said than done. One who is absorbed in thinking about the good of the whole world can do nothing else. Hence nirguna sadhana is difficult. Saguna worship, on the other hand, can be done by anybody according to his capacity. To serve the small village we are born in or to look after our parents is a form of saguna worship. Such service should, of course, not go against the interests of the world.

Apart from the point of easiness, there is one more point. Nirguna worship is fraught with some risk. Nirguna is all knowledge (Jnana). But saguna is full of love and tenderness and the warmth of feelings. A devotee is more secure there. Nirguna has some amount of risk. Saguna needs help from nirguna. One must eventually learn to free oneself from attachment to and preoccupation with individuals and outer forms. For example, while constructing an arch, support is given to it; but the support has to be withdrawn later. If the arch remains firmly in place after the support is removed, the support can be said to have done its work.

Saguna is indeed the source of inspiration, but the ultimate culmination must be in nirguna, in commitment to principles. Self-knowledge must ultimately emerge from the womb of devotion. The plant of bhakti must blossom into the flower of Self-knowledge.

There is image-worship, in some form or the other, in all the religions including Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Although it is not considered the highest form of worship, it has been accepted and respected. As long as it remains within the bounds set by nirguna, it remains free from defects. As soon as it crosses these bounds, defects appear in it. This has happened in all the religions—saguna therein has degenerated in the absence of restraint from nirguna. Animal sacrifice was prevalent in yajnas and other rites in ancient times, and even today animals are sacrificed to Goddess Kali. It is a travesty (distorted representation) of image-worship. It means that image-worship has crossed the bounds and has gone astray. This risk is averted if saguna is restrained by firm commitment to nirguna.

To sum up, saguna and nirguna are complementary to each other. Saguna is easier than nirguna. The Lord says in the end, “O, Arjuna! You may prefer saguna or nirguna, but be a bhakta (devotee); do not remain untouched by devotion.” And then the Lord describes the characteristic attributes of bhakta. The nectar may be sweet, but we have never tasted it. The verses describing the bhakta’s attributes, however, have a rare sweetness that we can experience directly.

These verses should be read daily, reflected upon, ruminated over again and again. We should try to imbibe these attributes bit by bit and go on enriching our life; and thus lead it gradually towards the Lord.
