

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 154 – Chapter 12 Bhakti Yogaha, Verses 1 to 2

The 12th Chapter gives a comprehensive essence of Vedas. The first part (the first 12 verses) of this chapter deals with Bhakti Yoga as a means of moksha. This chapter removes many confusions regarding bhakti yoga. Second part (13 to 20th) Bhakti Yoga palam or moksha is discussed in the second part – 13th to 20th verses.

Bhakti yoga is not a particular sadhana, but the range of spiritual sadhana culminating in Moksha. There are three sadhanas of bhakti yoga:

1. Karma Yogaha. Krishna divides this into sakama and niṣkāma karma. In both of these, a person is extroverted, dependent on the world. This is an obstacle to jñāna yoga.
2. Upasana Yogaha
3. Jani Yogaha

These three sadhanas should be practiced only in the atmosphere of eeswara bhakti, therefore these three yogas are called bhakti yoga.

Krishna subdivides these three into five levels; karma yoga is subdivided into level one and level two; and upasana yoga is also divided into level one and level two. jñāna yoga is the fifth level.

In Karma yoga level one Krishna wants to accommodate all materialistic people.

- In the first level of karma yoga, we practice karma yoga for selfish activities, but accept the results as prasadam from the lord. This attitude will purify the mind. In this level, karma yoga is pursuing worldly pleasures but with two conditions.
 - First condition is you pursue worldly pleasures only by legitimate means.
 - The second condition is attributing these acquisitions as eeswara parasadam. Claim everything as eeswara prasadam.

This first level of karma yoga is sakama karma yoga, where we have desire only for taking.

- In the second level, the karma yoga practiced for sharing. This is niṣkāma karma yoga. This will give purity at a faster rate. In sakama karma, we measure our success based on how much we have taken, in niṣkāma karma, we measure success based on how much we have given. This will give purity at a faster rate.
- In the third level, or first level of upasana yoga, Eka roopa Eeswara dhyānam. This Krishna calls this as abyāsaḥ yoga.
- In the fourth level or the second level of upasana yoga is aneka roopa Eeswara dhyānam. This helps in expanding the mind. Both third and fourth levels come under saguna Eeswara dhyānam.
- Once a person has completed the four level, that person is eligible for jñāna yoga. jñāna yoga consists of three levels:
 - Sravanam, systematic study of scriptures for a period of time under a competent guru.
 - Mananam, resolving all doubts.
 - Nidhithyasanam: Converting the intellectual knowledge to strengthen emotional personality;

dwelling on the teachings of scriptures.

Karma yoga is important for the purity of mind, but it has the disadvantage of extroverted, which is an obstacle for jñāna yoga. In upasana yoga, I invoke the Lord inside and therefore upasana yoga is invertedness. All these five levels put together is Bhakti yoga.

In the last eight verses, Krishna discusses the character of a person who has successfully completed these five levels. Krishna calls him para bhakta, and there is no difference between him and the Lord.

Verse 1

Arjuna asked: Who are the best yogis among them – the ever-steadfast devotees who meditates up on You as described before and those who meditate upon the imperishable unmanifest Brahman?

This Chapter begins with a question from Arjuna, based on the previous chapters. Arjuna asks who is superior – saguna bhakta or nirguna bhakta?

Saguna eeswara can be eka roopa eeswara or aneka roopa eeswara. Nirguna eeswara is not perceptible to anybody. There is only way to meditate to nirguna eeswara that is to see as the subject itself as there is no subject object division in nirguna brahman.

Arjuna is asking indirectly who is superior – saguna eeswara or nirguna eeswara?

Verse 2

Lord Krishna said – Fixing the mind upon me with great faith, those ever-steadfast devotees who meditate upon Me are considered to be the best yogis by Me.

The real answer to Arjuna's question is that the question is wrong; for a wrong question, there is no right answer. Comparison is possible only between two similar items. There is no question of choice between two dissimilar items. Saguna eeswara and nirguna eeswara are not comparable.

Saguna bhakti is the means and nirguna bhakti is the end. Saguna bhakti is the steppingstone and nirguna bhakti is the goal. There is no choice between the two. Without saguna bhakti, nirguna bhakti is impossible, without nirguna bhakti saguna bhakti is incomplete.

Krishna does not want to tell Arjuna that the question is wrong. But he says saguna bhaktas are superior and nirguna bhaktas attain me. There is no question of choice.