

Newsletter on Bhagavad Gita by Dr. P.V. Nath

The following text is a compilation of the single issues of a regular newsletter by e-mail, composed by Dr. Pathikonda Viswambara Nath.
It includes the original slokas of the Gita as well as the transliteration, translation and commentaries by Dr. Nath.

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**OM SAHA NAVAVATU SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU
SAHA VEERYAM KARAVAVAHAI
TEJASWI NAVADHEETAMASTU
MAA VID VISHAVAHAI**

**May He protect us both (the teacher and the pupil)
May He cause us both to enjoy (the Supreme)
May we both exert together (to discover the true inner meaning of the scriptures)
May our studies be thorough and fruitful.
May we never misunderstand each other.**

The Gita is in the form of dialogue between Krishna, the preceptor and the disciple Arjuna. Sanjaya, the narrator to King Dhritarashtra, intercepts now and then with a comment of his own. There are a total of 18 chapters with 701 verses (slokas.) Each of the chapters has a title and the title ends with the word "Yoga".

The word "**Yoga**" is derived from the word "Yuj" which means "Unite."
Study of every chapter assists the seeker to unite with the Lord and hence the use of the word "Yoga."

The seeker is he/she who is looking for attaining the union with the "Parabrahman" and experience the "Eternal Bliss." In Sanskrit the name for the word "seeker" is "Sadhaka". The efforts of the sadhaka is known as "Sadhana".

To undertake the task, the seeker must have "Faith" and "Devotion" in the subject, the teacher and "Parabrahman."

Chapter 12: BHAKTI YOGA

Introduction

The root word for bhakti is “bhaj” which means adoration or loving devotion.
The word also means: to share, to partake, to enjoy.

Bhakti: devotion

Yoga: union

Union with the Supreme through the path of devotion is Bhakti Yoga.

Another definition of Bhakti:

True Love towards That which does not perish at any time is Bhakti,
The happiness on having the worldly desires fulfilled cannot last forever,
The only one which does not perish is “Parabrahman” and the love to reach Him and unite with is
Bhakti.

One can say:

“I want Him” and strive hard to succeed in the efforts and experience the “Peace”. This is the result of true bhakti,

“I want from Him” is for worldly gains and it becomes a selfish act. It is not real Bhakti.

Bhakti is the love directed towards the higher ideal to unfold spiritually which assists one to outshine one’s own capabilities.

One may wonder why this chapter has not come in the earlier section of the text.

Let us see if we can find the answer.

Vibhuti yoga is all about where the glory of the Lord is and how it is manifest in the Universe.

The theory has to lead to practical experience and the seeker would like to actually visualise who the “Supreme” is. This was discussed in the 11th chapter: “Viswaroopa Sandarshana Yoga.”

Only on detailed understanding of the subject matter of the “Imperishable Brahman” the seed of “Devotion” can be sown in the field which is “the mind”. This is the theme in this chapter, “Bhakti Yoga”.

Arjuna was properly tuned to understand the technique of Bhakti to unite with the Infinite.

The chapter completes the second section of the triad “Bhakti Shatka” and this is the triad about “That” (Tat).

Let us now get into the topic for this chapter: “Bhakti”.

“Prema” is “Love.” And Kama is desire/love for worldly objects. Prema and kama are not synonymous.

Kama could be towards any object with a desire to possess and feel “It is mine”. This comes from attachments (raga) to the objects around (including attachment to the physical body). Slokas 62, 63 chapter 2 deal with this topic and show us how it leads to downfall of the individual.

Prema is love to the parents, siblings, husband/wife, pet animals and the like.

The love directed towards the God/Supreme is “Bhakti”.

To summarise:

Kama: desire

Prema: love

Bhakti: devotion

Para Bhakti: Supreme devotion to the Supreme.

To reach the Supreme we need to develop “Para Bhakti” and this is taken up in the second half of this chapter.

Sloka 22, chapter 9 is about “unswerving devotion” to the Supreme which is “Ananya Bhak-ti”.

The bhakti is further classified into:

Sravana Bhakti:

That bhakti which is generated and propelled by constantly listening to the glory of the Supreme is “Sravana Bhakti”. People with this tendency develop the love to Supreme and enjoy listening to “His” glories. The example we have is King Parikshit who listened with bhakti to the narration of Suka Muni (subject matter of Srimad Bhagawatham) and attained “Liberation”.

Sankeertana Bhakti:

This is devotion through the method of singing the glory of the Lord. Saint poets like Purandara Dasa, Annamayya, Meera Bai are some of the examples of those great spiritual giants who showed bhakti in the form of singing the glory and attained Liberation and also helped in spreading His glory to masses around the country.

Mano bhakti:

The steps in meditation are “Sravana, manana, nidhi dhyasa” (listen, recollect and concentrate on what is heard.) “Mano Bhakti” is recollecting and developing love to what is heard/read about the Supreme and contemplating on the same.

Finally there is “Karya Bhakti”:

”Karya” means “actions.” It is the devotion expressed through actions. The actions conducted according to the principle of “karma phala tyaga” (renunciation of the results of actions) come under the category of “Karya Bhakti”. The actions have to be for “Him” and the results of such actions are for Him too. The actions conducted with the feeling of “We are His servants and He is our master” become “karya Bhakti.”

Bhakti is to:

To share:

True love demands that one shares what he has with his loved ones.

Sharing what one has with the needy is true form of devotion to the Supreme.

In context with the relationship between the Supreme and the individual, really speaking, the entire world belongs to Him alone and nobody else. Where is the question of “it is mine”? But, still, out of

compassion He has given us all various possessions to meet our needs. We should not act with the feeling that it is all ours only and does not belong to anybody else.

The entire world is His manifestation in various names and forms.
We should learn the art of sharing what we have earned/received by righteous means.
This is bhakti.

To partake:

The food that is offered to the God/deity via rituals or when going to the temple is known as “naivedyam”, (Nivedana: offering). At the temple the priest symbolically offers the food to the deity by reciting certain Vedic chants and hands over the food back to the devotees. The food received is considered as having been blessed by the Lord. The food is then known as “Prasadam”. One is expected to share it with the loved ones and this includes family and friends.

The art of sharing our wealth which has been earned by righteous means has to be shared not only with family/friends but with the needy ones in the society and this is “partaking” what we have.
It then becomes an act of bhakti.

To enjoy:

One tends to enjoy good things in life. It makes one feel happy. We enjoy food, health, company of loved ones etc. Let us learn to enjoy the company of the “Divine” who is constantly with us and unfortunately many of us do not remember it. He is with us as a constant companion both in happiness and sorrow. Constant memory of His presence inside and His presence all round us should be the best reason for us to enjoy “Him” and this is Bhakti.

Die Art und Weise der Verehrung:

Arjuna, der an den Gurukula Studien teilgenommen hatte, war vertraut mit den vedischen Lehren. Er war gelehrt worden, dass das Höchste formlos und ohne jegliche Qualitäten war.

Wenn wir in diesem Kapitel fortfahren, werden wir herausfinden, dass der Herr zustimmt, dass es nahezu unmöglich ist, Ihn als denjenigen zu verehren, der „Formlos und ohne jegliche Qualitäten“ ist. So wurde die Verehrung von „Om“ populär, das eine Form aber keine Qualitäten hat. Es war die früheste Form, die Verehrung für das Höchste zum Ausdruck zu bringen.

Sogar das war für die Mehrheit nicht einfach. So wurden die Puranas und mythologischen Geschichten zum Medium, um die Suchenden über das Thema des Höchsten zu unterrichten. Indem sie die Macht der Sinnesorgane erkannten, führten die Meister das Höchste mit Form und Qualitäten ein. So wurde es populär, das Formlose mit einer Form und zugeschriebenen Qualitäten zu verehren. Dies folgt dem Prinzip des „Sehen ist Glauben“. Mit dieser Methode auf das Höchste zu kontemplieren, ist die Basis des „Bhakti Yoga“ und ist in Reichweite auch derjenigen, die bezüglich des Themas von Spiritualität unwissend sind.

Narada Bhakti Sutras ist eine sehr populäre Komposition des Weisen Narada. Es ist ein ausgedehntes Thema, um sich darin zu vertiefen, aber extrem nützlich für die Suchenden. Es sagt, dass es neun Schritte (Nava vidha bhakti) gibt in der Kunst der Verehrung mit Hingabe. Diese sind:

Sravana (das Hören von Gottes Lilas und Geschichten), Beispiel: Parikshit maharaja.

Kirtana (das Singen von Seinem Lob und Preis): der Weise Narada, Shuka muni, Meera Bai, Saint Tyagaraya, Saint Annamayya, Saint Purandara dasa und viele weitere.

Smarana (das Erinnern von Seinem Namen und Seiner Gegenwart): Prahlada, Gopis in Brindavana.

Padasevana (Dienst zu Seinen Füßen): Uddhava, Hanuman.

Archana (Anbetung Gottes): Gajendra in Gajendra Moskha.
Vandana (Niederwerfung vor dem Herrn): Akrura aus dem Bhagawatha Puranam.
Dasya (mit Gott das Bhava eines Dieners kultivieren): Hanuman.
Sakhya (Kultivieren des Freundes-Bhava): Arjuna.
Atma nivedana (vollständiges Überantworten des Selbst): Bali Chakravarti.

Unsere gelehrten Seher der Vergangenheit präsentierten „Das Höchste mit Form“ den Suchenden in der Gestalt eines „Idols“ mit der Intention die Botschaft zu überbringen: „Schau das Ideal im Idol“. Sich wieder an die Qualitäten des Höchsten zu erinnern, wie sie im Idol repräsentiert sind, macht es für die Suchenden einfach.

Arjuna befragt Sri Krishna dazu, wie es durch das Praktizieren von Bhakti möglich ist, den Geist von der physischen Welt wegzubewegen hin zur Welt des Höchsten.

Weil sein Geist in der richtigen Art und Weise auf den richtigen Bhakti-Kanal eingestellt war, war Arjuna fähig, schnell in die tieferen Abschnitte der Philosophie einzusteigen.

Dieses Kapitel behandelt solche Fragen wie:
Was ist die angemessene Technik des Bhakti-Yoga?
Wie ist der Geist von der gewöhnlichen Welt wegzubewegen hin zur Welt des Parabrahman?
Wie kann man mit dem Unendlichen verschmelzen?

Später werden wir in diesem Kapitel auch lernen, dass Bhakti bedeutet:

Niemand zu beleidigen,
Niemand zu hassen,
Niemand zu verletzen,
Niemand Leid zu bringen oder zu verursachen,
Und viele weitere solche Qualitäten, die einen dazu qualifizieren den Titel eines „Bhakta“ (wahrer Devotee) verliehen zu bekommen.

Sloka 01

Arjuna uvacha:

Evam satata yukta ye bhaktastvaam paryupasate' ye chapyaksharam avyaktam teshaam ke' yogavittamaha.

