

## CHAPTER - VII

### CONCEPT OF DEVOTION OR *BHAKTI* AND ITS DIFFERENT KINDS

#### 7.1 : General Concept of *Bhakti* :

*Bhakti* is a generic term meaning loving devotion or attachment. It signifies a feeling and a sentiment, that is, an emotive state of mind. Its meaning can get particularised only when the entity towards which it is directed is specified. The word *bhakti*, when used in the religious context, can acquire particularly only when the name or the notion of the deity to whom it is directed is mentioned along with it. Only then, it can indicate a particular theology and religious mode. For example, *Viṣṇu-bhakti* and *Śiva-bhakti* can be legitimately explained in terms of Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva theologies. So, in the religious context, the term *bhakti* can mean devotion to God only in a general sense, and nothing more. Since the Hindu religious tradition is pluralistic in character in regards to beliefs, ideas and practices; *bhakti* cannot be confined to any one part thereof. Nor can it be lent a specific meaning in the light of any particular sectarian theology or religious behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

The term *bhakti* comes from the root *bhaj* and the suffix *ktin*. *Bhaj* means *to serve* or *to share* and *to participate*. In other words, *bhakti* is the intense devotion to God, to serve Him, to share and participate in the divine experience. According to the highest traditions of philosophical and religious thought in India, *bhakti* is living for

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1. Sharma, Krishna (2015). *Bhakti and Bhakti Movement – A New Perspective*; PP. 5, 6.

God, and living in God, in thought, feeling and deed. God-Union is described by the sage *Yājñavalkya* as a fulfilled experience of union between the lover and the beloved that knows nothing of other external or exterior aspects and of nothing higher or superior in taste.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of *bhakti* in general terms can be traced to the hymns in *Rgveda*, and it began to be crystallized during the *Epic* and *Purāṇic* periodas. R.G. Bhandakar finds the origin of the *bhakti* doctrine in the *Upaniṣadic upāsanā*.<sup>3</sup>

In *Śāṇḍilya-bhakti-sūtra*, *bhakti* or devotin is expressed as follow –

*sāparānuraktir īśvare //2*<sup>4</sup>

It means, *bhakti* or devotion is the supreme love for one personal God.

Again, in *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, *bhakti* or devotion is expressed as follows –

*sā tasmin parama premarūpā //2*<sup>5</sup>

It means that devotion or *bhakti* is the intense love for the Supreme.

From the above two *ślokas*, it is clear that the communion between the God and His worshipper is established through the sacrifice. In devotion or *bhakti*, the devotee experiences extreme meekness and insignificance. So, he entirely depends upon God and he also completely surrender himself to the Lord.

All religions declare that God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Each religion believes that by being faithful and obedient to this God, man can win his favour and thereby live in prosperity, peace and bliss on the earth– ending the entire

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2. Rajagopalachary, M and Damodar Rao, K (ed) (2016). *Bhaktimovement and Literature*. PP: 2,3

3. Bhandarkar, Sir R.G. (1965). *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*. PP. 28, 29.

4. *Śāṇḍilya Bhakti-sūtra*; verse-2

5. *Nārada Bhakti-sūtra*; verse-2

struggle for existence. So, faith, respect and dedication, with the primordial fear underlying all these, are very often given the name of *bhakti*. The person who has all these towards God is a *bhakta*.

*Bhakti* is, by common consent, the only fruitful attitude that can be adopted by a person, as a seeker of favours may be for entirely selfish ends, or for the welfare and happiness of one and all with God's kindness. Thus, among *bhaktas*, all are not God-seekers.<sup>6</sup>

In India, *bhakti* is at once personal as a way to unite oneself with God, and it is social as a way of orderly living with piety and God consciousness. In its personal dimension, *bhakti* is *jñāna* and *karma*. It takes elaborate worship rituals such as *archanā*, *japa*, *tapas* and *upāsanā* involving an elaborate discipline – a code of conduct. In its social dimension, *karma* takes the driver's seat and makes the *bhakta's* life a *Yajña*. Social reformers and those who serve their fellowmen as a holy duty, all these are *premī bhaktas* of a non-religious mould. Indeed, *bhakti* does not in itself mean devotion to God. The way of *bhakti* is devotion which may be channelled to social service. The benefactor of society need not necessarily be a believer in God or in a particular religion.

*Bhakti* is not just a religious cult in India; but it is a worshipful attitude inculcated very early in life. The first lessons that a child hears are – *Mātr̥devo bhava*, *Pitr̥-devo bhava* and *Ācārya-devo bhava* visualising the mother, the father and the teacher as Gods on the earth. *Bhakti* draws a roadmap for all men to evolve from a personal oneness through social oneness to the universal oneness; from the manyness

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6. Rajagopalachary, M. and Damodar Rao, K (Ed.) (2016) : *Bhaktimovement and Literature*; PP. 9-11.

of sensory understanding to the spiritual oneness of Godhead. This attitude is the saving grace for man and his world protecting them from disintegration. If it cannot, nothing else can or does.<sup>7</sup>

## **7.2 : Concept of *Bhakti* in the Traditional Scriptures :**

The main Hindu religious texts are –The *Upaniṣads*, the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Bhakti Sūtras* of Nārada and Śāṇḍilya. All these texts give due recognition to the two forms of *bhakti*, that is, – the *Nirguṇa bhakti* and the *Saguṇa bhakti*. *Bhakti* is viewed by all these texts in conjunction with *jñāna*. There is no evidence in these texts, of any inherent contradiction between *bhakti* and *jñāna*, and between *bhakti* and a monistic view of reality. The views of these classical texts regarding the concept of *bhakti* are analyzed in the following.

### **7.2.1 : *Bhakti* in the *Upaniṣads* :**

The word *Śraddhā* in the Vedic texts, at least in the *Samhitās* must have conveyed a sense, which was never akin to the word *bhakti*, as a form of loving devotion to a personal deity, but simply implied confidence, trust or belief based on the knowledge of truth.

The word *bhakti* in Vedic literature means distribution, partition, separation or a share. It is to be noted that in the *Maitrī-Upaniṣad* (VI- 13), Bhagavān Viṣṇu is the food that sustains the world, and in the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad*, we are brought very much near the later developed concept of *bhakti*. In this *Upaniṣad*, it is expressed in this way –

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7. Ibid; PP. 15-16.

*yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau*//<sup>8</sup>

It means, the eagerness of the devotee to serve God and preceptor is called *bhakti*. It is an active movement of a devotee, which emphasizes on the personal and emotional relationship with God.

Many of the different elements of *bhakti* were already to be anticipated in the raptures of the *Upaniṣads*. As Dr. Sarvepalli Rādhākṛishnan so beautifully summarizes, “The *Upaniṣadic* religion is the feeling of reverence and love for the great spirit. Such meditation is spiritualised *bhakti*..... The Absolute becomes a personal God. God is the friend and helper, the father and creator, the governor of the universe. He is said to be the Supreme Person (*Puruṣottama*). .....He is the inner guide or the *antaryāmi*..... According to the *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣads*, the Absolute and God are one, we call it the supreme *Brahman* to emphasise the transcendence of the finite, its unknow-ability, its all-comprehensiveness; we call it *Īśvara* to emphasise the personal aspect so necessary for religious devotion.”<sup>9</sup>

### **7.2.2 : Bhakti in the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā :**

The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, itself called an *Upaniṣad*, derives its philosophical basis from the *Upaniṣads*, and in the background there were the *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*, *Vedānta* and *Buddhism*<sup>10</sup>, and *karma* and *jñāna*. The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* became the earliest formulation and exposition of *bhakti* and *ekāntika dharma*.

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8. *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*: 6/23.

9. Radhakrishnan, S. (1951). *Indian Philosophy*; Vol. I., London, p. 233

10 Ibid.; p. 526.

The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* discusses threadbare three principal paths to release – *jñāna* (knowledge), *karma*(action) and *bhakti*(devotion). The first requires meditation on the unmanifested Absolute and is a process which brings a lot of hardship. The greatest contribution of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* is to have presented the Ultimate Reality as a personal deity, Who responds to intimate love (*bhakti*).

In the *Gītā*, *bhakti* does not carry the meaning of a just a simple loving faith, which is described as *śraddhā*. There is a clear distinction between *śraddhā* and *bhakti* in the *Gītā*. The possible variations of *bhakti* are also indicated – depending upon the mental state of the *bhakta*, his motivations and the nature of his cognition of God. The *Gītā* does not install *bhakti* as a counterpoise to *jñāna* either. On the contrary, they are regarded as interdependent – and a perfect compatibility is maintained between the two. The *bhakti* of the *Gītā* does not suggest any essential and ever-existent dualism between the devotee and the deity. Nor is it conditioned by the idea of a personal God.<sup>11</sup>

In the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, *bhakti* is differentiated from mere faith or *śraddhā*. The *śraddhā* manifests itself in numerous forms of religious worship, caused by the difference of *guṇas*, viz. *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* inherent in men. The *sāttvikas* worship the *devas*, *rājasikas* worship the *yakshas* and *tāmasikas* worship the *pretas* and the *bhūtas*. It is expressed in the following *śloka* as –

*yajante sāttvikā devān yakṣa-rakṣāmsi rājasāḥ /*  
*pretan bhūta-gaṇāṁś cānye yajante tāmasā janāḥ //*<sup>12</sup>

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11. Sharma, Krishna (2015) : *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement - A New Perspective*; p. 112

12. The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. chap. XVII, v. -4.

In each case, *śraddhā* is determined by the factors of natural dispositions. These *ślokas* are in the following –

*sattvānurūpā sarvasya śraddhā bhavati bhārata*  
*śraddhā-mayo yaṁ puruṣo yo yacśraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ* //<sup>13</sup>

It means, according to one's existence under the various modes of nature, one evolves a particular kind of faith.

It is also expressed in another *śloka* as –

*kāmais tais hr̥ta-jñānāḥ prapadyante nya-devetāḥ /*  
*taṁ taṁ niyamam āsthāya prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā* //<sup>14</sup>

It means, those whose intelligence has been stolen by material desires surrender unto demigods and follow the particular rules and regulations of worship according to their own natures.

Whether *sāttvika*, *rājasika* or *tāmasika* in nature, *śraddhā* is efficacious in every form in winning God's grace. It is expressed in the following *śloka* as –

*yo yo yām yām tanuṁ bhaktaḥ śraddhāyār citum icchatī /*  
*tasya tasyācalāṁ śraddhāṁ tām eva vidadhāmy aham* //21  
*sa tayā śraddhayā yuktas tasyārādhanam īhate /*  
*labhate ca tataḥ kāmān mayaiva vihitān hi tām* //<sup>15</sup>

It is considered necessary for every act of worship– that which is practised without it, it is asat and therefore invalid. Thus, all forms of *śraddhā* are recognised irrespective of the higher or lower categories of the objects of worship. But the *Gītā* does not connect *bhakti* with these forms of *śraddhā*; it connects it only with *parā śraddhā* or supreme faith which is beyond the three categories of *guṇas*. In the *Bhakti-*

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13. Ibid., chap. XVII, verse- 3.

14. Ibid, chap. VII; v. 20.

15. Ibid, chap. VII, v. 21-22.

*Yoga* of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, Kṛṣṇa says Arjuna as, this is expressed in the following *śloka* as –

*mayyāveśya mano ye mām nitya-yuktā upāsate /*  
*śraddhayā parayopetās te me yuktatamā matāḥ //*<sup>16</sup>

It means, “Those who fix their minds on My personal form and are always engaged in worshipping Me with great and transcendental faith are considered by Me to be most perfect.”

