

CHAPTER 12

DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

Connection between Chapter 11 and Chapter 12

- ❖ After hearing of Lord's inestimable, impersonal opulences, Arjuna
 - Again wants to hear about 'devotional service'
 - To clarify his 'position as a devotee', who works for Krishna, as opposed to a '*jnani*' who renounces work
 - To clarify his position as being attached to the personal form of Krishna, as superior to the Universal Form or the Unmanifested Brahman
 - Because some persons might mistake the awe-inspiring universal form shown in Chapter 11 to be more significant than Krishna's two-armed form

BREAKDOWN OF CHAPTER 12

SECTION I (12.1 – 12.7) — BHAKTI IS SUPERIOR TO IMPERSONALISM

- A worshipper of the 'Impersonal feature' is -
 - Less perfect
 - Undergoes more difficulty than one who worships Krishna with great faith and great attention
- The path of devotion is recommended because
 - It is not only easier to follow but also,
 - Krishna personally takes charge of delivering His devotee

SECTION II (12.8 – 12.12) — PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF DEVOTION

- One lives within Krishna by continuously fixing one's mind and intelligence upon Him (12.8)
- One practices the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga* to increase one's desire and ability to remember and obtain Krishna (12.9)
- One surrenders one's work to Krishna (12.10)
- One gives up the result of one's work to some good cause (12.11)
- One cultivates meditation or knowledge (12.12)

SECTION III (12.13 – 12.20) — QUALITIES THAT ENDEAR ONE TO KRISHNA

- Possessing divine qualities makes one dear to Krishna
- One who faithfully follows the path of devotional service, making Krishna the supreme goal is very dear to Him

SECTION I (12.1 – 12.7)

Bhakti is superior to Impersonalism

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION I

Bhakti is the safest and surest path of self-realization

Text 12.1

THEME: Arjuna wants to clarify which is more perfect:

- ❖ Those who always properly engage in devotional service, or
- ❖ Worshippers of the impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.1

- (a) **Two classes of transcendentalists** – Impersonalists and Personalists
 - **Personalist** – engages himself with all energy in service of Supreme Lord
 - **Impersonalist** – engages in meditation on impersonal Brahman, the unmanifested
- (b) **Only way to have association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead** – Devotional Service
- (c) **Conclusion of every chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*** – one should ‘attach to personal form’ *e.g.*
 - **Chapter 2** – Living entity is spiritual spark. Absolute Truth is spiritual whole
 - **Chapter 6** – 6.47 says *bhakti-yoga* is the best of all *yogis*
 - **Chapter 7** – Living entity is part and parcel of the whole. Recommends one to transfer his full attention to the whole
 - **Chapter 8** – Anyone who thinks of Krishna at the time of death at once goes to the spiritual sky, to the abode of Krishna
- (d) **What Arjuna thinks of other processes:**
 - **Worship of the Impersonal feature** – Waste of time because one cannot perfectly conceive of the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth
 - **Experience in Chapter 11** – The personal form of Krishna is best because
 - All other forms could be understood
 - No disturbance to love for Krishna


Text 12.2

THEME: Krishna answers – Those engaged in devotional service are most perfect because, they:

- ❖ Fix their minds on ‘My’ personal form
- ❖ Always engaged in worshipping ‘Me’
- ❖ Worship ‘Me’ with great and transcendental faith

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.2

- (a) **Krishna conscious activities are not material** – Because everything is done for Krishna
- (b) **A pure devotee is in ‘full *samadhi*’** –
 - Because of his constant engagement *e.g.* Chant, hears, cooks, shopping for Krishna, washes temple or dishes etc.
 - Does not pass a single moment without devoting his activities to Krishna

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 12.2 AND 12.3:** Arjuna is happy to hear that devotional service is superior, but he wonders, “What is the attainment of an impersonalist, who, renouncing work, is able to ‘fully worship the unmanifested?’”

