CHAPTER-2

BHAKTI

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Indian cultural tradition has recognized three paths for realizing the supreme: Jñānamārga—'the path of knowledge', Karmamārga—'the path of action or ritualism' and Bhaktimārga—'the path of devotion'. The first requires a high level of intellect, firm determination and a renunciation of the worldly impulses. The second requires a large amount of means and money. It is obvious that many people would not possess either a high intellect or sufficiently ample means. The path of Bhakti, therefore would appear to be the most democratic means of supreme-realization, which would require more inner will and aptitude rather than any external (or even internal) expedients out of human control. Bhakti is thus more a matter of will rather than resources.

The world Bhakti itself is formed from the root bhaj−sevāyām\(^1\) (in the sense of service) with a suffix ktin.\(^2\) The word Bhakti thus, primarily means 'service'. Then with the progress of time, its meaning has developed to connote the sense of 'devotion'. In its more normal classical Sanskrit. Sense, therefore Bhakti implies a sincere service of a god prompted by intense love based on a sense of supreme faith,\(^3\) (Bhakti and faith are only two sides of a coin, faith itself develops into Bhakti). Bhakti does not even require a renunciation or even suppression of our natural human impulses, it require only a sublimations a

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\(^1\) cf. पाँचवींधातुप्रद - no.998 (in भ्यादिमार्ग)  
\(^2\) cf विक्रमेश्यित्र - पाँचवींधातुप्रद - no.998  
\(^3\) Vyas Ramanarayan The Bhagavat... ...Delhi, 1977, p 3
8. \textit{Sakhyam}-'friendship with God':

\begin{quote}
स न पितेव सूनवे। अस्य पितवाः सच्चे स्याम।
देवताना सत्त्वमुप सेविम बय देवा न आयुः प्रतिरत्नु जीविसे।
य आनयतु परावेत।
\end{quote}

9. \textit{Ātmanivedanam}-'self surrender':

\begin{quote}
उत वात पितासिन:। यं रक्षति। मुमुक्षुवर्यं शरणां हि प्रपधे।
\end{quote}

\textbf{In Upaniṣads:}

Many of these types of \textit{Bhakti} are also elucidated or implied in the \textit{Upaniṣads}. \textit{Brāhmaṇas} being mostly connected with the \textit{karmakāṇḍa} (i.e. details of sacrificial activities), reference to any type or detail of \textit{Bhakti} in them is extremely rare; but \textit{Upaniṣads} propound and discuss various spiritual and philosophical ideas, and views; therefore, thoughts on \textit{Bhakti} also have found expression in some of the ancient \textit{Upaniṣads} like \textit{Chāndogya}, \textit{Bṛhadāranyakā}, \textit{Kātha}, \textit{Mundaka}; \textit{Śvetāśvatara} etc. The word \textit{Bhakti} occurs only once in the important \textit{Upaniṣads}.\textsuperscript{34} However, the word \textit{Śraddhā-}'faith' occurs many times\textsuperscript{35} and in various forms.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{34} आमेवे ३ २ ८ ७ आमेवे ३ २ ९ ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २७ \footnotetext{35} आमेवे ३ २ ८ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २७ \footnotetext{34} आमेवे ३ २ ९ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २७ \footnotetext{35} आमेवे ३ २ ९ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २७ \footnotetext{34} आमेवे ३ २ ८ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २० \footnotetext{35} आमेवे ३ २ ८ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २० \footnotetext{34} आमेवे ३ २ ९ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २० \footnotetext{35} आमेवे ३ २ ९ २ ० ५ ६ ३ शुक्ल यजुर्वेद ३३ २० \end{footnotes}
But in actual description, we find many elements of *Bhakti* being suggested by implications in many places: In *Mundaka*, the description of the worship of *omkara* is one of such places:

\begin{quote}
तदेवत्वां ब्रह्म ........................(२.२.२)
धनुपीठालनिषिद्धं महारथं
शर हुपासानिषिद्धं संध्ययो
आयमु तद् भागवतेन चेत्सा
लघुं तदेवां सोम्य विद्वि ॥ (२.२.२)
भिन्नं हृदयान्वितिनिषिद्धं सर्वं संस्यं
क्र्वन्ते चार्य कामिणि तस्मिन्तु द्वपे परावरे ॥ (२.२.२)
\end{quote}

Also about the favour of that Supreme, the famous saying goes:

\begin{quote}
यमेवै बुधु तेन लम्भ: (३.२.३)"
\end{quote}

Some scholars show the *Sakhyā-bhakti* in that famous Vedic verse:

\begin{quote}
ष चुपरि सयुज सखाया
समानं वृक्षं परिषज्जते
तपोर्मर्यमिति स्वाधत्य
नक्ययो अभिवचारशीलिः ॥"
\end{quote}

The *Upaniṣads* have propounded the nature of Brahman as two-fold: *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa*. The *bhakti* would naturally be associated with the latter.