Arjuna said:

Thus, those devotees who ever steadfast worship you and also those who meditate on the un-manifest imperishable brahman - which of these are better in yoga?

evam: thus;
satata yuktaha: ever steadfast;
ye: those;
bhaktas: devotees;
tvam: thou;
paryupasate: worship;
cha: and;
api: also;
aksharam: the imperishable;
avyaktam: un-manifest;

tesham: of these;
ke': which;
yoga vittamaha: better versed in yoga.

Evam: thus:

This word specifically refers to the last verse in the last chapter wherein the Lord gave the means of attaining Him, (karma, dhyana, bhakti and jnana yogas)
Arjuna starts with a request for clarification on this point.

This is the good quality to be found in a true and sincere seeker of “The Truth”. The disciple has to develop this approach in his relationship with the Guru. Honest and sincere doubts should be clarified. If not, the master who is teaching the subject assumes that his student knows everything and has understood him perfectly well.

Worship of the Brahman without any form and attributes is known as “Nirgunopasana.” The Supreme is beyond the capacity to be perceived by the sense organs and analysed by the mind and intellect. Hence “He” is known as “Indriya agochara” and “Avyakta” meaning beyond the perception of the sense organs.

Whereas, worship of the divine with a form and attributes is known as “Sagunopasana”. This could be worship of Supreme as of “Cosmic form; four armed Vishnu or one of His avataras (incarnations), creator Brahma, Shiva, Ganesha and many more whose names come in the pantheon of Gods”.

Which is the superior of these two methods is the question by Arjuna.

Sage poet Veda Vyasa, through the medium of Arjuna has introduced this sloka on behalf of all sincere seekers.

Sloka 02

Sree Bhagawaan uvacha:

**MAYYAVESHYA MANO' YE MAAM NITYA YUKTA UPASATE
SRADDHAYA PARAYOPETASTE ME' YUKTATAMA MATAHA.**

The lord said:

Those who have fixed their minds on Me, steadfast in their devotion, endowed with the supreme faith, those in My opinion are the best of the yogis.

mayi: on me;
aveshya: fixing/entering;
manaha: the mind;
ye: who;
maam: me;
nitya yuktaha: ever steadfast;
upasate: worship;
sraddhaya: with faith;
parayaa: supreme;
upetaha: endowed;
te: these;
me': of me;
yuktatama: best versed in yoga;

mataha: opinion.

What was Arjuna's question?

Thus, those devotees who ever steadfast worship You, and also those who meditate on the Un-manifest Imperishable Brahman—which of these are better in yoga?

What is the answer?

Those who have fixed their minds on Me, steadfast in their devotion, endowed with the supreme faith, those in My opinion are the best of the yogis.

One can see that the Lord has not given any direct answer to the question. Why?

The Lord is well aware of human weaknesses. After all there are varieties of people who have different temperaments. It is not possible to categorically state as to who is the best. If He had said that one of the two was the best of the yogis, those who expressed that temperament will feel they are superior and close to the God. This would possibly lead to clashes between the groups at a later date. Through the ages have we not seen clashes between groups of Hindus?

The same principle was expressed in sloka 26, chapter 9 - “patram pushpam phalam toyam“ - in relation to which is the best offering to the Lord.

The seeker, by the process of self-analysis and developing self-perfection has to reach the final destination, which is “Liberation”. It is the destination/Gamyā for all seekers. One can cross a big lake by boat, fly, walk around its periphery or swim. One cannot say that any one of the four paths is best.

Similarly, the four paths to unite with the God - “Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Dhyana” - are four different paths available to men/women of different temperaments.

But, the Lord stresses on three conditions for all worshippers and those are:

Establishing the mind on the Supreme – Mayyaveshya;

Ever steadfastly thinking of Him - nitya yuktaha;

Having firm faith in Him - sraddhaya upetaha.

1) Mayyaveshya:

It is a fact that all our minds are a bundle of thoughts. We have studied that:

Thoughts make words;

Words make actions;

Action makes character;

Character leads to destiny.

Let our minds contemplate on divine thoughts. The thoughts should be strong and merge into what we are contemplating. This is known as “Aveshya”. The thought penetration on the divine is “Mayyaveshya.”

The seeker should contemplate on the Lord using the capacity of discrimination. Discrimination is the role of the intellect. The mind merging into the intellect contemplating on the Supreme is “Mayyaveshya.”

2) Nitya yuktaha:

We should develop the art of constant contemplating on the Supreme at all times and it is “Nitya yukta”. “Nitya” is constant, at all times, and should be in the spirit of 24/7 basis. Perfect control over the impulses received from the five sense organs and perfect control over the mind by the intellect at

all times is the means. From such a perfect control there would not be disturbances even in sleep. Such seekers live the life of dedication to the Lord of their choice.

3) Sradhaya paraya:

With supreme faith.

It is a fact that faith carries a person forward more easily. He who has no faith in himself will not make any progress in any field of activity. It should not be “blind faith” but faith that comes from regular study of the scriptures and blessings of the guru. This principle applies to any field of learning. The more the faith in what we have in pursuing what we want, greater are the chances of success. The perfect and total faith in the Supreme Parabrahman is “Supreme/Para Faith”. Such faith will assist in overcoming the problems one may encounter in life and guides one to success.

What is needed for a seeker is:

Devotion;

Faith in the scriptures, the guru;

And

Concentrated efforts.

It does not matter whether it is the worship of the Supreme without name and form or Supreme with any of the names and forms one is familiar with.

Let us not forget that the Lord is saying “it is My opinion”. He has maintained this stance all along the entire text. He has not used His authority as the “Bhagavaan” and saying “you must do this My way”. He has given the authority to the sastras and the spiritual texts. They have to remain as the eternal authoritative source.

It is like “Her Majesty”, the Queen. She also has to follow the law of the land and take them as authority and cannot say, “I am the Queen, I say so and it must prevail.”

Sloka 03 / 04

**YE TVAKSHARAM ANIRDESHYAM AVYAKTAM PARYUPASATE
SARVATRAGAMA CHINTYAM CHA KUTASTHAM ACHALAM DHRUVAM.**

**SAMNIYAMYE'NDRIYAGRAMAM SARVATRAM SAMA BUDDHAYAHA
TE' PRAPNUVANTI MAMEVA SARVA BHOOTAHITE RATAHA.**

Those who worship the imperishable, the indefinable, the un-manifest, the omnipresent, the unthinkable, unchangeable, immovable and the eternal.

Having restrained all the senses, even minded everywhere, rejoicing in the welfare of all beings; verily they also come unto Me.

ye: who;

tu: verily;

aksharam: the imperishable;

anirdeshyam: the indefinable;

avyaktam: the un-manifest;

pariyupasate: worship;

sarvatragam: the omnipresent;

acintyam: the unthinkable;

cha: and;
kutastham: the unchangeable;
achalam: immovable;
dhruvam: the eternal.

Samniyamya: having restrained;
Indriyagramam: all the senses;
Sarvatra: everywhere;
Sama: even;
Budhayaha: minded;
Te: they;
Prapnuvanti: obtain;
Maam: Me;
Eva: only;
Sarva bhootahite: welfare of all beings;
Rataha: rejoices.

These two verses are about the worship of the Supreme with no form and no qualities.
Sloka 3 deals with negative aspects of attributes/qualities.
Sloka 4 deals with the qualities needed by the seeker for realising the Supreme with no qualities and no form.

Let us remember that to attain something, in the beginning there has to be “two”, “the seeker and the sought after.”

The seeker is the individual who has taken up the path to attain union with the Parabrahman.

The sought after is “The Parabrahman.”

The seeker must have an idea of what he is going after and the sloka 3 deals with information on the Supreme.

In this instance, the Supreme is described in relation to what the seeker is familiar with but in a negative format.

Akshara: The imperishable. (A - not; kshara: perishable)

We have discussed this in detail in chapter 8.

“A” is “Om” - the Purusha;

And “Kshara” is the perishable body - the prakriti.

The seeker is he who is living in the physical world where everything, including himself is perishable. This is because everything that was existent in the past, or is existent now or that which will be existent later was/is/will be limited by time and is put under one category, “the perishable”. None of that which is in the world we know of is imperishable. Everything has a “past, present and future.” On the other hand the Supreme is beyond the clutches of “time” and hence described as “Akshara” (imperishable).

Anirdeshyam: The indefinable:

The senses and the mind have the capacity to see, observe and analyse what they come across. Seeing with the eyes, smelling with the nose, taste from the tongue, hearing from ears and feeling of touch from the skin and all of these seen and analysed by the mind gives room for expressing what is seen by the senses. This is the means of communication between individuals in this world of ours. But, as “He” is un-manifest and has no form as such, “He” is indefinable. We are used to the life of describing something using the medium of “comparison”. There is no means of “comparing Him” with anything and only way is by using the famous Vedic expression “Ne’ti” meaning “not this.”

Avyaktam: Un-manifest:

The weakness of us the humans is that we are slaves to the senses. The senses are the instruments to see anything. Without the medium of senses we cannot see anything. “He” is not seen by the eyes, cannot be recognised by the smell, cannot be felt by the skin, cannot be heard by the ears and cannot be tasted by the tongue.

Sarvatragam: “He” is present everywhere. He is all pervading.

The nearest comparison we can give is “The Sky”. We see the sky everywhere. The upanisads therefore use the sky as the medium of describing the Supreme. “He” is described as “Viswambara” meaning the “umbrella for the universe.” “He” envelops the entire universe.

“He” is said to be beyond the sky too. The physicists say that “The Sky” is non-existent and we get a misrepresentation of its so called presence by the bombardment of sun rays.

Acintyam: Unthinkable:

Because of these negative attributes, the mind cannot think of the Supreme. The mind has been geared to receive the impulses from the sense organs and analyse the same. We have not developed the art of seeing from within. The so called search light of ours in search of the Supreme is directed outwards and not inwards.

Acalam: Immoveable:

That which has no shape cannot move. The shape is in proportion to the space occupied by any object with a particular shape. He is all pervading Viswa roopa and He cannot actually move.

Let us try to take an example:

Child is sitting on the chair and is able to move about because of the space between her and the chair. The chair is large and she is proportionately small. The chair is immovable and she is moveable within the boundaries of the chair.

“He” is the immovable chair and “we” are the moveable children.

One can argue that the mountains are immovable and so they represent “The Supreme”. “No” is the answer. Because, geographically speaking they are relatively immobile. In the passage of time and changes in the geological movements of land and waters, the mountains we know of were not there as we know of now all the time in the same space.

Kutastham: “He” is changeless.

The Self which is “The Light of consciousness” remains without any change. It is the thoughts in our mind that constantly change. The screen on which the film is shown is changeless but the film projected on the screen changes.

Dhruvam: “He” is eternal.

The “Life principle” (Atman) has been the same from our birth till death. The physical body goes through the changes of childhood, adult and old age and finally death. Whereas, “He” has no death at any time and does not undergo any modifications.

Sloka 4:

Having restrained all the senses, even minded everywhere, rejoicing in the welfare of all beings; verily they also come unto Me.

