

## Chapter 12: Bhakti Yoga - Yoga of Devotion

This chapter is known as *Bhakti Yoga* or Yoga of devotion. This chapter is of utmost importance as stressed by Swami Hari Har Ji Maharaj, during his preachings all over the world. This chapter is the very heart of the Bhagavad Gita.

Arjuna having seen the true vision of God now wants to be one with Him. With this in mind he puts a question to the Lord as to which kind of devotee worshipping Him with full faith was superior, the one worshipping the Lord in His Un-manifest form or the one worshipping Him in His Manifest form.

The Lord answers this question in 19 verses at the end of which He declares this wisdom to be like *amrit*, the nectar of Gods. Amrit gives unsurpassable physical bounties while the verses this chapter give supreme spiritual attainments.

It is just as important as the Soul is to the body because without the soul the body is a dead one. Similarly Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga have no existence without Bhakti Yoga. Karma is powered by Bhakti. Bhakti also provides the Jnana with special reasoning power. This reasoning power leads to the liberation of the soul.

The blessed Lord clearly indicated that devotion to His manifest form is superior to devotion to His Unmanifest form. It is much simpler and should be practiced with full faith every day, which is all that is required.

Worship of the un-manifest, which is all pervading, is beyond the realms of the power of thinking of the human mind. Even then it may be possible to reach God by constantly dwelling on His infinite unmanifest form. In this form of worship the mind and the senses have to be rigidly under control. All other beings have to be understood to be part of him. He should be ever ready to take care of all living entities and to sacrifice his life in the service of others. All these three conditions are extremely difficult to follow.

The reason is that a human being has been endowed with a body, which he identifies it as "ME" and all the actions performed by this body is understood to be "MINE". The very thoughts of the word "ME" and "MINE" are enough to put him on a lower plane. He would not be able to attain God.

On the other hand, the path to worship of the manifest form is very easy; everyone can do it to his benefit. The path of worship of the manifest is simpler. The Lord has outlined the steps that one should with full devotion apply the Mind and Intelligence to the name and form of the Lord. If this is not possible then one should practice regularly. If practice is also difficult, then one should keep performing the actions understanding it to be the duty in the service of God.

By practice of regular worship one will attain knowledge. With the attainment of the knowledge, one will attain the power of concentration. With the practice of meditation one will be able to abandon all desires after which one will attain supreme peace.

The basic characteristics of a person, who wants to worship God, either in His Un-manifest or His Manifest form is then told to Arjuna. One should not entertain thoughts of causing harm to others; one should have friendly feelings for all persons. The feeling of "I"ness and working for oneself should be stopped. One should be equal minded in happiness as well as in sorrow. One should be regular in meditation. One should be prepared to forgive any person for any offence committed towards him. One should be always satisfied with whatever he has or in whatever condition he is living in. One should keep one's mind focused on God and do his duties. One should keep his senses well under control and not be tempted under any circumstances. One should not behave

in a manner, which causes urgency in other beings, nor be too excited oneself. One should remain quiet and peaceful in all conditions. One should refrain from greediness, foolish actions, impure actions and acting with bias. One should not be a slave to desires of the senses. One should not be tainted by extreme happiness, sorrow and happy and unhappy events. One should think for upliftment of friends and foes alike. One should consider praise and humiliation with an equal eye. One should be equal in cold and heat, happiness and sorrow and rise above false vanity and desire for things long past. One should be a person of few words i.e. talk less. One should be satisfied with whatever the Lord has given. One should keep the mind quiet and not let it roam around needlessly. One should consider every home as the abode of the Lord.

Those who are able to follow these religious activities are entitled to be called Yogis. All persons should strive to attain the above qualities then only they can be considered to be a Karma Yogi, Bhakti Yogi or Jnana Yogi.

In this spiritually sublime chapter all the Yogas are unified, all religions are unified, all countries are unified and the man is unified with his God.