Some later *Upaniṣads* are more explicit on the topic of *Bhakti*. The *Tripādvibhūti-Mahānārayana Upaniṣad*, for example, describes two kinds of *Yoga* – *nirālamba* and *Sālamba*—which clearly relate to the twofold nature of Brahman. The *Sālamba yoga* is nothing but *Bhakti* of a god in human form.³⁸

³⁵ कद. १.१.२, गुणध. १.७, वैतलिप. २.३.४; जनोयो. ५.१०.१, ७.१९.१, बुधवारय. १.५.३ etc.
³⁶ Also कतोपदिश. २.२३
³⁷ कद. २५.६६, अर्थविन. ६.२, २.२०, गुणध. ३.१.१, भेमात ४.६.
³⁸ भगवत सालात्स्तिकतं प्रसृत्वतः कातेरिति ब्रह्मीति. सालात्वतु संस्कारस्वत: सर्वसंस्कृतं विशिष्टं गुणलक्ष्यालम्बन सालाभोग.
\ldots\ldots तस्मादभक्तिविकारिनिविकारिणि भक्तियोगं एव प्रशस्त: भक्तियोगं निविद्यव भक्तियोगं नित्यवाण।
Ed. आचार्य नारायण राम, ईश्वरीश्चन्द्र शलोपानिशद, निर्माण सागर, मुंबई, 1948, P.382
This position is extended to the various godheads like Viṣṇu, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc. in other *Upaṇiṣads* like *Nārāyaṇātharvasira Upaṇiṣad*, *Rāmapūrva-paniṣa*, *Gopalapūrva-paniṣa*, *Kṛṣṇopaniṣa* etc.

Thus the progress of the thought of worship of anthropomorphic gods of nature, then a god of all gods, the qualit Supreme and then parallelly in gods in human form, is seen though Vedic, *Upaṇiṣadic* and later *Upaṇiṣadic* literature. The development of the godhead from Indra though Upendra and Viṣṇu to his incarnations like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa etc., can be traced through different Upaṇiṣads, just as the concept of worship appears to evolve into a fully developed theory of *Bhakti* over the same period.

*BhagavadGītā*:

Next is *Śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā*. *Gītā* is the single most important book of the entire Hindu tradition. It is permeated with the wisdom of the scriptures culminating in the *Upaṇiṣads*. It has been regarded as one of three *prasthānas* in Indian tradition because the philosophical ideas which are in the form of poetic revelations in the *Upaṇiṣads* are presented here from their practical aspect, their theoretical aspect being codified in the famous *Brahmasūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa. Thus, it contains the essence of the *Upaṇiṣadic* teachings which is often expressed in *Upaṇiṣadic* or allusive words. Yet, it has so deftly alloyed the element of *Bhakti* with the *Upaṇiṣadic Jñāna-mārga* that it has become a turning point in the history of Indian thought.

*Gītā* speaks of the Highest Lord very often as the Impersonal, Qualityless Brahman as described in the *Upaṇiṣads*. But at the same time it identifies Kṛṣṇa, the personal god, with It. It propounds the theory of *Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*
(comparable to sarvam khalv idam brahma.\(^{39}\). It teaches that all actions that one performs—sacrifices, other rituals, or whatever—should be performed without personal attachment and dedicated to him. (manmanā bhava madbhakto etc. 9.34 or yat karoṣī yad asīnaṣi etc. 9.27)\(^{40}\) Bhaktiyoga is more efficacious than Jñāna or karma for the realization of God. (tapasvibhy'dhiko yogī etc., and yoginām api sarveṣām...... śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām etc.)\(^{41}\). The single-minded Bhakti (ananyā) pleases the Lord who confers His prasāda 'favour' upon the devotees. Gitā is democratic in the matter of Bhakti : all persons, irrespective of their caste, creed or sex, have right to worship the Highest Lord and to work for their emancipation.\(^{42}\)

Bhagavata Sampradāya:

Gitā is very often called the Bible of the Bhāgavata religion. This implies that all (or at least most) of the principal teachings of the Bhāgavata religion are taught by the Gitā. Also some of the principles of earlier Bhāgavata cult as may be found propounded in works like Nārada-Pāñcarātra, Śāndilyaśūtras, or the most important, the Nārāyaṇīya section of the Mahābhārata, are as follows:

1. The Bhāgavatas believe that Hari or Nārāyaṇa (or Kṛṣṇa in Gitā) is the Highest Lord;

2. The entire world is created from this Highest Lord and shall resolve into Him. In the Gitā, Lord Kṛṣṇa says:

\(^{39}\) श्राब्दोऽयुयनिष्ठ, ३.२४ ि

\(^{40}\) श्रीमद्भागवतगीता, ६.२४ & २५.

\(^{41}\) श्रीमद्भागवतगीता, ६ ४६ & ४७.

\(^{42}\) श्रीमद्भागवतगीता, ९.२२.
3. This evolution in *Bhāgavata* takes the form of *caturvṛtyuḥ-Vāsudeva* (Highest Lord), Śankarṣaṇa (individual soul), Pradyumna (mind) and Aniruddha (Ego). In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says:

\[ \text{\ldots Bhūmirāpoḍanalo bāyu: \& mno bhūdāre ṛc.} \]
\[ \text{abhaṣaṁ ṛcāṁ māmiḥ prakṛiteitahya \|} \]
\[ \text{aprayāmtasvāṁ prakṛtitattvam āt} \]
\[ \text{ātvarbhuṁ Mahābāho yateḥ śāyakti jagat.} \|

Again the best of the four kinds of devotees (*Ārto Jijnāsur Arthārthī Jñānī ca*) has the *vijñāna*-‘conviction’ that *Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*.

