

A Philosophical Analysis of Bhakti-Yoga with Special Reference to Gita

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Abstract:

*“Patram puspam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati
Tad aham bhaktya-upahrtam asnami prayatatmanah.” -26, 9, Gita*

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.

This paper attempts to analyze Bhakti as one of the Margas for Liberation (Moksa) depicted in Gita. Gita is not a metaphysical, rather a religious and ethical text. It is also known as Yoga Sastra. The man who is predominately man of Emotion, ought to follow the path of Devotion (Bhakti). Bhakti Yoga, according to Gita, means path to union with the Absolute Consciousness (Bhagavan). This is the sole marg which can be followed by all people. Through bhakti one can union with the Bhagavan and can attain Moksa.

*“tesam jnani nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir visisyate
Priyo hi jnanino tyartham aham sa ca mama priyah- 17,7 of Gita*

Out of four kinds of bhaktas- Arta, Artharthi, Juingsu, Jnani. The one who is in full knowledge and who is always engaged in pure devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me. i.e. Jnani bhakta.

*“Bhaktya tv ananyaya sakya aham evam-vidho Arjuna
Jnatatum drastum ca tattvena pravestum ca parantapa”- 54, 11, Gita.*

My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding. So Ananya Bhakti or undivided devotion is the sole path of moksa. Which is the absolute goal of human life. Finally, in Gita it is found that Jnanayoga, Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga are reconciled.

Key Words: Gita, Moksa, Bhakti Marga, Ananya Bhakti

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I. Introduction

Indian literature and philosophy are life related, hence they are not only theoretical but also practical. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Holy Books, like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad-Gita are full of social, ethical, economical and political practices and guided human life and preserved a better world for all. Where found so many ideals performed for social wellbeing, like Lokasamgraha, Svadharma, Niskāma karma, Varna dharma etc. Further the conception of Moksa (Liberation) and the paths for it. Jinanayoga, karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga etc. Among the various ideals of Bhagavad-Gita, Bhaktiyoga occupies an important place, which is a practical path and easy one. Bhakti Yoga, according to Gita, means path to union with the Absolute Consciousness (Bhagavan). This is the sole marg which can be followed by all people. Through Bhakti, one can union with the Bhagavan and can attain Moksa. And he can being a member of happiness and peaceful world for all. So in this paper basically focused upon Bhaktiyoga as a easier path of union and moksa.

Bhagavad-Gitā:

Bhagavad-Gitā is the cream of Mahabharata which is included in the ‘Visada Parva’, it contains eighteen chapters, and each chapter is called ‘Yoga’. Here, ‘Yoga’ means ‘Union’, union of the Individual Selves with the

Universal Self. Bhagavad-Gitā, the etymological meaning is Song of Gods. Is is also known as Saptashati Gita, because it contained 7000 slokas. Bhagavad-Gitā is only conversation between Lord Shree Krishna and Ignorant Arjuna before fighting in the ‘Kuruksetra’, the Holy War (Dharma Yodha). Here, Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna about Nature of soul, Dharma, Svadharma, Duty, Stityopragya, Liberation etc. In Bhagavad-Gitā Shree Krishna teaches Arjuna about Lokasamgraha to pursue him to fight the Holy War ‘Kuruksetra’, because of ignorance Arjuna heited to fight against Kauravas who are his closed relatives but Krishna teaches Arjuna to do his duty as a ksatriya i.e. to protect the people from the unrighteous rule. Shree Krishna said that as an incarnation God the perfect Being. Though Gita is not a metaphysical text, rather it is religious, ethical text. It can be called as ‘Manava-Dharma-Sastra’ further it can be called as ‘Karma-Yoga-Sastra’.

In Indian philosophy, Indian tradition and Indian culture, the absolute goal or supreme end of human life and philosophy is to attain Moksa. Because, human beings are suffering in this stage of life i.e. Bandage. Gita also considers it and states that attainment of Liberation is the realization of the oneness or union of individual consciousness to the Supreme consciousness i.e. Bhagavan. Union is noted in it as yoga. Yoga or union of

the individual selves with the Universal Self. In Gita Three main different margs for such union- Jnanayoga, Karmayoga and Bhaktiyoga. Individual according their nature of character they have to follow any of these and being union and attain liberation. So J. N. Sinha in his book 'Outlines of Indian Philosophy, P.51 states as- "Some are predominantly men of action. They ought to follow the path of action or karmayoga. Some are predominantly men of intellectual. They ought to follow the path of knowledge or Jnanayoga. And some are predominantly men of emotional. They ought to follow the path of devotion or Bhaktiyoga. Such features are characterized by the pre-dominance of guna over other gunas.

