

## CHAPTER: VII

### *The place of Bhakti in Philosophy and Religion*

CHAPTER VII.

THE PLACE OF BHAKTI

IN

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.

So far we have discussed Bhakti mostly in the light of the emotional approach to God; but now we shall discuss Bhakti in the light of intellectual or philosophical point of view in order to assign a proper place to Bhakti in philosophy and religion. De facto, our true self is the source of infinite knowledge within us. Hence self-perfection is the highest aim of human life.

According to Will Durant, philosophy is a hypothetical interpretation of the unknown (as in metaphysics), or of the inexactly known (as in ethics or Political philosophy); it is the front trench in the siege of truth. Science is analytical description, philosophy is synthetic interpretation. Science wishes to resolve the

whole into parts, the organism into organs, the obscure into the known. It does not inquire into the values and ideal possibilities of things, nor into their total and final significance; it is content to show their present actuality and operation; it narrows its gaze resolutely to the nature and process of things as they are. The scientist is as impartial as Nature. But the philosopher is not content to describe the fact; he wishes to ascertain its relation to experience in general and thereby to get at its meaning and its worth; he combines things in interpretative synthesis; he tries to put together, better than before, that great watch of the Universe, which the inquisitive scientist has analytically taken apart. In brief, to observe processes and to construct means is science; to criticise and coordinate ends is philosophy. A fact is nothing except in relation to desire; it is not complete except in relation to a purpose as a whole. Science without philosophy, facts without

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perspective and valuation, cannot save us from havoc and despair. Science gives us knowledge, but only philosophy can give us wisdom.

Specifically, philosophy means and includes give fields of study and discourse; (logic, aesthetics, ethics, politics and metaphysics)<sup>1</sup> whereof metaphysics is the chief and others are subordinate to it. Metaphysics is the study of the "ultimate reality" of all things; of the real and final nature of matter, mind and spirit or God. Broadly speaking, we use the term 'philosophy' here in the sense of metaphysics, which is in fact the study of the Ultimate Reality of all things ( viz. God, World, Souls, Jīva, Jagat and Īśvara). Śrī Śaṅkarācārya uses the term in this sense as will be seen from his wellknown aphorism.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Will Durant : "The Story of Philosophy" - P. xxvi and xxvii.

2. ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या ।  
शंकराचार्यः विवेकचूडामणि. २०  
ब्रह्मज्ञानावलीमाला (२०)

In fact, "to know oneself" is the highest knowledge because, by knowing it, we can know the reality of the universe. Man is the epitome of the universe. That which exists in the Macrocosm is to be found in the microcosm.

According to Mrs. Annie Besant, philosophy is an explanation of life, constructed by the mind and accepted as true by the intellect. Without an explanation, which satisfies the reason, a man remains restless and discontented. The unintelligibility of life is torture to the thoughtful; one cannot rest in the midst of a whirl of forces and of events, a chaos, which throws up fragments which cannot be fitted into a rational whole. The mind imperatively demands order, succession, causal connections, the stately rythm of purposeful movements, the relation of past to present, of present to future. To understand is the deepest instinct in the Mind of Man, and it can never rest -

satisfied until this understanding is obtained. Man can suffer patiently, struggle perseveringly, endure heroically, if he feels within him a purpose, sees before him a goal. She holds that men have striven to understand the mysteries of existence by approaching them from one of three mutually opposed view-points:-

1. All comes forth from Matter, the One Existence, and this, from its own inherent energy, produces all forms, and gives birth through them to life. All materialistic philosophies are built on this basis.
2. All comes forth from Spirit, pure mind, the One Existence, and matter is merely a creation of the Spirit engaged in thought. There is really no matter; it is an illusion and if the Spirit rises above this illusion he is free, self-sufficing, omnipotent. He imagines himself separate, and is separate; he imagines objects, and is surrounded by them; he imagines pain, and he suffers; he

imagines pleasure and he enjoys. Let him sink into himself, and all the universe will fade away as a dream, and "leave not a wrack behind". All idealistic philosophies are built on this basis.

3. Spirit and Matter are two aspects of One Existence, the All, coming forth from the One together, united as inseparably during manifestation as the back and front of the same object, merging into Oneness again at the close of a period of manifestation. In the All exist simultaneously all that has been, all that is, all that can be, in one Eternal Present.<sup>3</sup>

According to Prof. M.N. Dwivedī, philosophy is the search of the one (Ātman or Brahman)

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3. Annie Besant : "Theosophy" - P. 52 and 53.

in the many.<sup>4</sup> Knowledge of the Self or Ātman is the highest of all. Know that self alone that is one without second.<sup>5</sup> Indian religion and Indian philosophy are broadly speaking identical. Right knowledge is the theoretical aim of philosophy and Mokṣa is the practical aim of all the systems of Indian philosophy, except the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, which aims at heavenly Bliss. True religion is extremely practical; it is indeed based entirely on practical experience, and not upon theory or speculation of any kind, for religion begins only where theory ends. Its object is to mould the character, unfold the divine nature of the

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4. M.N. Dwivedi : " Immitation of Samkara " -  
P.