4. The Lord can be propitiated and realized by devotion only and not by sacrifices and penances. In the *Gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says:

\[ \text{naṁ vedaṁ tapasya na dāneṁ na čeṣayaḥ.} \]
\[ \text{ṣaṁy ēvaṁ jñāno ṛcū ṛcāntaṁ māṁ yadhā \|} \]
\[ \text{abhaṣaṁ lomaṁ jñāno ṛcū ṛcāntaṁ māṁ yadhā |} \]
\[ \text{ātvarbhuṁ ∥ oṣṭaṁ ṛcū ātvarbhuṁ māṁ yadhā.} \|

5. He could be seen only by those on whom He confers His *Prasāda*-‘grace’.

The devotees of the Lord were also called *aikāntikas* since they were devoted single-minded to stet Lord, Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* says:

\[ \text{anantamānīnaṁ māṁ ye jāna-: pṛṣeṣāyante \|} \]
\[ \text{tēṣāṁ niṣpāmaṁ gacchante māṁ yadhā.} \|

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\[ *\text{Śrīmad Bhāgavatam-9.7} \]
\[ *\text{Śrīmad Bhāgavatam-7.4-9} \]
\[ *\text{Śrīmad Bhāgavatam-11.5.14} \]
\[ *\text{Śrīmad Bhāgavatam-9.22} \]
In reality, *Gitā* presents a blending of various elements of Indian tradition like *Vedānta*, *Sāmkhya*, *Yoga* etc., yet the principal tenents of *Bhāgavata* religion are so prominently presented in its fabric that Śrī Vallabhācārya has accorded to Gitā an authority matched only by the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*.

*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*:

*Srimadbhāgavatapurāṇa* is another milestone. It occupies a very important position in the realm of Indian philosophy, religion and culture. It commands eightyone commentaries in Sanskrit. It is one of the most popular works for reasons of its poetry as well as for depicting *Bhakti* as the most important means of realising the Supreme Truth.

According to *Bhāgavata purāṇa* (BP), before the creation, the Supreme Truth alone existed. It is beginningless, qualityless, eternal and non–dual. It is described as Brahman in its *Nirguna* aspect, Paramātman in its *Saguna* aspect, Īśvara by *yoga*–followers, Bhagavān by general devotees and also as Vāsudeva particularly by Bhāgavata–followers.

The common man is a bundle of urges, impulses, emotions, desires, aspirations. They drag him down to earth, do not allow him to rise to the level of the Supreme Truth which is beyond the powers of sense organs and intellect. How can his ordinary human impulses be spiritualized ? The path to do this is that of *Bhakti*-'devotion'. *Bhāgavatas* emphasized devotion without compromising the real nature of the Supreme for them. *Nirguna* itself becomes *Saguna*. It attains a perceptible form for the pleasure of the devotees, the two are not different. By adopting this approach, *BP* has achieved a transformation, a
sublimation of the human emotion, in a softer way of devotion, and attained popularity larger than that of *Upaniṣads*.

*Bhāgavatapurāṇa* was narrated by Śukadeva to Parīkṣit who was destined to die on the seventh day and who had no time to cultivate the path of knowledge for emancipation. Śuka, under the urgency of circumstances, showed him the short-cut in the path of *Bhakti*. Let him dedicate himself wholly to the Lord, sincere devotion to the Lord can bring emancipation even to the most wretched. The supreme can not be realized by penance, by reciting *Vedas*, or by mere knowledge as through the path of devotion. In fact, knowledge and performance of duty without devotion are useless. *Bhakti* or total dedication to the Lord leads the devotee to renunciation of his own desires a state also achieved by the paths of knowledge and duty. The stories of Ajāmila and Prahlāda also enjoin that a human being's paramount duty is to recite His names and glories and to cultivate an intense and unflinching *Bhakti* for the Lord, the one beyond Being and non-Being, to see Him and to realize Him everywhere through a feeling of total devotion. Certainly, He is Infinite and without name and form, But to please His devotees, He assumes name and form in accordance with their feelings and expectancies to transport them by bestowing upon them the privilege of witnessing His play-sports.

Ultimately, *Bhakti* is an intimate and intense love for God, a total dedication, a submission of all one's impulses and desires and aims, selfless service to God, a complete and willing and loving surrender to the Lord. It automatically divests one of one's personal feelings and expectation, and achieves a willing and loving renunciation of desires, a non-attachment to
worldly objects while one lives among them. It is a transforming experience, a total change of outlook, a sublimation of one's petty wishes, of small desires. It is a state of perpetual dedication to God, of merging of one's individuality into the Lord, a state of emancipation, of Mukti.

**Bhakti-Sūtras:**

Later texts of Bhakti-Sastra like Nārada Pañcarātra, Śaṅdilyabhaktisūtras, Nāradabhashisūtras etc., mainly present these same views with the same definitions, details etc. and with some scientific outlook and some attempts at codifications and classifications. For example, Śaṅdilya-sūtras discuss the nature of Bhakti and opine that it is neither of the nature of knowledge, nor of will or volition resulting into action. It starts with the belief in God which, deepening into faith, culminates in devotion. Śaṅdilya divides devotion in two—primary and secondary—the first being total devotion to Lord leading to Mukti, the second as not intense but only a means to leading to the first. Nārada baseis his classification of Bhakti on the four types of devotees mentioned in Gītā viz. Ārta—'distressed', Jijñāsu—'inquisitive', Arthārthī—'selfish' (corresponding to there Sattvika, Rājas and Tāmasa types) and Jñāni—'the knower', and calls the first three as secondary and last as primary.

