

Bhakti Tattva Viveka

Analysis of the Nature of
Bhakti

Chapter 3

Characteristics of *Bhakti*

Ignorance is the origin of suffering

O intimate devotees! Hearing about ignorance, you will want to know
about the real nature of ignorance.

I will thus speak a few words about this.

Kṛṣṇa has unlimited śaktis.

We are familiar with three: the *cit-śakti*, the *jīva-śakti* and *māyā-śakti*.

From the *cit-śakti* arise the Lord's abode, pastimes, and paraphernalia.

It is also called the *svarūpa-śakti*.

From the *jīva-śakti* unlimited *jīvas* appear.

The *jīva* is by nature a pure conscious entity but because it is incomplete, it has an inclination for *māyā*.

It becomes attached to *māyā*.

By its desire it becomes averse to Kṛṣṇa and falls under the control of māyā.

By its desire, it becomes completely independent of māyā and becomes favourable to Kṛṣṇa.

That is the difference between bondage and liberation for the jīva.

Māyā has two powers: ① ignorance and ② knowledge.

The *jīva* in its conditioned state, overcome by *māyā*, has its *svarūpa* covered by ignorance and gives up identity with its spiritual nature arising from pure knowledge.

It identifies the self with material elements which arise from ignorance.

Bondage of ignorance produces the *jīva*'s bound up condition.

When the *jīva* becomes free of ignorance, and destroys the *upādhis*, it attains a liberated state.

Thus ignorance is nothing.

It is simply a particular function of māyā which makes the jīva err concerning his real nature.

↓
avidyā

From ignorance arises the jīva's desire for action.

↓
bījan

From desire for action arise sinful and pious acts and their reactions.

↓
pāpān'

Ignorance is the origin of the jīva's suffering.

Only *bhakti* is capable of destroying ignorance.

Karma can destroy sins.

Jñāna can destroy the desires causing sin and piety.

But *bhakti* completely uproots sin, the seed (desire for sin or piety),
and ignorance, the origin of desire.

② s'ubheda

Bhakti gives auspiciousness

śubhāni prīṇanam sarva-jagatām anuraktatā |
sad-guṇāḥ sukham ity-ādīny ākhyātāni manīṣibhiḥ |

The wise explain that there are four types of auspiciousness (śubha) (śubhāni ākhyātāni manīṣibhiḥ): affection for all living entities (prīṇanam), being attractive to all living entities (sarva-jagatām anuraktatā), possession of good qualities (sad-guṇāḥ), and happiness (sukham), as well as other items (ity-ādīny). BRS 1.1.27

yenārcito haris tena tarpitāni jaganty api |
rajyanti jantavas tatra jangamāḥ sthāvarā api ||

Padma Purāṇa says:

He who worships the Lord (yena harih arcitah) is pleasing to all living entities (tarpitāni jaganty api); and all the inhabitants of the world (jantavah tatra), both moving and non-moving (jangamāḥ sthāvarā api), are pleasing to him (tena rajyanti).

This means that the worshipper of the Lord has attraction for all beings without hatred.

Thus all beings have attraction for him. ⁽²⁾

Devotees develop all good qualities ^{(3) developing all good qualities} spontaneously.

This is clear if one examines the lives of devotees.

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ |
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-gunā
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ ||

The devatās constantly dwell (surāḥ samāsate) with all good qualities (sarvair guṇaih) in (tatra) that person who has pure bhakti for the Lord (yasya akiñcanā bhagavaty bhaktir āsti). There are no good qualities in the non-devotee (harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-gunā) who chases after (dhāvatah) temporary material objects (āsati bahiḥ) with desire for material pleasure (manorathena). SB 5.18.12

Qualities like mercy, truthfulness, humility, submissiveness, detachment, and knowledge develop in the heart of devotee purified by bhakti.

These qualities will not develop in the hearts of persons afflicted with material thirst, though they make many attempts.

④ Sukha Pradāna → Happiness.

Attainment of happiness is also included in attaining auspiciousness and will be discussed separately now.

sukham vaiṣayikam brāhmam aiśvaram ceti tat tridhā ||

There are three types of happiness (**sukham tat tridhā**): from material things (**vaiṣayikam**), from brahman realization (**brāhmam**) and from the Lord (**aiśvaram ca iti**). BRS 1.1.30

All the happiness in the material world is material (*vaisayikam*).

The *siddhis* of yoga, the happiness of Svarga of the *karmīs* and the worldly happiness of persons completely slaves to their senses are all classed as material happiness.

The undifferentiated happiness arising from separately oneself from matter and thinking oneself one with changeless Brahman is the happiness of Brahman.

The happiness arising from constant obedience to the Lord full of all powers is called happiness related to the Lord.

Bhakti to the Lord by its nature gives all types of happiness but when it arises in the sincere heart it bestows happiness related to the Lord.

It gives happiness to other persons as well, according to their situation, according to their goals of *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma* or *mokṣa*, based on the desires in their hearts.

siddhayaḥ paramāścaryā bhuktir muktiś ca śāsvatī |
nityam ca paramānando bhaved govinda-bhaktiḥ ||

Astounding mystic powers (**siddhayaḥ paramāścaryā**), material enjoyment (**bhukti**), eternal happiness in the realization of brahman (**mukti**), and eternal bliss from service to the Lord (**nityam ca paramānando**) all appear from bhakti to Govinda (**bhaved govinda-bhaktiḥ**). From a *tantra* quoted in BRS 1.1.31

bhūyo 'pi yāce deveśa tvayi bhaktir dṛḍhāstu me |
yā mokṣānta-caturvarga phaladā sukhadā latā ||

O lord of the devas (**deveśa**)! I again pray to You (**bhūyah api yāce tvayi**) that I may have firm devotion to You (**dṛḍhā bhaktir astu me**). That bhakti is a creeper (**yā latā**) which bestows (**phaladā**) artha, dhārma, kāma, mokṣa (**mokṣānta-caturvarga**) and also the happiness of realization of the Lord (**sukhadā**). *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*

In summary *bhakti* yields all results.

The devotees, considered these results insignificant, seek only *prema* as the result.

If *jñāna* and *karma* do not take shelter of *bhakti* they cannot give their promised results.

Thus, except for *bhakti*, happiness cannot arise for the *jīva* in any condition or qualification.

Bhakti by its nature derides liberation

↓ Bhāva ③ → mokṣa laghūṭā ret

When bhakti arises even a little, artha, dharma, kāma and even mokṣa become insignificant.

hari-bhakti-mahā-devyāḥ sarvā mukty-ādi-siddhayaḥ |
bhuktyaś cādbhutās tasyāś ceṭikāvad anuvratāḥ ||

All the siddhis headed by liberation (sarvā mukty-ādi-siddhayaḥ) and all astonishing material pleasures (adbhutāḥ bhuktyaḥ) follow after (tasyāḥ anuvratāḥ) the great goddess called Hari-bhakti (hari-bhakti-mahā-devyāḥ) like fearful maidservants (ceṭikāvad). Nārada-pañcarātra

Rūpa Gosvāmī describes this fact beautifully:

manāg eva prarūḍhāyām hṛdaye bhagavād-ratau |
puruṣārthās tu catvārās tṛṇāyante samantataḥ ||

When even a little (manāg eva) attraction for the Lord (bhagavād-ratau) grows in the heart (hṛdaye prarūḍhāyām), the four objects of human attainment—artha, dharma, kāma and mokṣā (puruṣārthās tu catvārās)—become like grass, shameful to appear before bhakti (tṛṇāyante samantataḥ). BRS 1.1.33