Having given all the non-attributes, in this sloka we are given three attributes that will assist in realising the Supreme. They are:

Complete self-restraint - samniyamya indriyagramam;

Equal mindedness – samabuddhi;

Universal love - sarva bhootahita rataha.

Samniyamya indriyagramam:

The senses, as is their inherent nature drag the mind hither and thither. The world around is made up of innumerable men/women/objects and any one of these can attract the attention of the five sense organs or bring about a feeling of repulsion. It is like the horses on the chariot. (Refer to Gitopadeshnam in the introduction).

The mind should continue discharging its duties but the consciousness should guide it in the right path. This is total self-restraint. Please note the “self” in this case is “s” with a small case and refers to the individual (ego). Total restraint of the ego is the first of the three requisites.

Samabuddhi: equal mindedness.

Realising the presence of the Supreme in every individual/object and showing respect to one and all is the way to express equal mindedness.

What does the mind do?

It reacts to the impulses received from the sense organs by either with a liking or dislike for the object or not reacting at all.

What is the aim of the spiritual seeker? Where is the Supreme? How should one react with the Supreme?

“The Supreme” is said to reside within each individual as the “Atman”.

We should therefore learn to respect every individual and all forms of life.

It is true that on a social level we have to react in different ways towards different people. The employer has to look upon his employees as his employees, treat them as employees but all the time show respect to each one of them. Keeping the professional distance from people but expressing respect towards each one of them is sama buddhi.

There is another explanation to this.

After having been born into this world we have to go through various experiences in life, some are happy experiences and some are sad experiences. The happiness should not make us elated and distract from the duty in hand. The sorrows should not discourage us and make us lose the strength to carry on the ordained duties.

To concentrate on the Supreme amidst all the experiences is sama-buddhi.

This is “intellectual equanimity.”

Sarva bhootahita rataha: Universal love.

“Hita” is welfare, “rataha” is rejoicing and “sarva bhoota” is “all forms of life on this earth.” Rejoicing in the welfare of all forms of life on the earth is “Sarva bhoota hita rataha.” Hatred to none goes along with this quality.

These three qualities in the seeker will take him near to and unite him with the Lord.

It is the qualities in the person that help him to unite with the Supreme and not the form he/she is contemplating upon.

When the mind (seat of all actions and thoughts) of the seeker flows out in this direction, recognising the Supreme in all, it is to be recognised as the “worship of the Parabrahman.”

Sloka 05

**KLESHO ADHIKATARASTESHAM AVYAKTASAKTA CHETASAM
AVYAKTA HI GATIR DUKHAM DEHAVADBHIRAVAPYATE.**

Greater is the difficulty for those whose minds are set on the realisation of the un-manifest, because the un-manifest is reached with very great difficulty by embodied beings.

klesho: difficulties/troubles;
adhikataraha: greater;
tesham: of these;
avyakta asakta chetasam: whose minds are set on the un-manifest;
avyakta: un-manifest;
hi: for/verily;
gatihi: goal;
dukham: pain/sorrow;
dehavadbhir: embodied being;
avapyate: is reached.

The important word to understand in this sloka is “dehavadbhir” meaning “embodied being.” Who is an embodied being?

We should go back to recollect the words “Atma, Jivatma and Jiva”.

“Atma” is the spark of “Parabrahman” within. It is the divinity and present in all.

When the atman associates with the body, mind and intellect it becomes “Jivatma.”

Actions conducted forgetting the divinity within and living in the state of body-consciousness is the state of living of an embodied being.

For those who are associated with “body-consciousness” concentration on the formless aspect of Parabrahman is difficult, says the Lord.

Let us be clear, the Lord has not said it is not possible but making it clear that it is difficult.

We all have come to live thinking of ourselves with a form and qualities, seeing others around with form and qualities (akara, guna). It becomes difficult to contemplate on that with no form and attributes. (nirakara, nirguna)

Because of this, worship of that with form and attributes is much easier.

It is like the students in schools and colleges. Those in schools will not find it easier to understand the higher intricate points that are studied in the university.

The life of a spiritual seeker also has to go from the level of that of a school child to that of a student in the university. Is it not a fact that a 5-10yr old child cannot go the University for Studies? There are some exceptionally brilliant children in schools who get exceptionally good grades in exams and are eligible to go to the college for higher studies.

Developing the three qualities mentioned in sloka 4 will help the seeker to contemplate on the formless Parabrahman. It takes time. Get total control over the mind and sense organs and develop the universal love and then you can contemplate on the formless is the message from the Lord.

We, the physically grown up but spiritually retarded have to grow spiritually and go through the primary and secondary schools in spirituality and enter the college to meditate on the formless, attribute-less Parabrahman.

Sloka 06 / 07

**YE TU SARVANI KARMANI MAYI SAMNASYA MATPARAHA
ANANYENAIVA YOGENA MAAM DHYAYANTAHA UPASATE.**

**TESHAM AHAM SAMUDDHARTHA MRUTYU SAMSARA SAGARAAT
BHAVAMI NA CHIRAAT PARTHA MAYYAVESHITA CHETASAAM.**

But those who worship me, renounce all actions in me, regard me as the supreme goal, worship me with single minded devotion and dhyana;

To those with minds set upon me, o Arjuna, I become, very soon, the saviour and lift them up from the ocean of death and samsara.

ye: who;
tu: but;
sarvani: all;
karmani: actions;
mayi: in Me;
samnyasya: renouncing;
matparaha: regarding me as the supreme;
ananyena: single-minded (not on others);
eva: even;
yogena: with yoga;
maam: Me;
dhyayantaha: meditating;
upasate: worship.

teshaam: to them;
aham: I;
samuddhartha: saviour;
mrutyu: death;
samsara: samsara;
sagaraat: from the ocean of;
bhavami: (I) become;
na ciraat: very soon;
mayi: in Me;
aveshita: set upon;
chetasaam: with minds.

The steps needed / path to be followed by the spiritual seekers are given in sloka 6 and the results of those actions is given in sloka 7.

Sloka 6 gives the path and sloka 7 gives the destination.

Sloka 6 is sadhana (effort/aim) and sloka 7 is sadhya (result / reach destination).

What are the steps to be taken and by whom it should be taken?

In the subject matter concerning union with the Parabrahman and release from the earthly bondage, those who aim to achieve success (Liberation) must follow certain strict disciplines. Nothing comes in life without sacrificing something.

What are the conditions?

- a) Mayi sarvani karmani samnyasya: renouncing all actions in Me
- b) Matparaha: considering Him as the Supreme Goal
- c) Ananyenaiva yogena maam dhyayante upasate: worshipping Him with single-minded devotion.

The Lord says “renounce all actions in Me” and does not say “abandon all actions.” It should therefore mean that we should continue to discharge our duties (nitya karma, Naimittika karma - daily duties, obligatory duties - refer to chapter 3) but only with the full understanding and implementing what is said in sloka 47, chapter 2.

There should not be any trace of ego/selfishness in the actions conducted. The work I am doing is God’s work and not for my personal pleasure and gains should be the attitude to work. Every work, including good work has its results but how we make use of the results is important. Whilst striving to get the maximum permissible benefits from the action (righteous actions only), the mind-set should not be on the results and what one would like to do with those results. There is no room for day-dreaming on future but concentrate on present. The sincere seeker will, in course of time, by the grace of the Lord will reach the destination and experience the “Eternal Bliss” of union with the Supreme.

“Actions” in this sense include also the thoughts and speech (mano, vak, kaya). We have already learnt that the thoughts are the precursors of actions. So let all the thoughts be on the divine and let the speech bring out divinity at all times.

Is it not true that those who are in search of exceptionally great results in their life have to forego a number of other mundane pleasures of life? He who wishes to win a gold medal in the Olympics has to sacrifice a number of other pleasures which he knows others are experiencing. He has to follow a strict discipline and not let other pleasures distract him from his aim. The joy of winning the gold medal in the Olympics and thereby become champion of the world in that sport/athletic event is greater than the combined joys from all other sources for he who sets his mind on winning.

What is the advice from the Lord for such seekers?

Develop “self-perfection” is the advice. Whatever we think and act should be analysed in relation to the aim we have set ourselves. If they are going to distract us from the path to the goal, they should be dropped and no encouragement should be given to such thoughts.

Each one of us has to set a goal and work hard at achieving it. For the spiritual seekers the goal is in uniting with the Supreme. Have an aim in life and work for fulfilling the aim.

Ananyenaiva yogena: with yoga dedicated to Me and nothing else.

This is single-minded concentration that is needed for yoga. “Anya” is “something other than”. “Ananya” is only that and nothing else.

Sloka 22, chapter 9, “Ananayaschintayanto“ makes it clear that whosoever thinks of the Lord only and nothing else and worships Him and nobody else, ever united with Him, will get the grace of the Lord who promises to get them what they strive for and preserve what they possess (yoga kshema).

So far, we have studied karma, bhakti, jnana and dhyana yogas. Really speaking “Ananya yoga” is not a new yoga but a pre-requisite for all the other four yogas. Each one of them needs the mind-set to be fixed firmly on Him. The power that can be acquired from the practice of any yoga is proportionately increased with the practice of “ananya yoga.”

To strive for the Lord is “yoga” and strive for worldly pleasures is “bhoga”. No room for worldly pleasures in “ananyenaiva yoga”.

Maam dhyayante upasate’: “concentration on Me only in acts of meditation and worship.”

Let us recollect what is “dhyana”. It is not simply sitting in a quiet spot and recollecting the Lord of one’s heart.

Dhyana has three preliminary steps,
They are:
Sravana, manana and nidhi dhyasa.

Sravana is listening.

What is the point of listening where what is heard goes into the head from one ear and goes out from the other ear?

What is heard from the ears must be understood. With love and faith in the guru and in the Lord and guidance from the guru it is possible to understand what is heard.

It is not just what is heard from the ears.

It is really what is heard by the mind from all the five sense organs and analysed from the reasoning capacity of the intellect.

Manana is recollecting.

There is a need to recollect every so often what is heard. Without recollecting what is heard no student will progress further in his/her studies.

Just repeating the name of Sri Rama a million times without actually understanding the divinity in the name and recollecting His glory is far inferior to repeating only few times the sacred name but with understanding His attributes and recollecting His form at every step. This should lead the seeker to implement the fundamental principle of “Truth” in his/her life, the principle for which Sri Rama stood for.

Seeing the idol of Sri Krishna should remind the seeker of “Nishkama karma”. (no desire orientation in the work conducted except universal welfare.)

Learn to see the ideal in the idol is true manana.

Nidhi dhyasa:

Firmly concentrating on what is heard, what is understood and keeping the aim at the target (union with Parabrahman) will take the seeker rapidly towards his/her target.

Upasate: worshipping.

True worship comes from adoration of the loved ones. Faith in the Lord will proportionately increase the capacity to worship.

Maam: "Me".

It is not only the Lord with a name and form but also the Lord with all the attributes.