Nine types of devotional activity are mentioned in Bhagavata Purāṇa. While Nārada gives eleven types of Āsakti 'attachment for the Lord'—attachment for His qualities, for His form, His worship, His memory, His Service, His friendship, His parental affection, His amorous love, for self surrender, for merging in Him, for His extreme separation.47

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47 नारद भक्तिसूत्र
One important distinction is indicated by Nārada with regard to the nature of Bhakti-rasa, particularly its Madhurā type. He shows that when rati of a Gopī is Kṛṣṇavishayā, it would develop into Śrīgāra if it were self-oriented, i.e. with a desire to obtain the joy of love for her own self (which would be nothing but lust); but here in the case of Gopī, her rati is totally Lord-oriented, aiming only at the loving service of the Lord and without an iota of desire to gain any joy for her own self; hence this Kantārati is also a self less devotion, the highest kind of Bhakti and not Śrīgāra. The distinction is subtle but fundamental and very well points to the original nature and claim of Bhakti as rasa.

Pañcarātra & Vaikhānasas:

The Āgamas of Pañcarātra hold an important position in the history of Bhakti-literature. Śatapatha-Brāhma a says that the great Nārāyaṇa saw and performed the Pañcarātra sacrifice (lasting for five nights?) and transcended all other beings and became one with them all. Possibly the Purūṣo ha Nārāyaṇa, in later literature, becomes Nara and Nārāyana. Nārāyana in later literature, becomes the highest divinity. In Sāttvata Sanhitā, Nārāyana says to Nārāda that Vāsudeva is the Highest Changeless God; from Him comes out Saṅkarṣaṇa, the lord of all life, from him comes out Pradyumna (called manas), and from Pradyumna comes Aniruddha, 'the Ego'. From Aniruddha comes Brahmā who then creates universe. The stages from Vāsudeva to Brahmā are five, one step more than the theory of caturvyūha. Again the system is said to deal with five-fold knowledge: tattva 'cosmology', muktiprada 'liberation', bhakti-prada 'devotion', yaugika 'Yoga' and vaiśeṣika 'differentiating sense objects'.

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48 नारदस्यविषयाः
Śankarācārya has mentioned fivefold worship of the four-formed Paramēśvara, Lord Vāsudeva viz. abhīgamana—going to temples', upādāna—collecting articles of worship', ījā—worship, svādhīya—reciting the mantras', yoga—meditation'.

Bhandārkar has noted a work called Jñānāmytaśāra included in the famous Nārada–Pañcarātra. It describes Bhakti of Six types:
1) Smarana—'rememberance', 2) Kīrtana—utterance of His name and glory', 3) Praṇama—'salutation', 4) Carana–sevana—'resorting to his feet', 5) Nirantarapujana—'constant worship of Him with devotion', and 6) Pūrṇa–ātmanivedana—'complete self-surrender'. (BP has added three more types: Śravaṇa, Dāsyā and Sakhyā.) According to this work, Dāsyā is the best form of Mukti. Pūrṇa Ātmanivedana should be preceded by Dāsyā and Sakhyā. But Rādhā is the highest form of feminine principle loved by Lord Kṛṣṇa. In fact, Īśvara Himself has divided Himself into the two forms: Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā.

These principles bring us quite near to the views and thoughts on Bhakti propounded by Lord Caitanya and codified by the Gosvāmīn brothers in their works.

The Vaikhanasa sect is somewhat different from the Pañcarātra. Vaikhānasas were more closely adherent to the Vedic rituals and could be called the sect of the house-holders. The Vaikhanasa Āgama ascribed to sage Māricci enjoins the worship of Nārāyaṇa as the Highest and Eternal Brahman. Nārāyaṇa could be worshipped in two ways: either as the formless through sacrifices etc. or the 'Informed' one though the worship of idols. The Vaikhanasa Āgama treats

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50 Bhandārkar R.G. Vaiṣṇavism, saivism etc. Pune, 1928, PP 57–58.
of varied topics like the qualities of a worshipper, aspects of temple-building, expiatory rituals, some places of Vṛndāvana, rebirth and the theory of two post-mortem paths, concept of Māya subduing human beings, fruits of human actions and so on. But for our purposes, it has described four forms of worship: Japa—(reciting His names and epithets of glory), Agnihotra—(maintaining household fire for ritualistic purposes), Arcana—(worship of idols) and Dhyāna—(meditation).

Muktā-phala of Bopadeva:

In Muktā-phala, Bopadeva has compiled 800 verse from Bhāgavata-purāṇa dealing with the topic of Bhakti only, has analysed and arranged them in nineteen chapters and presented them to propound a coherent theory of Bhakti.

The chapters are grouped under four headings as follows:

I. Viṣṇu-prakaraṇas (ch.1–4; (1) Viṣṇoḥ Lakṣaṇam Bhedāṣ ca, (2) Viṣṇo Rūpam, (3) Viṣṇor avatārarūpāni, (4) Viṣṇoradhiṣṭhānarūpāni Mahimā ca).

II. Viṣṇubhakti-prakaraṇa (ch.5–6; (5) Viṣṇubhakter lakṣaṇam bhedāṣ ca (6) Viṣṇubhakti–Mahimā)

III. Viṣṇubhaktyaṅgavarga–prakaraṇam (ch.7–10; (7) Viṣṇubhaktyaṅga–varga–lakṣaṇam bhedāṣ ca (8) Viṣṇusṛvanaṃ Kirtanam ca, (9) Viṣṇusmaranam, (10) Viṣṇusṛvāṇa–Kīrtana–smaranāni)

It will be seen that this book provides both a strong and almost a complete foundation for Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *Bhakti* theory as well as a sort of back-support for RG’s treatment of the *Bhaktirasa* theory. There is, however, one important difference. Whatever is said in this book relating to Lord Viṣṇu, all that Mahāprabhu Caitanya relates to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Though, the source viz: the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is the same for all other theorists and those of the Caitanya school, the originality or specialty of the latter is (only ?) in restricting the area of application of the self–same principles & views from Lord Viṣṇu and His (ten) incarnations to only that of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Though this was not a difficult step since the play–sports and the *carita* of Lord Kṛṣṇa had always occupied the greatest attention (and also the largest space in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa*) yet under the influence of Jayadeva’s great work *Gīta–govinda* and of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism, Lord Caitanya took the definitive step and made the transformation from Vaiṣṇavism to Kṛṣṇaism complete. (Was it to facilitate this transition of emphasis that the eighth incarnation of Kṛṣṇa was replaced by an amendment in the theory that all often incarnations were *aṁśāvataras* whereas Kṛṣṇa–incarnation was a *pūrṇāvatāra* ?)