5. लमेवैकं ज्ञानं आत्मानमन्यो वाचो  
विमुच्यते ।  
M. 4.2.5



soul, and make it possible to live on the spiritual plane, its ideal being the realization of Absolute Truth and the manifestation of Divinity in the actions of the daily life.<sup>6</sup>

In brief, Religion is the yearning of the individual soul for the Infinite. It develops by conscious attempts. It finds its highest fulfilment with the sublimation of the individual being into the being of the Universal. Religion (Dharma) is the natural bond of unity between man and God. It is natural because God is the ideal self of man.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Swami Abhedānanda : " How to be a Yogi " Page 3.

7. न ह्यच्युतं प्रीणयतो बद्धायासोऽसुरात्मजा ।  
आत्मत्वात् सर्वभूतानां सिद्धत्वादिह सर्वतः ॥  
Bh. 7:6:19

यो वै भूमा तत्सुखं नात्ये सुखं अस्ति ।  
Ch. 4 7:23

Religion is like a friendly policeman who guides man through this Traffic of Life to reach the goal of a perfectly happy and successful living.<sup>8</sup>

With this much prelude in regard to the general nature of philosophy and Religion from the Eastern as well as the Western point of view, we shall consider in brief the Bhāgavata Philosophy, especially in regard to the doctrine of Brahman, Jīva and Jagat. The Bhāgavata Philosophy in general, appears to be a powerful attempt at reconciling Vedāntic idealism and Sāṃkhya realism, with the emphasis on the former.

According to Śrī Viṣṇu-Purī, the Bhakti which the Bhāgavata inculcates is a sort of Vedāntic Bhakti - to coin a new phrase. If the Bhakta chooses, he remains eternally in

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8. A. Pārthasārthy : "The Art of Living" -  
(The Path to Perfection) - P. 36.

his status of a devotional Jīva. But union with the Divine is also his privilege and can be realised if he prefers it. But says the Bhāgavata, the saints prefer the other way, leading to perpetual devotion and not to absorption. Or, as popularly put, the Bhakta wants to be the eater of sugar and not to be sugar itself. <sup>9</sup>

The opening verse of the Bhāgavata is an adoration of the "Ultimate Truth" ( परं सत्यम् ). The word पर is explained by Sridhara as meaning God ( परमेश्वर ). And the truth ( सत्य ) is used here in the sense of Reality ( त्रिकात्म्यादित्य ). It is held that by virtue of this supreme underlying reality of God, the world of mind and matter appears as real. The fact that the world is produced from God, is sustained in Him, and is

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9. Viṣṇu-Purāṇa : " Bhakti Ratnāvalī " -  
Introduction - P. V.

ultimately dissolved in Him is but an  
inessential description ( लक्ष्यलक्षण ) of  
God.<sup>10</sup> His pure essence ( स्वस्वरूपलक्षण )  
consists of pure formless consciousness. It  
continues the same in all the three states of  
waking, dream and deep sleep; it is this that  
enlivenes the body, senses, life and mind. It  
is neither born, nor grows, nor decays, nor  
dies; yet it presides over all changes as the  
One constant factor as pure consciousness.<sup>11</sup>  
This Reality is called Bhagavān by the -  
Vaiṣṇavas, Brahman by the Vedantists and  
Parmātmān by others.<sup>12</sup> When this Reality is

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ज्ञानमाद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्थस्त्वभिज्ञः स्वशब्द  
10. तेनै ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिकवये मुख्यं यत्सूक्ष्मः ।  
तेजोवारिमृदा यथा विमिश्रयो यत्र विसर्गोऽमृता  
धाप्नोति स्वेन सदा निरस्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धीमहि ॥  
Bh. I : 1 : 1

11. सर्वं ब्रह्मात्मकम् । Bh. II : 27 : 18

12. वदन्ति लक्ष्यविवेकस्त्वं यदज्ञानमक्षयम् ।  
ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्धते ॥  
Bh. I : 2 : 11

conceived in its fullness in all its proper relations, it is called Bhagavān, whereas, when it is conceived without its specific relations as the One ( from बृह - to grow, grown so great as to unify all in one) in its abstract character it is called Brahman, and it is called Paramātmān in its ( परम ) transcendent aspect. From the ultimate point of view, there is no distinction or difference among Bhagavān, Brahman, and Paramātmān. There is only one Reality, which manifests itself as power and possessor of power.<sup>13</sup>