Texts 12.3 – 12.4

COMMON THEME: Those who worship unmanifested will also reach Krishna eventually and surrender (Ref.


Bg. 7.19 – *Vāsudeva realization after many births*)

❖ **Characteristics of impersonal conception of Absolute Truth**

1. Unmanifested
2. Beyond sense perception
3. All-pervading
4. Inconceivable
5. Unchanging
6. Fixed
7. Immovable

❖ **How to worship the Unmanifested**

1. By controlling various senses
2. By being equally disposed to everyone
3. By engaging in welfare for all
4. Difficult for any common man, much penance involved before the ultimate realization of full surrender takes place

 **LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 12.4 AND 12.5:** Having replied that personal realization is superior, Krishna now informs Arjuna of the inferiority of the impersonalist's process of realization.

Text 12.5

THEME: But the path of Impersonalists is troublesome and very difficult

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.5

(a) **Two groups of transcendentalists discussed**

- **Jnana-yogis** – Those who follow the path of inconceivable, unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme Lord
- **Bhakti-yogis** – Those persons who are in full Krishna consciousness and engage in devotional service of the Lord

(b) **Bhakti-yoga vs. Jnana-yoga**

- **Same goal** – Both ultimately bring one to the same goal
- **Process of Jnana-yoga is very troublesome** – It is very difficult for him to simply theoretically understand that he is not this body
- **Process of Bhakti-yoga is direct** – It is a process of being in direct service with the Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - The Bhakti-yoga accepts the Deity of Krishna as worshipable because there is some bodily conception fixed in the mind, which can thus be applied

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.5 continued...

(c) **Deity worship is not idol worship**

- **Ref. Vedic literatures** – Worship may be ‘saguna’ or ‘nirguna’ of the Supreme ‘possessing’ or ‘not possessing’ attributes
- **Worship of the Deity in the temple is ‘saguna’ worship** – because the Lord is represented by material qualities
- **Absolute nature of the Lord** – The form of the Lord although represented by material qualities like stone, wood, etc. is not actually material
- **Analogy: Deity Worship compared to a mailbox**
 - The Deity is the authorized representation of God, known as ‘*arca-vigraha*’
 - The Deity is a incarnation of Supreme Lord to accept service from the living entities
- **The Lord is omnipotent, all powerful** – Therefore He can accept the services of the devotee in His ‘*arca-vigraha*’ form, just to make it convenient for the man in conditional life

(d) **For an embodied soul, there is always a difficulty with the unmanifest, both at the time of ‘practice’ and at the time of ‘realization’**

(e) **Difficulties in the ‘practice’ for the Impersonalists**

- They have to understand the unmanifested representation of the Supreme
- Process is difficult: *e.g.* Studying Vedic literatures like Upanisads, learning the language, understanding the non-perceptual feelings

(f) **In contrast, Krishna consciousness provides simple ‘practice’**

- Simply chanting Hare Krishna
- Guidance of bona-fide spiritual master, simply by offering regulative obeisances unto the Deity, hearing the glories of the Lord, eating the remnants of foodstuff offered to the Lord

(g) **Difficulties in terms of ‘realizations’** –

- **Impersonalists** – They take the risk of practicing difficult path and still do not realize the Absolute Truth in the ultimate end
 - **Partial realisation** – They can achieve only ‘sat’ and ‘cit’ realizations
 - **Difficult to give up the idea** – A jnani-yogi may come to the point of Bhakti-yoga by the grace of some devotee, but still long practice in impersonalism becomes a source of trouble, because he cannot give up this idea
 - **Against one’s real nature** – Every living soul is partially independent and therefore this unmanifested realisation is against the nature of his spiritual blissful self
- **Personalists** – They have no risks, trouble or difficulty in approaching the Supreme Lord directly
 - **Complete realisation** – They realize ‘sat’, ‘cit’ and ‘ananda’ which implies even the blissful portion of the Absolute Truth is realized
 - **Ref. SB** – If surrender or Bhakti is the ultimate goal, then why to take the trouble to understand what is Brahman and what is not Brahman and spend one’s whole life in that way, when the result is anyway going to be troublesome