Śaṅkarācārya: *Advaitavāda*

The basic principles of Śankara’s Advaita philosophy are well known. As the famous half–couplet tacitly puts them:

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्य जीवो ब्रह्मो व नापर: ।

Brahman, the highest qualityless principle, is the only truth. The world is only Maya, an illusion, aconstantly changing entity, whereas the soul, the
individual sentient principle is entirely identical with the Supreme except for its association with its gross corporeal frame. In this system, emancipation of a soul is achieved through the real knowledge.

But so long as one lives, one has to accept the dual reality the twofold Truth the \textit{Pāramārthika satya} and the \textit{Vyāvahārika satya}. On the worldly level, the pure and extreme philosophical truth does not operate. The worldly transactions are made possible by a mixture of Truth and non–truth. On the worldly level, then, all the consideration of ethics and religion shall operate, the \textit{Nirguṇa} Brahman will be replaced by \textit{Saguna} Brahma can be represented in the images of various Godheads and the \textit{Bhakti} of these Godheads will be admissible.

How Śāṅkara has effected this compromise between his Absolutist philosophy and devotional practice is beautifully exemplified in the following verse from the famous \textit{Śatpadistotram} ascribed to him:

\begin{quote}
\begin{verse}
सत्यपि भेदापनमे नान्य तवाः न मामकीनस्त्रम्।
सामुद्रो हि तरंकः, क्वचन सामुद्रो न तारंकः।
[Though the distinction (between you Supreme, and me a poor soul) is removed, O Lord!, I am yours, not that you are mine. Waves belong to the ocean, never the ocean to waves.]
\end{verse}
\end{quote}

Śāṅkara has advocated the theory of deliverance by the path of knowledge. Yet he has composed many beautiful devotional poems. In his \textit{Sīvānanda–Lahari}, he defines \textit{Bhakti} in the following verse:

\begin{footnote}
As the saying does सत्यपि भेदापनमे नान्य तवाः न मामकीनस्त्रम्।
\end{footnote}
The verse gives five examples of Bhakti but Śankara considers the last example, the fifth one—Sindhuḥ sarid-vallabham as the proper illustration of the correct definition of Bhakti. He explains: the Ganges constantly flows towards the sea and ultimately assimilate itself in the waters of the sea, abandoning in the process its name, colour, from, and quality. You cannot distinguish the waters of the Ganges by its name, colour, taste etc. from the water of the ocean. In the same way, when the fluctuations of one's mind abandon all their objects of knowledge, assume the form of God permanently and remain permanently in that condition, that is the best definition of Bhakti.

Rāmānuja: Viśiṣṭa–advaita:

In Śaṅkara's advaita, Bhakti is a compromise, since knowledge alone can give liberation and any Saguṇa bhakti has no locus standi as such, because anything below the level of Nirguṇa Brahman is māyic and unreal.

Not so in Ramanuja's Viśiṣṭa–advaita 'Qualified Non–dualism'. According to Ramanuja, 'Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Vasudeva, known by the name of Viṣṇu, indicated in the term 'Brahman' and qualified by cit (sentient) and a–cit (non–sentient) is the only reality.'53 Thus Brahman Itself is God or Īśvara

52 श्यामराय-शिवानन्द सहरी-६१
53 विद्विदिर–विशिष्ट., ब्रह्मपरायण., विभवान्य., पर बासुदेवो नारायण एवंकम् इति विभिषिष्टात्मविभाय सरससम् ।– तत्तत्रत्रस्मत दीर्घिका, quote by Vyas R N, The Bhāgavata Bhakticult, P.P. 111 and 139
and is related with the Cosmos in a body–soul–like relation which is threefold: (1) adhara and adheya, which makes the world as real as Brahman Itself (2) niyāmaka and niyāmya indicating the transcendental positive and redemptive nature of the godhead – Viṣṇu or Īśvara; and (3) seṣīn and seṣā– the relation of the Lord and His servant, satisfying 'the highest demands of ethics and aesthetics by defining god as Supreme or Lord for whose satisfaction the world of cit and acit lives, moves and has its being.'

This God has infinite affection for devotees. He assumes fivefold forms: Para, Vyūha, Vibhava, Antaryamin, and Arcāvatara. Para is the Supreme residing in Vaikuntha and reclining on Śeṣanābī. The four Vyūhas are Vāsudeva (Lord possessing six qualities in perfection), Sankarṣana (presiding over individual souls), Pradyumna (mind) and Aniruddha (Ego). Vibhavas are His incarnations like Rāma, Kṛṣṇa etc. and should be worshipped by persons seeking liberation. Antaryānīn is the pervading divine principle. Arcāvatāra of the Lord are his idols and images. These develop a sense of attachment in the heart of a worshipper and provide him an opportunity to serve God physically. Thus God in Ramanja's system takes all types of forms to bestow favour and protection upon His devotees. Here, Bhakti is more important than jñāna. Both the sentience as well as the body of human beings are real, and a part of the soul and matter of the Supreme. His karmas bond him to the body. Cit 'consciousness' is limited by the body, it identifies itself with the body resulting in ahamkāra. This cit 'the Self' can be liberated only through the Grace of God. For this, one should cultivate an attitude of complete and unqualified surrender,

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54 Srinivasacarī P. N., cultural Heritage of India Vol. I P. 567
prapatti, to pave way for liberation. One shall then perform the activities of all kinds of devotion, he will offer praises to Him, bow down before Him, exert oneself in His direction, meditate upon Him, continuously worship Him and so on. The Lord will then be pleased and His Grace will destroy one's inner darkness. Such a bhakti will lead one to the attainment of the Supreme. Only through bhakti, Rāmānuja says, the Supreme can be attained.

Rāmānuja himself was a great devotee. Even while commencing his Bhāṣya on the Brahmasutras of Badarayana, he gives this maṅgala sloka.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{अखिलभवनजनमयंश्येमभज्जात्मीले} \\
\text{विनत्विनिधभूतव्रतस्तीक्षेत्तरे} \\
\text{श्रुतिमिरसि निविद् श्रद्धापि श्रीनिवासे} \\
\text{भवतु मम परस्परस्यसूचि भक्तिहृय ॥} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Madhvacārya: Dvaitavāda:

It might appear that Madhva goes to the other end of the interpretation of the vedantic statements and propounds Dvaitavāda-'the principle of Dualism' out of the necessities of social ethics and religion and of the logical outcome of the Bhakti-theory. He somehow explains away the Upaniṣadic statements advocating identity of Brahmā and Jīva and propounds that the Monotheistic Lord God is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, and that the world of finite souls and matter is distinct from Him, depends completely on Him and is controlled by Him. Being a Vedāntic, Madhva is a Monotheist and propounds Brahmā as the supreme principle, the highest God; but he does not identify

\[\text{रामानुज, श्री माध्य. १}\]
with Him the matter and the finite power of Māyā, also called his Svarūpāsakti. With the help of this sakti, He enters prakṛti and creates this world of forms. Prakṛti has two functions: it obscures the true nature of Jīva and screens Lord God from Jīva. Madhva propounds a distinction between the Lord and His Māyā-sakti (with the help of a concept of viṣeṣa) on the one hand, and between the Lord and the jīvas as well as the world of matter on the other. In fact, the five-fold mutual distinctions of the three basic principles viz Brahma-Jīva-Bheda, Brahma-Jāda-Bheda, Jīva-Jāda-Bheda, Jīva-Jīva-Bheda and Jāda-Jāda-Bheda are very fundamental to Madhva's theory.

Madhva is the first among Vaiṣṇava acāryas to makes an attempt to establish a complete identity between Brahma and Lord Viṣṇu.

The principle of Bhakti comes very natural to this system, almost as its corollary. Viṣṇu is the Supreme Being, united with infinite qualities and eternal. He controls the seven cosmological and spiritual states—Uttṛṇa, Sthiti, saṁhāra, Niyamana, Āvaraṇa, Bandhana and Mokṣa. He is immanent—Antaryāmin—in all the Jīvas who should conceive a selfless love and respect for and faith in Him. One who loves this Universe of the Lord will receive His Grace. The aim of Bhakti, therefore, will be obtaining Viṣṇu only. On realizing His supremacy, there naturally arises in the Jīva a love for Him, and the attachment for the worldly web automatically recedes, which is the highest state of Bhakti. The Upāsanā—'worship of Lord Viṣṇu' can be of two types: the study of the scriptures (Śastra bhyaśa) and knowledge (Jñāna). The first destroys the nescience and the second enlightens the Reality. When the knowledge grows into direct experience, one achieves the highest form of Bhakti, the Niṣkāma
Bhakti 'desireless' devotion—leading to the fourfold Mukti 'emancipation': Salokya (the same abode), Samipya 'nearness', Sarupya 'similar form' and Sayujya 'communion'.

It should be noted that in this system the theories of Vasudeva and caturvyūha have no place, even the incarnations of Viṣṇu – Rāma, Kṛṣṇa etc., – are not objects of worship and hence seem to lose much their of importance as found in other parallel Vaiṣṇavaite views. Only Viṣṇu as the Supreme Principle is the creator, the controller and the object of worship for all intent and purposes in this system.

Nimbārka: Bhedābheda Vāda

Nimbārka’s Vedantic philosophy is called bhedābheda Vāda 'the theory of identity in difference'. In fact, it has many parallels with that of Rāmānuja. The very names bhedābheda and viśiṣṭa-advaita reveal the closeness of their views. Theoretically, however Nimbārka can be placed between Śaṅkara and Madhva.

According to Nimbārka, the world is the Pariṇāma 'transformation' of Brahman. In this effect, jīva also is included. Thus, Brahman is the cause of the jīva and the material world. As cause, Brahman differs (bheda) from the other two, and this difference is primary. However, the material cause cannot be separated from the effect (abheda), hence the identity which also is primary. Thus the relation between the Brahman and the world – including jīvas – is both of identity as well as difference, and both are real. The twofold sakti 'energy' of Brahman takes the twofold forms—of enjoyer 'the jīva' as well as object of enjoyment i.e., the physical world. The identity is of the nature, the difference is
of the form. Though the jīva is the effect of Brahman, yet it is eternal, not created. In mukti jīva attains its original purity and all of the perfections of Brahman, except its form and the power of creation.