However, the above interpretation of the Bhāgavata Philosophy by Jīva Goswāmī; is contradicted by the Sāṃkhya theory of the Bhāgavata, for it denies the Reality of individual souls and the reality of the world

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13. अथ एकमेव स्वरूपं शक्तित्वेन  
शक्तित्वेन च विशजति ।

appearance. It may be noted here that the Bhāgavata Sāṃkhya Philosophy is theistic and so it radically differs from the classical atheistic Sāṃkhya, as expounded by Īśvara Kṛṣṇa. The fundamental difference of the Bhāgavata School of Sāṃkhya from that of the classical Sāṃkhya is that it admits one Puruṣa, as the Real, all pervading Soul, which is the Real Seer of all our experiences and the basic universal Being that underlies all things of this universe. In the eleventh Skandha, it is held that the Ultimate Reality is One and that all differences are mere differences of names and forms.14.

De facto, the philosophy of the Bhāgavata, though monistic or Advaita is independently its own. It seems to be a synthetic view ( સમન્વયાત્મક દર્શન ) of the various Dvaita

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14. તત્ત્વ યોગ ને ચેતન યોગ,  
નામ રૂપ ગુણ કર્મ યોગ.

"શ્રી ગોપાલની અપ્રતિદ્ધ સાબીતો"

and Advaita philosophies of the time, like the Bhagavad Gītā of olden days. Bhakti and Jñāna are not diametrically opposed to each other but they are beneficial and complementary to each other like dispassion and philosophic wisdom ( वैराग्य and लक्ष्यज्ञान )<sup>15</sup>. This is why some Ācāryas hold that knowledge and devotion depend mutually upon each other. Due to knowledge, devotion increases and due to devotion knowledge also is found to expand and grow. Thus, these two are mutually depending upon each other. There are some Ācāryas who go one step still further and say that not only do they mutually depend upon each other but they rise simultaneously in a seeker's bosom, and not severally. According to these Ācāryas, Bhakti and Jñāna are not two different things. Both of them are the experience of

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15. स्वामीजी श्रीचिदानन्दजी "भक्ति और ज्ञान" -  
कल्याण भक्ति अंक - पृ. ६९

one and the same Reality. They appear to be different due to the difference in the seat of their manifestation.<sup>16</sup> Bhakti is the attitude of the heart, and Jñāna is the attitude of the intellect of the creature towards his Creator. The goal of both is practically the same viz. God realization. In actual experience both are one and the same. So where the Bhakti experience is, there alone in the peak of

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16 પ્રેમ પ્રીતિ નરકુ લક્ષી,  
અખા સો જાને કોઈ,  
પ્રેમ મિલાવે ચિયુકુ,  
પ્રીતિ અપરશ કોઈ

દેવ અખાજીની રાખીઓ  
પૃષ્ઠ:૧૮



supreme devotion<sup>17</sup> is the infinite knowledge  
of the supreme self.<sup>18</sup> It is equally true that where  
there is Divine Wisdom, there alone is the  
Infinite Devotion to the Lord, as revealed in

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17. भक्त्या ~~स्वनन्यया~~ शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽङ्गुनि ।  
ज्ञातुं ~~इष्टुं~~ च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप ॥  
Gāthā ॥ : 54

अहंभूतः प्रसक्तात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।  
क्षमः सर्वेषु भूतेषु भक्तितं लभते परात् ॥  
भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि लेख्यतः ।  
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशले तदन्तरम् ॥  
Gāthā ॥ 18 : 54 & 55

18. तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः  
एकत्वप्रनुपश्यतः ।  
I p. 7

the Gītā.<sup>19</sup> From one point of view Jñāna Yoga and Bhakti Yoga are the two different aspects of devotion; for in truth Jñāna Yoga is Abheda Bhakti and Bhakti Yoga is Bheda Bhakti,<sup>20</sup> for Bhakti culminates in self-surrender, while Jñāna ends in self-knowledge. In essence self-surrender and self-knowledge are one at bottom. The way of man's approach or "Turn Back" to God is in essence the same in Christian and non-christian teachings. It has three stages, an ethical stage i.e. the stage of purification ( चित्तशुद्धि ), knowledge and love i.e. "illumination" ultimately leading to the mystical union of the soul with God as revealed in Neo-Platonism.