(h) **Best solution** – For every individual living entity, the process of Krishna consciousness, which entails full engagement in devotional service is the best way

- **WARNING!** – If one wants to ignore this devotional service, there is the danger of turning to ‘Atheism’

**SUMMARIZED THEME 12A
COMPARISON OF IMPERSONALISTS & PERSONALISTS**

S. NO	IMPERSONALISTS	PERSONALISTS
IN TERMS OF PRACTICE		
1	Meditate on formless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult for embodied 	Meditate on form of deity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy for embodied
2	Unmanifested is beyond the senses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restricts the senses 	Senses can perceive the Deity and sound of mantra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engages the senses
3	Must understand the brahman through Upanisads etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn the language sanskrit • understand the non-perceptual feelings 	Understands Krishna through devotional service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple chanting hare krishna • guidance of bona-fide spiritual master, simply by offering regulative obeisances unto the deity, hearing the glories of the lord, eating the remnants of foodstuff offered to the lord
4	Long practice makes it difficult to take up bhakti	Completely natural
5	Troublesome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no relationship with the lord 	Miseries mitigated by relationship with Krishna
6	Depends on our own endeavour	Krishna delivers devotee from Maya. why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because krishna himself recommends the process • out of paternal love • by his causeless mercy
IN TERMS OF REALISATION (Brahman vs Bhagavan)		
	Brahman	Bhagavan
1	Nirguna (without qualities)	Saguna (with form, qualities, etc.)
2	Inconceivable	Possess inconceivable potencies
3	All pervading	All pervading by energy and as supersoul
4	Unchanging, fixed and immovable	Unchanging, fixed and immovable
5	Cannot perceive any opulence because of lack of activity	Possessor of six opulence's in full
6	Risk of not realizing absolute truth at the end	Success is guaranteed as nothing is lost
7	May realize the eternal (sat) and knowledge (cit) aspects of his original nature (partial realization)	Realises eternity, knowledge and bliss (includes brahman and paramatma realisation)



LINK BETWEEN TEXTS 12.6 & 12.7:

The ease of attaining the desired goal by practicing true *bhakti* is next described

Texts 12.6 – 12.7

COMMON THEME: Devotional service is simple and easy because Krishna personally delivers His devotees


FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORTS 12.6 – 12.7

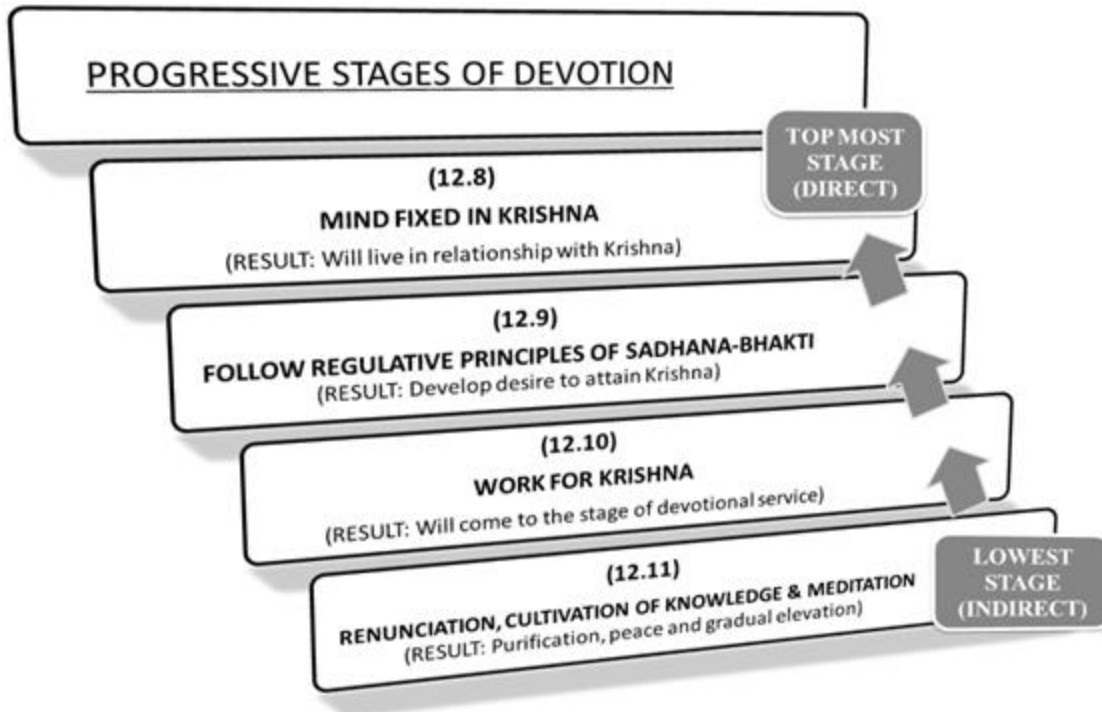
- (a) **Only way to appreciate Supreme Personality of Godhead** – Devotional Service
- (b) **Fortunate position of devotee**- delivered by the Lord very soon
- (c) **Realization in pure devotional service**
 - God is great
 - Individual soul is subordinate to Him – duty is to render service to the Lord
 - If not serve the Lord – you will render service to Maya
- (d) **Principles**
 - Mind – Completely fixed in devotion to Supreme Personality of Godhead
 - Standard of devotional service – One can do any work but work only for Krishna
 - Desire – Life’s only mission and desire is satisfaction of the Lord
 - *e.g.* Arjuna in battle – Can sacrifice all for Krishna’s satisfaction
- (e) **Process is simple** – Just devote to your occupation and chant Hare Krishna – Thus attracts Supreme Personality of Godhead
- (f) **Promise** – Without delay, Lord will deliver the devotee from material ocean (*Yogis* have to personally endeavor to go to other planets)
 - *Ref. Varaha Purana* – Devotee’s do not need *Astanga-yoga*
 - Lord takes responsibility like – *Analogy: Child taken care by parents*
 - Comes on Garuda to pick from the ocean – *Analogy: Expert swimmer also needs help to be picked up from the ocean*
- (g) **Sign of intelligence** – To always prefer devotional service compared to other paths
- (h) **Specific benediction of devotional service** – *Ref. Narayaniya* –
 - No need to perform fruitive acts or mental speculation
 - Attains all benefits of *yogic* processes, rituals, sacrifices, just by devotional service
- (i) **Conclusion of Bhagavad-gita:** Simply Chant Hare Krishna and go to the Supreme destination easily and happily (*Ref. Bg. 18.66 – “sarva dharman...”*)
 - **Highest Perfection of Life** – Take shelter of the Supreme Omnipotent Godhead, Krishna

SECTION II (12.8 – 12.12)
PROGRESSIVE STAGES OF DEVOTION

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION II

Bhakti-yoga is a systematic process of cultivating attachment towards Lord Krishna while becoming detached from the material world

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION I & SECTION II:** Having established the superiority of Bhakti, the question now arises “How to perform devotional service?”. In the next five verses, Krishna, beginning with the highest stage, describes levels of achievement in *bhakti*



Text 12.8

THEME: Perform devotional service by thinking exclusively of Krishna

- ❖ Fix mind upon Me
- ❖ Engage all your intelligence in Me
- ❖ **Benefit** – You will ‘live in Me’ always without a doubt

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.8

- (a) **Devotee is transcendental from very beginning** – Lives in Krishna without a doubt
- In devotional service one lives in direct relationship with Supreme Lord
 - Not lives on a material plane, but lives in Krishna
 - When one chants the Holy name (Holy Name and Krishna are non-different), Krishna and internal potency dances on the tongue
 - When the devotee honours prasadam he becomes ‘Krishna-ized’
- (b) **Service gives realizations** – One who does not engage in such service, cannot understand how it is possible, although the process is there in the *Bhagavad-gita* and other Vedic literatures

Text 12.9*

THEME: If one cannot perform devotional service as per 12.8 (fixing one’s Mind on Krishna without deviation) then practice “Sadhana”

- ❖ Follow the regulative principles of Bhakti-yoga
- ❖ **Benefit** – Develop a desire to attain ‘Me’

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.9

- (a) **Text 12.8 vs. Text 12.9** – Text 12.8 refers to those who have already developed attachment to Krishna and 12.9 refers to those who have not developed
- (b) **Definition of 'bhakti-yoga'** – *bhakti-yoga* is the “**purification of the senses**” by prescribed rules and regulations
 - Material existence – Senses engaged in sense gratification
 - *Bhakti-yoga* – Senses when engaged in direct contact with Supreme Lord are purified.
- (c) **Service in spiritual existence** is the ‘platform of pure love’
 - In contrast – Service in material existence – One serves some master but there is no love; only wants some salary
- (d) **How to achieve that stage of pure love** – Practice devotional service with present senses
- (e) **Is “Love” an external imposition – No**
 - Love is dormant in all
 - Heart is contaminated by material association
- (f) **How to follow regulations of devotional service** – Guidance of spiritual master / rise early / enter temple and offer prayers / chant Hare Krishna / offer flowers to Deities / cook for the Deities, honour prasadam, constant hearing of *Bhagavad-gita* and Srimad Bhagavatam from pure devotees
- (g) **Qualifications to practice** – ‘Anyone’ can practice;
- (h) **Guarantee of success** – There is surity of love of Godhead

Text 12.10

THEME: If you cannot practice 12.9 (practicing the regulations of Bhakti-Yoga) then

- ❖ Engage all external senses for working for Krishna
- ❖ Work for Krishna
- ❖ **Benefit** – You will come to the perfect stage

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.10

- (a) **How to perform work for Krishna** – based on *Bg. 11.55*
 - Sympathetic to propagation to Krishna consciousness
 - *e.g.* Every endeavor needs land, capital, organization, labor like in any other business
 - *e.g.* Can build a temple / Help in publication
- (b) **If one cannot sacrifice** results of his activities, at least sacrifice some percentage of his results

Text 12.11

THEME: If you cannot practice 12.10 (Working in consciousness of Krishna) then

- ❖ Try to give up all results of your work and be self-situated

FOCUS OF LEARNING IN 12.11

- (a) **Reasons** – One may be unable to sympathize for Krishna conscious acts because of social, familial, religious considerations or any other impediments
- (b) **What is the hope/recommendation for them** – Sacrifice the accumulated results to some good cause

FOCUS OF LEARNING IN 12.11 continued...

- (c) **Authority for such matter** – Such procedures are given in Vedic rules:
- Many yajnas
 - Special functions of *punya*, etc.
- (d) **How that helps** – One may gradually elevate to the state of knowledge
- (e) **Practical examples** – Charity to hospitals / Social institutions – such sacrifices of hard earned results purify the mind and one can gradually understand Krishna consciousness
- (f) **In what cases social service, community service, national service is recommended:** Krishna consciousness is not dependent on any other experience because Krishna consciousness itself purify the mind, but if there are impediments to Krishna consciousness then one can try to give up the results of his actions for some good causes
- In that respect, social service, community service, national service etc. may be accepted
- (g) **Principle behind this philosophy** - Ref. Bg. 18.46 – If one decides to sacrifice for the Supreme cause, even if he does not know, that the Supreme Cause is Krishna, he will gradually understand