This is the path of worship of the Lord with form and attributes (sakara, saguna) which is much easier for the seekers.

What is the end result for such a disciplined life?

First of all, there should not be a time limit put on for the results to materialise. If there is a time limit imposed, it is actually a business transaction and not true worship.

The Lord says that He will lift them up from the ocean of "Mrityu samsara."

The ocean He is referring to is the ocean of life called "Samsara."

Why should He lift us from this ocean?

Because the ocean is riddled with deadly creatures like sharks, crocodiles etc. When one is on the journey in a boat crossing an ocean, accidental fall into the ocean will expose one to the deadly creatures of the ocean and make one immediately start shouting "help, help" and requesting help in lifting up from the ocean back on to the boat.

What about the ocean of life - Samsara? What are the deadly creatures in it?

The six dreaded enemies of man known as "arishadwargas" are "desire, anger, greed, delusion, arrogance and enmity" (kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and matsarya).

These six enemies ruin the seeker.

The seeker has to undergo the cycle of births and deaths for many more cycles.

With the proper worship as suggested in these two slokas, the seeker will be able to cross the ocean of life and reach the destination which is "union with the Supreme" and no more re-entry into the ocean of life. The Sanskrit word for it is "punarapi jananam-punarapi maranam" (rebirth again and death again and again.)

The focus for the seeker is "The mind" which is the centre of all activities. The mind focussed on divine will be the focus point to overcome the sorrows of this life and experience of "Eternal Bliss" (ananda).

Finally the word to note is:

Na chiraat: very soon.

The grace from the Lord for such actions comes very soon. We have mythological examples of "Gajendra moksha and Bhakta Prahlada", two of the great examples of "Bhakti" wherein the Lord came to their rescue very soon and conferred Liberation.

In our case, we should of course have faith in this statement but not count it in hours, days, years and births and deaths for getting “Liberation”.

On the other hand, we should strive to clear our mind of the stored thought imprints. The sooner the process is completed and no more new thought imprints are allowed to enter and register in the mind that much quicker will be the “Eternal Bliss.”

If the Lord, for example is ten metres away from us, each step that is to be taken by the seeker to reach Him is extremely hard to take. But, if the seeker can walk forward first and complete the first step, the Lord will come running the other nine metres towards him. In this sloka, Sri Krishna says that He will come very soon to rescue the sincere seekers.

Sloka 08

**MAYYEVA MANA ADHASTVA MAYI BUDDHIM NIVESAYA
NIVASISHYASI MAYYEVA ATA URDHVAM NA SAMSHAYAHA.**

**Fix your mind on me only. Place the intellect in me, thereafter you shall no doubt,
live in me only.**

mayi: in me;
eva: only;
mana: the mind;
adhastva: fix;
mayi: in me;
buddhim: intellect;
nivesaya: place;
nivasishyasi: you shall live;
ata urdhvam: hereafter;
na: no;
samshayaha: doubt.

Two important words in this sloka are:

Adhastva: fix;
Nivesaya: place

These two words have been used with extreme care by sage poet Veda Vyasa.

Fix your mind,
Place your intellect.

To understand the sloka clearly we need to have a clearer knowledge of what mind is and what intellect is, and also to have a correct meaning of the words “fix and place.”

Both the mind and the intellect come under the domain of “subtle body” and are not seen.

The physical body which is visible is “gross body”. It includes the sense organs. The gross body moves around the world and comes in association with the world. The sense organs bring in the impulses to the mind, the mind analyses the impulses and the intellect conducts reasonable analysis of what is brought in, lets the mind know what the analysis is and the mind uses the organs of action to take further action in relation to the impulses received.

This is action. We are discussing in this sloka is about the role of the mind and the intellect in our actions that we undertake.

To unite with the Supreme and live with Him, the mind should be fixed on Him. Please note the word “fix”. It is a word we use more often. When an instrument is loose, it needs to be fixed, when it is faulty it needs to be fixed. In other words fixing means correcting or making sure it is correct. A properly fixed instrument works perfectly when used correctly, according to the manufacturer’s instruction.

We should make sure that the mind is fixed properly in its role to react to the impulses received. This needs guidance from the parents in younger days and blessings by the guru as we get older. To do so we must, first of all be aware that it needs to be fixed and see that it stays fixed constantly.

This is what the Lord means when He says: “fix your mind in Me”. “Let your mind work to react to the impulses so that divinity reflects in the actions conducted” will be the analysis of this word.

Not just “fix your mind on Me” but “fix your mind in Me only”. This implies that whatever impulses are received should not drag the mind towards sensual pleasures but react with the feeling “it is the work for the Lord and the results are also Lord’s”.

“Place your intellect in Me” is the next piece of advice. It is “placing it”. It is like “place the plate on the table; place the books on the desk etc.” It does not need fixing but just placing.

If the reasoning is wrong the results will then go wrong. Placing the book on the desk will assist the student to attend to his studies but not placing the book in an untidy environment. Placing the plate on the table is correct way of starting to eat the food. Placing it on the cooker is not the place to eat the food.

Where should the intellect be placed then? What is the correct place for it?
The intellect should be placed in Him, says the Lord.

Here, “Me” stands not for Krishna but for Krishna tatva. The essence of Krishna is Krishna tatva.

The idol is for worship but not as the idol but as the ideal.
Only the ideal can take the seeker to the Supreme. The ideal of Krishna is “Divinity”. Absolute divinity is Krishna.

Our mind should react to the impulses received by using the intellect which is placed in divinity. With this practice, it is easier to reach Him.

Nivasishyasi mayyeva: Live in Me only.

One uses the word “live” in the context of “residence” which is the “home”. Home is the place of residence and other places of residence are only temporary. Living in home means there is a provider and carer in the house who takes care of the needs. But it also implies that the residents of the home discharge their duties as per the house rules.

When we live in His abode, He will take care of us but we should discharge our duties that reflect the rules of the house of divinity. He promises the stay in our house if we follow the rules of the divinity. If we break the rules, we have to face the consequences and be prepared to be evicted.

In relation to bhakti yoga, single-pointed love towards the God of our choice will make it easy for us to live in the abode of the Lord. No doubt about it: “na samsayaha”, says the Lord. Let us therefore develop the faith in the Lord and His teachings.

The arrow to be fixed on the bow to reach the target is the mind.

The string is drawn towards the chest. This is placing the mind on to the intellect.
Target is “Atman” - moksha.

Mind fixed on the Atman must unite first with the intellect and with single pointed attention aim at the target. It needs sadhana.

There are many arrows in the quiver. They are desires and hatreds.
We must also keep the arrow which is for moksha and learn to use it.

In the picture of Gitopadesham, Arjuna was taught to fix his mind on divine duty - be a tool of the Lord for uprooting evil and establish dharma.
His Intellect was placed in Krishna - Krishna as charioteer. Reasoning capacity brought out the divinity and was guiding the chariot on the battlefield.

Sloka 09

**ATHA CHITTAM SAMADHATUM NA SHAKNOSHI MAYI STHIRAM
ABYHYASA YOGENA TATO' MAAM ICHAPTUM DHANANJAYA**

If you are unable to fix your mind in me, then by yoga of constant practice try to reach me, o dhananjaya.

atha: if;
chittam: the mind;
samadhatum: to fix;
na: not;
shaknosi: able to;
mayi: in me;
sthiram: firmly;
tataha: then;
abhyasa yogena: by the yoga of constant practice;
maam: me;
aptum: reach;
iccha: wish.

In this sloka “chittam” refers to the mind and not the intellect.

What about those who cannot fix their mind in the Lord? Have they no scope for Liberation/redemption?

This sloka and the two slokas after this sloka give an answer to the question.
The Lord does love everyone and would like everyone to go back and unite with Him permanently.
Moksha is not for selected few but for those who follow certain strict disciplines.

The important word in this sloka is “Abhyasa”.
Abhyasa is practice.

In chapter 6, sloka 15 we have come across the statement:
“Abhyasena to kaunteya vairagyena ca grihyate”, meaning,
Subdue the wandering mind by constant practice and detachment.

Starting from childhood to graduation, practice plays an important role in making a progress in education.

In the earlier days of childhood, from ages up to about 5-7yrs, practice has a major role in progress. Without practice it is impossible to learn alphabets and numerals without which the child cannot learn to read or write or make conversation and cannot count. By constant and disciplined practice, the same child who did not know simple alphabets can become a Professor in languages.

Similarly, even though we are not children by age, many of us, the so called elders are children when it comes to spiritual knowledge and it is empirical that we must undertake constant spiritual practices and make a habit of conducting them on a regular basis.

This method of achieving the end result by constant practice is “Abhyasa yoga.”

Abhyasa and Ananya (sloka 6) are therefore given the credit in spiritual study and given the post-fix “yoga”. “Abhyasa yoga and Ananya yoga”. These two yogas are common to any of the four main disciplines of yoga, namely:

Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Dhyana.

Why is that we cannot fix our mind on the Lord?

Because it is the nature of the mind. It oscillates easily from one object to other, not just from the impulses received from sense organs but also from one thought to another from the thoughts which are stored in its memory bank.

So the fundamental truth to remember is:

“Practice maketh one perfect.”

“Discipline comes from perfect practice.”

Quote from Amritabindopanisad:

Mana eva manushyanaam
Karanam bandha mokshayah

Meaning,

Mind is the cause for both bondage and liberation.

One can say:

Sir, I cannot change my nature.

The reply would be:

Nurture the habit of practice and then you can change your nature.

Sloka 10

**ABHYASEPYASAMARTHO'SI MATKARMA PARAMOBHAVA
MADARTHAM API KARMANI KURVAN SIDDHIM AVAPSYASI.**

Even if you are unable to practice “abhyasa yoga”, do work for my sake; even by doing action for my sake, you shall attain perfection.

abhyase: in practice;

api: also;

asamarthaha: not capable;

asi: are;

matkarmaparamaha: intent on doing actions for my sake;

bhava: be;

madartham: for my sake;
api: also;
karmani: actions;
kurvan: by doing;
siddhim: perfection;
avapsyasi: shall attain.

This applies to majority of us. We simply fail in practicing what we want to practice.

Simple examples for this are:

- Getting up early in the morning:

We just simply cannot do this. We try it for a day or two and give up.

- Control in our food habits:

The habits developed from childhood distract us from fulfilling the wish to control what we eat.

This happens because the thought imprints from the past are far too many and too strong. They are like the weeds in the garden. They have taken a strong hold on us and despite our wish these sprout forth. The effects of these imprints are hard to overcome.

What we forget is that we are born as humans and this itself shows that there are some good thought imprints also implanted in our mind. These are probably weak and need nurturing to grow. By practice we can do so but the other thought imprints prevent this becoming successful.

What is the solution then?

To remember that under favourable conditions some of the seeds of thought imprints can start growing. This comes from faith in the God and those who come as gods in our life like parents, teachers etc. who care for us.

Working for the sake of loved ones is one way. We know that the children would like to please their fathers, mothers and teachers. The words of praise like “good girl, good boy, well done” will encourage many children and make them do the work for the sake of loved ones.