Bhaktiyoga: The people who are predominantly men of emotional. They ought to follow the path of devotion or Bhaktiyoga. Though this marg the man can be union and can attain liberation easily. 'Bhakti' the etymological meaning is pray of devotion. So bhakti implies undivided devotion or pray to the Bhagavan. Bhakti as marg, it is derived from notion of Upashana depicted in Upanishad. It is the only path which can be followed by the all people irrespectively. So In Gita Bhagavan Shree Krishna states as -

"Patram puspam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati

Tad aham bhaktya-upahrtam asnami prayatatmanah." -26, 9, Gita

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it. It implies that irrespectively it is the only and easier path for union and moksha. With Bhakti where one realize and tries to union Bhagavan is always accept it. Devotion may be with leaf or flower or fruit or water. Isvara is always nearest to us, just we have to devote Him with undivided pray. He does not partial to any one, all are nearest to Him. So it is stated as-

*"Samo'ham sarva-bhutesu na me dvesyo'sti na priyah
Ye bhajanti tu mam bhaktya mayi te tesu capy aham."* -29, 9, Gita

I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him. It implies that Supreme Conspicuousness is neither partial nor far from any one. He is nearest to everyone and Bhakti marg is one of the three which is marg of devotion. One can realize the nearness of individual consciousness to the Supreme Conspicuousness. Undivided pray or devotion to the Bhagavan is the way to realize it. Hence, it is stated as-

"Man-mana bhava mad-bhakto mad-yaji mam namaskuru

Mam evaisyasi yuktvaivam atmanam mat-parayahan." -34, 9, Gita

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me. It implies that who completely devote himself or his mind in Bhagavan and offers worship to Bhagavan is always dearest to Him and can union.

Any type of pray or devotion is not marg of union. So Bhagavan says to Arjun who representing common people in Gita as-

"catur-vidha bhajante mam janah sukrino arjuna

Arto jijnasur artharthi jnani ca bharatarsabha." - 16,7, Gita

O best among the Bharatas, four kinds' pious men begin to render devotional service unto Me-the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute. Some devotees are engaged upon it for survive from disease are known as Arta or distressed one. Some devotees are engaged upon it for wealth are known as Artharthi or Wealth seekers. Some devotees are engaged with it for self knowledge are known as Jgansu or Self knowledge seekers. And some devotees are engaged with it in undivided manner to union with Bhagavan as absolute gaol are known as Jnani or Wise one or seers. Among these four kinds devotees Jnani devotees are nearest to God. Because his or her devotion is free from all types of attachment and perform in niskam manner. So it is stated as-

"tesam jnani nitya-yukta eka-bhaktir visisyate

Priyo hi jnanino tyartham aham sa ca mama priyah." -17,7, Gita

Of these, the one who is in full knowledge and who is always engaged in pure devotional service is the best. For I am very dear to him, and he is dear to Me. Here it implies that out of the four kinds of devotees Jnani devotee is the dearest to Bhagavan. He carry the lack and preserves whatever they have. It is stated as-

"Ananyas citanayanto mam ye janah paryupastate

Tesam nityabhiyuktanam yoga-ksemam vahamy aham." -22, 9, Gita

But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditation on my transcendental form- to them I carry what they lack and I preserve what they have. Bhakti is the marg, where Supreme frees individual from bandage of suffering. So it is stated as-

"Maha-bhutany ahankaro buddhir avyaktam eva ca

Indriyani darsaikam ca panca cendriya gocarah." -6, 12, Gita

"Iccha dvesah sukham dukham sanghatas cetana dhritih

Etat ksetram samasena sa-vikaram udahrtam" -7, 12, Gita

The five great elements, false ego, intelligence, the unmanifested, the ten senses and the mind, the five sense objects desire, hatred, happiness. Distress, the aggregate, the life symptoms, and convictions - all these are considered. In summary, to be the field of activities and its interactions. Gita emphasises upon undivided devotional service with complete surrender to the Bhagavan. Hence, it is stated as-

***“bhaktya tv ananyaya sakya aham avam-vidho arjuna
Jnatum drastum ca tattvena pravestum ca parantapa.”-
54,11, Gita***

My dear Arjuna, only by undivided emotional service can I be understood as I am, standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding. Bhagavan can be understood only by the process of undivided devotional service.

Ananya Bhakti implies that complete surrender in front of the Bhagavan and involve in undivided devotional service and tries to understand oneness to the Bhagavan. The jnani can realize the reality and can perform *niskama*, undivided devotional service and can make yoga with Supreme, through which one can attain Moksa.

Unlike *mimamsa* and *Advaita Vedanta*, *Visistadvaita Vedanta* considers Bhakti marg as path for liberation. *Visista Advaita Vedantist*, Ramanuja as a theist believes in salvation is possible, not through *jnana* and *karma*, but through *bhakti* and *prasada* (grace). *Jnana*, in the scriptures, stands for *dhyana*, or meditation, and *nididhyasana* or concentrated contemplation. Bhakti is gained through concentration on the truth that God is our innermost self and that we are but modes of his substance. But such *jnana* cannot be had unless the bad *karma* is destroyed. Works undertaken in a disinterested spirit helps to remove the past accumulations. So long as *karma* enjoined in the scriptures is undertaken with a selfish motive, the end cannot be gained. The results of ceremonial observances are transitory, while the results of the knowledge of God is indestructible (*Akaya*); but if we perform work in the spirit of dedication to God it helps us in our effort after salvation. Work performed in such a spirit develops the *sattvanature* and helps the soul to see the truth of things. The two *jnana* and *karma*, are means to bhakt, or the power which tears up our selfishness by the roots, to the will, new eyes to the understanding and new peace to the soul. Bhakti is a loving devotion towards God. Bhakti is not a mere emotional pursuit, according to Ramanuja. It involves training one's mind and intellect towards love of God. It calls for an unperturbed total concentration on God and unbroken chain of thoughts on God