Text 12.12*

THEME: If you cannot take to “this practice” (“This practice” refers to the following of the principles of Krishna consciousness as recommended in Text 12.10)

- ❖ Then engage yourself in ‘cultivation of knowledge’ (Knowledge here refers to *Bramha-jnana* – knowledge of soul different from the body)
- ❖ Better than ‘knowledge’ however is ‘meditation’ – Yogic meditation by which one will realize the Supersoul
- ❖ Better than ‘meditation’ is ‘renunciation of the fruits of action’
- ❖ Benefit of such renunciation – “peace of mind”

FOCUS OF LEARNING IN 12.12


- (a) **Two kinds of devotional service**
- Way of regulative principles
 - Way of full attachment in Love of Godhead
- (b) **Cultivation of knowledge** – For those unable to take to Krishna conscious path – It is better to cultivate knowledge
- (c) **Result of knowledge** – One understands his real position
- (d) **Knowledge will develop to meditation** – Then one can gradually understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead
- Some processes make one understand that one himself is the Supreme, that sort of meditation is preferred if one is unable to engage in devotional service
 - If one is unable to meditate in such a way, then there are Vedic prescribed duties for different *Varnas*
 - But always one should give up the result of labor – Employ the result for some good cause
- (e) **Why ‘renunciation of fruits’ is mentioned as better than ‘meditation’** – Although *karma-yoga* is the lowest on the yoga-ladder, Krishna says that it is better than meditation, because it is more practical and it does not disturb the mind with harsh and impractical requirements for renunciation

SECTION III (12.13 – 12.20) QUALITIES THAT ENDEAR ONE TO KRISHNA

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SECTION III

The characteristics mentioned here are not independent of Bhakti. They automatically result from surrender to Krishna

- These qualities fall in two categories – Essential (*Svarupa-laksanam*) and Ancillary (*Tatastha-laksanam*)
- All the qualities mentioned are Ancillary, except the most important “*Bhaktiman*” – Devotional service to the Lord (Essential Quality)
- Therefore all these qualities result from mind and intelligence fixed on Krishna (Devotional Service)

 **LINK BETWEEN SECTION II & SECTION III:** Pointing out these qualities further substantiates the theme of Chapter 12: That *bhakti* is the most efficacious method of spiritual advancement. One engaged in *bhakti-yoga* exhibits transcendental qualities which mark him as a devotee. The Lord is pleased with such a devotee

Texts 12.13 – 12.14

COMMON THEME: Takes all sufferings as Krishna’s kindness to avoid reaction

1. **Tolerant** – Never disturbed by any circumstances
2. **Non-envious** – Kind to everyone even to his enemy
 - Not become his enemies’ enemy – considers all reactions as result of one’s past misdeeds (*Ref. SB 10.14.8 “Tat te anumkampa...”*)
 - Takes distress as the Lord’s mercy: “I deserve much more”
3. **‘Nirmama’ (Free from Proprietorship)** – Devotee does not attach much importance to the pains and troubles of the body
 - **Free from false-ego:** Knows that “I am not the body”
 - **Equipoised** in happiness and distress
4. **Satisfied** – Whatever comes by Lord’s grace; does not over-endeavor to achieve something
5. **Self-controlled/Completely perfect mystic** – Because completely fixed in instructions of spiritual master
6. **Determined** because of Sense control – Therefore fully determined and cannot be swayed by false arguments
7. **Mind and intelligence fixed entirely on the Supreme Lord** – Because Fully conscious that Krishna is the eternal Lord

Text 12.15

THEME: Never causes distress to others

8. **Not get affected** – Because a devotee is always engrossed in Krishna consciousness, material circumstances cannot move him, not disturbed by anyone
 - Such a stage is obtained by grace of Lord to the Devotee
9. **Does not affect others** – No-one is put into anxiety, difficulty, fearfulness or dissatisfaction by such a devotee, because he is kind to everyone