We can probably know what pleases parents, teachers and try to conduct such actions.

But what type of actions please Lord?

The answer is:

Any acts that are good will please the Lord.

Many a times we go to the prayer room and pray for His blessings. We ask for His blessings to fulfil our wish.

The wish/wishes could be to fulfil some simple basic needs in life, health related issues, concerning the welfare of family etc.

This we do so with a strong faith that “He” resides in the Higher worlds above the plane of the earth. How can He come down and sanction what we want?

The scriptures tell us that He is manifest in every form of life. In so many varieties of different forms He comes only to lift us upwards towards Him.

“He” is inside each one of us as the Atman and it is our duty to manifest the divinity within. Just like what we expect the Lord to shower His love on us, we should by expressing the divinity in actions shower our love to others.

What can I do which will make My Lord happy?

Do I love My Lord and can I make Him happy?

Yes, we can make Him happy is the answer.

How?

By conduct of good actions like charitable work (which will be of help to others in need). Acts like Japa, meditation etc also will please the Lord.

How should one conduct such actions?

On the principle of “I am doing the work for my beloved Lord and not for selfish gains for myself.” This is “Nishkama karma”.

Work for “My sake” and you will attain perfection and it will lead you to Moksha, says Bhagawan.

This is what we should understand by the statement “even by doing actions for My sake, you shall attain perfection.”

Simply acting for the Lord even though we cannot practice “Abhyasa yoga” will grant us His Grace which is: “perfection in actions and opportunity to unite with Him”.

Sloka 11

**ATHAITAD APYASHAKTO'SI KARTUM MADYOGAM ASHRITAH
SARVA KARMA PHALA TYAGAM TATAHA KURU YATATMAVAAN.**

If you are not able to do my yoga taking refuge in me, then renounce all actions and fruits thereof, self-controlled.

atha: if;

etat api: even this;

ashaktaha asi: you are not able;

kartum: to do;

mat yoga: my yoga;

ashritaha: taking refuge in;

yatatmavaan: self-controlled;

sarva karma phala tyagam: renunciation of all actions and their fruits thereof;

tataha: then;

kuru: do;

yatatmavaan: self-controlled.

“Unable to do My yoga”:

What is “My yoga”?

Matkarmaparamaha: intent on doing work for His sake is “My yoga.” This we have studied in the last sloka.

Practice/abhyasa is difficult, working for His sake is difficult, some may say. The next best way would be:

“yatatmavaan” - meaning “self-controlled” (control of thoughts) and

Sarva karma phala tyagam: renunciation of all actions and their results.

We have studied about this in the previous chapters already and the Lord is stressing on the same again.

Why?

Thoughts lead to words;

Words lead to actions;

Actions lead to habits,
Habits dictate one's character;
Character leads to one's destiny.

Here, I am talking about thoughts and about the benefits we would like to enjoy from the fruits of actions. The mind-set is on results for our actions even before they materialise.

What is the danger from developing such nature?

The danger of "Failure to concentrate on the present".

It amounts to "day dreaming."

"Day dreaming" brings its own problems in course of time, some of which may be serious too.

What is needed?

"Self-control" is the command.

It means, "Concentrate on the present, put 100% efficiency in it and do not let any other thoughts distract from the present". This is work efficiency demanded by and appreciated by the employers all over the world.

Self-control is remembering the Lord while carrying on the various duties, and dedicating the fruits of action to the Lord is the easiest way to get His grace.

This habit of controlling the incoming thoughts of fruits of action, and concentrating on the present is "self-control".

This is assisted by developing the attitude: "the results of actions are His". The mantra for it is: "Sree Krishnarpanamastu".

Pure (satvic) thoughts and pure and righteous (dharmic) actions please the Lord.

Best virtue the seeker can develop is: "un-selfishness."

Sloka 12

**SHREYO HI JNANAM ABHYASAT JNANAD DHYANAM VISHISHYATE
DHYANAT KARMAPHALA TYAGAS TYAGAT SHANTIR ANANTARAM.**

Knowledge is indeed better than practice; Meditation is better than knowledge; Renunciation of fruits of action is better than meditation. Immediately after renunciation, Peace is attained.

Sreyo hi: better indeed;

Jnanam: knowledge;

Abhyasat: than practice;

Jnanat: than knowledge;

dhyanam: meditation;

Vishishyate: is better;

Dhyanat: than dhyana;

karmaphala tyagaha: the renunciation of fruits of action;

tyagat: from renunciation;

Shanti: Peace;

Anantaram: immediately after.

To put this into descending order of superiority:

Practice: abhyasa;

Knowledge: jnana
Meditation: dhyana
Renunciation: tyaga (karma phala tyaga)

We have to realise that this sloka is for the seekers in search of “Peace.” The understanding of the word “Peace” varies and we can understand by analytical study of the same.

Abhyasa: “Practice/habit”:

To pray God is a good habit and this idea is drilled into many and accordingly they pray daily, sometimes even 2-3 times a day. This is seen more so in India where there are prayer/pooja rooms in the people’s in Hindu homes and there are many temples in the towns/cities. Before going to work, majority go to the prayer room and/or the temple and spend a few minutes praying. They actually follow the ritual and silently go round the idol as pradakshina (circumambulation) three times, get the teertham (holy water) offered by the priest. This has become an involuntary social habit picked up from childhood. They feel satisfied that they have discharged an important duty. This is carried out as a daily routine which has become a mechanical habit. They do take a bath, wear clean clothes too which are a requisite for prayers. It so happens that the walk in the spiritual path has stopped at this level and their action becomes a mechanical act. It is a good habit to pray daily. Ritualistic religious practices which have become a habit do not lead to any progress and definitely does not give peace. The peace may be experienced during the few minutes spent quietly in front of the idol.

Jnana:

But, better than this mechanical action, knowledge of the Supreme is essential. Knowledge acquired from the study of the sacred texts is Jnana. Mere text book knowledge is not enough. Learning a number of prayers and reciting hymns from the sacred texts is better than simply standing silently in front of the idol for few minutes.

Dhyana:

Meditation on what is studied is the next step in progress. Sitting silently for a prescribed time in the prayer room or in meditation is a better step. The seeker has to practically develop the habit of listening to the sacred texts (sravana), recollects what is heard (manana) and contemplates on what is heard (nidhi dhyasa). He sees the idol, recollects what he knows about the divinity in the idol. Or when he goes out of the prayer room, he is aware that divinity exists all round because he had learnt it in his spiritual studies. Dhyana is nothing but realisation of the knowledge of divinity by constant meditation. It is the wisdom one develops from attaining the knowledge and putting it into practice.

Karma phala tyaga:

Renunciation of the fruits of action is karma phala tyaga. Tyaga is renunciation of what one has. It is the ego that makes us hold on to what we possess. Karma phala tyaga is the way to come out of “egocentric” living. Once there is annihilation of ego and renunciation for the materials in the objective world there is “Peace” all round and at all times. His mind is constantly “pure” and not contaminated by worldly pleasures and attractions. Whereas dhyana is keeping the mind pure for a limited period of time, karma phala tyaga is keeping the mind constantly pure. As majority of us are engaged in actions, this method is the best one to experience the “Peace.”

Sloka 13

**ADWESHTA SARVA BHOOTANAAM MAITRA KARUNA EVA CHA
NIRMAMO NIRAHANKARAHA SAMA DUKHA SUKHA KSHAMEE**

He who does not hate any being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egotism, who is equal minded in sorrow and pleasure and forgiving,

Sloka 14

**SANTUSHTAHA SATATAM YOGEE YATATMA DHRIDA NISCHYAHA
MAYYARPITA MANO'BUDDHIR YO MAD BHAKTAHA SA ME' PRIYAHA.**

Ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled and possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on me, he, my devotee is dear to me.

adweshta: no hatred;
sarva bhootanaam: all forms of life;
maitra: friendly;
karuna: compassionate;
eva: even;
cha: and;
nirmamo: free from feeling of "mine-ness" / without a sense of me and mine;
nirahankaraha: without egotism;
sama: equal;
dukha: sorrow;
sukha: happiness;
kshamee: forgiving.

santushtaha: contented;
satatam: always/ever;
yogee: the seeker;
yatatma: self-controlled;
dhruda: firm;
nischyaha: resolve;
mayi arpita mano'buddhir: with mind and the intellect dedicated to me;
yaha: who;
madbhaktaha: my devotee;
saha: he;
me': to me;
priyaha: dear.

Slokas 13 to 19 give us a total of 35 virtues of a true devotee and the Lord says that such a person is dear to Him and He is always with such a devotee.

With this statement we have to understand that the Lord is not partial to anybody special. Only criterion is: "possession of all the virtues". God loves all but it is us who do not reciprocate His love. This is because we do not see the God who is in all forms of life. A true seeker has to put into practice all these virtues at all times and also making sure he does not lose even one of these virtues even for a moment. We have not been given these virtues to test other's level of bhakti but to put the test to ourselves and find out if we meet the criterion of a "true bhakta."

These are for developing the art of "self-perfection".

It is a good habit to write down these virtues on a sheet of paper, keep the same near his/her bed and analytically look at it before going to bed every night and answer sincerely the question:

Have I got these virtues? Which virtues I do not possess and what can I do to develop them?

1) Adweshta sarva bhootanaam: “no hatred to any being (includes all forms of life)”.

This is the first and foremost virtue to develop.

Hatred breeds contempt and leads to many actions which in turn ruin the individual. Really speaking one can say that the hatred creates a poison in the system which will have dire consequences later.

What makes one develop hatred?

Our response of happiness or misery depends upon our minds’ response to the stimuli from the world around.

Raga/attraction when fulfilled leads to developing greed/lobha.

Raga/attraction when un-fulfilled leads to “dwesha”.

What is “Raga”?

When we are in possession of love and attention of the people we love and in possession of things we desire we rejoice.

This aspect of the mind that turns to rejoicing is “Raga”. (attachment).

When we encounter unwanted people or objects it harbours thought of hatred in the mind. This is Dwesha. The mind filled with dwesha is restless and it leads to future unwanted reactions that cause pain.

It is difficult to control the mind, says Krishna.

But, it is possible to control it by practice and dispassion, He adds.

How can we practice it?

This virtue can be developed only when one starts seeing the divinity within every form of life. Let us not forget the fact that the Lord comes in so many forms only for the sole purpose of teaching us the lesson of life and to help us to reach Him.

Love for Lord is of course essential to develop bhakti but this should reflect in “love for all” because the Lord is in all.

The questions to put for ourselves daily is:

Did I hate anyone today?

Why did I show hatred?

Can I make amends?

Do I hate anybody? Why?

Is there anyone who hates me? What action from me made the other person hate me?

Let us keep in mind that hatred is a reaction to an action. The action comes under “past” and hatred comes under “present.”

