

THE ESSENCE OF BHAKTI YOGA

What is Bhakti?

The word Bhakti comes from a root word “Bhaja” in Sanskrit which means to remember, contemplate, worship, serve, adore, love and sing the glories and greatness of the creator. Four main components of Bhakti are: chanting the glory of God, worshiping, service and surrender to God. Bhakti may be defined as single-minded, constant, loving remembrance of God as given in the following verse:

an=ny=c=et= / s=t=t=] y=e m=] sm=rit= in=ty=x= / +

t=sy=h] s=ulB= / p=q=* in=ty=y=ukt=sy= y=eig=n= / ++è.ââ++

I am easily attainable, O Arjuna, by that ever steadfast yogi who always thinks of Me regularly with faith and loving devotion and whose mind does not go elsewhere. (8.14)

an=ny= ic=nt=n= a=Er in=ty= sm=rn= are the keywords in Bhakti-yoga. Bhakti is also called an=ny= B=ikt=, p=r= B=ikt=, avy=iB=c==ir[=I B=ikt=. Para Bhakti comes when intellect surrenders to divine will in the spirit of true or pure love. Bhakti is selfless loving contemplation of God. The one who always contemplates God with full faith is considered to be the best of all yogis as given below:

y=eig=n=m=< aip= s=v=*e{=} m=d<g=t=en==nt=r=tm=n== +

X3=v==n=< B=j=t=e y=e m=] s= m=e y=ukt=t=m==e m=t= / ++è.ââ++

I consider the yogi-devotee --- who lovingly contemplates Me with supreme faith, and whose mind is ever absorbed in Me --- to be the best of all the yogis. (6.47)

m=yy=< a=v=exy= m=n==e y=e m==] in=ty=y=ukt== Wp==s=t=e +

X3y== p=ry==ep=et==s=< t=e m=e y=ukt=t=m== m=t==/ ++âä.ä++

Lord Krishna said: I consider the best yogis to be those ever steadfast devotees who worship with supreme faith by fixing their mind on Me as their personal God. (12.02)

Lord personally takes care of Welfare of His Devotees.

an=ny==x=< ic=nt=y=nt==e m==] y=e j=n==/ p=y=*up==s=t=e +

t=e{==] in=ty==iB=y=ukt==n==] y==eg=Z=em=] v=h=my=< ahm=< ++i.ää++

I personally take care of both the spiritual and material welfare of those ever-steadfast devotees who always remember and worship Me with single-minded contemplation. (9.22)

t=sm==t=< s=v=e*{=uu k:=le{=u m==m=< an=usm=r y=uQy= c= +

m=yy=< aip=*t=m=n==eb=ui3r< m==m=< Av=E{y=sy=< as=]x=y=m=< ++è.ë++

Therefore, always remember Me and do your duty. You shall certainly attain Me if your mind and intellect are ever focused on Me. (8.07)

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Bhakti is suitable for all

A spiritual discipline should be commensurate with the faith, interest, and ability of the person. Some may be disqualified or not ready to receive the knowledge of the Supreme, but the path of devotion is open to all. No one is disqualified due to caste, creed, gender, or mental capacity to receive devotion. Most saints and sages consider the path of devotion the easiest and the best of all paths. Bhakti is not only the easiest, but also fastest way to God as given below:

s=m=eCh] s=v=*B=Ut=e{=u n= m=e 8e{y=eCòst= n= ip=>y=/ +

y=e B=j=ònt= t=u m==] B=ky== m=iy= t=e t=e{=u c==py=< ahm=< ++i.âi++

The Self is present equally in all beings. There is no one hateful or dear to Me. But, those who worship Me with love and devotion are very close to Me, and I am also very close to them. (9.29)

aip= c=et=< s=udur=c==r=e B=j=t=e m==m=< an=ny=B==k<: +

s==Q=ur< Av= s= m=nt=vy=/ s=my=g=< vy=v=òs=t==e ih s=/ ++i.âi++

If even the most sinful person resolves to worship Me with single-minded, loving devotion, such a person must be regarded as a saint because of making the right resolution. (9.30)

iZ=p=>] B=v=it= Q=m==*tm== x=xv=c%=ònt=] in=g=c%òit= +

k:=Ent=ey= p=>it=j==n=lih n= m=e B=kt=/ p=>[=xy=it= ++i.âi++

Such a person soon becomes righteous and attains everlasting peace. Be aware, O Arjuna, that My devotee shall never perish or fall down. (9.31)

m==] ih p==q=* vy=p==iXty= y=eCip= sy=u/ p==p=y==en=y=/ +

òsF=y==e v=Exy==s=< t=q== x=U7=s=< t=eCip= y==ònt= p=r=] g=it=m=< ++i.ää++

Anybody --- including women, merchants, laborers, and the evil-minded --- can attain the supreme abode by just surrendering unto My will with loving devotion, O Arjuna. (9.32)

ik:} p=un=r< b=>=É[==/ p=u[y== B=kt== r=j={=*y=s=< t=q== +

ain=ty=m=< as=uK=] l=ek:m=< wm=] p=>=py= B=j=sv= m==m=< ++i.ää++

It should then be very easy for holy priests and devout royal sages to attain the Supreme Being. Therefore, having obtained this joyless and transitory human life, one should always worship Me with loving devotion. (9.33)

m=nm=n== B=v= m=4kt==e m=6=j=I m==] n=m=sku:o +

m==m=< Av=E{y=òs= y=uktv=Ev=m=< a=tm==n=] m=tp=r=y=[=/ ++i.ää++

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow down to Me. Thus uniting yourself with Me by setting Me as the supreme goal and the sole refuge, you shall certainly come to Me. (9.34)

Difference between Karma-Yoga, Bhakti- Yoga and Jnāna-yoga

y=t=< k:r=ei {= y=d< axn==òs= y=j=< j=uh=ei {= dd=òs= y=t=< +

y=t=< t=p=sy=òs= k:=Ent=ey= t=t=< ku:o {v= m=dp=* [=m=<< ++i.äë++

O Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever charity you give, whatever austerity you perform, do all that as an offering unto Me. (9.27)

aBy==s=eCpy=< as=m=q==e*Còs= m=tk:m=*p=rm==e B=v= +

m=dq=*m=< aip= k:m==*ò [= ku:v=*n=< òs=i3m=< av==psy=òs= ++âä.âî++

If you are unable even to do any spiritual discipline, then be intent on performing your duty for Me. You shall attain perfection just by working for Me (as an instrument, just to serve and please Me, without selfish motives). (12.10)

A Bhakta becomes free from the bondage of Karma by $m=dp=* [=m=<<$, $m=tk:m=*p=rm=$, and $m=dq=*m=<$. Any one of the above three processes makes a Karma as Akarma.

Bhakta offers ($m=dp=* [=m=<<$) all work to God before or after performing the work. It is said that One who does all work as an offering to the Lord --- abandoning selfish attachment to the results --- remains untouched by Karmic reaction or sin as a lotus leaf never gets wet by water. (5.10) He considers all work as God's work ($m=tk:m=*p=rm=$) and he works for God ($m=dq=*m=<$) as His instrument only.

A karma-yogi also becomes free from the bonds of Karma by working for the greater good of the society without any selfish motive. Thus the service to society is called Karma-yoga and the same service to society when it is considered as a service to God is called Bhakti. Thus Karma-yoga becomes Bhakti-yoga when it is done with God consciousness. A Jnāna-yogi considers all works as works of nature and does not think oneself as the doer.

Both Karma-yogi and Bhakti-yogi get Jnāna

n= ih N=n=en= s=;x=] p=iv=F=m=< wh iv=6t=e +

t=t=< sv=y=] y==eg=s=]òs=3/ k:=len==tm=in= iv=ndit= ++â.âè++

In truth, there is no purifier in this world like the true knowledge of the Supreme Being. One who becomes purified by Karma-yoga discovers this knowledge within, naturally, in course of time.

(4.38)

t=e {==] s=t=t=y=ukt==n==] B=j=t==] p=>Iit=p=Uv=*k:m=< +

dd=im= b=ui3y==eg=] t=] y=en= m==m=< Wp=y==ònt= t=e ++â.ââ++

t=e {==m=< Av==n=uk:mp==q=*m=< ahm=< aN=n=j=] t=m=/ +

n==x=y==my=< a=tm=B==v=sq==e N=n=dIp=en= B==sv=t== ++â.ââ++

I give knowledge and understanding of metaphysical science --- to those who are ever united with Me and lovingly worship Me --- by which they come to Me. (10.10)
I, who dwell within their inner psyche as consciousness, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of transcendental knowledge as an act of compassion for them. (10.11)

B=kyt== tv=< an=ny=y== x=ky= ahm=< Av=]iv=Q==eCj=*un= +

N=t=u] 7{!u] c= t=Tv=en= p=>v=e{!u] c= p=r]t=p= ++â.çâ++

Through single-minded devotion alone, I can be seen in this form, can be known in essence, and also can be reached, O Arjuna. (11.54)

A Jnāna-yogi also gets Bhakti

y=e m=m< Av=m< as=]m=U\$=e j=n=it= p=uo {=eT=m=m< +

s= s=v=*iv=d< B=j=it= m=] s=v=*B=v=en= B=rt= ++âç.âi++

The wise, who truly understand Me as the Supreme Being (Purushottama), know everything and worship Me wholeheartedly, O Arjuna. (15.19)

b=hUn=] j=nm=n=m< ant=e N=n=v=n< m=] p=>p=6t=e +

v=s=udev=/ s=v=*m< wit= s= m=h=tm= s=udul*B=/ ++ë.âi++

After many births the enlightened one worships Me by realizing that everything is, indeed, My (or Supreme Being's) manifestation. Such a great soul is very rare. (7.19)

B=kty= m=m< aiB=j=n=it= y=v=n< y=x< c=òsm= t=Tv=t=/ +

t=t=e m=m< t=Tv=t=e N=tv= iv=x=t=e t=dn=nt=rm=< ++âè.çç++

By devotion one truly understands what and who I am in essence. Having known Me in essence, one immediately merges with Me. (18.55)

The Best Sādhanā

Lord Krishna declares that learning and preaching the transcendental knowledge of the Gita to be the best way of practicing three main spiritual disciplines --- Bhakti, Karma and Jnāna --- to reach His supreme Abode as follows:

y= wm=] p=rm=] g=uÄ] m=4kt=e{v=< aiB=Q==sy=it= +

=ûkt=] m=iy= p=r=] k&:tv== m==m=< Av=E{y=ty=< as=]x=y=/ ++âè.êè++

The one who shall propagate (or help the propagation of) this supreme secret philosophy (of the Gitā) amongst My devotees, shall be performing the highest devotional service to Me and shall certainly (attain the Supreme Abode and) come to Me. (18.68)

n= c= t=sm==n=< m=n=u{y=e{=u k:ûxc=n=< m=e ip=>y=k&:T=m=/ +

B=iv=t== n= c= m=e t=sm==d< any=/ ip=>y=t=r=e B=uiv= ++âè.êï++

No other person shall do a more pleasing sevā to Me, and no one on the earth shall be more dear to Me. (18.69)

aQy=e{y=t=e c= y= wm=] Q=my=*] s=]v==dm=< a=v=y==e/ +

N=n=y=Nen= t=en==hm=< w{!/ sy==m=< wit= m=e m=it=/ ++âè.êï++

Those who shall study our sacred dialogue shall be performing a holy act of knowledge-sacrifice. This is My promise. (18.70)

OM TAT SAT