The *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* recognises the value of faith or *śraddhā* in all its manifestations. But the *Bhakti-Yoga*, it states, is possible only through *parā- śraddhā*, which is free of the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and is therefore *nirguṇa* in character. *Bhakti* as *parā- śraddhā* is related only to the worship of the *avyakta* or the unmanifest, i.e., the impersonal God. As against this, the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* deals with devotion to a personal deity under the lower category of *sāttvika-śraddhā*. Therefore, in the final analysis, *bhakti* is represented in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as an active and passionate search of the self for the divine. It means much more than just an attitude of faith, or acts of worship, or a code of conduct to be fulfilled “as heard from the others.” It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as follows –

*dhyānenātmani paśyanti kecid ātmānam ātmanā /*  
*anye sāṅkhyena yogena karma-yogena cāpare //*<sup>17</sup>

It means, some perceive the Super soul within themselves through meditation, others through the cultivation of knowledge, and still others through working without fruitive desires.

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16. Ibid; chap. XII, v. 2.

17. Ibid; chap. XII, v. 25.



In the discourse on the *Bhakti-Yoga*, Kṛṣṇa points out the superiority of the contemplative *bhakti* over other forms of *bhakti*. The conscious individual effort to fix one's mind and intellect in God is considered higher than the effortless act of surrender and complete dependence. The simple worshipful attitude, devoid of *jñāna* and *yoga*, is recommended only for the weak who do not aspire for the higher goal. Various options are offered for the cultivation of *the Bhakti-Yoga* coupled with a qualitative gradation. The contemplative *bhakti* is regarded as the highest and the one obtained through *Abhyāsa-Yoga* as the next in order of merit. *Bhakti* in the sense of surrender is clearly graded as the lowest. *Bhakti*, *jñāna* and *yoga* stand interwoven in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. In the discourse on the *Bhakti-Yoga*, not only *bhakti* is clearly connected with *jñāna* and *yoga*, but both the *bhakta* and the *jñānī* are described in similar terms. It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as follows –

*abhyāse 'py asamartho 'si mat-karma-paramo-bhava /*  
*mad-artham api karmāṇi kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi //*  
*athaitad apy aśakto 'si kartuṁ mad-yogam āśritaḥ /*  
*sarva-karma-phala-tyāgaṁ tataḥ kuru yatātmavān //*<sup>18</sup>

According to the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, through *bhakti*, the *bhakta* who takes refuge in God, “attains Him”. It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as follows –

*vītā-rāga-bhaya-krodhā mam-māyā mām upāśritaḥ /*  
*bahavo jñāna-tapasā pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ //*<sup>19</sup>

“Enters into God”. It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as follows –

*mat-karma-kṛṇ mat paramo mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ /*  
*nirvairāḥ sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava //*<sup>20</sup>

“Abides in God”. It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as follows –

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18. Ibid; chap XIII, v. 10, 11.

19. Ibid; chap. VI, verse. 10.

20. Ibid; chap XI; v. 55

*antavat tu phalaṁ teṣāṁ tad bhavaty alpamedhasām /  
devān deva-yajo yānti mad-bhaktā yānti mām api //*<sup>21</sup>

And “lives in Him”. It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhāgavadgītā* as follows –

*mayyeva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya /  
nivaśisyasi mayyeva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayah //*<sup>22</sup>

The final teaching of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* is absolute reliance (*eka-śaraṇa*) on God. According to the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, *bhakti* or true devotion is to believe in God, to love Him, to be devoted to Him and to enter into Him. It is its own reward.

### 7.2.3 : *Bhakti* in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* :

The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is definitely a Vaiṣṇava text. It dwells a great deal on the life and personality of Kṛṣṇa. The whole of tenth skandha of this *Purāṇa* is devoted to the Kṛṣṇa theme.

The loving devotion for Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa has strong emotional overtones in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in which *bhakti* for him is described as a surging emotion. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*katham vinā romaharṣṁ dravatā cetasā vinā /  
vinānandā śrukalayā śudhyedbhaktyā vināśayaḥ //*  
*vāggadgadā dravate yasya cittam rudatyabhī kṣnam hasati kvacicca /  
vilajja udgāyati nr̥tyate ca madbhaktiyukto bhuvanam punāti //*  
*yathāgninā hema malaṁ jahāti damataṁ punaḥ svaṁ bhajate ca rūpam /  
ātmā ca karmanuśayaṁ vidhūya madbhakti yogena bhajatyatho mām //*  
*yathā yathātmā parimṛjyate ’m matpuṇya gāthāśravaṇābhidhānaiḥ /  
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ cakṣuryarthaivāñjana samprayuktam //*<sup>23</sup>

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21. Ibid; chap VII; v. 23

22. Ibid, chap XII; v. 8.

23. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*; Book XI; chap. 14, verses - 23 – 26

This state is produced by gazing at the image of Kṛṣṇa, singing his praises, keeping company with his devotees and hearing about his mighty deeds. Furthermore, out of nine acts of devotion, certain acts of worship having a ritualistic content can be conceived only in relation to a personal deity and the Vaiṣṇava traditions of idol-worship.

The personal deity, Kṛṣṇa is interpreted throughout as the *Nirguṇa Brahman* – and the *Saguṇa Brahman* as Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, naturally, *bhakti* is also described in both its *Saguṇa* and *Nirguṇa* form.<sup>24</sup>

In the third book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, in answer to Devahūti's question about the distinctive features of the *Bhakti-Yoga*, Kapila explains that *bhakti* manifests itself in a number of ways and can be of different kinds. The difference in its expression is caused by the inherent difference in the natural tendencies and attributes of people. Kapila then goes on to enumerate three kinds of *bhakti* caused by the three *guṇas*. The *bhakti* caused by pride or ill-will is described by him as *tāmasika*, and that caused by some desire or end in view as *rājasika*. He refers to the *bhakti* which manifests itself in the worship of idols and the performance of the prescribed rituals in the service of the Lord as *sāttvika*. To these three, Kapila adds yet another category, that of *nirguṇa bhakti*. He elaborates on it separately and keeps it distinct from the other three. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*bhaktiyogo vahuvidho mārṅairbhāvinī bhāvyate /*  
*sva bhāvagūṇa mārṅeṇa puṁsām bhāvo vibhidyate //*  
*abhisandhāya yo hi ṁsām dambhaṁ mātṣayameva va /*

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24. Sharma, Krishna (2015) : *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement : A new Perspective*. P. 121

*saṁrambhī bhinnadṛg bhāvaṁ mayi kuyārta satāmasaḥ //*  
*viṣayānabhisandhāya yaś aiśvaryameva va /*  
*arcādāvarcayedyu mām pṛthag bhāvaḥ sa rājasah //*  
*karmanirhāramuddiśya parasmaṁ vā tadarpaṇam /*  
*yajedyasṭavyamiti vā pṛthagbhāvaḥ sa sātṭikaḥ //*  
*madguṇaśrutimātreṇa mayi sarvaguhāśye /*  
*manogatirvichinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhasohambu dhou //*  
*lakṣaṇaṁ bhaktiyogasya nirguṇasya hyudā hṛtam //*  
*ahaitukyavyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame //*<sup>25</sup>

Whereas the first three can be related with various forms of belief in a personal deity, the fourth can be understood only in relation with the idea of an impersonal god. *Nirguṇa bhakti*, is, therefore, explained and sustained in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* with the help of the relevant underlying principles of Śāṁkhya, *Vedānta* and *Yoga*. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*vāsudeve bhagavati bhaktiyogaḥ prayojitaḥ /*  
*janayatyāśu vairāgyaṁ jñāna yadbrahma darśanam //*  
 ... ..  
 ... ..  
*yogena vividaṅgena bhaktiyogena caiva hi /*  
*dharmeṇobhayacihnena yaḥ pravṛttinivṛtti mān //*<sup>26</sup>

In the discussion of *Nirguṇa bhakti*, emphasis is laid on the enquiry after the Self and the importance of religious rites and the outer modes of worship is minimized. The form of *bhakti* is obviously represented as different from *Saguṇa-bhakti* directed towards a personal deity which expresses itself in externalized acts of worship as listed

25. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*; Book - III; chap. 29, verse; 7-12

26. Ibid; Book - III; chap. 32. verses. 23-35.

under the requirements of *navadhā-bhakati* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*devānām guṇaliṅ gānā manuśravikakarmanām /*

*animittā bhāgavatī bhaktiḥ sidhergarīyasī //*

... ..

... ..

*paśyanti te me rucirāṇyamba santaḥ prasannavaktrāruṇa locanāni /*

*rupāṇi vidyāni varapradāni sākāṁ vācam spṛhanīyām vadanti //*<sup>27</sup>

When the soul unifies with the *Nirguṇa Brahman* through devotion, then the devotee by virtue of his knowledge of truth and his dissociation from the worldly objects of attachment, destroys the egoism of his mind and feels free from the desires that make the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality difficult. Through devotion, the devotees disentangle themselves from the world. Then the knowledge of the Supreme Self or *tattva-jñāna* dawns upon them, and with the advent of this knowledge, they are able to meet their real self. The sense of otherness between God and His devotee disappears in such a meeting. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*sādhū prṣṭa mahārāja sarvabhūtahitāt manā /*

*bhavatā viduṣā cāpi sādhuṇām matirīdṛṣṭī //*

... ..

... ..

*indriyairvi śayākrṣṭ aira kṣiptām dhyāyatām manaḥ /*

*cetanām harate buddheḥ stambastuyamiba hradāt //*<sup>28</sup>

27. Ibid; Book - III; chap. 25, verses. 32-35

28. Ibid; Book - IV; chap. 22; verses. 18-30

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *bhakti* is described as an end as well as means. In one sense, it indicates the mental attitudes of the aspirant; in the other, it stands for an accomplished state of mind. Thus, irrespective of whether it is described as a means or an end, *bhakti* in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* does not stand exclusive of the other two, i.e., *jñāna* and *karma*. Either it leads to them, or is their result.

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *bhakti* is not represented as a separate spiritual discipline excluding *jñāna* and the idea of an impersonal God. On the contrary, its *Nirguṇa* category is related to *jñāna* and is directed towards the *Nirguṇa Brahman*. It is urged that one should contemplate on the impersonal *Ātman* with *bhakti* and *jñāna*; It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*yadā ratirbrahmaṇi naiṣṭhiki pumānācāryavan jñānavirāga ramhasā /*  
*dahatyavīryaṁ hṛdayaṁ jīvakosaṁ pañcātmakaṁ yonimivohitoḥ ganiḥ //*<sup>29</sup>

And *bhakti* is described at one place as a characteristic feature of the knowledge of the *Nirguṇa- jñāna*. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*jñānayogaśca manniṣṭho nairguṇyo bhakīlakṣaṇaḥ /*  
*devayorapyaka evārtho bhagavacchabdakṣaṇaḥ //*<sup>30</sup>

Knowledge of philosophy and the practice of *Yoga* are also considered legitimate parts of *bhakti*.

#### **7.2.4 : *Bhakti* in *Śāṇḍilya*'s and *Nārada*'s *Bhakti Sūtras* :**

The two other authoritative texts that are most to explain the doctrine of *bhakti* are the *Bhakti Sūtras* of *Śāṇḍilya* and *Nārada*. This is obviously due to the fact that

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29. Ibid; Book-IV, Chap.22; verses 26.

30. Ibid; Book-III; chap. 32, verse. 32.

they are the two earliest known works concerned specifically with the *Bhakti* theme itself.

*Śāṇḍilya* and Nārada both are invariably quoted in all academic discussions on *bhakti*. But neither of them deals with *bhakti* as a doctrine or *siddhānta*. Both speak of *bhakti* in the general sense of devotion while analysing its nature and significance.

Whereas *Śāṇḍilya*'s approach is more in keeping with *Nirguṇa-Bhakti* and the classical system of *Sāṃkhya* and *Vedānta*, Nārada shows a greater leaning towards the *Purāṇic* tradition and the sectarian characteristics of the *Bhāgavatas* and their *Saguṇa* mode of *bhakti*.

The *bhakti* of *Śāṇḍilya* is much more contemplative in nature as compared to that of Nārada, which is definitely more emotional.<sup>31</sup> *Śāṇḍilya* defines *bhakti* as a state of mind by attaining which a man lives, moves and has his being in Him.<sup>32</sup> Although it can be cultivated with the help of *jñāna* and *Yoga*<sup>33</sup> it is essentially a state of mind and experience. It includes the means, but is beyond and other than them. According to *Śāṇḍilya*, *bhakti* is an act of recognition, and therefore, a form of knowledge. Since the act of recognition in itself presupposes former knowledge, it is in itself an expression of renewed knowledge. On the other hand, Nārada describes *bhakti* as intense attachment to God;<sup>34</sup> but more in terms of personal emotion<sup>35</sup> For him, *bhakti* has the nature of *āsakti* or attachment. On obtaining *bhakti* or union with God, man does not

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31. *Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra*; verses. 68.

32. *Śāṇḍilya Bhakti-Sūtra*; verse. 19.

33. *Ibid*; verse 19

34. *Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra*; verse. 68.

35. *Ibid*; verse.68

desire anything else and is overjoyed and satisfied.<sup>36</sup> Nārada speaks with great fervour about acts of worship directed towards the personal form of the deity. To adore His greatness and beauty, to worship Him, to serve Him, and to love Him in His personal form is often described as *bhakti* by Nārada.<sup>37</sup>

Although the main theme of Nārada and Śāṇḍilya is *bhakti* and they are not really concerned with the nature of God, nevertheless there are sufficient indications of their views on God in their *sūtras*. Neither of them holds a personal view of God as a necessary condition of *bhakti*. Even Nārada, whose *bhakti* is clearly directed towards a personal deity<sup>38</sup> and whose *daśadhā bhakti* is just not possible without the deity's idol and temple, does not lay down the idea of a personal God as a necessary condition of *bhakti*. As far as Śāṇḍilya is concerned, his concept of God is definitely impersonal in character. He makes it a point to emphasize that his *bhakti* should not be confused with *Deva-Bhakti* or devotion to a personal deity<sup>39</sup>

Śāṇḍilya does not establish God as a third principle<sup>40</sup> when he uses the term *Īśvara*, it stands for an embodiment of both the transcendent and the immanent principles. Therefore, without looking for a separate and distinct entity as God, if Śāṇḍilya's *bhakti* is placed within his own dualism of *cit* and *acit*, it can well be interpreted as a unifying principle. Describing God as both the transcendent Lord (*Īśvara*) and an imminent principle (*Ātman*) does not create any problem for Śāṇḍilya

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36. Ibid verses 5 and 6

37. Ibid verse 82.

38. Ibid, verses 9 and 79, 82

39. Śāṇḍilya *Bhakti-sūtra*; verse. 18.

40. Ibid; verse 40.



in defining his ideas on *bhakti*<sup>41</sup> For Śāṇḍilya, both *Īśvara* and the *Ātman* can be the objects of *bhakti*<sup>42</sup>. He takes them as one.

According to Nārada also, the idea of God is imminent. It can be seen in his description of the divinity of great souls or *mahātmās*. Nārada sees no distinction between them and God. According to him, *bhakti* can be attained through divine compassion as well as through the grace of the Divine men<sup>43</sup>

Neither Śāṇḍilya nor Nārada represent *bhakti* as a path separate or opposed to *jñāna*. In the relative context of *jñāna*, *karma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, Śāṇḍilya tries to establish a definite relationship between *jñāna* and *bhakti*. Whereas knowledge is necessary for *bhakti*, the final liberation comes only through the attainment of *bhakti*. According to Śāṇḍilya, bondage is due to the want of devotion and not that of *jñāna*<sup>44</sup>. When *bhakti* appears, it destroys the existing knowledge and leads to new knowledge<sup>45</sup>. Śāṇḍilya's *bhakti* is the experience of this renewed knowledge. On the other hand, when Nārada speaks of the superiority of *bhakti*<sup>46</sup>, he offers two explanations for it. First, it is superior because it is its own reward and does not require any other support. It is self-sufficient and spontaneous, and takes shape of its own accord. Secondly, because God has an aversion for the egoist, and love for humility. Thus, Nārada sets aside *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* as inferior, not because they are

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41. Ibid; verse 38.

42. Ibid; verses 29, 30, 31

43. *Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra*; verses- 38, 41.

44. *Śāṇḍilya Bhakti-Sūtra*; verse. 90.

45. Ibid; verse-96

46. *Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra*; verse- 15

antithetical to *bhakti*; but because they can never be self-sufficient. On the whole, Nārada regards *bhakti* as superior to knowledge only in an emotive sense.

Finally, it is seen that though certain points of distinction and difference can be found, both Śāṇḍilya and Nārada regard *bhakti* as a matter of emotion and experience; never as a doctrine or cult. They attach importance to *bhakti* only in the sense of religious and spiritual feeling.

*Bhakti* for the impersonal God is very often described in these texts as higher form of devotion; and a monistic ideology accompanies all such descriptions of *Nirguṇa bhakti*.<sup>47</sup>

### 7.3 : Conception of Devotion or *Bhakti* in Śāṅkaradeva's Philosophy :

According to Śāṅkaradeva, *bhaktiyoga* is the crown of the spiritual sādhanā and the only way to realise the chosen ideal, the God. Śāṅkaradeva's *bhakti-dharma* speaks that *bhakti* is the ultimate goal of human life. It has different names and each has its own significance. *Bhakti-dharma* or *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma* of Śāṅkaradeva is also known as *Bhāgavatī dharma*, because it is based on the *Bhāgavata purāṇa* and the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* in which *bhakti* or devotion to God gets priority. It is also known as *Mahāpuruṣīyā dharma*, because it admits the worship of one God, Who is named as Hari, *Puruṣottama* or *Mahāpuruṣa*, the supreme Person. This religion is also known as *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*, as it lays emphasis on surrender of the self to Hari, chanting and listening His names Who is conceived to be gracious and merciful<sup>48</sup>.

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47. Sharma, Krishna (2015) : *Bhakti and the Bhakti Movement*; p. 129.

48. Sharma, Nilima, (ed.) (2008) : *The philosophy of Śāṅkaradeva : An Appraisal - Bhakti - The ultimate value* by A. Neog; p. 139.

Śaṅkaradeva takes the *bhaktiyoga* of *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* and applies it to Personal God or *Īśvara* of *Bhāgavat purāṇa*, Who is the highest Divinity; the full incarnation of Viṣṇu. In order to present a higher ideal of life, God incarnates Himself so that the world may be saved and helped to move higher in the spiritual evolution. Beacuse God is not a detached spectator of the world process; He is to be reached by *bhakti* according to Śaṅkaradeva.

In order to cultivate devotion to achieve his desired ideal, Śaṅkaradeva takes *dāśya-bhakti bhāva*. God is taken by Śaṅkaradeva as a compassionate master and bosom friend. It is found in his disciple Mādhavadeva's *Nāmaghoṣā* as –

*harika bāndhava                      buliyā yijana*  
*karaya hari kīrttana*  
*samaste śāstrara                      tattvaka jānila*  
*jānā sehi mahājana.*<sup>49</sup>

It means– The saint who calls Hari as his friend and sings the name of Hari knows the substance of all sāstras,

Among the nine kinds of *bhakti*, *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* are regarded as the best forms as they are necessary requisites for the purification of mind. Śaṅkaradeva says it in his *Kīrttana ghoṣa* as follows–

*śravaṇa kīrttana binā                      āna puṇye napāya*  
*iṭo ghora saṁsārara pāra.*<sup>50</sup>

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49. *Nāma Ghoṣā*, v.-366; edited by Das, H.M.

50. Śaṅkaradeva : *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā (Vedastuti)* , v. 1674

It means, – No other virtues except the listening and chanting of the names of God enables one to overcome the worldly pains and sufferings.

Śaṅkaradeva's *bhaktidharma* is the sayntesis of religion and philosophy. It lays emphasis on the need for ethical life as an essential condition of spiritual realisation and *bhakti* or devotion leads us to that path. According to Śaṅkaradeva, *bhakti* is always linked with good. The *Bhakti-Pradīpa*, the *Bhakti-Ratnākara* and the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* of Śaṅkaradeva explain that *bhakti* is greater than *mukti*.

### 7.3.1 : *Bhakti* in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* :

Śaṅkaradeva's *Bhakti-Pradīpa* is very small in form; but its inner meaning has made it a large one. In this book, Śaṅkaradeva advises the devotees frequently to worship Viṣṇu. People lose their discretionary powers and become ignorant due to lack of *Viṣṇubhakti*. According to these scriptures, the *Viṣṇubhakti* is the only way to get rid of the pains and hurdles of life.

Śaṅkaradeva starts with a prayer to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa*. In this very beginning, Śaṅkaradeva compares *bhakti* to nectar. He says that only *bhakti* can purify the whole world and the devotees feel immense pleasure through it. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it as—

*jagata pavitrakāri sākṣāte amṛta/  
yāka śuni sādhusava hove kṛtakṛtya/*<sup>51</sup>

In the chapter *Kṛṣṇa-Arjuna-Saṁvāda*, Śaṅkaradeva tries to clear the confusion about devotion and salvation through the conversation of Arjuna and Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this conversation, it is found that one can attain salvation with the help of *bhakti*

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51. Śaṅkaradeva's *Bhakti-Pradīpa* : v.7

easily. There appear no hurdles in worshipping one's own God. It is one and only devotion, which can show the right path to the devotee. It is said earlier that, in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*, *bhakti* includes nine, i.e., *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *sakhya*, *smaraṇa*, *arcana*, *vandana*, *pādasevana*, *dāsyā*, *ātmanivedana*. It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* as follows –

*śravaṇam kīrtanam cāsyā smaraṇam mahatām gateḥ /*  
*sevejyāvanatirdāsyam sakhyamātmamasamar panam //*<sup>52</sup>

But the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* lays stress on *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* only. According to this scripture, hearing the name of God is called the best devotion. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it as–

*mora kathā śravaṇata karibeka rati*  
*ākese buliyā sakhi uttama bhakati.*<sup>53</sup>

It becomes clear from this reference that the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* also supports the *navadhā-bhakti* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. But it gives stress on hearing the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It also prohibits hearing the name of other gods except the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is said that, hearing the names of other gods makes *bhakti* impure. Hearing and uttering the name of Kṛṣṇa should be the only practice of a devotee. Then and then only this practice may be called *bhakti*. He expresses this in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* as–

*nuśunoi āna eko devatāra nāma*  
*abyabhicāriṇī tāke bulio bhakati*<sup>54</sup>

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52. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahapurāṇa*: Book-VII; verse -11.

53. Śaṅkaradeva's *Bhakti-Pradīpa* : v. 28.

54. Ibid: pada - 30.

Śaṅkaradeva uses the word *abyabhicārī bhakti* to denote pure *bhakti* and that is only for Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is seen that Mādhābadeva also supports the thought of Śaṅkaradeva and opines that the devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the pure devotion. In fact, the pure love and affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa is defined as *abyabhicārī bhakti* by the author. To follow the way of *abyabhicārī bhakti*, one should have to worship none other than Kṛṣṇa. According to the *Bhakti-Pradīpa*, all the gods become pleased through the worshipping of the Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is expressed in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* as follow—

*sarvadeva tuṣṭa hove kṛṣṇaka pūjane*<sup>55</sup>

Here, the influence of the *Bhāgavata bhāvārtha dīpikā* of Śrīdharaśvāmī is found clearly. As the branches and leaves of a tree become lively and fresh by watering at the root, similarly all gods become pleased through the worshipping of Kṛṣṇa. It is expressed as follows—

*prāṇsyopahāro bhojanam, tasmādeva indriyāṇām*

*trptiḥ na tu tattadindriyeyu prthaka prthagannle panena*

*tathā acyutārādhanameva*

*sarvadevatārādhanam na prthagityarthah.*<sup>56</sup>

It is worth mentioning that Kṛṣṇa is depicted as God in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the influence of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is shown in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* as well as other writings of Śaṅkaradeva.

In the *Bhakti-Pradīpa*, we have found the story of a Brāhmaṇa and wife of a Cāṇḍāla. In this story, the Brāhmaṇa worships Indra, the king of God for his material

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55. Ibid : pada – 62

56. Śrīdhara Svāmī : *Bhāgavata Bhāvārtha Dīpikā*; 4/31/14

welfare and for the ultimate goal. On the otherhand, Cāṇḍālīni is a *Haribhakta*. She tries to explain the Brāhmaṇa about the consequence of *Haribhakti*, but fails. Instead of accepting the thought of Cāṇḍālīni, Brāhmaṇa insults her and worships Indra loudly. Then Cāṇḍālīni takes a bath in the river and chants the name of Kṛṣṇa. At that time, Nārada appears and becomes surprised by the act of Cāṇḍālīni. After hearing the whole story from the Cāṇḍālīni, he says that it is the work that makes a man Brāhmaṇa or a Cāṇḍāla. So, by worshipping Hari, the Cāṇḍālīni has achieved her to the ultimate goal of life; i.e., the salvation. But the Brāhmaṇa has degraded himself by his act. Here, Śaṅkaradeva compares the act of the Brāhmaṇa to an act of receiving a piece of glass instead of a pearl. In this story, it is clearly found that Śaṅkaradeva gives stress on kīrtana or chanting the name of Hari.

According to the *Bhakti-Pradīpa*, the life of a non-devotee without knowledge is always valueless. It is expressed in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* as—

*haribimukhara tāra jīvana niṣphala* //<sup>57</sup>

The activities of a non-devotee can be compared with that person who accepts the small pool of water leaving the river Gaṅgā. It is expressed as follows—

*indrakese pūje avaheli nārāyaṇa /  
māṇikaka teji kare kācaka yatan //  
yena gaṅgā tejiyā doṇāka jāyā hānṭhi  
teji yena soṇā saniyāta mārai gānṭhi*//<sup>58</sup>

In the *Kṛṣṇa-Arjuna saṁvāda*, Lord Kṛṣṇa's attempt to remove the confusion of Arjuna about *bhakti* is depicted by the author. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that the devotee of

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57. Śaṅkaradeva's *Bhakti-Pradīpa* : v. 65.

58. Ibid : pada – 64, 65

Kṛṣṇa purifies all the holy places. And Lord Himself is the ever joyful eternal soul. He destroys the enemies of devotee and rears them. As the Sun is the destroyer of lily, Kṛṣṇa is the destroyer of all the inner enemies of a devotee. So, it is the duty of a devotee to devote Lord Kṛṣṇa to get rid of the fear of death. The *Bhakti Pradīpa* opines that any other religious activities and worshipping another god is just like an illusion. So, one should avoid the worshipping of other gods, should get engage to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

To worship Kṛṣṇa, one must practice to develop the power of self control and must deal equally with everyone. Moreover, a devotee must not feel envious of other religions. A devotee must be kind to all the creatures of the world and pacified for every religion. Then only the *bhakti* becomes strong. The *Bhakti Pradīpa* does remember that God lives in every creature of the world. Śaṅkaradeva expresses it as follows –

*samaste bhūtara hṛdayata ācho āmi /*  
*parama sundara manohara antaryāmī //*<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is defined as the king of all the religions. It cannot be compared with other names of the world. Uttering the name of Kṛṣṇa is equal to the religious austerity of an ascetic. It is expressed in the *Bhakti Pradīpa* as –

*parama sanyāse sādhe yi gati maraṇe /*  
*pāve save phala eka nāma sumaraṇe //*  
*mahā dharma karma yata āse saṁsārata /*  
*nāma sumaraṇe save upaje lagata //*<sup>60</sup>

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59. Ibid : pada - 146

60. Ibid : pada – 162, 163



A person must be sunk in the ocean of painful life due to lack of Haribhakti. It is said that, all the earlier sins are washed away as soon as one utters the name of Kṛṣṇa without any cause. Bāli, Prahlāda, Nārada etc. could have the blessings of Kṛṣṇa easily with the help of chanting Harināma. It is found in the *Bhakti-Pradīpa* that Arjuna utters the name of Kṛṣṇa as his friend and later also repents for that. But it is said that devotion is related with friendship also. The sense of *sakhītya* is found in the relation of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa.

*Haribhakti* is that stage of mind, in which the devotee becomes unknown to the knowledge of outside world. When a devotee is deeply engaged in *Haribhakti*, the atmosphere of surroundings becomes irrelevant for him. The devotee chants the name of Kṛṣṇa and attains that stage of happiness which can not be explained. The heart of devotee is melted by uttering the name of Hari and tears come out from his eyes. It is expressed as follows –

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa bolante śarīra romāñcita /  
netrara lotaka jhare drava hove citta //  
bhakatira ānandata ākula hṛdaya /  
si janata gailo jānā āpuni bikraya //*<sup>61</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva opines that it is the stage of ultimate goal. At this stage, the devotee feels immense pleasure and it cannot be compared even to the pleasure of attainment of the heaven.

### **7.3.2 : Bhakti in the Bhaktiratnākara :**

*Bhakti* plays the central role in the teaching of Śaṅkaradeva. He has repeatedly asserted that discarding all other paths, one should follow the path of devotion. The

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61. Ibid : pada - 236

*Bhaktiratnākara* of Śaṅkaradeva, written in Sanskrit is a work of immense importance from the point of *bhakti*. In his other scriptures, Śaṅkaradeva has preached his philosophical views through some narratives or stories. But in the *Bhaktiratnākara*, he has dealt with the concept of *bhakti* without any episodic narratives. This work is actually a compilation of different verses mainly from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, which are the best suited to describe the different aspects of *bhakti*. He has commented upon these verses to express his own views.

In *Bhaktiratnākara*, Śaṅkaradeva opines that *bhakti* or ‘devotion’ is the ultimate aim of human life. In India, four goals of human life are accepted, these are – *dharma* (duty), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desire) and *mokṣa* (liberation). Among these four, *mokṣa* is the highest goal.

But Śaṅkaradeva attaches utmost importance to devotion. In his view, *bhakti* or devotion is superior to *mukti*.

In Śaṅkaradeva’s views, *bhakti* is of the nature of love. It is expressed in the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*parama īśvara                      bhajanīya deva*  
*mota pare āna nāi /*  
*kāya-vākya-mane              mora pāda-padme*  
*bhajā nāma-guṇa gāi /<sup>62</sup>*

Quoting from the *Bhāgavata*, Śaṅkaradeva declares that the *nirguṇa* type of *bhakti* is the continuous surge of the mind towards the Lord Who resides in all beings; just by hearing the attributes of Him, one can attain purity of the soul; though he says that *bhakti* can be *sagūṇa* and *nirguṇa*. The surge of the mind is likened to the

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62. *Bhaktiratnākara*; chap.XI (*Bhaktiyoga Māhātmya*), verse- 424.

continuous flow of the water of the river Gaṅga towards the sea. This type of devotion or *bhakti* is spontaneous (*ahaituki*) and uninterrupted (*avyavahita*). It is described in the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*nabāñcaya eko kāma                      jānibā tāhāra nāma*  
*bhāgavatī bhakati uttama /*  
*mokṣata adhika iṭo                      bhakatira sukha ati*  
*parama ānanda nirūpama //*  
*bhaktiye puruṣara                      liṅga-deha bhagna kare*  
*bināyatne mukutika pāve /*  
*yena udarara bahni                      bhuñje prāṇī anna yata*  
*jīrna kare savāko svabhāve //*<sup>63</sup>

Following Śrīdhara Svāmin, Śaṅkaradeva explains the term *ahaitukī* as devoid of any desire for fruits (*niṣkāma*). *Avyavahita* means without the perception of difference (*bheda-daraśana-sūnya*). Hence, in Śaṅkaradeva's concept, the *nirguṇa bhakti* is not motivated by any desire. This is the highest type of *bhakti*. Śaṅkaradeva deals with the best (*uttama*) kind of *bhakti* in the *Bhaktiyoga Māhātmya* of the *Bhaktiratnākara*, which is the same as the *nirguṇa bhakti*. Thus, it is said that the natural (*svābhāvika*) and desireless (*animitta*) inclination of the mind towards God is the *uttama bhakti* or the highest type of devotion. This type of *bhakti* easily destroys the *liṅgaśarīra* of the devotee and leads him to liberation. However, according to Śaṅkaradeva, as also to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, devotion to God is superior to liberation. It is expressed in *Bhaktiratnākara* as –

*animittā bhāgavatī bhaktiḥ siddher garīyasī /*  
*jarayatyāśu yā kośaṁ nigīrṇamanalo yathā //*<sup>64</sup>

63. Ibid: chap.XII; (Uttama Bhakti); verses- 480.

64. Ibid: chap.XI; verse- 2.

It means, *niṣkāṃ bhakti* to Lord Kṛṣṇa can soon destroy subtle body just as the fire does eaten up food.

Here, *siddhi* means liberation. This type of *bhakti* cannot be attained by any effort. It is attainable by the grace of God only. It is a gift of God. God saves his devotee who worships Him with faithful devotion from death and transmigration. It is expressed in the following śloka as –

*imaṃ lokam tathaivānumātmānamupayāyinam /*  
*ātmānamanu ye ceha ye rāyaḥ paśvo gṛhāḥ //*  
*visṛjya sarvānanyāṃsca māmeva viśvato mukham /*  
*bhajantyanyayā bhaktyā tān mṛtyo ratipā raye //*<sup>65</sup>

It means, the Lord provides release from the cycle of birth and death to those devotees alone, who shun the happiness in this world and are devoted to the Lord alone.

*Bhakti* is not only the best, but the easiest way to *mukti* or liberation. Śaṅkaradeva mentions that there are many paths of liberation; but among these the path of devotion is the best.

Śaṅkaradeva also declares that a devotee should surrender completely to God abandoning all other things, even the *śruti*, the *smṛti*, injunctions, prohibitions etc. The importance of surrendering oneself to Lord Kṛṣṇa alone cannot be overestimated in the school of Śaṅkaradeva, for he repeatedly declares that devotion with supreme surrender (*eka-śaraṇa-bhakti*) is the only way of life. *Eka-śaraṇa-bhakti* is the refrain of all the chapters of *Bhaktiratnākara*. Even if one thinks of Lord Kṛṣṇa alone out of enmity, he can attain the highest goal. In this context, Śaṅkaradeva refers to Śiśupāla,

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65. Ibid: chap.XI; verses- 4, 5.

Pauṇḍra, Śālva and others who have attained His similarity (*sārūpya*) just by contemplating about Him out of enmity and malice. It is expressed in the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*vaiṛeṇa ye nṛpatayaḥ śiśupālaśālva*  
*pauṇḍrādayo gativitāsavilokanādyaiḥ/*  
*dhyāyanta ākṛtidhiyaḥ śayanāsanādau*  
*tatsāmyamā puranuraktadhiyām punaḥ kim /*<sup>66</sup>

It means, while the kings, like Śiśupāla, Śālva, Pauṇḍraka and others, thinking of God only in term of enmity, secured the form of the Lord, what to speak of those who worship God with love come to gain His form.

He says that if one can attain God with mere contemplation or ordinary devotion, then what is to be said of him who thinks of Him with love, full devotion and self-surrender ?

According to Śaṅkaradeva, *bhakti* is classified into two types; these are , – *sādhana bhakti* and *phalarūpa* or *sādhya bhakti*.<sup>67</sup> *Sādhana-bhakti* is the mental and physical practices which lead to supreme love towards God. In the first stage of the path of devotion, a devotee has to worship God according to these *sāadhanas* or means. *Phalarūpa* or *sādhya-bhakti* is the fruit of this *sādhana bhakti*. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, there are nine kinds of *bhakti*. These are *śravaṇa* (hearing), *kīrtana* (chanting or singing), *smaraṇa* (remembrance), *pādasevana* (propitiation), *arcana* (adoration), *vandana* (prayer), *dāśya* (offering service), *sakhya* (friendship) and *ātmanivedana* (self-surrender). It is expressed in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa* as follows –

*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇouḥ smaraṇam pādasevanam /*  
*arccanam vandanam dāśyam sakhyamātmanivedanam //*

66. *Bhaktiratnākara*: chap.XIV; verse- 8.

67. *Mahāpuruṣa Jyoti* : 2003; Vol- V; p. 93

*iti suṁsāpitā viṣṇo bhakti ścennavalakṣaṇa /  
kriyeta bhagavatyaaddhā tanmanyeha dhīta muttamam //*<sup>68</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva has referred to these nine kinds of *bhakti* in his *Kīrttana-Ghoṣa*. It is expressed in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*śravaṇa kīrttana*                      *smaraṇa viṣṇura*  
*arccana pada sevana /*  
*dāsyā sakhitva*                      *vandana viṣṇuta*  
*kariba deha arpaṇa //*  
*navavidha bhakti*                      *viṣṇuta ācarai*  
*sehise pāṭha uttama //*<sup>69</sup>

In *Bhakti-Ratnākara* also, Śaṅkaradeva has discussed the importance of *śravaṇa*, *kīrttana*, *smaraṇa*, *arccana* etc. However, Śaṅkaradeva has attached utmost importance to *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* of the attributes and names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Further, the last *sādhana*, that is, self-surrender is regarded by him as the highest means of attaining devotion and also liberation.

During the course of devotion, the devotee develops a relation with his God, which is termed *bhakti-bhāva* (mode of devotion). In Vaiṣṇavism, there are five *bhakti-bhāvas*. These are *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalya* and *madhura*. Among these different modes of devotion, Śaṅkaradeva favours the mode of *dāsyā-bhakti*. He has repeatedly expressed the desire to become the servant (*dāsa*) of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the *Bhaktiratnākara*, he has quoted different verses from the *Bhāgavata* to show that worshipping Lord Kṛṣṇa as His servant is the highest form of worship, while becoming His servant is the highest goal of life. It is expressed in the *Bhakti-Ratnākara* as follows –

68. *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*: Book: VII; chap.5; verses- 23, 24

69. *Kīrttana-Ghoṣa: Prahlād Caritra*; verse- 340.

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ dhyānaṁ hareradbhūtakar maṇaḥ /  
janmakarmāguṇāñānca tadarthe' khilaceṣṭ itam //*<sup>70</sup>

It means, one should listen to, celebrate (*Kīrttana*) and meditate on Hari's wonderful deeds and should dedicate to Him all, one's birth, deeds and qualities. Again,

*matkathāśravaṇe śraddhā madanudhyā namuddhava /  
sarvatābho paharaṇaṁ dāsyenātmani vedanam //*<sup>71</sup>

It means, one should have reverence in listening to the deeds of God; meditate on the Lord's forms, give up all gains and surrender oneself to the Lord and His servant (*dāsa*).

In this way, Śaṅkaradeva has established in the *Bhaktiratnākara* that the ways of devotion consisting of the listening to and uttering of the names and attributes of the Lord Kṛṣṇa is the highest duty of mankind. Śaṅkaradeva makes it clear that *bhakti* should be the goal of man.

### 7.3.3 : *Bhakti* in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* :

The *Kīrttana-ghoṣā* is directly connected with the very second kind of *bhakti* or devotion, that is, *Kīrttana* or chanting alone the names and attributes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In his *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, Śaṅkaradeva has made it clear that the path of devotion or *bhakti* is superior to all other means of getting the divine grace. *Bhakti* theory of Śaṅkaradeva is grounded upon 'The *Śrīmadbhagavatagītā* and The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*'. The *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*, which constitutes the core of his Neo-Vaiṣṇavism is

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70. *Bhakti-Ratnākara*; Chap.X; verse, 21.

71. *Bhaktiratnākara*; Chap.X; verse, 25.

based on the philosophy that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only Adorable one. This single-minded belief in and surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the essence of *bhakti* in the *Śrīmadbhagavad-gītā*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa can be made a permanent property of the devotee's mind and heart neither by *japa* and *tapa* nor by *yajña* and *dāna*; but by pure devotion alone. Śaṅkaradeva subscribed to the philosophy of Oneness of Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu everywhere, in every particle of the Universe. Therefore, a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa should see the Lord in every being. In his *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, Śaṅkaradeva declares that a true Vaiṣṇava is he who loves each and every living being, because his mind is overpowered with Kṛṣṇa-consciousness – a broad minded and divinity surcharged blissfull state in which he hardly finds any distinction between a dog and an untouchable; a jackal and a priest. Therefore, Śaṅkaradeva strictly prohibited the worship of any other god and recommended the love and devotion with humility and self-surrender to Kṛṣṇa alone. For him; Kṛṣṇa is the mind and destiny, the cause and the effect, the *Upāya* and *Upeya*, the object and objective of the whole hearted devotee who finds him everywhere.<sup>72</sup>

In *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, Śaṅkaradeva describes that among the nine forms of *bhakti*, *dāsyā* and *sākhya* are two states of emotional attachment for the Lord. Śaṅkaradeva described himself as a *Kimkara* (servant) of the Lord Kṛṣṇa. Mādhābadeva, who was the most favourite follower of Śaṅkaradeva used to consider himself as the servant of the Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is expressed in *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* that for the Vaiṣṇava devotee, the attachment for the Lord itself is the goal of life. They even donot aspire for the final emancipation from this troublesome worldly life. For following this *bhakti* cult, one

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72. Kalita, Jagat Ch. (Ed.) (2014). *Neo-Vaisnavite Movement in North-East India*. Pp. 225, 226.



need not belong to any so called higher class and need not have the help of any priest of any higher caste. In the matter of the marital status of the devotee also, there was no rigidity. Moreover, with regard to the caste-system, a good deal of flexibility gained ground in the society, because, there was no bar for any caste in the matter of hearing (*śravana*) and chanting (*kīrttana*) of the holy names and attributes of the Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is expressed in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*nālāge bhaktita deva dvija ṛṣi huibe /*  
*nālāge sambhṛta śāstra vistara jānibe //*  
*tapa japa yajña dāna save viḍambana /*  
*kevala bhaktita tuṣṭa honta nārāyaṇa //*<sup>73</sup>

It means, for devotion, one need not be gods, *dvija*, sage; and need not acquire knowledge of many scriptures. Penances, silent prayers, sacrifices, gifts are mere deceptions. Nārāyaṇa remains content only with devotion.<sup>74</sup>

In the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, Śaṅkaradeva describes the stories of Ajāmila, *grāha-gajendra* etc. and from them, we can understand that a sinner can attain salvation by uttering the names of God without any knowlegde. Ajāmila uttered the name of his younger son Nārāyaṇa at the time of his last breath and he achieved the ultimate goal of life; that is, salvation. It is expressed in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*maribara velā* *iṭo ajāmīle*  
*nārāyaṇa nāma laila /*  
*kauṭi janamara* *yata māhāpāpa*  
*tāro prāyścitta bhaila //*  
*saṁsārata yata* *āno asmṁkhyāta*  
*āchai mahā pāpigaṇa /*  
*savāro ehise* *mukhya prāyaścitta*  
*harira nāma kīrttana //*<sup>75</sup>

73. *Kīrttana-Ghoṣa. Prahlād Caritra*; verse- 380.

74. Saikia, Purananda (2005) : *Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradevar Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, P. 192.

75. *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā. Ajāmila Upākhyāna*; verses – 182, 183.

It means, Ajāmila uttered the name of Nārāyaṇa at the time of death, and then all his sins were atoned. There are countless worst sinners in the world; but for them, the name of *Hari* is the atonement foremost for all sins committed.

In this way, Śaṅkaradeva expressed in *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* that the best way unto the Lord Kṛṣṇa is that of *bhakti*; i.e., devotion to Kṛṣṇa with love. Śaṅkaradeva stressed *śravana* and *kīrttana* as the two modes of *bhakti*. However, as far as the relation between a devotee and God is concerned, *dāsyā bhakti* is highly eulogized.

Śaṅkaradeva gives more importance to *bhakti* than knowledge. According to the philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva, men can gain liberation in the *Kaliyuga* only through the stress of *bhakti* and *bhakti* alone. It is expressed in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*aprayāse sije kalita puṇya /*  
*kalira śunā yena mahāguṇa //*  
*kariyā kīrttana kalita āti /*  
*pāvai vaikuṇṭhaka cautriśa jāti //*  
*hari nāma ghuṣi kali yugata /*  
*nichaye huibeka loka bhakata //*<sup>76</sup>

It means, in kaliyuga, one can earn virtue by singing Hari's nāma and can ascend to Vaikuṇṭha. By chanting Hari's nāma, people shall surely be God's devotee.<sup>77</sup>

Men cognise the false world as true due to ignorance. Knowledge is very much necessary to remove this ignorance. But for Śaṅkaradeva, this knowledge can be attained only through *bhakti*. Knowledge does not arise without *bhakti*. There is no contradiction between *bhakti* and knowledge. Knowledge arises from *bhakti* and by

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76. Ibid. *Pāṣaṇḍa-Marddana*; verses – 73, 75.

77. Saikia, Purananda (2005). *The Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, Pp. 37, 38

this knowledge men can attain the ultimate goal of life; i.e. *mukti*. It is expressed in the *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*bhaktira bale jñāna labhilā nirguṇa /*  
*jīvante mukuta hui rahilā arjjuna //*<sup>78</sup>

It means, by virtue of devotion, Arjjuna achieved Supreme Knowledge.<sup>79</sup>

So, it can be said that, according to Śaṅkaradeva, *bhakti* is *mati*, *gati*, *deva*, *dvija* and the power of life. It is the ultimate goal of human life and the root of salvation. According to Śaṅkaradeva, the *jīva* can get itself liberated from the bondage of the world and can realise its identity with God with the help of devotion, which begets knowledge.<sup>80</sup>

Though *bhakti* is the way of getting *mukti*, it is greater than *mukti*. This has been clearly explained by Śaṅkaradeva in his *Bhakti-Pradīpa*, *Bhaktiratnākara* and the *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*. Here, Śaṅkaradeva speaks about *niṣkāma bhakti* or desireless devotion which is greater than *mukti*. According to Śaṅkaradeva, a true *bhakta* cares not for *mukti*; he cares for devotion and devotion alone. He sacrifices his life in the service to God. Nothing is desirable to him apart from the service of God and he has no desire even for salvation. In return, God also loves him.

Devotion or *bhakti* is an emotional process of realising the Supreme. It is not easy to define devotion. In religion, devotion means to worship God, to adore and to love God. More appropriately it means loving devotion.<sup>81</sup> It is expressed in the *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

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78. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*; *Sri Kṛṣṇa Vaikuṇṭh Prayāna*; verse – 1956

79. Saikia, Purananda (2005). *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā*, p. 944.

80. Sarma; S.N, (2016). *The Neo-Vaiṣṇavite Movement and the Satra Institution of Assam*. p. 48.

81. Dhavamony, M. (1971) : *Love of God According to Śaiva Siddhānta*; p. 22

*tumisi parama priya ātmā nārāyaṇa /*  
*tayu pada paṅkaje majoka mora mana //*  
*premabhāve sudurllabha tohmāka smaraṇa /*  
*yena tena mate karo sravaṇa kīrttana //*  
*sadāya thākoka mora mana tayu pāve /*  
*bolā hari hari āve prāṇa thāke yāve //*<sup>82</sup>

According to Śaṅkaradeva, in the form of soul, God is present within all beings, whether it is man or it is animal. In other words, there is the same *Parmātmā* in man or in a cow, in a dog, in a fox or in a donkey. Such equality and equanimity towards all creatures enabled Śaṅkaradeva's *bhakti dharma* to attract people to accept *bhakti dharma* and to become disciples without notice of their castes, creeds or religions. It is expressed in the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows—

*kukura śṛgāla garddabharo ātmārāma /*  
*jāniyā savāko pari karibā praṇāma //*  
*samasta bhūtate viṣṇubuddhi nohe yāve /*  
*kāya-vākya mane abhyāsivā ehi bhāve //*  
*viṣṇumaya dekhai yiṭo samaste jagata /*  
*jīvante mukuta hovai acira kālata //*<sup>83</sup>

In this way, Śaṅkaradeva builds through his *bhakti dharma* a broad platform of secularism and integration in Assam. The seed of integration of his *bhakti-dharma* and culture is innate in the character and attributes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. So, it can be said that Śaṅkaradeva had established integration in society on the basis of Kṛṣṇa story, where is no caste, no creed and no religion; and these all are reflected in his great book the *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā*, whose main object is *bhakti*.

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82. *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* : *Vedastuti*; verses – 1658-1659.

83. Ibid: *Śrī Kṛṣṇara Vaikuṇṭha Prayāna*; verses – 1823, 1824

#### 7.4 : *Cāri Vastu* or *Cāri Khuṭi* of Śaṅkaradeva's *Bhakti-Dharma* :

There are four fundamental principles (*cāri vastu*) or the four pillars (*cāri khuṭi*) in Śaṅkaradeva's *bhakti dharma*. These four principles are –

- (i) The *Guru* (the spiritual preceptor)
- (ii) The *Deva* (the worshipful deity)
- (iii) The *Nāma* (the celebration of the deity's names and attributes as the way unto Him) and
- (iv) The *Bhakata* (the devotees of the Deity)

But these principles are essentially one, because *nāma* is *deva* in worded form and either *guru* or *bhakata* as individual soul is non-different from the Supreme soul *deva*.<sup>84</sup>

These *cāri vastu* are explained below –

- (i) **The *Guru*** : The first pillar of *bhakti* is the guru or the spiritual preceptor. There are three kinds of guru. One's own father is called the *Ādya guru*. Next guru is he who gives formal education. Third and the best guru is he who leading a pure and dedicated life, gives instruction about the path of devotion. His instructions are based on his own spiritual experience. He is abored as the Lord. It is expressed in the first chapter of the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*bhrātrīvyamenam tadadabhravīryamupekṣayā' dhyeṣitamapramattam /  
gurorharicaraṇopā sanāstro jahi vyalīkaṁ svayamātmamoṣam //*<sup>85</sup>

It means, one should cut across the vagaries of the mind with the sword in the form of worship of the guru who is no other than Hari Himself on that account.

84. Goswami. Ashok (2017) : The *Bhaktiratnākara* of Śaṅkaradeva ; p. XXXV.

85. The *Bhaktiratnākara* : chap.1; verse -8.

(ii) **The Deva** : *Deva* implies taking resort to the Lord, that is “Kṛṣṇa”. One should surrender to Kṛṣṇa because He is one Who can rescue one from the world of bounds. Lord Kṛṣṇa can be realized through the path of *bhakti* only. It is ascertained that Kṛṣṇa is the only worshipful deity. It is expressed in the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*tvameka evāśya sataḥ prasūtistvaṁ*  
*sannidhānaṁ tvamanugrahaśca /*  
*tvanmayāyā saṁvṛtacetasaṁtvāṁ*  
*paśyanti nānā na vipāścito ye //*<sup>86</sup>

It means, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only source, maintenance and the place of ultimate dissolution. He is spiritually enlightened, Who is indivisible.<sup>87</sup>

(iii) **The Nāma** : *Nāma* means unconscious words coming out from the mouth, but to a *bhakta*, it is the awakening of subtle self-consciousness. Here, the devotee takes resort to *nāma* or “prayer”. In other words, *nāma* means the celebration of the names and attributes of Lord Kṛṣṇa (*Hari*) as the path unto Him. The only path unto the Lord Kṛṣṇa is called the path of *bhakti*. It is expressed in Mādhavadeva’s *Nāma-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*hariguṇa nāma gāva ānanda kari mane /*  
*chintāmaṇi tanu bhāi biphala kara kene //*<sup>88</sup>

(iv) **The Bhakata** : The concept of *bhakata* stands for the intimate social bond. Through *nāma*, the devotee elevates himself from the level of self-consciousness to the

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86. Ibid : chap.1; verse – 30

87. Goswami. Ashok (2017) : The *Bhaktiratnākara*; p. 52.

88. Mādhavadeva’s *Nāma-Ghoṣā* : verse- 415.

level of social consciousness. A true selfless devotee works for the society.<sup>89</sup> and he is ever engaged in singing the praise of the Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is expressed in *Nāma-Ghoṣā* as follows—

*ekānta bhakata save                      nirguṇa kṛṣṇara guṇa*  
*gāve sadā vasiyā yathāta /*  
*vaikuṇṭhako parihari                      yogiro hṛdaya eri*  
*thākā hari sākṣāte tathāta //*<sup>90</sup>

### **7.5 : Bhakti Rasa of Nāma-Ghoṣā by Mādhavadeva :**

Mahāpuruṣa Mādhavadeva was the greatest and most faithful disciple of Mahāpuruṣa Śrīmananta Śaṅkaradeva, the propounder of *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*. Śaṅkaradeva asked Mādhavadeva in 1568 AD to compose a scripture which would be saturated with philosophy and would also taste very fine with devotional fervour at the same time. *Nāma-Ghoṣā* was the result of that exhortation by the saint. Therefore, it can be called a homage by Mādhavadeva to his preceptor.

*Nāma-Ghoṣā* is the unique and legendary literary creation of Mādhavadeva. It was composed in verse form, i.e., in poetic form. The verses are called *ghoṣā*. Total one thousand and one *ghoṣās* have been incorporated in this book and so it is also called *Hājārī-Ghoṣā*. This book is the epitome of *dāsyā bhakti*, in which Mādhavadeva regards himself as the servant of *Īśvara*. Through *bhakti*, one can attain *mukti* – is the main essence of *Nāma-Ghoṣā*.

*Nāma-Ghoṣā* is the *magnum opus* of Mādhavadeva. It is one of the four fundamental scriptures (*Cāri Puthi*) of Assam Vaiṣṇavim. *Nāma-Ghoṣā* means verses

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89. Mahanta : 2015; Pp. 45, 46 Ibid: verse -4.

90. Mādhavadeva's *Nāma Ghoṣā* : verse- 4

containing God's name which is meant for community prayer. The saint advised his disciples to sing and listen to the name and attributes of God. Invariably these singing had to be done in verse, not prose. *Nāma-Ghoṣā* by Mādhavadeva fulfilled the requirement of the devotees for such verses. But it was at the same time also a treatise on the *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*. *Nāma-Ghoṣā* achieved its purpose of preaching *Eka-Śaraṇa-Hari-Nāma-Dharma* aesthetically. This scripture is known by the name of *Hājārī--Ghoṣā* as well as it contains one thousand verses in different metres . It goes generally by the name of *Ghoṣā-Śāstra* among the Assamese people.

According to hagiographical literature, *Nāma-Ghoṣā* is the icon of Mādhavadeva in words. What he received from the scriptures and his Guru, what he realized within his heart and what he received as grace of God – all are there in *Nāma-Ghoṣā*.

The *Nāma-Ghoṣā* is the epitome of *dāsyā bhakti* in which he regards himself as the servant of *Īśvara*. By thinking oneself as the most insignificant and inferior person, one's pride and jealousy, greed and ambitions, etc. are vanished and one attains the tranquility of mind. But in such a state, the qualities like love, sympathy and compassion also disappear from mind and the prayers seem dry. Hence, the saint Mādhavadeva seeks his salvation in *bhakti* which to him is full of *rasa* (*rasamaya bhakti*). To have *rasamaya bhakti*, one should sacrifice enjoyment and should remain satisfied with whatever he possesses. Mādhavadeva wrote in his first verse (*ghoṣā*) –

*muktito nispr̥ha yito                      sehi bhakataka namo*  
*rasamayī māgoho bhakti /*  
*samasta mastaka maṇi                      nija bhakatar baśya*  
*bhajo hena deva yadupati //*<sup>91</sup>

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91. *Nāma-Ghoṣā* : verse -1



It means, I pay homage to that devotee who is not interested even in salvation. I seek (only) the tasteful devotion. I pay homage to the Lord, the head of the Yadu race and the cynosure of all beings, who is subservient to his own devotees.

The true *Bhakata* (devotee) is indifferent to personal salvation and is content to serve God with his praise. *Nām* is the bridge between the objective existence of Godhead and the subjective raptures of *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* is the highest mode of worship as it cleanses the mind completely and is available to the meanest of men – for example

*viṣaya sambandha sukha samasta yonite pāya*  
*harisevā eko thāne nāi*  
*harira sevāra yogya kevale manuṣya tanu*  
*jāni phurā hari guṇa gāi //*<sup>92</sup>

It means, – Carnal pleasure can be had by all creatures, but God-worship can be performed only in a human body. So, one should utilize this birth and go around singing the glory of God after getting this body suitable for God-worship.

And it is especially suitable to the epoch of universal corruption, KaliYuga, which has tarnished everything else, for example –

*ghora kaliyuga yata dharma karma*  
*save karileka dūra*  
*yijane kevale hari nāma lave*  
*puruṣa si si catura //*<sup>93</sup>

A most interesting consequence is the thoroughly democratic and humanistic character of *bhakti* as expounded by Mādhavadeva. It is said to be most appropriate form of worship for the unlettered and unsophisticated masses. *Hari- nāma* is also the

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92. Ibid: verse -28.

93. Ibid: verse -268.

highest form of worship because it is available to all humanity without exception, for example –

*parama nirmala dharma hari nāma kīrttanata  
samsate prāṇira adhikāra  
etekese hari nāma samaste dharmara rajā  
ehi sāra śāstrara vicāra //*<sup>94</sup>

Learning and austerities are not considered passport to salvation. In fact logical polemics are decried as danger to the soul. It is *bhakti* that throws wide open the doors of heaven to the poor and the unlettered.

The dominant metaphor of *bhakti* in the *Nāma-Ghoṣā* is that of ‘rasa’. It is like nectar, like water to thirsty souls, like honey. And *Bhakti* itself is like a “river of love” expressing the glory of the celestial world, and it is Śaṅkaradeva who made it over-run its banks through the whole world. There is again an enchanting image of *bhakti* as a lake of sweet water with bees drunk on the honey of lotus-flowers and swans crooning the name of God. The verb repeated most often is “to drink”. But this sublime experience comes only to him who has prostrated himself absolutely at the feet of the world’s master. Hence, the next important metaphor is that of the slave, the servant, who takes refuge in the service of God. There are traditional gesture of submission like taking straw grass in one’s teeth, holding the master’s feet, and in one striking instance, of selling oneself as a slave.

Mādhavadeva affirmed Śrī Kṛṣṇa as God, the Almighty by saying that -

*kṛṣṇa eka deva dukhahārī kāla māyādiro adhikārī  
kṛṣṇa bine śreṣṭha deva nāhi nāhi āra /*

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94. Ibid: verse -118.

*sṛṣṭi sthiti antakārī deva tānta bine āna nāhi keva  
jānibā viṣṇuse samasta jagate sāra //*<sup>95</sup>

It means – Viṣṇu is the creator, saviour and destroyer and only He can allay the pain of a distressed person and none other than Kṛṣṇa is greater. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate source of all energies and chief of all incarnations.

On the part of himself, Mādhavadeva feels very deeply that he is fully ignorant, does not know how to adore the God, the *Parameśwara* and so he begs forgiveness for his ignorance and prays the God to give shelter in his lotus feet. He expressed self-surrender, self diminution, self remorse, self sacrifice through his servitude devotion. He never sought liberation but wanted endless pleasures by hearing and chanting the Divine glories of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa through servitude devotion. He believed that devotion is meaningless if it does not purify the minds and hearts of the people. His heart was melted with Divine power of God, with the glories of his spiritual master Śaṅkaradeva and by the nectar juice of *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* and many other vedic scriptures.

From the above discussion, we find that *Nāma-Ghoṣā* is the magnum opus of Mādhavadeva, in which the scholarship in all vedic literatures, intelligence, the poetical proficiency, the essence and emotions, the deep servitude adoration to Śaṅkaradeva and to Lord Kṛṣṇa and *rasamaya bhakti* - all are equally manifested. So, it is an unique, perfect and holy scripture of Assam Vaiṣṇavism.

Mahāpuruṣa Mādhavadeva propagated the tenets of *Nāma-Dharma*, with the verses of *Nāma-Ghoṣā*. It is called one of the most essential, powerful, and effective pillar of *Eka-Śarana-Hari-Nāma-Dharma*. It is like a ripen fruit with full of delicious

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95. Ibid: Verse -588.

divine juice which gives extreme pleasure to the ears and palate bonding emotionally the minds and hearts of the Assamese people. It is sung in joy, sung in sorrow and interestingly it is sung by the illiterate too. This is the *bhaktirasa* which was expressed in of *Nāma-Ghoṣā śāṣṭra*.

## 7.6 : Nine Kinds of *Bhakti* :

In Śaṅkaradeva's *bhakti dharma*, there is an explanation about nine types of *bhakti*. Though these nine types of *bhakti* function differently, yet they have the same purpose of God-realisation. These nine kinds of *bhakti* or devotion are –

- (i) *Śravaṇa* (hearing the name of God).
- (ii) *Kīrttana* (chanting the names and attributes of God)
- (iii) *Smarāṇa* (remembrance)
- (iv) *Arcana* (worshipping)
- (v) *Vandana* (adoring)
- (vi) *Pādasevana* (service)
- (vii) *Dāśya* (attitude to serve)
- (viii) *Sakhya* (friendly attitude)
- (ix) *Ātma-nibedana* (Self-surrender)

These nine forms of *bhakti* are not self-sufficient by themselves. According to Śaṅkaradeva, these are complementary to one another. A full-fledged devotion to God requires all these factors, though Śaṅkaradeva puts utmost importance to the *Śravaṇa* and *Kīrttana* forms of devotion.

These nine kinds of devotion are discussed one by one in the following :

### 7.6.1: Śravaṇa (Hearing the Name of God) :

Śravaṇa means hearing of God's virtues, sports in connection with His Divine Name and Form. It is the first step in the spiritual movement. In order to know about God, the inner enlightenment is needed. For this spiritual enlightenment, hearing about the holy names and Divine life of Kṛṣṇa is indispensable. In Śaṅkaradeva's *bhakti dharma*, *satsaṅga* or the association with the holy person is another important aspect. Hearing the religious discourse from them purifies the mind from all irrelevant thoughts. In the *Bhakti Pradīpa*, Śaṅkaradeva describes śravaṇa as follows –

*mora kathā śravaṇata karibeka rati /*  
*ākese bulio sakhi uttama bhakati //*<sup>96</sup>

Again, in the *Bhaktiratnākara*, Śaṅkaradeva explains śravaṇa as follows –

*īśvara kṛṣṇara līlā-caritra yi jana /*  
*parama śraddhāye sadā karanta śravaṇa //*  
*ati alpa kāle āsi tāhāra hiyāta /*  
*honta bhagavanta kṛṣṇa prakāśa sākṣāta //*<sup>97</sup>

Hearing is such a powerful medium for spiritual realisation that it produces a strong impact upon the psychological make-up of people. But, mechanical hearing does not work unless the subject can call off his mind from external engagement. Hence, with the great power of attention, one should listen to the divine life of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>98</sup>

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96. Śaṅkaradeva : *The Bhakti-Pradīpa*; verse- 28.

97. *The Bhaktiratnākara* : Chap. 7 (Śravaṇa Māhātmya); verse- 216.

98. Mahanta, Nirupama (2015) : *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*; p.49

### 7.6.2 : *Kīrttana* (Chanting the Holy Names and Attributes of God) :

*Kīrttana* means singing the holy names and attributes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His glories. It is an undeniable fact that music has a profound influence on man and it has the capacity of changing the minds of people in a more effective way. *Kīrttana* can easily change the hearts of people, because *Kīrttana* or prayer is very sweet and pleasant.<sup>99</sup>

It is found in *Bhaktiratnākara* that whoever sings the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the full respect, then all the desires vanish and the mind of the devotee is purified. Again *Kīrttana* has such powerful impact that it washes away all sorts of dross and drain of the mental process. Like the rising Sun which ruins darkness, the loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, which arises due to the constant recitation of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, also puts an end to all sorts of miseries and sufferings. The chanting of the *nāma*, the recitation of the glories of the Lord Kṛṣṇa, discussion of the spiritual matters including the singing of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* and acting in the religious drama are considered as the five kinds of *Kīrttana*.<sup>100</sup>

Śaṅkaradeva explains the notion of *Kīrttana* in his *Bhakti Ratnākara* as follows—

*bolanta kṛṣṇaka tayu nāma yītojana /*  
*aksmāte mukhe mātra karaya kīrttana //*  
*etekate siṭo mahā pavitra hoyaya /*  
*śunantā sabāko sadā pavitra karaya //*  
*kariyo kīrttana kṛṣṇa nāma-guṇa caya /*  
*ātapare āna śreṣṭha dharma nāhikaya //*  
*mahā mokṣa-dātā kīrttana bine nāi /*<sup>101</sup>

99. Swami, Sivananda (1981) : *Essence of Bhakti Yoga*; p. 30.

100. Mahanta, Nirupama (2015) : *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*; Pp. 50-53.

101. The *Bhaktiratnākara* : Chap. 8 (*Kīrttana Māhātmya*); verses- 345, 346, 372



One can also attain the supreme experience even by hateful remembrance of God. Kings Śiśupāl, Śālva etc. also became liberated by constant remembrance of God as their enemy. But, Śaṅkaradeva approves the loveful remembrance as the most ideal type of remembrance. Prahlāda attained redemption with the help of such loving remembrance. It is expressed in *Nāma-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*nitānte harika kare dhyāna /  
hari vine nedekhanta āna //  
sadāye kṛṣṇara guṇa kahe /  
cittata dharila kṛṣṇagrāhe //  
neḍoi mane govindara pāva /  
kṛṣṇata upajai premabhāva //*<sup>106</sup>

At the end, it can be said that *Smaraṇa* is considered as the most subtle process for attaining the Supreme.

#### **7.6.4. : Arcana-Vandana (Worshipping-adoring) :**

By *Arcana-Vandana*, Śaṅkaradeva means worship. Śaṅkaradeva follows the instruction of the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* in depicting the manners of worship, which are simple and lack of complicity in contrast to the Vedic ways of worship. God should be worshipped with the help of flower, water and leaf. God is appeased even while He is offered ‘a handful of water’ and a single leaf of *Tulasi*. It is expressed in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* as follows –

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam yo me bhaktyā prayacchati /  
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ //*<sup>107</sup>

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106. *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* : *Prahlād Caritra*; verses- 323, 324.

107. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* : chap.-9; verse – 26



It means, if a true devotee offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water with love to Lord Kṛṣṇa, then He will accept it.

Śaṅkaradeva expressed in his *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*bhakata sakale pūjai phule jale*  
*tuṣṭa hao tāke pāi /*  
*abhakate yadi nānā dravya deya*  
*tāto mora tuṣṭi nāi //*<sup>108</sup>

Some people again worship Kṛṣṇa with the desire for fruit. They might achieve the desired end; but self-centered achievements are temporary and lack of lasting effect. But, those who worship passionately without any desire, enjoy the supreme delight.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the selfless worship is the best kind of worship. A selfless devotee worships Kṛṣṇa whole heartedly by dedicating his life at the feet of God. In such devotion, the highest pleasure arises. It is expressed in *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* as follows –

*parama guputa harināma dharma*  
*jāni āso śuddhabhāve /*  
*yāka ācarile ṭhāvata basiyā*  
*durlabha mukuti pāve //*  
*harita bhakati karoī sarbadāye*  
*kariyā kīrttana karma /*  
*manuṣya lokara ehimāne mātra*  
*puruṣara śreṣṭh dharma //*  
*harināma dharma smaraṇa mahimā*  
*dekhiyo dūta samprati /*  
*pāpī ajāmilo nārāyaṇa buli*  
*pāileka parama gati //*<sup>109</sup>

108. *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* : Damodar Bripropākhyāna. verse – 1594.

109. *Kīrttana-Ghoṣā* : Ajāmila Upākhyāna; verses- 193, 194.

Thus, there is one road and that is the worship of Kṛṣṇa which arrests all kinds of worldly evils and provides peace.

### 7.6.5: *Pādasevana* (Feet-Worship) :

*Pādasevana* means serving the Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus-feet. By *pādasevana*, Śaṅkaradeva means the proper maintenance of *Nāmghar*, to arrange the offerings etc., Such service gives rise to the thoughts of self-humility or meekness. In this sense, *pādasevana* is regularly practised by a devotee who is particularly engaged in performing such actions.<sup>110</sup> In the *Nāma-Ghoṣā*, it is expressed as---

*namo haripada*                      *pankaja yugala*  
*bimala sukha-sāgara /*  
*anādi ananta*                      *santa sadāśiva*  
*bhagavante bhayahara //*  
*tumisi parama*                      *guru nārāyaṇa*  
*tuva pade karo seva //*<sup>111</sup>

### 7.6.6: *Dāsya* (Attitude to Serve) :

*Dāsya-bhakti* means the love of God through self-submission. Considering oneself as a servant of God, one expresses *dāsya-bhakti* by serving God and carrying out His wishes. Śaṅkaradeva expresses the sheer helplessness before the Lord Kṛṣṇa through his writing. It seems that he took recourse to this *dāsya-bhakti* for his spiritual union with the Supreme. Śaṅkaradeva encouraged *dāsya-bhakti* as it arouses immediate power in the minds of the devotees to withdraw pride or egoism which stands as the main obstacle on the path of devotion.<sup>112</sup>

110. Mahanta, N: *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*; p.56.

111. Mādhavadeva's *Nāma-Ghoṣā* : verses- 192, 196.

112. Mahanta, N. (2015): *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*; Pp.57, 58.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, the devotion of a house-holder is futile without *dāsyā-bhakti*. In Śaṅkaradeva's word, *dāsyā-bhakti* is expressed in the following –

*tohmāra akāma bhr̥tya āmi /*  
*tom̐yo niṣkāma mora svāmī //*  
*nāhi kāma āhmāra anyathā /*  
*nuhi rājasevakara yathā //*<sup>113</sup>

It means, a true devotee is a desireless servant of God and God is also the desireless Master of the devotee. A devotee has no other desires as cherished by the servant of a King.

In another verse, Śaṅkaradeva also describes as –

*nikinilā dāsi bhajiloho āsi*  
*gītate huyā dagadha /*  
*kaṭākṣe mārile vadha ki nalāge*  
*astre kāṭilese vadha //*<sup>114</sup>

In this way, Śaṅkaradeva expresses *dāsyā bhakti* in his book.

### 7.6.7 : Sakhya (Friendly Attitude) :

*Sakhya* means the cultivation of the friendly sentiment with God. To think of God as the constant companion, as one's relative or friend, to love Him as one's own self, is the *sakhya-bhāva*. It is an important constituent element in the path of devotion. It signifies the intimate relationship between man and God. The friendly sentiment towards God indicates that God is not a terrifying Personality, but He is sweet and loving. People can approach Him without any hesitation. Friendly sentiment is

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113. *Kīrttana -Ghoṣā : Prahlād Caritra*; verse- 451.

114. *Kīrttana Ghoṣā: Rāsa-Kṛīḍā*; verse- 892.

encouraged by Mādhavadeva. He observed that a devotee can establish life-long friendship with God without any fear of separation as He is ever-present.<sup>115</sup>

The relation between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is the best example of *sakhya*. Śaṅkaradeva writes in his *Bhakti-Pradīpa* as –

*mādhave dekhanta                      sakhira manata*  
*gucila pātaka yata //*  
*sambodhi bolanta                      bandhu dhanañjaya*  
*śuddha bhailā moka smari /*  
*bhakata lakṣaṇa                      mahimā adbhuta*  
*śunā sāvadhāna kari //*<sup>116</sup>

### 7.6.8. : *Ātmanivedana* (Self-Surrender) :

*Ātmanivedana* means self-surrender. The *Bhāgavata purāṇa* and the *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* accept self-surrender of the self. The devotee no longer feels the existence of his ego, he has no personal or independent existence, he is the mere instrument of God.

In the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, it is expressed as –

*sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja /*  
*ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ //*<sup>117</sup>

It means, Kṛṣṇa said Arjuna, - Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.<sup>118</sup>

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115. Mahanta, N. (2015) : *The Mystical Thoughts of Śrī Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and Śrī Śrī Mādhavadeva*; Pp. 57, 58.

116. The *Bhakti-Pradīpa*; verses- 122-123.

117. *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* : chap. 18; verse- 66.

118. Swami Prabhupāda (1986) : *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā-As it is*; p. 740.

These are the nine ways of *bhakti*, which are found in Śaṅkaradeva's *bhakti-dharma*. Among these nine forms of *bhakti*, *śravaṇa* (hearing the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa) and *kīrttana* (chanting the holy names and attributes of Lord Kṛṣṇa) are the best forms to attain salvation according to Śaṅkaradeva's. He expresses it as follows –

*yadyapi bhakati navavidha mādḥavara /*  
*śravaṇa kīrttana tāto mahā śreṣṭhātara //*<sup>119</sup>

It means, although there are nine kinds of devotion of Mādhava, *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* are the best among them.

While *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* lead one to the supreme mystical experience, the other subsidiary forms remain as auxiliaries.

Though *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* are the best forms of *bhakti* for Śaṅkaradeva, it does not mean that the other seven forms of *bhakti* are meaningless. They are included in *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana*. Even though, Śaṅkaradeva considers *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* as the best forms of *bhakti*; he regards *śravaṇa* as the beginning of *bhakti*. The main duty of a devotee is hearing the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. *Śravaṇa-kīrttana* is very simple since there is no hard and fast rule in *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana*. All men can do *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* of *Hari-kathā*. *Śravaṇa* creates an interest in *Hari kathā* which naturally leads one to chant the names and attributes of Kṛṣṇa. This act of chanting the names of God is called *kīrttana*.<sup>120</sup> Hence, *śravaṇa* and *kīrttana* are the best *bhakti*.

*Bhakti*, without *bhakta* is meaningless. On the basis of the different stages of *bhakti*, Śaṅkaradeva in his work *Bhaktiratnākara* divides devotees into three types.

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119. *Śrīmad Bhāgavat Mahāpurāṇa* : Book- I; chap. V. verse – 38.

120. Sarma. S.N. (2016) : *The Neo Vaiṣṇavite Movement and the Sattra Institution of Assam*; p 76.

These are – *uttama bhaktas*, *madhyama bhaktas* and *prākṛta bhaktas*. Among these three, *uttama bhaktas* are the highest type of *bhakta*, which is above all cupidity, ahaṁkara, jealousy etc. as he knows that the world is the formation of *māyā*. He desires only to serve God as his servant. As a result, he remains peaceful and fair-minded constantly. In the philosophy of Śaṅkaradeva, this *uttama bhakta* is known in various terms such as *mahābhakat*, *param bhakat* etc.

*Prākṛta bhaktas* are known as *adhama bhaktas* who adore God in different idols. He adores not the other devotees as well as no respect for any other being. According to Śaṅkaradeva, in the course of time, *prākṛta bhaktas* can become *uttama bhakta* as a result of devotion.

*Madhayama bhaktas* are greater than *prākṛta bhaktas*, but lesser than *uttama bhaktas*. These are those *bhaktas* who adore God and see God in all, they generate friendship with other *bhaktas*. They forgive their opponents and are kind to the afflicted ones. These are but the four ways of serving the Lord. He also follows the advice of the spiritual leaders with great reverence. It is expressed in the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*īśvara dekhe jīto mane samastate /*  
*samānata maitrī kare prīti uttamata //*  
*bipakṣata kṣamā kare kṛpā duḥkhitata /*  
*jānā rājā sehijana madhyama bhakta //*<sup>121</sup>

In Śaṅkaradeva's writings, it has been repeatedly mentioned that even the sinners can purify themselves, if they become penitents and lead a spiritual life. Śaṅkaradeva advises to forgive the sinners who want to rectify themselves with the aid

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121. The *Bhaktiratnākara*: Chap. 18; (*Madhyama Bhakatara lakṣaṇa*), verse- 600.

of devotional love. God is love, so the sinner should seek shelter in God. It is expressed in the *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

*durācāra naro                      kṛṣṇaka bhajiyā*  
*hove mahā śreṣṭhātara //*  
*āna deva teji                      moke mātra bhaje*  
*yadi durācārī nara //*  
*pāpi buli tāka                      nadhariba keve*  
*nāhi mora adhikāra /*  
*hauka durācāra                      hauka sadācāra*  
*vaiṣṇava yito hovaya //*<sup>122</sup>

### 7.7. : *Bhakti* is Superior to *Mukti* :

Mādhavadeva expresses a verse at the begining of his famous work *Nāma-Ghoṣā*, where he emphasises the fact that *bhakti* is superior to *mukti*. The verse is as follows –

*muktito nisprha yito    sehi bhakataka namo*  
*rasamayī māgoho bhakati,*  
*samasta mastaka maṇi    nija bhakatarā baśya*  
*bhajo hena deva yadupati //*<sup>123</sup>

It means, to those *bhaktas*, who have no longing even for *mukti* or salvation and whose sole aim is the love of God, I bow down my head with all reverence. I beg to God to grant me *rasamayī bhakti* and nothing else. I devote my whole existence to Him, Who is attached to His *bhakata*.

Śaṅkaradeva also emphasises the path of *bhakti* as superior to any other path of *mokṣa*. It is expressed in his work *Bhaktiratnākara* as follows –

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122. *The Bhaktiratnākara*: Chap. 20; verses- 636, 656, 663.

123. Mādhavadeva's *Nāma-Ghoṣā* : verse- 1.

*tapa yoga ādi*                      *āche puruṣara*  
*bahūta panthā mokṣara /*  
*tāto kari mātra*                      *mokṣato adhika*  
*bhakti yoga mādhavara //*<sup>124</sup>

By surrendering oneself at the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one could enjoy the blissfull form of Lord and easily attain salvation.

Śaṅkaradeva and Mādhadeva have expressed in numerous lines about the supremacy of *Bhakti* to any other *mārgas*, rituals, sacrifices in their books *Bhaktiratnākara* and *Bhakti-Ratnāvali*.

In the *Bhaktiratnākara*, it has been said that a true devotee never hankers after *Sāyujya mukti* and considers the state of *bhakti* as superior to that of *mukti*. In one place of the same book, it is stated that the devotees of Kṛṣṇa refuse even *Sālokya mukti* in *Vaikuṇṭha* if it is offered without providing any opportunity for practicing devotion.<sup>125</sup>

In *Bhakti-Ratnāvalī*, it is stated that though the state of liberation brings happiness, yet *bhakti* is superior to *mukti* in as much as the latter is devoid of joy inherent in the service to the Lord, while the bliss of *mukti* is inherent in the former, i.e., *bhakti*.<sup>126</sup>

The Vaiṣṇava sects of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Nimbārka, Vallabha and Chaitanya have not recognised *jīvan mukti*, that is liberation during life time.

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124. *The Bhaktiratnākara*: Chap. 10; verse- 6.

125. *The Bhaktiratnākara*: Chap. 11; verse- 3.

126. *The Bhakti-Ratnāvali of Mādhavadeva*; Chap. 11.



But the Vaiṣṇava saints of Assam recognised both *jīvan-mukti* and *videha-mukti*. Śaṅkaradeva did not favour the *Sāyujya-mukti*, where the complete absorption in God deprives *jīvas* of the sweetness and bliss associated with *bhakti*.

Śaṅkaradeva is not altogether averse to *mukti*. He means only that the devotees should not direct their efforts to the attainment of salvation alone. It would mean some sort of selfishness on the part of a devotee if his devotion were directed solely towards attaining salvation. Liberation would come automatically in its own time – it is inherent in *bhakti*. As such, a separate effort solely directed to attain liberation is not only unnecessary but also undesirable.

Devotion to God or *bhakti* arises out of love of God or *Bhāgavatprema*. Mahāpurusa Śrīmananta Śaṅkaradeva conceived that *bhakti* comprehends knowledge and sense of greatness of God. It is attachment to God accompanied by detachment to all worldly things. It is the loving service to God. Śaṅkaradeva is in favour of knowledge with devotion. As he expresses, knowledge follows the realm of Veda; brings out the sound judgement out of it; knowledge remains in devotion. It is expressed in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* as follows –

*jñāne gati kavaḥ veda    lovā tārā paricheda  
āche jñāna bhakatir māje //*<sup>127</sup>

To Śaṅkaradeva, knowledge without devotion is futile. He, who follows the way of knowledge without devotion struggles for nothing. Such knowledge cannot produce any result. Śaṅkaradeva maintains that devotion is the bearer of great fruits.

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127. Śrīmad Bhāgavat Mahāpurāṇa : Book- XI; verse – 199.

According to Śaṅkaradeva, it is only through the performance of devotion that knowledge arises automatically. Śaṅkaradeva observes that devotion will culminate in the long run, into omniscience. However, Śaṅkaradeva used the word devotion in comprehensive sense. In this sense, devotion includes the absence of shame, fear, desire, greed, attachment, anger and other vices; aversion to wordly objects; respect for all objects, love, faith, self-surrender, selfless service, purity of senses, intellect, ego and purification of mind. *Śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of the glories of God are the two modes of devotion on which Śaṅkaradeva emphasises.