Many of us do not want to look into the past and accept our share of mistakes in the action that led to the reaction of hatred. After all, if we consider ourselves as seekers in search of the Lord, let us learn to correct our faults first. It is us who are on the spiritual journey and we should make every effort to reach our destination as soon as possible. Developing hatred and consequent reaction to hatred would simply delay our spiritual progress.

Why not look upon the event that led to the feeling of hatred as a test from the Lord to see if we meet the criterion of a “bhakta”?

2) Maitra: friendship.

It is simply not enough to develop the first virtue “adweshta”, but develop “Friendship” along with it. Developing friendship will help in reducing the intensity of hatred. Many children at school use the word “I hate you” and many a times we find that the same child who said so will become a close friend of that child at a later date.

Developing the quality of “Maitra” is a positive turn in the life of the seeker.

How does friendship come?

Not by bribery.

It does not come overnight.

It comes from acts of integration, sacrifice, love, sharing, being honest etc.

The relationship between a husband and wife should be built on friendship with the above features between the husband and the wife.

“A friend in need is a friend indeed” is the proverb which we are all familiar with.

3) Karuna: compassion.

Compassion towards all is the next virtue to develop. Compassion should be irrespective of caste, creed, sex, religion. Be compassionate even towards a sinner is the philosophy to practice in life. There is divinity even within the sinner too. Pardoning the sins committed, assisting in correction of sinful acts and putting the sinner on to the correct path in life is what is meant by “social service” in its truest sense.

We can say that Mother Teresa fits the bill for this quality. She showed great compassion to those unfortunate victims in the streets of Calcutta and set an example for mankind to follow.

Eva cha: and also.

It is an important statement. It is no use developing the first virtue of no hatred but there should be an additional clause and that is “friendship and compassion”. These two are the important pre-requisites to develop along with the virtue of “Adweshta”.

4) Nirmamo: Free from the sense of me and mine.

No hatred, friendship and compassion demand that the seeker has to show the capacity to share what he has got. Feeling that “I am giving from what I have got” is wrong. Whatever we have is only as caretakers because really speaking we are not true owners of any wealth. The bounty in nature is given by the Lord for all forms of life to share and survive. A true devotee really has nothing to seek but everything to give.

One should develop the feeling “these are all my people” and not develop the feeling “these belong to my party.”

5) Nirahankara:

Ahankara is the expression of ego and Nirahankara is “no sense of ego”. Let one not pat his back himself and say “I have all these virtues.” A true seeker goes in search of virtues which he does not possess rather than feeling proud of what virtues he has got.

The worst form of egoism is “spiritual egoism”. He who is providing spiritual service to others should never have the feeling of superiority over others.

Aham swarupa: form of He who is showing divinity on earth.

Mahavakya applicable to it would be: “Ayam Atma Brahma”. (this Atman is Brahma)

Aham bhavana: expression of divinity.

Mahavakyas applicable to this would be “Aham Brahmasmi, Tat Tvam Asi and Prajnanam Brahma.”

6) Sama dukha sukha: Equal (reaction) towards results of both the events that end in sorrow or happiness in life.

It is possible that the practice of the above virtues may even bring hardship to the individual or good rewards for his virtuous acts.

But, the reaction to these results should be “equanimity” with no elation for success/merit and no depression for failure/criticism.

The source of constant pleasure for such a seeker is his own Atman and experience of this pleasure is “Atmananda.” He is said to be “Atmarama”.

7) Kshamee: forgiving.

The next virtue to develop is the capacity to forgive. Praying the Lord to forgive those who hurt others including one’s own family and friends is not an easy virtue to develop. Jesus Christ when put on to the Holy Cross did pray to the Lord to forgive those who committed such a horrendous act. The ignorant may put the devotee/seeker to a lot of hardship but the seeker should not lose faith in his Lord and should pray to forgive the ignorant.

Mahatma Gandhi did show this virtue in his life. He advocated showing the other cheek to he who hits him. He was shot point blank when he went for his routine morning prayers. The only words that came from him at that time were “Hey Ram.”

The society we live in has actually developed the family unit system where there is an opportunity to develop these virtues before the children of the family become participating members of the society. The children are expected to be brought up so that they express these virtues when they start going into the wider world (school, college, work etc).

The microcosmic society is the family unit and the macrocosmic society is the entire universe. Between these two are the streets, towns, cities, states, countries, continents. This needs harmony and love between various members of the society.

8) Santushtaha satatam: it is not simply being contented but being contented always.

This is very important to remember.

Many a time most people do feel contented. But when things start going wrong, the feeling of contentment evaporates into thin air. The Lord does give tests to us every so often and we are taken off guard and show discontentment. It is both to what one has in life and what one gets in life. We may be content with what we have got but when situations change, we start feeling discontented.

Contentment with what one had in past, has at present and what he would have in future is what is meant by “always.”

Fully feeling at rest and at peace with himself and the world is the hall mark of he who is ever contented.

Let me make it clear that it does not mean that the seeker should feel contented and does not want to put his/her best efforts in what he/she is doing. Each one of us has a duty to do our best making full use of our potential always following the path of dharma and truth. The principle to remember is that the results what we get are to be used as caretakers of the property belonging to our Master and not as the sole owners of what we got and to do whatever that pleases us.

9) Yogee:

Yogee is he who is steady in meditation on the Lord and constantly remembers the Lord. The impulses from the physical world do not bring in any agitations in his mind.

10) Yatatma: Self-controlled.

Here the “self” is small “s” referring to the mind and not to the Atman. The mind as the band master has to have a total control over itself and its subordinates (sense organs).

11) Dhrida nischayaha: it is firm conviction in the spiritual life.

Firm conviction in the guru, in the scriptures and the goal in life are necessary. As discussed in the beginning under “santushtam satatam”, situations change in life and may bring happiness or sorrow of disproportionate levels. There should be unshakeable faith in the Lord.

The intellectual conviction must be very strong to be successful in our mission in life. It is like the needle in a compass in a driver’s mariner. The needle is always pointing to the north. The needle in our life’s activities should be pointed to “The Lord, personification of Satya, Dharma.”

12) Mayyarpita mano buddhir: with mind and the intellect dedicated to Me.

The mind and the intellect are the two most important subtle instruments we, the humans are blessed with. The mind is the band master and the intellect is the reasoning capacity. We should learn to control the gross body (sense organs) with the subtle body (mind and intellect) and the subtle body with the Atman. Firm decision and immovable faith in the Supreme will guide us toward “Him.”

Yo mad bhaktaha sa me’ priyaha: He, My devotee is dear to Me.

Sloka 15

**YASMAANNO DWIJATE LOKO LOKANNODWIJATE CHA YAHA
HASHAMARSHA BHAYODWEGAIR MUKTO YAHA SA CHA ME’ PRIYAHA.**

From whom the world has no fear, and who has no fear from the world, who is free from joy, envy, fear and anxiety - he is dear to me.

yasmaan: from whom;

na: not;

udwijate: is agitated/frightened;

lokaha: the world;

lokat: from the world;
cha: and;
yaha: who;
harsha amarsha bhaya udwegair: by joy, envy, fear and anxiety;
muktaha: freed;
saha: he;
priyaha: dear;
me': to me.

13) Yasman no dwijate loko: from whom the world has no fear.

As the true devotee does not cause any harm to anybody, the world has no fear from him.

Let us take the example of someone who holds a knife.

We do know that the knife can be a dangerous tool. A surgeon who holds a knife and uses it as equipment of his trade does not make others frightened. On the contrary, a murderer running amok in the streets frightens everyone in the street.

The world had no fear from great souls like Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King.

The results of actions from such great souls are only for benefit to the world.

The devotees with this quality do not rob the world and the world therefore has no fear from them.

14) Lokannodwijate cha yaha: He who has no fear from the world. His is a universal vision.

He has love for all and hatred towards none. Again Mahatma Gandhi fits in with this picture. He did not fear anyone and using his tool of non-violence carried on the mission of achieving freedom for masses.

Mythologically we have the story of Prahlada, son of demon Hiranyakashipu. Hiranyakashipu was a terror to the world. The world had no fear of Prahlada and Prahlada had no fear of the world.

In the present episode in Mahabharata, Arjuna with the support from Krishna was ready to fight the Kauravas. He had no fear of the world and was ready to sacrifice his life in the battlefield.

The examples given are those great souls whose wealth was their divine virtues.

True bhakta should have no fear of anyone stealing his virtues and hence no fear from the world. In the same vein, he is not there to steal the virtues from others and hence the world has no fear from him.

What makes these souls so strong?

This is answered in the second half of this sloka.

It says:

Who is free from joy, envy, fear and anxiety (harshamarsha bhayodwegaih muktaha).

15) Harshamarsha bhayowagaih:

Harsha: joy

Amarsha: envy

Bhaya: fear

Udwagiah: anxiety

Muktaih: free from

The mind which is a victim of joy also becomes a victim of sorrow. We have discussed this aspect several times already. There is no such thing as “permanent happiness” except the happiness one would experience from “Moksha”. All other forms of experiences of happiness do lead to weakening of the strength of happiness in course of time. Strong mind helps the individual to remember the transient nature of both happiness and sorrow and does not let him become a victim of either of them.

Amarsha: envy.

He is not envious of anybody. He does not consider others as lucky when he sees them rejoicing in happiness. If someone else gets what he is after, he does not get jealous. He has no enemies as such. His own enemy is “his ego” and he has managed to conquer it.

Bhaya: he has no fear.

The path he has taken to unite with the Parabrahman is hard but it does not frighten him. As no one can steal his virtues, he is not frightened in his journey. He has not fallen prey to the attachments in his life. He has developed the virtue of detachment in attachment.

Udwega: anxiety.

Because of these virtues, he has no anxiety. The best example that fits in all these virtues is Prahlada. His mind was totally absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord. He took every situation in his life as divine dispensations and was not disturbed by any.

Such a devotee is dear to Me says the Lord.

Sloka 16

**ANAPEKSHAHA SHUCHIR DAKSHA UDASINO GATAVYATAHA
SARVARAMBHA PARITYAGEE YO MADBHAKTAHA SA ME' PRIYAHA.**

He who is free from wants, who is pure, alert, who is unconcerned, untroubled, who is selfless in all undertakings, who is devoted to me, is dear to me.

anapekshaha: free from wants;
shuchir: pure;
dakshaha: alert;
udasino: unconcerned;
gatavyataha: untroubled;
sarva: all (undertakings);
arambha: beginning;
parityagee: renounce;
madbhaktaha: my devotee;
sah: he;
me': to me;
priyaha: dear.

16) Anapekshaha:

“Apeksha” is desire and it means desire for something. Anapekshaha means “no desire for anything”. Desire is a form of “want” and not having any wants in life is another of the qualities of a true bhakta. Because of this he does not go after pleasures in the material world which are the cause of bondage and are hindrances towards achieving the goal of life: Moksha. As a matter of fact, he does not even long for Moksha. All his actions fall under the category of “nishkama karma” (desire-less actions). He

has a total control over his senses and the mind at all times. He is aware that the “objects change or we change” and the happiness experienced on getting the object does not last long.