Bhakti or devotion is a vague term extending from the lowest form of worship to the highest life of realization. It has had a continuous history in India from the time of

the Rg-Veda to the present day. Bhakti, in Ramanuja is man's reaching out towards a fuller knowledge of God quietly and meditatively. He insists on an elaborate preparation for bhakti, which includes *viveka* or discrimination of food, *vimoka* or freedom from all else and longing for God; *abhyasa* or continuous thinking of God; *kriya* or doing good to others; *kalyana* or wishing well to all; *satyam* or truthfulness; *arjavam* or integrity; *daya* or compassion; *ahimsa* or non-violence; *dana* or charity; and *anavasada* or cheerfulness and hopes. Thus bhakti is not mere emotionalism, but includes the training of the will as well as intellect. It is knowledge of God as well as obedience to this will. Bhakti is loving God with all our mind and with all our heart. It finds its culmination in an intuitive realization of God. For him bhakti has a social significance.

Bhakti and Moksa are organically related, so that at every stage of bhakti we are perfecting ourselves. Bhakti is salvation in becoming, and is regarded as superior to the other methods, since it is its own reward (*phalarupatvat*). The soul becomes through bhakti more and more vividly conscious of its relation to God, until at last it surrenders itself to God, who is the Soul of soul. Then there is no longer self-love or self-seeking, since God has taken the place of self and the whole life is transfigured. Nammalvar stated in his 'Tiruvaymoyi, ii.3.4. that "In return for thy great and good gift-the mingling of my spirit with thine-I have entirely yielded up my spirit to thee." Every drop of one's blood, every beat of one's heart, and every thought of one's brain are surrendered to God. It is a case of "I yet not I."

Bhakti is distinguished into formal (*Vaidhi*) and supreme (*mukhya*). The formal is lower phase, where we indulge in prayers, ceremonies and by themselves save the soul. We must worship the supreme; for nothing else, in the last analysis, can serve as the object of meditation is called *Mukhya*.

Prapatti is complete resignation to God, and is, according to the Bhagavatas, the most effective means for gaining salvation. It is open to all, the learned as well as the ignorant, the high as well as the low, while the path of bhakti, involving as it does *jnana* and *karma*, is confined to the three upper classes. But anyone, after taking instruction from a preceptor, may fling himself on the bosom of God and take refuge in him. According to the Southern school of Bhagavata (Tengalais), "Prapatti is the only way to salvation, and no more effort on the part of the devotee is necessary." God saves the soul who has utterly surrendered himself to Him. But the Northern school Bhagavata (Vadagalasi) holds that *orapatti* is one way of reaching the goal, and not the only way. For them human effort is an essential factor in salvation. The individual who has qualified himself by *karma*, *jnana*, *bhakti* and *prapsatti* wins the favour of the Lord.

Tengalais uphold the *Marjaranyaya* or the cat theory, since the kitten is taken up by the cat with its

mouth, this school holds that nothing depends on man's effort, for the grace of God selects the individuals to be freed. The soul is seized by God in one supreme act, which need not be repeated. Vadagalasi upholds the Markatanyaya, or the monkey theory, since the young monkey is to exert and stick to the mother. This school insists on the continuous offering of the soul to God. Ananya Bhakti Bhagavad Gita, is the full and complete surrendered and exclusive devotion, meditation on God's transcendental form. So in Gita stated as-

"Ananyas citayanta mam ye janah paryupasated

Tesam nityabhiyuktanam yoga-ksemam vahamy aham." -22, 9, Gita

Who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditation on My transcendental form-to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.

It is seen that both Prapatti in Vishishtadvaita and Ananya Bhakti in Gita are similar in nature, both imply that supreme state of bhakti is complete surrendered of oneself in front of God for His grace. As stated in 'Gita Rahasya' by Thinker Bal Gangadhar Tilak, it can be said that due to Bhaktiyoga, Bhagavad-Gitā is so beautiful and popular and relevant upto date.

In conclusion it can be said that Bhakti Yoga in Bhagavad-Gitā is one of the paths for liberation. It is the easiest and popular path. For spiritual perfection bhakti is the only supreme way, yes jnana and karma help in this way, but not supreme path. It is depicted in Gita as reconciling of yogas. Bhakti or Bhakti yoga is eternally relevant for human being. That is why in Assam Sankardeva has dedicated his life for bhakti. Each and every individual without sex, class, caste discrimination follow this path and being a perfect spiritual human being and create a peaceful society.

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