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19. तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिविशिष्यते ।  
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥  
गीता: 7: 17

20. स्वामीजी श्रीचिदानन्दजी "भक्ति और ज्ञान"  
कल्याण भक्ति डोंक : पृ ७०

In brief, the mystic way is for Plotinus the way of inner freedom and detachment from external things. It is also the way of introversion. Since the One is "within, at the innermost depth", we must turn our gaze within, closing our eyes to the world about us, - retreating inwards, and seeking there the Divine vision.<sup>21</sup>

It is always useful to know and bear in consciousness the inmost nature of the three-fold activities of Cognition, Desire and Action - thought, emotion and occupation.<sup>22</sup> In the world mental as in the world Spiritual; each man must progress by his own efforts.<sup>23</sup>

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21. Sidney Spencer: "Mysticism in World Religion" - (Plotinus and Neo-Platonism) - P. 167.

22. Bhagavāndās : "The Science of Emotions" - Page 524.

23. H.P. Blavatsky : "The Key to Theosophy" - P. xiii.

In the initial stage the devotee believes himself to be distinct from God but after passing through the following three stages viz. -

- (1) I am His ( तस्यैवाहम् ),
- (2) I am Thine ( त्वेवाहम् ),
- (3) I am Thyself ( त्वमेवाहम् );

he believes himself to be one with God. The last of the above three stages is called Parā-Bhakti or Abheda Bhakti. It is similar to the Mahāvākya - "Thou art that".<sup>24</sup> The same sentiment has been practically expressed by Hanumānjī, the best of the Bhaktas and the Jñānīs in revealing himself before Śrī Rāma.<sup>25</sup> In Jñāna Yoga (i.e. Abheda Bhakti) the aspirant resorts to logical reasoning ( Vicāra ); and believes that

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24. लक्ष्मणसि

Ch. 4. 6 : ४ ७

25. देहदृष्ट्या तु दासोऽहं जीविदृष्ट्या त्वदेशकः ।  
वस्तुस्तु त्वमेवाहम् इति मे निश्चला प्रति ।।  
हनुमन्नाटक

" I am one with God, I am Truth - consciousness - bliss ( सच्चिदानन्द ). As I am truth, I am beyond time, and therefore, birthless and deathless. As I am consciousness, I am wisdom itself, and therefore, I have not to attempt for the acquisition of knowledge. As I am bliss itself, I am above the need of the worldly persons and things for the sake of happiness. I am not the body, and so I am free from birth, death, old age, disease etc., I am not the vital breath, and so I am above hunger and thirst; I am not the senses and so the contact of or separation from sense-objects does not give me pain or pleasure; and I am not the internal organ ( कोतः करण i.e. मन बुद्धि चित्त अहंकार ), and so, I am beyond the touch of grief or - infatuation, attraction and repulsion ( रागद्वेष ). I am neither the doer nor the enjoyer. At the rise of the sun, the living beings of the world engage themselves in good or bad activities, but the Sun itself, the Eye of the whole world

is not at all affected by the pains or pleasures, joys or sorrows of the worldlings.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the self that is the Ātman is not at all affected by the objects, emotions and thoughts of the embodied beings. By constant meditation on the above truth with a quiet, pure and loving mind, the aspirant attains to Mokṣa or beatitude.

In Bhakti Yoga i.e. Bheda Bhakti, the true devotee believes that the universe in its manifold names and forms is nothing but the One - the Brahman. It is all the play of the Lord. Thus, the true devotee is one who sees the oneness of all life, sees the divine presence everywhere, and thus attains to beatitude. In both the above spiritual disciplines, heart-purity and concentration or the four-fold means ( साधन चतुष्टय ),

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26. यथा हि भानुर्दयो नृचक्षुषां ततो निहन्त्यान् त्व  
अद् विधत्ते ।  
एवं समीक्षा निपुणा सती ते हन्यात्तद्विश्रं पुरुषस्य  
बुद्धे ॥  
एष स्वयं ज्योतिरज्ञोऽप्रमेयो महानुभूतिः सक्त्वानुभूतिः ।  
एकोऽद्वितीयो वचनां विशदो देनेक्षितः वागसवस्वरन्ति ॥

are of vital importance.<sup>27</sup> Whatever be the means adopted, mind must be persuaded away from its natural fascinations for the sense-objects, and it must be guided to live a life of the nobler values of ethical and moral principles. Jñāna leads to faith, faith leads to love and love leads to the strengthening of devotion.

It will be seen from the above that the way of life and the way of salvation, preached by Bhakti, involve divine wisdom. It is only after God-vision that true Bhakti is generated in man. It is only when a man has attained to the full knowledge of God that he is able to meditate on Him with full devotion.<sup>28</sup> In fact

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27. ज्ञादौ नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः परिगृह्यते ।  
इहामुत्रफलभोगविशगस्तदनन्तरम् ।  
श्रमादिषट्कसम्पत्तिर्मुमुक्षुत्वमिति स्फुटम् ॥  
शंकराचार्यः "विवेकचूडामणिः" ॥ १६
28. यो नापेवमसंमूढो जानाति पुरुषोत्तमम् ।  
स सर्वविघ्नजलिनां सर्वभावेन भारत ॥  
गीता : १५ : १९

the highest devotion (Parā Bhakti) and the highest realization (Ātmanubhava) seem to be in reciprocal causation unless a man comes to possess the highest devotion, he will not have a vision of God and unless he has a vision of God, true Bhakti will not spring in him.<sup>29</sup> As shown above, only a सर्वविद् (i.e. a true philosopher) is a true devotee of सर्वभाव (i.e. God-vision). Furthermore, the Gītā speaks of the Jñānī (i.e. a true philosopher) as the Bhāgavatottama, the best of the four types of devotees.<sup>30</sup> "The wise man is the Bhakta par-excellence. Exceedingly dear am I to the man of

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29. Dr. R.D. Rāṇaḍe : "The Bhagavadgītā as a Philosophy of God-realisation" - P. 267.

30. चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सकृन्निगोऽर्जुन ।  
ज्ञातो जिज्ञासुर्धर्मो ज्ञानी च भक्तर्षभ ॥  
Gītā . 7 : 16



wisdom and he is dear to me." <sup>31</sup> By the grace of God, a true devotee will be able to ward off all perils. <sup>32</sup> Besides, the Gītā reveals that they alone can cross Māyā who take refuge in God. <sup>33</sup> The Bhāgavata also says that one can attain Mokṣa only by taking refuge in God, and by divine grace, consequent upon perfect detachment

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तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एव भक्तिविशिष्यते ।  
31. प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥  
गीता . ७ : १७

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तश्चिन्त्यते ।  
32. मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तश्चिन्त्यते ।  
गीता : १८ : ५४

मातेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायाभेदां तस्मिन् ते ॥  
33. मातेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायाभेदां तस्मिन् ते ॥  
गीता : ७ : १४

from all excepting God.<sup>34</sup>

A man may be a Prince or a great Preceptor but if he has no love for God nor does he try to know of God or to remember God in his lifetime is an animal in the form of a human being.<sup>35</sup> A man can be truly spirited or religious minded, if he can conquer his animal nature by realising his true self and its relation to the universal spirit. To realise the eternal truth, first of all, the heart must be purified, and concentrated on God; for God is revealed only unto the pure at heart, and that too, according to the --

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येषां स भगवान् दययेदन्तः ॥  
34. सवलिताः सवलिपदो यदि निर्वर्त्तकम् ।  
ते दुस्तरातलितरन्ति च देवतायां  
नैषां नमाहन्ति श्री. स्वभूगालभूये ॥  
Bh. 2.7.42

35. श्री रामशंकर मोनज लह. "श्रीमद् भागवत",  
महा पद्येणो, पृ० ७७

gradation of purity, sanctity and piety of the soul.<sup>36</sup> Cit Śuddhi is thus the condition precedent to God-realisation. First, when a man realises God, he has a feeling of disgust for all worldly things.<sup>37</sup> The true devotee must therefore, develop the attitude of having nothing but the One (एकमेव द्वितीयम्), the Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata.<sup>38</sup>

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36. Dr. K.A. Thakkar : " Thesis on - The Philosophy of Śrī Akhājī " - P. 18.

37. यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।  
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥  
Gita. 2:52

38. जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्धेऽवभिज्ञः स्वशब्द-  
लेने ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिक्वये मुमुक्षुः ।  
लेजोवारिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसगोदितृषा  
धाम्ना स्वेन सदा निश्स्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धामहि ॥  
Bh. 1:1.1

लक्ष्मादेवेन मनसा भगवान् सात्वतां पतिः ।  
श्रोतव्यं कीर्तितव्यं च ध्येयं पूज्यं च नित्यदा ॥  
Bh. 1:2.14

लक्ष्माद् भारत सवन्ता भगवान् हरिरीश्वरः ।  
श्रोतव्यं कीर्तितव्यं च स्मर्तव्यं चैच्छताम्रयम् ॥  
Bh. 2:1.5

Secondly, a man is freed from his sins as soon as God reveals Himself to his vision, as a lit-up fire reduces the entire fire-wood to ashes.<sup>39</sup> It may be questioned here whether sinlessness is a cause or an effect. It is a case of reciprocal causation; for the purity of the heart, sinlessness and detachment lead to God vision, and God vision leads to the state of purity, sinlessness and detachment.

Thirdly, it is only a result of God-vision that one is able to solve the riddle of this universe, as revealed to Arjuna in the Gītā. He alone becomes one with Brahman, who sees the multiplicity of all beings inherent in the One and their evolution from that One alone.<sup>40</sup>

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39. ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ।

Gita 4:37.

40. समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम् ।  
विनश्यत्स्वाविनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥  
समं पश्यन्ति सर्वत्र सन्नयस्थितमेष्वरम् ।  
न हिनस्त्यात्मना ऽऽत्मानं ततो याति परं गतिम् ॥

Gita 13:28-29.

In brief, a true Bhakta sees the One in the many and the many in the One, as everything originates from and sustained by God and is ultimately resolved into God.<sup>41</sup>

Fourthly, a true Bhakta that is a Bhakti Jñānī attains to a vision of absolute equality.<sup>42</sup>

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41. सत्यं परं च्छीमदि । Bh .1.1.1.

जन्माद्यस्य यतः । ब्रह्म सूत्र 1.1.2.

शास्त्रयोर्मित्वात् । ब्रह्म सूत्र 1.1.3.

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म ।

तत्त्वज्ञानमिति वात उपासीत ।

Ch.V. 3:14:1.

42. समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोषाशमकाञ्चनः॥

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्द्याऽऽत्मसंस्तुतिः॥

-Git 14:24.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानपमानयोः॥

शीलोष्ठासुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः॥

-Git 12:18.

It is this mystic vision or equal vision that distinguishes a true devotee from everybody else. Dr. Rānade holds that the mystic i.e. the true Bhakta or Bhakta-Jñānī must see the form of God continuously, imminently in the universe and transcendently above it.<sup>43</sup> It is only then that the sixth sense (or spiritual eye) of direct perception of higher truths develops and frees it from dependence upon the sense powers.<sup>44</sup>

Lastly, as a full blown lotus flower cannot contain within itself its own perfume, but must necessarily radiate it to prince and pauper alike, so the realizer of God must proclaim God to the whole world and spread God's Gospel. Communion is therefore, an essential feature of the Bhāgavata religion.

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43. Dr. R.D. Rānade : " The Bhagavatagītā as a Philosophy of God-realisation" - P.269.

44. Svāmī Abhedānanda : " How to be a Yogī " - P. 7.

It would be evident from the above discussion that :

1). For attaining Parā Bhakti, a man must have a disgust for worldly things.

2). He must be sinless that is quite pure at heart. This is why the Bible says -  
"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."<sup>45</sup> In the Rg-Veda too it is said that only the God-minded see God for ever more.<sup>46</sup> After getting the vision of God the after-effects of God-vision are as under :-

- a). Warding off of all perils by divine grace.
- b). Solution of the world riddle.
- c). Vision of equality.

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45. St. Luke : "The New Testament" Chapter 11, Verse 28.

46. सदा पश्यन्ति सूर्यः ।

Rv 1:22.

- d). Origin of Parā-Bhakti.
- e). Saints' responsibility to spread  
God's gospel or community of saints.
- f). Joy and peace for evermore.<sup>47</sup>

In truth, the above mentioned are the marks of a true Jñānī too. This is why in the last analysis Parā Bhakti and Brahma Jñāna or divine love and divine wisdom are said to be the two aspects of one and the same Ultimate Reality, the Bhagavān of the Bhāgavata. In the words of Swāmī Śivānanda, " Concentration is done either on a point in space (Bhakti Mārga) or on the entire existence (Jñāna Mārga). Mind has to be concentrated on one substance, be it this or that. The annihilation of thought is the death of individuality,<sup>48</sup> which is the

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47. यौलव्धवा-वापरे लभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।  
अस्मिन्निस्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणाऽपि विचाल्यते॥

७ 6:22.

48. Swāmī Śivānanda: "Essence of Bhakti Yoga" -



experience of the Absolute. Bhakti has thus an essential place in the scheme of religion and in the realm of philosophy. The God of the Bhakta is the self-in-self ( अच स्व रूप ), while the God of the Jñānī is selfless Self-Divine ( स्वस्वातीत स्वयं ). This is the truth supreme revealed in the Bhāgavata ( सत्यं परं धीमहि ). A true Bhakta says, " Oh Lord ! I am Thine. All is Thine, I am not a separate entity. I have no power to do anything, you are doing everything taking myself as an instrument. O Lord ! You are everywhere. I am walking over Your Body. I am not able to live separately, for I am seeing you everywhere. You appear as the man and the woman and as the old man that totters with a stick on the road. You have become everything. I have no independence. I am your slave. A slave has no optional views. He can do only what the master commands him to do. I am doing nothing.