17) Shuchir: He is totally pure in thoughts, actions and speech. (mano, vak kaya shuddhi)

Physical cleanliness in the form of daily wash is a routine for majority. After all it is natural to get the dirt on the body as the day progresses. We feel fresh after cleansing ourselves. Apart from the physical dirt from the atmosphere around, we get impure by the accumulation of so many thoughts in our mind. These thoughts are about the objects from the material world either desire or hatred towards the same. If we have to move forward spiritually, we must learn to wash these impure thoughts in our mind which can be expressed via speech or actions. Japa (repetition of sacred mantras), dhyana, keertanas (singing the glory of the Lord) are some of the forms of purifying our mind.

18) Dakshaha: Being alert towards the inflow of impulses from the world around and to the thoughts generated within the mind is “Daksha”.

“Sadhana” is the effort to put in towards whatever we want to achieve and without having the quality of “being alert” it is impossible to achieve the end result. This is specially so for the spiritual seekers. “Delusion” (Maya) is round the corner and can hit us at any time and being alert to the influence of “Delusion” is “Daksha” in the truest sense.

We all have a duty towards the world of which we are part of. These should be Pure (satvic) duties. Passionate (rajasic) and indolent (tamasic) actions deter in spiritual progress. There is therefore a need to be alert and look at our thoughts analytically. Let us not forget that the thoughts do get converted into actions. A momentary lapse is enough for a major fall and accidental injury.

If we look upon the spiritual journey as a mountain to climb, we can appreciate the need to be alert. An individual who is climbing a mountain knows fully well that as he approaches towards the peak, accidental fall would lead to serious injury including death not only to the individual but to those who are at lower heights than him on the journey. Momentary lapse in concentration is one of the reasons for many such accidents.

By nature, we should all learn to be alert to any dangers that may crop up in the journey of life. Do we not notice it in the school where the teacher keeps on warning the children to be attentive and alert?

When we are expecting important guests to the house, do we not make sure that we are clean? We stand in front of a mirror to tidy our hair and wipe off the marks on the face before opening door to the guests. To meet someone we love we want to be alert and tidy ourselves.

Similarly, to meet the Lord we have to make sure we are totally clean. Let no rajasic or tamasic thoughts creep into our minds.

To be alert is the quality of a Kshatriya because lapse in concentration could mean losing his position as a ruler or death even.

We should be alert in what we eat or drink to keep good health and thereby live a long and healthy life.

A vocalist is always on guard and protects his voice because it is his livelihood.

We have the example of the great sage “Viswamitra” who had a number of falls in his spiritual climb to become a “Brahmarshi”. As a matter of fact (as his name implies) he is a friend of the world. He has shown us the mistakes that led to the fall from the spiritual heights achieved in life.

19) Udaseena: unconcerned.

Generally when we say someone is unconcerned we use it to express the feeling that the person is not interested and it is actually a critical remark we make of that person. This is not so in this context.

Knowing the impermanence of objects in the world, the seeker is not perturbed with changes around including changes in his/her own body and/or of the loved ones and thereby free from attachments (raga). He is selfless in all his actions. This is because he has learnt the art of putting his efforts now and he does not hanker for the fruits of actions. Praise or censure does not affect him and he is not perturbed by them. He discharges all his duties conscientiously. He is simple and straight forward in his manners to one and all, he be a friend or foe.

20) Gatavyataha: untroubled. “Vyatha” is “sorrow” and gatavyathaha is being free from sorrow.

Anxiety and fear fuel the perturbed mind and the seeker has to master the art of being free from fear and anxiety. They have the tendency to reduce the efficiency of work and hinder the progress in the journey of life. The true seeker is untroubled by any events that happen in his life and also is untroubled by the consequences of any actions he has undertaken. Having taken refuge in the Lord/Master, why fear?

As we have studied already, desires bring sorrow as a consequence. Control over the desires is an important step in spiritual practice.

It is a well-known fact that any action has its own consequences. As his actions have been pure at all times, as he considers himself to be the servant of the Lord and discharging the duties to his master the seeker can remain unperturbed by the consequences of the actions.

One cannot please others at all times but learning the art of pleasing one’s own conscience is a good quality to develop.

21) Sarvarambha parityagee: “sarva” is all; “arambha” is beginning; “parityaga” is total renunciation. “Total renunciation of all beginnings” in all actions is “sarvarambha parityaga”.

“What is the beginning, one may ask”?

“I am going to do the work”, “I am going to get”: “I am” is the starting point to any work. Dropping the sense of doership in any action undertaken is “Sarvarambha parityaga.” It is the ego that makes one bring in the word “I” and mastering the art of subduing the ego is an art to develop by all seekers. We have learnt already that every action has a result and that we should offer the fruits of the work for the Lord. (sloka 47, chapter 2) We have an adhikara (right) to fulfil the role allotted to us on the stage of life and this can be played to the best when there is no expression of ego in such play. Instead of “me”, if the attitude is “offering the fruits of actions to the Lord” we would have fulfilled this condition.

In a nutshell it means “stopping all desire oriented undertakings”.

Having said so let me make it clear that it is not possible for many to do so. We have to slowly learn the art of climbing and lifting ourselves from “laziness to passion, passion to pure and pure to total purity” (from the tamas to rajas; rajas to satva and satva to shuddha satva.)

When we conduct any ritual the officiating priest makes us take the “sankalpa” (resolve) which is an expression of “I am doing the ritual”. As we are all still in the earlier class in spirituality, it is not wrong to take sankalpa. Of course we must strive gradually to use the word “Loka samasthsa sukhino bhavantu” (let all be happy in this world) when we conduct any ritual and this attitude helps in finally dropping the ego in actions.

Becoming totally dull and inactive is not the way forward in spiritual journey. It is impossible to shut oneself away within the confines of one's own house and forget the world. Rare few have achieved this capacity and majority do not belong to that category. We have to work and learn to work selflessly.

Such a seeker is dear to Me, the Lord reiterates.

Sloka 17

**YO NA HRUSHYATI NA DWESHTI NA SHOCHATI NA KANKSHATI
SHUBHASHUBHA PARITYAGEE BHAKTIMAAN YAHA SA ME' PRIYAHA.**

He who neither rejoices nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, who has renounced both, good and bad, he, My devotee is dear to Me.

yo: who;
na: not;
hrishyati: rejoices;
shochati: grieves;
kankshati: desires;
shubha: good;
ashubha: bad;
parityagee: renounces;
bhaktimaan: full of devotion;
sah: he;
me': to me;
priyaha: dear.

The equanimity of mind of a true bhakta/devotee is brought out in this verse and in the next few verses.

Refer sloka 38, chapter 2 - sukha dukhe same' kritva.

22) Yo na hrushyati na dweshti: neither rejoices nor hates.

Majority of us do come under the category of "worldly people". By this, I mean, our reactions to events (both good and bad) in our lives tend to fit into a set pattern. Those that are pleasing to our senses make us rejoice and those that are not pleasing to the senses (reaction to unwanted situations, with those people who are bad to us) make us develop the feeling of "hatred".

What we forget is that both of these reactions have "a birth, growth and death". It simply means that there is a point when we experience the feeling of happiness/hatred (birth), the feeling of happiness/hatred becomes greater and greater and it reaches a peak in its experience (growth) and in course of time the feeling gets weaker and weaker and soon dies off (death). Neither of these are permanent feelings. Both of these are only states of mind and they cannot be permanent.

With reference to the feeling of "happiness" the masters say: "Be happy" and not "Become happy". There is a great difference in the meaning of these two words. "Becoming happy" is falling into the trap of getting caught in the "fruits of actions". This makes one forget the surroundings and live in the dreamland and not the real world. Learn to be happy with life is the master's advice to mankind in general.

True and sincere devotee does not show these reactions but has developed the state of mind which is like that of a "Sthitaprajna". (man of steady wisdom – chapter 2).

Newly born children do bring a great joy to many but as the child grows, there is an element of sorrow too for various reasons.

Na dweshti:

Hatred is a fairly common reaction for many. There are many reasons one develops hatred. In general “Kama” (desires) leads to hatred.

Hatred is towards undesirable events and to circumstances.
When there is criticism we hate.

Hatred leads to many unpleasant actions. Duryodhana developed hatred towards his cousins, the Pandavas and this led to the mighty war of Kurukshetra that saw the death of millions of soldiers. He who develops hatred loses all sense of proportion and this leads to his ruin.

How to overcome the feeling of hatred?

“Love” is the answer. Universal love is the only way. To develop this love, one should lose his “ego”. He, who has no feeling of “I” ness in his actions will not develop hatred.

23) Na shochati: does not grieve.

Grief in reaction to losing an individual/object depends upon the grade of attachment one had developed towards the same. “Death, disease” are two main reasons that cause grief.

Attachment to worldly objects brings in a sense of “pride”. When the pride gets hurt, it is expressed in the form of grief. We have learnt before that “Today” is the result of “Yesterday”. Our actions knowingly or unknowingly in the past, including past births are responsible for grief experienced today.

A true devotee does not let grief reduce his efficiency in work.

What is the remedy which the Lord gives us through the sacred text?

24) Na kankshati:

Develop the art of “Detachment in attachment”, He advocates.

Not to have desires because attempts at fulfilment of the desires end up in grief in course of time. Therefore, He says:

Na kankshati: has no desires.

A true devotee does not have any desires including the desire to attain moksha. This does not come overnight. It is a gradual process of learning. Realising that desires in turn bring grief would help the seeker to advance in his path.

25) Shubhashubha parityagee: renounce both good and bad/evil.

One should not misunderstand this advice and give up good and auspicious actions. One should read this advice as:

“Renounce both the good and bad in the results of dharmic actions conducted.” A true devotee who is also a true jnani conducts his actions in the spirit of “Krishnarpanamastu” and fulfils the conditions in sloka 47, chapter 2: Karmanyevadhikaraste.

This is achieved by he who has understood the qualities of a man of steady wisdom (Sthita prajna), the doctrine of karma, and jnana. A man of equanimity does not feel elated when the outcome of actions is good and depressed when the outcome is bad. He has accepted the guidance of the charioteer/sarathi in his life who is “His conscience.” The learned masters say that such a person who is “thought free” (Nirvikalpa) will achieve this state of perfection.

After all is it not true that whatever we have is God’s and whatever we receive is a gift by His grace? The reaction to whatever he receives for his actions would be: “O Lord, You gave me this and I will receive it as your prasadam and my salutations to you for giving it to me”.

Only by transcending the mind, one can develop the equanimity to the pairs of opposites mentioned in this and the next two slokas.

Bhaktimaan yaha saha me’ priyaha: such a devotee is dear to Me, reiterates the Lord.