Text 12.16

THEME: Detached from everything worldly

10. **'Anapeksah' (Neutral)** – Not dependent on ordinary course of activities
 - Money may be offered to a devotee, but he does not struggle to acquire it
 - If it comes automatically by Lord's grace he is not agitated
11. **'Sucih' (pure)**
 - External: Bathing at least twice a day
 - Internal: Rising early for devotional acts
12. **'Daksa' (expert)**
 - Fully knows the essence of all activities of life
 - Convinced of authoritative scriptures
13. **'Udasina' (without cares)**
 - A devotee never takes the part of a particular party
14. **'Gata-vyathah' (painfree)**
 - Because he is free from all bodily designations
15. **'Sarvarambha Parityagi' (free from all endeavors)** – not striving for some fruit
 - Pure devotee doesn't not endeavor for anything against the principles of devotional service
 - e.g. Constructing a big building requires great energy, a devotee takes such business only if it benefits him in devotional service e.g. constructing a big temple but not constructing a big personal house

Text 12.17

THEME: Unaffected by material emotions

16. **Neither rejoices nor grieves** over material gain or loss
17. **Neither laments nor desires**: Not anxious to get a son or a disciple / Not laments by not getting them
18. **Transcendental in face of all kinds of auspicious, inauspicious and sinful acts**
 - Prepare to accept all kinds of risks for Lord's satisfaction
 - Nothing is an impediment in the discharge of devotional service
 - **Bhaktiman (devotee)** – The essential quality from which all other qualities appear

Texts 12.18 – 12.19

COMMON THEME: Further qualities mentioned

19. **Equal to friends and enemies**
20. **Equipoised in dualities**
21. **Always free from contaminating association**
22. **Silence** – implies "to speak only of essentials"
 - **Most essential speech** – To speak of supreme lord
23. **Satisfied** – Happy in all conditions – Sometimes get palatable food and sometimes not
24. **Does not care for any residence**
25. **Fixed** in – Determination and knowledge
26. **Engaged in devotional service**

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.19**(a) Practical application: Krishna consciousness and good qualifications**

- One who wants to be recognized as devotee should develop all good qualifications
- Ofcourse one does not extraneously endeavor to acquire these qualifications because engagement in Krishna consciousness and devotional service automatically helps one develop them
- One who is not a devotee has no good qualifications

SUMMARISED THEME 12B**QUALITIES OF PURE DEVOTEES (2.13-12.19):****Classified summary of qualities that endear one to Krishna****A) Attitude towards one self**

- *'Nirmama'* – Free from sense of proprietorship
- Free from false-ego : Knows that "I am not the body"
- *'Gata-vyathah'* (Painfree)
- *'Sarvarambha Parityagi'* (Free from all endeavors)

B) Dealings with other living entities

- *'Non-envious'* – Kind to everyone even to his enemy
 - Equal to friends and enemies
- *'Udasina'* (without cares)
- Always free from contaminating association
- Silence

C) Reaction when things happen to him –

- Satisfied
- Self-controlled/Completely perfect mystic
- Tolerant
- Equiposed in happiness and distress
- Anapeksah (Neutral)
- Suci (pure)
- Daksa (expert)
- Neither rejoices nor grieves over material gain or loss
- Neither Laments Nor Desires
- Transcendental in face of all kinds of auspicious, inauspicious and sinful acts
- Equiposed in dualities
- Does Not Care For Any Residence

D) Dealings with the Lord

- Determined
- Mind and intelligence fixed entirely on the Supreme Lord
- Engaged in devotional service
- Fixed

Text 12.20*

THEME: Dearest of all is “One who makes Krishna as the goal of his life”

- ❖ They follow this imperishable path of devotional service
- ❖ Completely engage themselves with faith
- ❖ Make ‘Me’ as Supreme goal of their life