Only you are doing through me. You are 'the Doer. You are the Enjoyer. I am nothing. Thy will will be done.' 49

In the opinion of Swāmī Śivānanda, this is the highest type of Love. This is Divine Love. The ego cannot assert itself, for God alone is everywhere. The mind cannot modify itself into Vṛttis of sense-objects; for to him, there is no object except God. Who is there to be loved or hated ? The Bhakta is, therefore, blissful at all times. The mind cannot think of anything else but God; for everything is God. Wherever the mind goes, there it experiences Samādhi ( यत्र यत्र मनो याति तत्र तत्र समाधयः ); for it does not find an object of enjoyment, independent of God. God is filling every speck of space. The whole

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49. Swāmī Śivānanda : " Essence of Bhakti Yoga " -

P. 6 and 7.

world is clothed with the Glory of God.<sup>50</sup> The saint and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious, the good and the bad, the man and the animal, all are forms of God. How can the mind deal with them in an undivine way ? There the mind experiences Samādhi; for the mind has consciousness, but it has no object. This is Samādhi. Samādhi is thoughtless consciousness, objectless knowledge. This is Parā Bhakti. This is one with Vedāntic realization. Vedānta Sākṣātkāra ( साक्षात्कार ) and Parā Bhakti are only two names of one and the same thing. The effect of both is the annihilation of the ego or the destruction of the mind.

The essential unity of Divine Love and Divine Wisdom is revealed by Śrī Rāmaṇa Maharṣi as follows :

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50. ईशावास्यं सर्वं इदं सर्वं

I. U. Verse : 1.

" The Self is the only Reality. There are no others, for one self or only one life is vibrant in every atom. The self-knower or the realized one, therefore, does not see the world as different from himself. In fact - ' as we are, so is the world'. The pure-hearted wise ever visualise God.<sup>51</sup> De facto ' I - I ' is the self; but when it flies off at a tangent and says, ' I am this or that, I am such and such' It is the ego. The ego-sense is the basis of the individuality and it is only the - individual ego which passes from life to life; and so all that is required to realise the Self is " to be still " i.e. to have a strong desire to recollect the forgotten thing and to keep the surface mind quite still." <sup>52</sup> Hence,

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51. सदा पश्यन्ति स्वरयः

Rv 1:22.

52. Śrī Rāmāṇa Mahārṣi : " Golden Jubilee Souvenir " - P. 96.

Ātma-Vidyā is the easiest thing to attain;  
and discrimination and dispassion are the  
two wings of the Soul - bird flying to its  
Home. The obstacle is the mind. It must be  
got over or transcended whether in the home  
or in the forest. Mokṣa can be attained even  
while one lives here and now;<sup>53</sup> for we are  
one with Brahman. Self-realization is the  
climax of Divine Wisdom and Divine Love. Self-  
surrender is the same as self-knowledge. De -  
facto, the self is pure, contentless conscious-  
ness. For self-realization we have to attempt  
to get in from without i.e. to turn inwards  
towards the self (Ātman). The attempt is Vicāra  
and the inner movement is Grace. Grace is ever  
present; but the seeker must earnestly strive  
to qualify himself for the grace. Both Vicāra

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53. अहं ब्रह्मास्म्यहं ब्रह्मास्म्यहं ब्रह्मेति निश्चयः॥

चिदहं चिदहं चेति स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते॥

शंकराचार्यः "सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धान्तसारसंग्रहः"

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and Kṛpā are necessary; for each has to endeavour for Self-realization. God helps them who help themselves. Abiding in God ( आत्म स्थिति ) is the true Āsana for Ātma Yōgā, as self perfection (Ātma Siddhi) is the highest aim of life. In reality, the egoless state is the natural, the real state, while the ego-state is the unnatural and the false state. Our ultimate freedom (Mokṣa) lies in our becoming aware of our selfhood and non-duality.<sup>54</sup>

In brief, the goal of philosophy and Religion or of Jñāna and Bhakti is God-realization (i.e. Saṁyama Brahman in Bhakti and Nirguṇa Brahman in Jñāna). In fact, Bhakti is the emotional approach to God, while Jñāna is the intellectual approach to God, while the three fibres of the supreme religion of the Bhāgavata

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54. Sri Rāmāṇa Mahārṣi : "Golden Jubilee Souvenir." p. 96.

viz. Jñāna, Bhakti and Vairāgya are at bottom one. They are the three different aspects of one and the same experience of the Ultimate Reality.<sup>55</sup> Detachment or internal renunciation of worldism (जगद भाव) is dispassion in the true sense of the term; God-sight or vision of God everywhere is the true mark of Parā Bhakti and the destruction of the sense of duality (i.e. अद्वैत भाव in toto is true knowledge of the Reality.<sup>56</sup> No religion or philosophy can, therefore, afford to ignore the three factors of Bhakti, Jñāna and Vairāgya in any scheme of religion and philosophy. De facto, the three fibres - detachment, devotion and wisdom form a triangle, whereof each is a