It was Nimbārka who introduced yugala-worship in religious practice. Kṛṣṇa, according to this view, is always conjoined with His prema-sakti. Rādhā, and accompanied by His āhladini-saktis, the gopīs. The conjoined image, when worshipped with devotion, ceases to inspire lust and is visualized as the play-sport of the Lord. Thus, the loving worship with humble surrender to the Lord, the only resort of the individual soul, is the best kind of Bhakti. The principles of prapatti and bhagavat-kṛpa are similar to those in Rāmānuja. The devotional worship is fulfilled in three stages: seeing the world as the manifestation of Brahman, seeing the soul as a form of Brahman, and realization of the Eternal Blissful Omni potent, Omni scient, Omni present Brahman in the soul and the world. Nimbārka has distinguished the five forms of worships as Śānta-quietude, Dāsya-servitude, Sakhyā-'friendship', Vātsalya-'parental affection' and mādhurya-'sweetness' (or aujjvalya-'brightness').

Nimbārka gave a form support to Ramanja's Bhakti-movement. In fact, philosophically he is considered to be the source of the Bhakti Sampradāya. He replaced Viṣṇu-worship of Rāmānuja with Kṛṣṇa-worship and introduced the Rādhā-element in the bhakti philosophy. He started yugalopāsanā and foregrounded the element of rasa-'Relish, joy' in bhakti.
Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *Acintya-bhedābheda*\(^{36}\):

RG, the author of BRAS, is the direct disciple of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose philosophy is codified by the Gosvamins, Sanātana, Rūpa and Jīva, and is called *Acintyabhedābheda*, leading Nimbārka's principles to their logical furtherance. Lord Caitanya is called the founder of the Bengal school of Vedantic system which holds that *srutis* (i.e. *Upaniṣads*) are authorities in themselves and should be interpreted in their *mukhya vṛtti* to reveal their true spirit. *Upaniṣads* state that *Prāṇava* is Brahman, and Gītā states that Lord Kṛṣṇa is both *Prāṇava* as well as *Parama* Brahman. The term *Brahman* implies that there exist *sāktis* 'powers' in Brahman. *Upaniṣads* clearly say that Brahman possesses *sāktis* which are *para* supernatural and *svābhāviki* 'inseparable', which are infinite in number and in their magnitude and activities. Therefore, Brahman is Infinite. Brahman is *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, absolute existence, absolute consciousness (as opposed to materiality) and absolute bliss. Three of His *sāktis* are principal—*svarūpa-sākti*, *māyā-sākti* and *jīva-sākti*.

(1) The *svarūpa-sākti*, also called *cit-sākti* (power of sentience) exists in Him eternally and is intimately connected with Him and His *lilās* hence is also called *antarāṅga-sākti*. Its three aspects called *sandhini*, *samvit* and *hladini* correspond to His three aspects *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. By *sandhini*, He upholds His own existence and that of others; by *samvit*, He knows and makes others know; by *hladini*, He enjoys and makes others enjoy bliss.

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\(^{36}\) The matter and very often even the expression in this section, are largely taken from the article of Śrī Rādhā Govind Nath, entitled 'The Acintya Bhedābheda school being chapter 21 in The cultural heritage of India, Vol III edited by Haridās Bhattachāriyya calcutta.2001.
(2) His Maya-sakti is His power of insentience and materiality (jaṭatā); it is also called bahiranga-sakti. At the time of creation, it cannot act without the agency of svarūpa-sakti. It has two aspects: guṇa-māyā and jīva-māyā. Guṇa-māyā consists of the three guṇas sattva, rajas and tamas, and is transformed into the constituents of the material universe. jīva-māyā helps creation by making jīva forget its self and cling to the enjoyment of material pleasure.

(3) All beings—human and others—are His jīva-sakti, also called tatastha-jīva-sakti since it is included in neither of the other two.

The saktis are eternally associated with Brahman. He is therefore always sagūṇa, with these attributes. He is always nirguṇa because he is always detached from the guṇas of māyā. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, beyond the limitations of time, space and relativity. He is Satya, Śiva, and Sundara. Being añanda, He is sweetness and beauty and relishability and therefore attractiveness incarnate. Hence it is that He is called Kṛṣṇa (>ṛkṛṣ- 'attract') 'the Supreme Attractor'. Thus, both the terms Brahman and Kṛṣṇa imply the same Ultimate Reality but because of His attractiveness, Kṛṣṇa is the best aspect of Brahman. This Kṛṣṇa has a form resembling a human being; this form is bliss and consciousness incarnate, is perfect, eternal, non—material, perpetually youthful and enchanting. He performs līlās with His eternal parikaras (playmates and associates) in His own dhāman—'abode' known as Goloka, Vṛndavana or Vraja. The parikaras are nothing but manifestations either of His Own Self or of His Śaktis. His līlās with them, therefore, do not taint or detract from His Self—complacency. Parikaras, in fact, serve Him with intense love in His līlās which, therefore, are exceedingly charming both for
Him and His Parikaras. Both of them are eager to mutually make each other happy with the enjoyment of bliss.

This Kṛṣṇa or Brahman is rasa. *Raso vai saḥ*[^57]. He is both the relishable rasa as well as the relisher, the transcendental rasika. Through the eternal activities of his Svarūpa-śakti, He is the embodiment of infinite varieties of rasahood. In Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Parama Īśvara or Pūrṇa Bhagavat, His Svarūpa-śakti and rasahood find the fullest, the highest and the most perfect expression. Of the two aspects of rasahood of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, viz. rasa and rasika the supreme Rasika is Kṛṣṇa Himself. The bliss He enjoys, the rasa, has again two aspects: svarūpa-ānanda and śakti-ānanda — bliss of enjoying His own self and that of enjoying His śakti. He being only ānanda, is immensely delightful. He enjoys Himself through His hlādinī-śakti which is essentially delightful itself, yet becomes much more richly relishable when thrown by Him into the heart of His devotees, parikaras and others. In this state, it is transformed into bhakti and preman or intense love for Him which finds expression in a flow, as it were, from the heart of His parikaras in the course of their loving services in His līlās and enjoyed by Him with maddening relish. This is śaktyānanda, it is much more enthralling than His Svarūpānanda. Preman is delightful to His devotees also who with the help of Preman relish His all-round sweetness. Śrī Kṛṣṇa relishes rasa as His own self (svayam-rūpa), as different bhagavat–Svarūpas and also as His Parikaras; it would appear that He has manifested Himself eternally as all these, only to enjoy the rasa in all its varieties.

[^57]: वैदिक उपनिषद, २.७
Narāyaṇa is another Svarūpa of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His dhāman being Paravyoman or Māhā Vaikunṭha. In Paravyoman, His aiśvarya is prominent over His mādhurya and stifles the Sevā-vāsanā of His associates who cannot therefore offer whole-hearted service. In Dvārakā and Mathurā, both mādhurya and aiśvarya are equally evolved; but some times the aiśvarya overtakes mādhurya, thus stifling the Sevā-vāsanā of the Parikaras. It is only in Vṛndāvana that mādhurya always is so over-whelmingly prominent over aiśvarya (that often even the consciousness of His Godhead is immersed in the bottomless ocean of sweetness). The love of His Vṛndāvana associates, the Vrajabhāva, is therefore steeped in mādhurya, gives fullest and unstifled expression to their Sevā-vāsanā, and is so intense as to inspire in them a mamatva buddhi, a sense of 'mineness' as distinguished from a sense of 'thinness' so prominent in His Paravyoman associates.

The love of the Vṛndāvana associates is classified in accordance with its intensity into Dāsya, Sakhyā, Vatsalya and Kāntā. In Dāsya, because of the sense of inferiority, the Sevā-vāsanā cannot find adequate expression. In Sakhyā this hesitation is removed and the friends and He reciprocate their love mutually. In Vatsalya the loving sense of superiority regards Him as the object of anxious parental care to the extent of even of chastising Him if needs be. In kāntā, the love is much more intensified with a profound sense of 'mineness'. Apparently, it resembles the mad lover of a damsel for her love or paramour, but the main difference is that in Kānta-preman there is not a shadow of any desire for one's own pleasure. The cause of this distinction is that in the ordinary love, the characters are under the bondage of Māyā-sakti, in the Kānta-preman
the parikara associates are under the influence of Lord's Svarūpa-śakti. As said by Bhāgavata Pūrāṇa, just as fried or boiled paddy does not germinate, so also the mind engrossed in Kṛṣṇa does not generate Kāma, i.e., desire for one's own pleasure. In fact His associates of Kāntā Preman, the Gopīs, are only the embodied expressions (mūrtā rūpa) of His Svarūpa-śakti, Hladinī. They are thus His own consorts. The love of Gopīs has various phases manifested in different Gopīs; however, all such phases, with infinitely superior manifestations, exist in their chief Śrī Rādhā who is Pūrṇa-śakti and therefore not essentially different from Kṛṣṇa, the Pūrṇa Śaktimat yet the two exist separately from eternity for enjoyment of the bliss of līlās. Just as other Bhagavat-svarūpas are manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, so are their Kāntās (consorts) the corresponding manifestations of Śrī Rādhā, who is, therefore, the Mūlakāntāsakti.

The enjoyment of rasā is fullest only when it is relished not only as an object but also as a subject of love. In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the divine Rasika is the object of His associates, love, sometimes subject too; but as regards Kāntā Preman, He is only the object of Rādhā's love and not at all a subject. It is Rādhā alone who may relish His sweetness to the fullest extent possible because it is in her alone their love finds its most perfect expression. In Vṛndāvana, therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's fervent desire for relishing His own sweetness like Śrī Rādhā is destined to remain ever unfulfilled.

58 Bhagavata Purāṇa: न मन्यते शास्त्राद्वयन्ति काम कामाय कपये शास्त्रिन सार्थिन्द्रियं च ॥
59 Śrī Rādhā's fervent desire for relishing His own sweetness like Śrī Rādhā is destined to remain ever unfulfilled.
The Bengal School believed that Lord Caitanya is the embodiment of Śrī Radhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa conjoined, of Purṇa-śakti and Purṇa-śaktimat, of Rasarāja Kṛṣṇa and mahābhāva (the highest expression of Kāntā Preman) the object and the subject combined in one and the same form. The lilās of Śrī Kṛṣṇa have thus continued and formed another and complementary expression in the lilās of Śrī Caitanya.

Thus, it can be seen that the concept of Bhakti passes through various layers of Indian tradition and in varied branches of its thought-processes—philosophical, religious, ritualistic, literary etc.—and develops into a concept which is at once philosophical as well as aesthetic. One can see how the different and distinct threads of the concept come together and are woven into a beautiful design to evolve into the aesthetico-philosophico-religious darśana of Lord Caitanya's Acintya-bhedabheda. For RG, the material of his theory of Bhaktirasa was almost ready, lying before him to be woven into and presented as a poetic theory. He only had to codify the threads into a coherent theory, and he has done it with great insight and creative imagination in has two works: Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu and Ujjvalanilāmani.