FOCUS OF LEARNING: PURPORT 12.20 – This purport summarizes Chapter 12

(a) **Chapter 12 recommends without doubt that ‘devotional service’ is the only Absolute path for self-realization**

- By good association one develops attachment for pure devotional service
- Then one accepts a bona-fide spiritual master
- Then one begins to hear and chant and observe regulative principles with faith, attachment and devotion

(b) **What about the Impersonal path**

- Is recommended only up to the time one surrenders himself for self-realization
- Is beneficial as long as one does not have the chance to associate with a pure devotee
- Is for one who works without fruitive result, meditates and cultivates knowledge to understand spirit and matter
- Fortunately if one develops directly a desire to engage in Krishna consciousness, he does not need to undergo step by step improvements in spiritual realization

(c) **Conclusion of Chapter 12**

- Devotional service as described in the middle six chapters is more congenial
- One need not bother about materials to keep body and soul together because,
- By grace of the Lord, everything is carried out automatically

❧ **END OF CHAPTER 12** ❧

CHAPTER 12 Appendix

Selected Texts extracted from “Surrender unto Me”

Text 12.9

Kṛṣṇa calls Arjuna “Dhanañjaya,” the winner of wealth, because Arjuna obtained riches by fighting. Kṛṣṇa now requests Arjuna to fight his mind and obtain the wealth of meditation upon Him.

Kṛṣṇa has already discussed abhyāsa-yoga in Bg. 6.35. Abhyāsa- yoga is the constant practice of thinking of Kṛṣṇa.

In Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted a statement from Padma Purāṇa that describes constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa as the goal of all sādhana practices. Smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇuḥ vismartavyo na jātucit/sarve-vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ: “Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never be forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the śāstras should be the servants of these two principles.”

Text 12.12

Thus these verses describe a sequence: (Text 8) perfected devotional service: always remembering Kṛṣṇa; (Text 9) devotional service in practice: performing sādhana-bhakti and working for Kṛṣṇa, as Kṛṣṇa desires, i.e., performing typical temple service; (Text 10 and Text 12) niṣkāma-karma-yoga: working with detachment and offering the fruits of the work to Kṛṣṇa; which will award one peace, bhakti, as described in “the peace formula” (Bg. 5.29).

Two other stages, which are lower than niṣkāma-karma-yoga, are also mentioned in text 12: yoga and cultivating knowledge, or brahma-jñāna. Still lower than brahma-jñāna, and without a direct transcendental result, is the method mentioned in text 11: detached work without offering the fruits to Kṛṣṇa. (Kṛṣṇa has already explained in Chapter Five that by working in a detached fashion one attains to brahma-jñāna.)

Text 12.20

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura concludes this chapter: “These characteristics that arise in one from devotion and from peacefulness are not material qualities. This is in accordance with the statement ‘Kṛṣṇa is satisfied only by devotion, never by material qualities.’ The word ‘but’ (tu) in this verse indicates the introduction of a new idea. The devotees described up to this point have each perfectly cultivated one aspect of their personalities. Those mentioned in this verse, however, are desirous of perfecting all these qualities. Therefore, even during the stage of sādhana, they are superior to those on other paths even if those individuals have achieved the perfected stage of their paths. For this reason the word atīva (‘extremely’ or ‘very, very’) is used in this verse.”



*arjuna uvāca
naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā
tvat-prasādān mayācyuta
sthito 'smi gata-sandehaḥ
kariṣye vacanaṁ tava*

“My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy. I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions.”

BG (18.73)

Bhagavad-gītā Notes

Part 3

Jñāna Yogā Section

Chapters 13 – 18

Based on “Bhagavad-gītā As It Is”

By His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
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Consciousness

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Supplemented by additional material from

- ‘Surrender Unto Me’ by HG Bhūrījan Prabhu
- Notes from Vaishnava Training & Education (VTE)
- North America VIHE notes

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