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55. ભકિત જ્ઞાન અને વૈરાગ્ય, પદારથ એકું તથા નામ વિભાગ.  
તેને અણબલયો કહે જૂજવા, પણ સમજ્યાને તે એક જ હુઆ  
અનુભવતા બાલી જે ભેદ, ભકિત જ્ઞાન આજા નિર્વેદ.  
સમ્યાદક! ભાઈકર ભેરી" આજાના લખ્યા"અમર

56. જગતભાવ રદેશી ગયો ત્યારે ત્યાં વૈરાગ જ થયો;  
જ્યાં જુએ, હરિ દલે પડે ત્યારે ભકિત સરાડે અઠે  
દ્વૈતભાગ આજા જ્યારે ગયું, -એ તથા પ્રકારે જ્ઞાન જ થયું

side of the mystic triangle of Ātmanubhava.  
Thus, both - Bhakti and Jñāna lead the aspirant  
to the Summum Bonum of life.

De facto, man is the architect of his own  
destiny, which he can by no way escape. The  
question of mercy, forgiveness or redemption  
is absolutely irrelevant. The inexorable law  
of Karman is bound to have its way. The path  
of knowledge and the path of devotion stand on  
par both with regard to the ultimate aim and  
their concern with the development of the mind.  
Both the paths aim at the supreme excellence  
of man and both assert that this can be  
achieved by the infinite developments of man's  
mind. But their difference of approach is not  
less emphatic. The path of knowledge is a hard  
task-master. It demands uncompromising -  
abstention, ruthless suppression of nature,  
strict inhibition of the instinctive life of  
man. But the path of devotion is for the  
sublimation of man's inherent tendencies. It



admits the claims of instinctive life involving human frailties. It tunes natural life to higher spiritual values transfigures the animal into the God; for man is not a stranger to the "region beyond", but is an integral part of it. He belongs to a different order than where he is. This sojourn is bound to end, and he will one day be awakened to the native glory of his unfathomable depth - selfhood. Call it divine grace, redemption or anything, it is bound to come for the spiritual resurrection of man buried in materiality.<sup>57</sup>

To sum up, the Bhāgavata is a gospel of divine life and not a text-book of systematic philosophy as ordinarily understood. The Bhāgavata philosophy has its theoretical as well as its practical aspects known respectively

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57. Siddheśvara Bhaṭṭācārya: "The Philosophy of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavata" - Vol. II - P. 220.

as Brahma-Vidyā and Bhāgavata Dharma. From the stand-point of Vijñāna (i.e. Ātmanubhava) it is admitted by all teachers that Bhāgavat (i.e. Bhagavān) is the only Absolute Reality; and Dharma is the means of realising Him - through complete self-surrender to His grace. Both the aspects are non-dualistic from the stand-point of Vijñāna and dualistic from that of the relative knowledge gained in the other three states viz. waking, dream and dreamless sleep. The essence of this philosophy is -

- (1) that Brahman or Ātman is the only Absolute Reality;
- (2) that the Ātman is the inner witness of the three states, which remains unchanged even in the midst of the change of states, and which alone can explain the fact of memory of the three states;

(3) and that the whole universe, including body, mind and ego is an expression in name and form of this Reality and as such, has no independent existence of its own.<sup>58</sup>

The Bhāgavata specifically favours Love Divine i.e. the emotional and volitional - approaches as more effective, easy and natural to the ordinary man, and as open to all, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, age or sex. Without love, everything else is considered useless and ineffective. Mere dry Jñāna or ritual is only a waste of energy.<sup>59</sup> The essential truths which the Bhāgavata emphasises again and again are the imperishability of the

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58. Swāmī Tyāgīsānanda : " The Cultural - Heritage of India " - Vol. III - P. 281 and 282.

59. Swāmī Tyāgīsānanda : " The Cultural - Heritage of India " - Vol. III - P. 289.

soul, the goodness, power and helpfulness of God and the attainment of salvation by the method of Bhakti.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the main theme of the Bhāgavata is the importance of Hari-Bhakti or devotion to God, especially in His manifestation as Kṛṣṇa.

The Bhāgavata has united the Upaniṣadic approach with the Yoga-technique of Patañjali. This is why it is called the supreme religion or the Paramahansa-Dharma. The central note of philosophy and religion viz. Self-discovery is nowhere so emphatically borne out, as in the Bhāgavata-Dharma. It aims at nothing less than the realisation of Bhagavān, the Supreme Person, the highest fulfilment of the individual. It is a self-complete religious system that takes due

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60. P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer : "Srimad-Bhāgavatā" -

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cognizance of the harmonious growth of all the three faculties - willing, knowing and feeling - phasing them out into their natural order of hierarchy. Thus, Bhakti has an honoured place in the scheme of religion and philosophy.