Sloka 18 - 19

**SAMAHA SHATROU CHA MITRE’ CHA TATHA MANOPAMANAYO
SHEETOSHNA SUKHA DUKHESHU SAMAHA SANGA VIVARJITAH.**

**TULYA NINDA STHUTHIRMOUNEE SANTHUSHTO ENA KENA CHIT
ANIKETAHA STHIRAMATIRBHAKTIMAAN ME’ PRIYO NARAHA.**

**He who is equal minded towards friends and enemies; in honour and disgrace; in heat and cold;
pleasure and pain; who is free from attachment;**

**To whom praise and criticism are equal; who is silent; satisfied with whatsoever he gets; who has
no particular home (abode); steady minded; full of devotion; such a devotee is dear to me.**

samaha: equal minded;
shatrou: towards enemies;
cha: and;
mitre: towards friends;
tatha: thus;
mana: in honour;
apamana: shame/disgrace;
sheeta: cold;
ushna: heat;
sukha dukheshu: in happiness and sorrow;
sanga vivarjitaha: freed from attachment;
tulya nindaa stutihi: equal in praise and censure;
mouni: who is silent;
ena kena chit: by what-so-ever he gets;
santushtaha: satisfied;
aniketaha: without abode;
sthiramatir: steady minded;
bhaktimaan: full of devotion;
me’: to me;
priyaha: dear;
naraha: man.

The qualities of a true devotee, started with sloka 13 in this chapter end up with these two final slokas. The Lord has given us five more pairs of opposites of qualities.

26) Samaha shatrou cha mitre cha: equal-minded towards friends and enemies.

Those who agree with what we do/are doing,
Who help at times of need,
Who share moments of happiness/sorrow in our lives,
Do not wish harm to any including those who harm them,
Are considered as friends.

Contrary to friends are foes:
Who do not agree with what we do/say,
Who do not help at times of need,
Try to bring the person down,
Find pleasure in the suffering of the person,
Get jealous when the person is experiencing happiness/receives praise from others.

Such an equal minded person is dear to Me, says the Lord.

“Dear to Me” means the Lord accepts the person as “friend.”

When one can get such a powerful friend, such a best friend, why bother about others? Do not get perturbed at the way others may react to you, others may treat you but learn to show love to all and hatred to none is the message from the Lord.

When we do not expect anything from others, there is no more feeling as friends and foes.

27) Manapamanayo: In honour and disgrace.

These are reactions at the intellectual plane. The truth is that the time takes away everything. What is honour at certain times may not be estimated/considered as honour at other times/place/situations. For a devotee these are just passing phases in his life. If he does receive the honour/praise he would simply say: Shree Krishnarpanamastu.

If he experiences disgrace, he looks upon it as “karma phala” for his actions of the past.

28) Sheetoshna: (equal) in heat and cold.

Cold and heat are natural with the changes of climate for almost every one of us. These are reactions at the physical plane. He who has experienced the divine ecstasy born of Supreme devotion to the Lord does not react to the change in climate. To he who is so immersed in his love of God climatic changes do not bring any physical reactions of cold and heat. Mythological stories give examples of devotees who roam about without a care even when there is torrential rain pouring down.

29) Sukha dukheshu: (equal) in happiness and sorrow.

The beauty of life is in the joys and sorrows one experiences. If there were no sorrow, joys would not have any value. Happiness and sorrow are the results of actions from the past and the Lord has mercifully given us either joy or sorrow. Accepting these are the grace of Lord and not getting elated/depressed is the quality of a true bhakta. He takes them as tests from the Lord. The Lord wants to study our reaction to both happy and painful events in our life and the successful seeker is he who shows neither elation nor sorrow. He thanks God for events that bring in happiness and does not complain on God when he is experiencing sorrow.

30) Sanga vivarjitaha: he is free from attachment to the experiences in the above situations.

This is reaction at the mental plane.

With this quality, he is a master of any situations at all times in his life. His concentration on “Love of God” is constant and does not flicker even for a second. The quality is that of “detachment in attachment.”

It could also be interpreted as “not getting attached to any individual/object which he comes across in the passage of his life.”

Sree shankaracharya says in Bhaja Govindam:

Satsangatve nissangatvam,
Nissangatve nirmohatvam
Nirmohatve nischalachittam
Nischalachitve jeevanmuktam
Bhaja govindam bhaja govindam
Govindam bhaja mooda mate’

As attachment decreases, infatuation is reduced.
Where there is no infatuation,
One attains equanimity and divine peace.
Worship Govinda, worship Govinda, o’ deluded one.

The essence of this important quality to be imbibed is:
Start by reducing the number of those you are attached to,
Cut down the association with evil minded ones,
Develop association with devotees of the Lord,
Finally, learn the art of seeing the Lord in all devotees and worship only the Lord.

31) Tulya nindaa stutihi: equal in praise and censure.

His devotion to the Supreme does not waver either when people praise him or censure him. We have examples of sage poets like Sri Annamacharya, Purandara Dasa who have shown in their life that they do not become victims of praise or censure. Similarly, our actions/duties in our life should be in the spirit of dedicated devotional acts and not alter either because of praise or censure. Constant self-analysis, self-policing of one’s own thoughts should help to correct one’s faults when exposed to censure.

32) Mauni: silent. “Maunam” is silence.

One is said to be silent when one is not talking. The mind is said to talk when actions are expressed through the various organs of the body because the mind is the band master over all organs of actions. It is the vasanas that are expressed as actions. When the vasanas/thoughts are not expressed and not silently contemplated upon, the mind is said to be silent. He continues to contemplate on the Supreme with devotion. This is the “Nidhi dhyasa” (contemplate on the Supreme), the third step in meditation. (The other two steps are Sravana and Manana, meaning listening and recollecting).

33) Santushto ena kena chit: contented with whatsoever he gets.

He is contented with what he gets for his actions. Striving to get the maximum results for actions is not wrong. One should study and work hard on what he is working at. He must put into practice the theory that has been taught. All along his attitude should be that the results for his actions are “God’s grace.”

When the saint goes for alms in morning, he is contented with what he gets that day.

The seeker works with 100% potential and full of zeal. The seeker should be aware that desires eat away the mind and distract from the goal of life and contentment is essential in life to achieve the final goal.

34) Aniketaha: with no fixed abode.

A true devotee’s abode is the abode of the Lord. Worldly possessions do not trap him. The Hindu is expected to go through the four stages in his life: Brahmacharya ashrama, grihastha ashrama, vanparastha ashrama and sanyasa ashrama.

The last stage/shelter in the life is that of “sanyasa.” A true sanyasi is he who does not stay for any length of time in any one place.

The sastras say that the sanyasi should not stay for more than three days in any one place. One need not insist on this strict rule of stay of no more than three days at any one place. Really speaking, wherever he stays, he should not develop love and attachment to it (example: not to feel that it is my house), be it the house or its residents/possessions.

“Body” is “Niketa” and “no body” is “aniketa.” Absence of body consciousness is true aniketa. Home is a place that gives a sense of possession, happiness, comfort and shelter. Aniketa should not look at what he has as his possession, should not start feeling comfortable and cosy with what he has got.

The life is a journey from station “a” to station “z”. There may be many more stations on the way. He may get down at an earlier station and decide to stay in a hotel. The hotels on the way are only temporary shelter and not one’s own permanent shelters.

35) Sthira mati: steady mind.

The mind of a true bhakta is directed towards the Lord of his choice. His mind is in steady contemplation on the Supreme and finds delight in it.

36) Bhaktimaan: devoted to Me.

All the 36 divine qualities of a true bhakta are constantly growing in his intellectual garden and he offers these daily to his dear lord. This is higher form of worship.

Worship with the flowers from the garden which is only a symbolic action and has to be accompanied by worship with the flowers from the intellectual garden which consists of these 36 divine qualities.

The guhya/secret word here is: “naraha”. In slokas 12 to 17 the Lord says “sa me’ priyaha” but in the 19th sloka He says:

“Bhaktimaan me’ priyo naraha” says the Lord.

“Naraha” means “individual”. Please note that there is no mention of any named individual, any religious denomination or sex as a condition to be a devotee of the Lord. The condition being simple straight forward possession of these qualities.

Sloka 20

**YE TU DHARMAMRUTAM IDAM YATHOKTAM PARYUPASATE
SRADDHADANAA MATPARAMAA BHAKTASTETEEVA ME' PRIYAHA.**

Who, with faith having me as the supreme goal follow this immortal and nectar-like dharma as declared above, such devotees are most dear to me.

ye tu: those indeed;
dharmamrutam: the nectar of dharma;
idam: this;
yathoktam: as declared above;
paryupasate: practice/follows;
sraddhadana: with faith;
matparamaa: having Me as their goal;
te bhaktaha: these devotees;
me': to Me;
ateeva: very;
priyaha: dear.

The Lord has given three conditions to fulfil so that the seeker may become very dear to His Lord.

These are:

Bhakti: devotion

Sraddha: faith

Paryupasate: practice.

Devotion to the Supreme:

Faith in the Supreme that He is the final goal in life to experience “Eternal peace” comes from developing the love to the Supreme.

Once these two requirements are met, the next step has to be to put into practice what the Lord has enumerated.

It does go without saying that the seeker needs the blessings and compassion of “Guru” to get the blessings of “Jagadguru.”

It is no use developing some of the qualities. All the 36 qualities have to be developed and put into practice on a 24/7 basis all through the life.

The question comes about what is “Dharma” the Lord is referring to?

The answer is clearly given by the Lord:

This “immortal dharma” which is putting into practice all these qualities.

We have studied already that the “dharma” is “righteousness spiritually, socially and morally”. These qualities cover the duties at these three planes of existence (spiritual, social and moral).

Mere reading of the scriptures, memorising the sastras are not enough. We should realise the presence of “Atman” within and “Paramatman” all round at all the three levels of physical, mental and intellectual levels. With this we should have purity of the mind, speech and body (trikarana shuddhi - mano, vaak, kaya shuddhi). A real Hindu is he who has developed perfection in practice of these virtues.

This dharma is the nectar, says the Lord. It takes the seeker from death to immortality. The seeker should learn to collect this nectar in the bowl of his mind.

Dharma is duty (following the principles incorporated in the 36 qualities),
The goal is to develop and put into practice all the qualities at all times.

The guhya bhasha in this sloka is:

Ye tu: those indeed.

Again, please note, there is no mention of caste, sex, creed, religion. It applies to the entire mankind.

Let me end this chapter by quoting Sri Ramakrishna's gospel.

Bhakti is of two kinds:

Vaidika bhakti,

Prema bhakti.

Vaidika bhakti is:

Conform to the injunction of the scriptures - Vedas, Upanisads,

To chant the beloved name of the Lord as many times as possible in a day,

To fast,

To pray,

To go on pilgrimage,

Performance of ritualistic worship as prescribed.

Developing universal love gradually leads the seeker to develop Supreme Devotion to the God and this is "Prema Bhakti." The seeker gives himself entirely to the Lord and like a child that gets lovingly lifted and carried by the mother, the Lord lifts the seeker up and carries him.

Thus completes the twelfth chapter, "BHAKTI YOGA" in the Srimad Bhagawadgita which is a Upanisad, Brahma Vidya and Yoga sastras in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna.