CHAPTER VI: BONDAGE AND LIBERATION
1. Nature of Liberation:

The concept of bondage and liberation occupies the position of supreme importance in different branches of Indian philosophy as well as literature. The vast mass of literature comprising the Vedic, the Purāṇic, together with different systems of philosophy has embarked upon the task of elucidating the nature of liberation. Among the four values of life, viz. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa, the last one is regarded as the supreme value by most of the Indian philosophers. Mokṣa or liberation is the highest goal of human life. The thinkers of ancient India devoted their intellectual resources to discover the path leading to this ultimate goal of human life.

The Upaniṣadic seers have pointed to this ultimate goal of human life in so many passages. But as it is not possible to describe the Absolute Reality from the human point of view, so Upaniṣads do not always describe precisely the condition of the ultimate liberation. Generally in the Upaniṣads this ultimate freedom is described as a state of oneness with Brahman or as the attainment of Brahman (Brahma-prāpti). Surendranath Dasgupta opines “Emancipation or Mukti means in the Upaniṣads the state
of infiniteness that a man attains when he knows his own self and thus becomes *Brahman*.”

In the *Mundakopaniṣad* it is said that the self becomes one with *Brahman*. The *Śruti* describes this with the example of the bow and arrow. The *Mundaka* says, “The *Praṇava* or *Omkāra* is the bow, the *Ātman* is the arrow and *Brahman* is said to be its mark. One should hit that mark being self-collected. And then one should become one with the mark (i.e. *Brahman*) like the arrow.”² Again it is said that all these become one in the highest imperishable *Brahman*.³ Just as the rivers entering into the sea becomes one with the sea, similarly the self having attained *Brahman* becomes one with it.⁴ The *Praśnopaniṣad* also says, “He becomes merged in the supreme un-decaying *Ātman*.”⁵ And again it is said, “He becomes omniscient and becomes all.”⁶ He enters into all.⁷ This means that the liberated self becomes all things and enters into all things. This is possible because the self is in reality, one with *Brahman*, the Absolute. In the

2. *prāṇavo dhanuḥ śāro hyātmā brahma tāllakṣyamucyate / apramattena veddhavyāṁ śāravattanmayo bhavet* // *MU*, 2.2.4
3. *pare'vyaye sarva ekibhabanti* // *Ibid*, 3.2.7 (b)
4. *Ibid*, 3.2.8 and *PU*, 6.5.
5. *sa pare'ksara ātmani sampratiśhate* // *PU*, 4.9
6. *Ibid*, 4.10
7. *Ibid*, 4.11
Brhadāraṇyakopanisad also Yājñavalkya describes the state of liberation, as that where no duality can remain, everything becomes Ātman.  

The Upaniṣads also asserts that the knowledge of the self leads to liberation. Bondage or ceaseless series of transmigration is for one who is ignorant. “The wise man however who has divested himself of all passions and knows himself to be Brahman, at once becomes Brahman and no bondage of any kind can ever affect him.” The self is identical with Brahman’ayamātmā brahma. All sufferings are due to the fact that the individual self does not apprehend this true nature of the self as identical with Brahman. Only the true knowledge of the self can destroy ignorance and save one from bondage. But from the numerous passages of the Upaniṣads it is clear that the knowledge of the self does not produce or generate liberation; it is liberation itself. “brahmaveda brahmaveda bhavati” – One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman. It is the realization of once own nature that is called liberation. The Brhadāraṇyakopanisad Upaniṣad says, “Therefore, he who knows it as such becomes self-possessed, calm, withdrawn into himself, enduring and concentrated, and

8. sa yo’yamātmedamamṛtamidaṁ brahmedaṁ sarvaṁ. BU, 2.5.1
10. BU, 2.5.19
11. MU, 3.2.9
sees the self in his own self (the body); he sees all as the self.”¹² Liberation is the state of unlimited joy, devoid of all pains and sufferings. “He who knows the self overcomes sorrow.”¹³ In the Upaniṣads, liberation is not regarded as something new, which is to be attained. It is not a new acquisition or a new product. “For everything that comes to be is transient; that which from nothingness became something may also return back from being something into its nothingness.”¹⁴ Mukti is therefore, not a new beginning but the perception of that which existed from eternity.

Almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy except Cārvākas discuss about the state of bondage and liberation. According to them, ignorance of reality is the root cause of our bondage and sufferings. Bondage means the process of birth and rebirth and the consequent sufferings of individuals. Liberation on the other hand means a complete cessation of this world process. According to all the systems of Indian philosophy, except Cārvāka, liberation is the supreme end of human life. But though the philosophers have accepted liberation as the supreme aim of human life, yet regarding the nature of this liberation they differ among themselves. Cārvākas do not accept liberation. According to them there is

¹² BU, 4.4.23.
¹³ tarati śokātmaviditi // CU, 7.1.3
¹⁴ Paul Deussen, *The philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, P.344
no meaning of the term liberation, liberation is nothing but the death of the physical body – *dehasya nāśo muktih*.\(^{15}\) They believe that the maximum of pleasure with minimum of pain is the highest good. Wealth and pleasure are the *summum bonum* of life.\(^{16}\)

According to the Jainas, the root cause of bondage is *karman*.\(^{17}\) The *karmans* obstruct the various capacities of the self and keep it tied to the wheel of worldly existence. However, in Jainism the concept of *karman* is somewhat different from that of other systems of Indian philosophy. According to the Jainas, *karman* is material. *Karmans* are the subtle particles of matter (*pudgala*).\(^{18}\) The Jainas maintain that the intermixture of the *karmans* with the self is at the root of all evil. In the state of bondage, the intrinsically pure and perfect self becomes impure and imperfect and its many capacities like consciousness, vision, knowledge, energy, bliss etc. are obstructed by different types of *karman*. As the self comes under bondage because of its contact with *karman*, it is inevitable that the self attains liberation as a result of its dissociation from it. The Jainas prescribe right attitude, right knowledge and right conduct as the

\(^{15}\)*Sarvadarsāna Samgraha*, P. 7

\(^{16}\) Ibid, P. 2

\(^{17}\)*Studies in Jaina Philosophy*, T. Nathmal, P. 221

\(^{18}\) Ibid, 226
path to liberation. According to the Jainas, all these three must be combined to produce liberation. *Samyagdarśana* means sincere belief in the doctrines propagated by the Jaina sages. *Samyagiñāna* is the correct knowledge of all the categories spoken of by the Jaina sages. *Samyagcaritra* implies the observance of the five vows, viz., *ahimśa* or non-violence, *sунṛta* or truthfulness, *asteya* or non-stealing, *brahmacharya* or celibacy and *aparigraha* or non-possion. After the absolute separation of *karman* from the soul the *jīva* attains liberation. Jainas recognize 'four infinites', viz., infinite knowledge, infinite vision, infinite bliss and infinite power. According to them, liberation is a state of perfection and attainment of these four infinites by the self. When the self is freed from the *karma* it moves upward and reaches the summit of the mundane space. It resides there forever.

The Buddhists, though uphold the theory of not self (*nairātmyavāda*) also believe in liberation. The Buddhists use the term *'nirvāṇa'* to mean liberation. The term *nirvāṇa* means extinction. Hence, *nirvāṇa* is described negatively in the Buddhists works. Accordingly, *nirvāṇa* is the end of suffering, the extinction of desire, destruction of

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19. *samyag darśana jñāna caritrani moksamārgah. Sarbadarśana Samgrah.* P. 68
20. Cf. Ibid, P. 71
22. Ibid
greed, hate, delusion etc. All possibilities of rebirth in any form are stopped in nirvāṇa. Nirvāṇa is declared in the Buddhist scriptures as changeless, eternal, immutable and a state of immortality.\textsuperscript{23} The Dhammapada states that one who attains Nirvāṇa, attains immortality.\textsuperscript{24} The Buddhists also say that nirvāṇa is a state of bliss.\textsuperscript{25} Thus Buddhists do not always describe nirvāṇa as a negative state, rather, in their view, it is a positive state. The Buddha has declared it as a state of highest freedom, bliss, great peace, immortality and moral perfection.\textsuperscript{26}

Leaving aside the Nāstika systems, we now propose to discuss very briefly the concept of liberation in six Āstika systems. Liberation in all these systems means the realization of the real nature of the self. But as different philosophers conceive the nature of the self differently, so the nature of liberation also differs from system to system. Generally the state of liberation is conceived as a state free from suffering, a state where one can realize one's true nature.

Among the orthodox philosophers the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika maintain that liberation is freedom from pain.\textsuperscript{27} In their view, liberation is complete

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon, A.B. Keith, P.61
\item \textsuperscript{24} Dhammapada, Verse, 114
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 203
\item \textsuperscript{26} Early Monistic Buddhism, N. Datta, P. 280
\item \textsuperscript{27} Nyāya Bhāṣya, 1.1.9
\end{itemize}
cessation of effort, activity and consciousness. In liberation, the self only exists being devoid of consciousness and bliss. According to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, consciousness is a quality (guṇa) of the self and is produced by the reaction of the self to organic nature. And whatever is caused cannot be eternal. Hence, consciousness cannot remain in the liberated self. Liberation is also not a state of pleasure or joy. Pleasure is always associated with pain. Moreover, if it is said that the liberated self enjoys everlasting pleasure, then it must also be said that the self should have an everlasting body, since experiencing is not possible without the bodily mechanism. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas compare the state of pure existence attained by the liberated self to the state of deep dreamless sleep.

In the view of the Sāṁkhya-Yoga the self or Puruṣa is conscious and pure. Bondage does not belong to Puruṣa as it is ever free. There is only a false sense of bondage due to non-discrimination between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The Sāṁkhyas say that bondage is nothing but the false sense of identity of the self with the mode of buddhi. Buddha the first evolute of

28. Nyāya Mañjari, P. 77
29. Cf. Nyāyasūtra, 3.2. 73-78
30. Nyāyavārtika, 1.1.22
31. suṣuptasya svapnadarśane klesābhāvādāpavargah // Ibid, 4.1.63
32. SK, 19,20; Cf. Sāṁkhya tattvakaumudi on it.
33. Ibid, 62; Sāṁkhya tattvakaumudi on it.
Prakṛti and the Puruṣa are different, but because of ignorance a seeming unity between the two is wrongly established and consequently, sorrows and sufferings, pain and misery, which really belong to buddhi, appear to follow Puruṣa from birth to birth. Hence, ignorance is the cause of bondage and removal of ignorance will lead one to freedom.34 The Sāṅkhyaists describe three kinds of bondage, (i) Natural (ii) Evolutional and (iii) Personal.35 Complete isolation of the Puruṣa from Prakṛti is the state of liberation. Classical Sāṅkhyas says that liberation is attainable only after passing beyond the range of three guṇas. A.K. Lad remarks that “The original Sāṅkhya view, viz, the increase of sattvaguna is the liberation viewed from the standpoint of morality and the classical Sāṅkhya view, viz., to pass beyond the range of three guṇas, is the liberation viewed from the angle of metaphysics.”36

The Sāṅkhyaists maintain that only discriminative knowledge can lead one to liberation.37 Mukti, in this view also means escape from suffering or the removal of various kinds of sufferings, which afflict a person. Discriminative knowledge again is attained through tattvābhyaṣṭa

34. Ibid, 44
35. Gaudapāda Bhāṣya on Ibid.
36. A.K. Lad, A comparative study of the concept of Liberation in Indian Philosophy
   P. 104
37. Cf. vyaktāvyaktajñāvijñānāt. SK, 2
Dr. Anima Sengupta points out, “It is necessary, therefore, that through tattvābhyāsa, we should form in buddhi, the true conception of the nature of Puruṣa and then with the help of this saving knowledge, we shall be able to attain liberation from the sorrows and sufferings of this world.”

Regarding liberation the Sāṅkhya view is also supported by Yoga system. Rechard Grabe observes that “The ultimate goal of human aspiration according to that text book (referring to the Yoga Sūtras) is not union with or absorption in God, but exactly what it is in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, the absolute isolation (Kaivalya) of the sole from matter.”

As a practical means of liberation the Yoga system prescribes eight limbs, viz., yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhyāna, dhāraṇā and samādhi. The Sāṅkhya Philosophers also accept these yogic practices for attaining immediate knowledge of the self

According to the Sāṅkhya-Yoga the self in liberation possesses consciousness but it is devoid of bliss or happiness. As Puruṣa is free from all attributes, so bliss or ānanda cannot also remain in liberated selves.

38. Classical Sāṅkhya: A Critical Study, Dr. Anima Sengupta, P. 166
39. Rachard Grabe, The Philosophy of Ancient India, P. 15
40. yamaniyamasana prāṇāyāma pratyāhāra dhīna samādhi
41. Sāṅkhyaapravacanasūtra, 5. 82
In the view of the Advaita Vedāntins, liberation means the realization of the true nature of the individual self as absolutely identical with Brahman. This is of the nature of unsurpassable bliss, since the essence of Brahman is bliss. The negative interpretation of liberation puts it as the complete cessation of all pains and sorrows. Avidyā, which conceals the true nature of Brahman, is the cause of all pains and sorrows. When avidyā is destroyed by right knowledge, all pains and sorrows are destroyed. According to the Advaita Vedāntins, the self is eternally free and bondage of the self is not real. It is ignorance that conceals the real nature of the self as eternally free, as a result of which the individual self thinks itself to be bound. Liberation consists in the removal of this ajñāna and revelation is the re-affirmation (prāptāprāpti) of the truth that exists from beginning less time, it is not anything new.

2. Liberation in the Purāṇas:

Like most of the systems of India philosophy the Purāṇas especially the Vaiṣṇavite ones maintain that avidyā or ignorance is the cause of

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42. ānaddatmakabrahmavāptiṣca mokṣaḥ. Vedāntaparībhāṣā, PP. 292-293
43. śokanivṛttiṣca. Ibid
44. avidyāstamayo mokṣa sa ca bandhah udāḥṛtaḥ. Brahmāsiddhi, Mandana Misra.P. 110
45. evaṁ prāptasyaṣyaṁandasya prāptih pariḥṛṣasya pyanarthasya nivṛttir mokṣa. Vedāntaparībhāṣā, P. 294
bondage of the ṛṣṭa (individual self). Avidyā causes difference and transmigration.\textsuperscript{46} Hence, liberation consists in the destruction of ignorance. Ignorance can be destroyed by right knowledge only. With the destruction of ignorance the true nature of the self is revealed. The realization of the ṛṣta’s true nature is liberation.\textsuperscript{47} The Bhāgavata Purāṇa also describes liberation as the realization of the real nature of the self and discarding the false nature.\textsuperscript{48}

In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa five types of liberation are enumerated. These are: sālokya, sārṣṭi, sāmīpya, sārūpya and sāyujya.\textsuperscript{49} Sālokya means residing in the same loka with the supreme lord in all divine attributes. Sārṣṭi means attainment of the divine powers equal to the Lord. Sāmīpya implies proximity to God and sārūpya means attaining the same form as of Īṣvara. Sāyujya is the highest form of liberation and means the attainment of unity with God. The Purāṇa also propounds that the world is a production of māyā and is not real. The ṛṣṭa thinks himself to be the doer of all actions, which are actually done by Prakṛti. The wise ṛṣṭa does not identify with the objects of senses. Avidyā or ignorance causes bondage.

\textsuperscript{46} BP. 3.25.15 and NP. 1.47.4
\textsuperscript{47} NP. 1.33.31
\textsuperscript{48} muktirhitvānyathārūpam svarūpeṇa vyavasthītv // BP. 2.10.6
\textsuperscript{49} sālokyaśārṣṭisāmīpyasyārūpyaikatvamapya /
    dīyaṁānaṁ na grhnati vinā matsevanāṁ janāḥ // Ibid. 3.29.13

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while vidyā or knowledge leads to liberation.\textsuperscript{50} Hence, the jīva should acquire knowledge of discrimination. The supreme knowledge removes ignorance together with its products, viz., the physical body, mind and the like. As a result the self realizes its true nature as everlasting bliss.\textsuperscript{51}

3. Liberation in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa:

As regards the problem of bondage and liberation the Viṣṇu Purāṇa agrees with the Advaitic concept. In the sixth part of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in the narrative of Khāṇḍikya and Keśidhvaja we find elaborate discussions of bondage and liberation. According to this Purāṇa, bondage consists in the wrong perception of the not self as the self. The cause of bondage and transmigration is nothing but avidyā or ignorance. The nature of avidyā consists in the cognition that the not self is the self (anātmani ātmamānī) and in the notion of property in what is not one’s own (asve svamiti mata). These are the two seeds of the tree of ignorance.\textsuperscript{52} The body is composed of five elements, viz., ether, air, fire, water and earth. The self is distinct from these five elements. Even then the embodied person being bewildered by the darkness of delusion (moha) asserts that “This is I” thinking that

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 11.11.4
\textsuperscript{51} NP, 1.45.75
\textsuperscript{52} anātmanyātmabuddhiryā asve svamiti yā matih / avidyātarusambhūtā bijametad dvidhā sthitam // VP. 6.7.11
body as the self.\textsuperscript{53} Man performs all actions for the purpose of body fruition and the consequence of such acts is another body. Agentic, enjoyership etc. are all effects of \textit{avidyā}. The self is not the doer, nor the enjoyer. Even then performance of actions by the self entails transmigration and bondage.\textsuperscript{54}

According to the \textit{Viṣṇu Purāṇa} the self is always free. Bondage is not natural to the self. The self is pure in nature and is composed of happiness and wisdom. The properties of pain, ignorance and impurities actually belong to \textit{Prakṛti}, not to the self.\textsuperscript{55} When the self is associated with \textit{Prakṛti} it is vitiated by \textit{ahaṁkāra} etc. and it assumes the nature of \textit{Prakṛti}.\textsuperscript{56} There is no affinity between fire and water, but when water is placed on water in a cauldron, it boils and exhibits the properties of fire such as heat etc.\textsuperscript{57} Similar is the case with the self. The cause of such association of the self with \textit{Prakṛti} is \textit{avidyā}, which is the root cause of all

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\item \textsuperscript{53} pañcabhūtāṁmake dehe dehi mohatamovṛtah /
\item \textsuperscript{54} dehasca yadā .............. bandhāyaiva syāt // Śrīdhara’s Comm. on Ibid. 6.7.13.
\item \textsuperscript{55} nirvāṇamaya evaṁśātmā jīvaṁmayaṁ malaḥ /
\item \textsuperscript{56} dulkhāṇāṁnāmālaṁ dharmāḥ prakṛteṣte to nātmanāḥ // Ibid, 6.7.22.
\item \textsuperscript{57} jalaṁṣya nāgpasāṁsargah sthāṁśaṅgāttathāpi hi /
\item \textsuperscript{58} śabdodrekādikāṁ dharmāṁ stat karoti yathā mune // Ibid, 6.7.23
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afflictions of the self.\textsuperscript{58} Hence, when \textit{avidyā} is destroyed the self realizes its real nature, which is always free and liberated.

The \textit{Vishnu Purāṇa} also maintains that liberation is of the nature of \textit{Brahman} (\textit{brahma-praṇa}).\textsuperscript{59} This is final liberation when the \textit{jīva} perceives that all things are non-different from the self. In the story of \textit{Rbhu} and \textit{Nidāgha} it is clearly said that \textit{Nidāgha} attained final emancipation realizing that the self is one; everything else is non-different from the self and the self is \textit{Brahman}.\textsuperscript{60}

Following the Sāṅkhya system the \textit{Vishnu Purāṇa} also discusses three types sufferings, viz., \textit{ādhyātmika}, \textit{ādhidaiivika} and \textit{ādhibhautika}.

The \textit{jīva} is always immersed in these afflictions. He can get solace from these afflictions only in liberation.\textsuperscript{62} Liberation is described as the attainment of divine being (\textit{Bhagavat}) which is of the nature of unlimited bliss and happiness. This type of liberation is absolute and final.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{58} tade tat kathitaṁ bijamavidyāyaṁstava praṇho // Ibid. 6.7.25
\textsuperscript{59} sarvabhūtiṁyabhedena dadṛṣya sa taddītmanah /
\textit{yathā brahma-praṇo muktimaṇḍa paramāṁ dvijah} // Ibid. 2.16.20
\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Ibid. 2.16.24
\textsuperscript{61} ādhyātmikādi maitreyā jñāntvā tāpatrayāṁ budhah /
\textit{uppanajñānyavairāgyah prāpnotavyantikāṁ layāṁ} // Ibid. 6.5.1
\textsuperscript{62} iti saṁśāradvākharākā tāpatāpitacetasāṁ /
\textit{vimuktādpadaḥacchāyāṁte kutra sukhaṁ nṛpyāṁ} // Ibid. 6.5.57
\textsuperscript{63} nirastāṁśāyāṁśadukhabhāvaikalakṣaṇāṁ /
\textit{bhaisajyāṁ bhagavyapraṇiptrekmāntāyantikā mātā} // Ibid. 6.5.59

\textsuperscript{169}
of the three types of dissolution discussed in this Purāṇa, the third one is the ātyantika (absolute) dissolution is mokṣa. From the other two types of dissolution there is re-emergence of the world process. But after the absolute dissolution, there is no return to empirical life. When this absolute dissolution is obtained through knowledge, all sorrows and sufferings cease.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also declares that the mind of the individual selves is the cause of its bondage and liberation. When the mind is attached to the objects of enjoyment, it binds the self in bondage. Pleasure and pain pertain to the mind only. There is nothing, which is painful, or pleasurable. Pain and pleasure are just the resultant of the mind only. When the mind is detached from these objects and is concentrated on God, the self is liberated.

4. Means of Liberation:

In the Śruti it is said that "ātmā vāre dṛṣṭavyah śrūtavyo māntavyo nididhyaśitavyaḥ". It means śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana are the means of Brahman realization. The Gītā recognizes different ways of

64. ātyantikasca mokṣākhyah prākrto dvipārddhikah // Ibid, 6.3.1-2
65. Ibid, 6.7.28-29
66. BU, 2.4.5
liberation, viz., jñāna (knowledge), karman (action), bhakti (devotion) and yoga (concentration). The Purāṇas also prescribe different paths for attaining liberation such as knowledge, action, yoga, and devotion. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also prescribes these means for the attainment of liberation.

Jñāna:

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa gives much stress on the path of knowledge because ājñāna is the main cause of one’s bondage and sufferings. Ājñāna again can be removed by jñāna or knowledge only. Parāśara said that the Ātyantika Pralaya is caused by knowledge. When the yogins become united with Paramātman, then that is called absolute dissolution.67 And it has already been mentioned that absolute dissolution is actually liberation. Prahlāda also said that those who realize the truth through knowledge, meditation and concentration obtain liberation having their bondage destroyed.68

Parāśara again declares that the means of attaining liberation is both knowledge and action.69 It is said that men are afflicted by three-fold iįįi

67. jñānādātyantikāḥ prokto yogināḥ paramātmanai // nityāḥ sadaiva jātānāṁ yo vināśo divāniśaṁ // VP, 1.7.40
68. tattattvavedino bhūtvā jñānādhyānānamāṁdhibhil// avāpurumaṁtimapare puruṣāṁ dhvastabandhanāḥ // Ibid, 1.18.23
69. tasmāṁ tatprāptaye yatnāṁ kartrāyāṁ panditairnāraih // tatprāptiheturjñānāṁca karma coktaṁ mahāṁmune // Ibid. 6.5.60
Attainment of liberation is considered to be only remedy of these threefold class of sufferings. Knowledge, on the other hand, is of two kinds: scriptural knowledge and reflective knowledge. Scriptural knowledge is derived from scriptures while reflective knowledge is attained through self-realization. By scriptural knowledge one attains *Sādā Brahman* and by reflective knowledge one attains *Para Brahman*. Parāśara refers to Manu who said that there are two forms of *Brahman* - one is *Sādā Brahman*, the other is *Para Brahman*. After being well versed in *Sādā Brahman*, the spiritual aspirant attains *Para Brahman*. Ignorance is like utter darkness. In order to destroy the darkness of ignorance, the scriptural knowledge acts as a lamp while knowledge that is derived from reflection acts like the sun. This implies that just as the light of a lamp can remove darkness to some extent; in the same way scriptural knowledge destroys ignorance to some extent. But when one attains *Brahman* through reflective knowledge, then all his ignorance is completely removed just as the sun destroys darkness.

70. अगमोत्थान विवेकोत्थान द्विद्वी ज्ञानाम् तथोत्थाये /
   सादाब्रह्मागमामायिन परां ब्रह्मा विवेकायां // Ibid, 6.5.61

71. द्वि ब्रह्मानि वेदिताव्ये सादाद्रह्माम परांनि यत् /
   सादाब्रह्मानिः निष्काताः परां ब्रह्मादिद्धिक्षति // Ibid, 6.5.64

72. आंधानि ताना इव ज्ञानाय रीत्वयेवोद्धवायं /
   यथां सुर्यस्थताः ज्ञानाम् यद विप्राः विवेकायां // Ibid, 6.5.62
darkness totally. Parāśara also alludes to the reference of *Atharvaveda.*

the *Mundaka Upaniṣad* belonging to the *Atharvaveda* knowledge is divided into two types: *parā* (supreme) and *aparā* (inferior). By *parā* *vidyā* Supreme God is attained; while *aparā* consists of the *karma kāṇḍa* of the Vedas. Thus *aparā* *vidyā* indicates the necessity of performing action (*karman*) prior to attaining knowledge.

**Karman:**

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* accepts *karman* or action as a necessary means on the path of liberation. There are two types of action, *pravṛtti* (active) and *nivṛtti* (quiescent). Actually the *pravṛtti mārga* means the path of action. Meditation (*upāsanā*) and concentration (*yoga*) etc. are the quiescent form of action. It is also believed that by doing *karman* without any desire for its fruit leads to liberation. This is the view propagated in the *Gītā.*

words of Jāda Bharata in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* imply that action from which

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73. dve vidye veditavye vai iti cātharvaṇi śrutih /
   parayā tvakṣaraaprāptirṛgvedādīmayāpaṇā // Ibid. 6.5.65
74. dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma yadbrahmavido badanti-parā caivāparā ca //
   MU, I.1.4
75. H.H. Wilson, *The Vishnu Purāṇa.* P. 503n
76. pravṛttāṇca nivṛttāṇca dvividhāṁ karma vaidikāṁ /
   tābhṛṭāṁbhūbhṛṇāṁ puruṣāṁ sarvamūrtiḥ sa iṣyate // VP. 6.4.41
77. Cf. 6.4.43
78. karmajanāṁ buddhiyuktā hi phalaṁ tyātvā maniśiṇāḥ /
   jannabandhavinirnuktāḥ padaṁ gacchantya nāmayāṁ // BG. 2.51

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no recompense is sought is a means of liberation. Karna itself is not the ultimate truth; it is only a means towards this truth. Karma helps in attaining liberation through the purification of mind.

The necessity of karma in the path of liberation is underlined in the 6th part of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in the story of Keśidhvaja and Khāṇḍikya. It is stated in the Īsopaniṣad that a spiritual practitioner well versed in both vidyā or knowledge and avidyā or action goes beyond death by following the path of action and attains immortality by following the path of knowledge (vidyā). Vidyā here stands for knowledge and avidyā for karma. Thus action and knowledge are both necessary. By action one can cross death meaning the defilements like kāma etc. Keśidhvaja performed many sacrifices being endowed with spiritual knowledge in order to go beyond death. This means that performance of actions is recommended as introductory to the acquirement of knowledge, but it’s ignorance to consider them final.

79. tadevāphaladāṁ karma paramārtho mastaṁva /  
mukti śādhanabhūtvāt paramārtho na śādhanām // VP, 2.14.25
80. vidyāṁ āvīdyāṁ ca yastadvedobhayāṁ saha /  
avidyāṁ mṛtyum tīrvā vidyāṁ mṛtamasānte // Īsopaniṣad, 11
81. iyāya so'pi subhūṁ yajñāṁ jñānavapāśrayaḥ /  
bramavidyāmadhiṣṭiḥāya tarttum mṛtyumavidyaḥ // VP, 6.6.12


*Yoga:*

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* assigns an important position to *yoga* in the path of liberation. It propagates that the afflictions caused by ignorance can be overcome by the practice of *yoga*. In the 6th part of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Keśidhvaja gives instruction about this *yoga*. Keśidhvaja said that the self in itself is pure and immutable. The cause of misunderstanding this real nature of the self is *avidyā*, which can be removed, according to Keśidhvaja, only by *yoga*.82

It has already been mentioned that according to the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the mind of man is the cause of his bondage and liberation. Yogic practices make the mind prepared for receiving the true knowledge of the self. *Yoga* is defined in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as the conjunction of the mind with *Brahman*.83 The spiritual aspirant must restrain his mind from all the objects of senses and meditate upon the Supreme Being in order to attain liberation. Just as the magnet attracts iron, so also the Supreme Being attracts to Himself the aspirant who meditates on Him. The term *yoga* literally means ‘union’ or ‘to join’. It is derived from the root *yuj*. Actually there are three different meaning of the root ‘*yuj*’: (1) *yujiryoge* meaning to join (2) *yuj samādhau* i.e., in the sense of concentration (3) *yuj samyamanc*

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82. Ibid, 6.7.25
83. Ibid. 6.7.31

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i.e., in the sense of controlling. Hence, the term *yoga* may mean (1) spiritual unification i.e., the union of the individual self with the supreme self, (2) concentration of the mind, (3) complete control of the mental modes. In the *Yoga* system of *Patañjali* the word ‘*yoga*’ is used in the third sense i.e., the full restraint of the states of *citta*, i.e., the mind *yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ*.\(^{84}\)

The states of mind comprise our inner experience. This *citta* sometimes tends towards good and sometimes towards bad. In the *Vyāsa bhāṣya* it is said that the mind is like a river, which flows both ways, towards sin and towards the good. When the modes of the mind lead us towards passions and their satisfaction, they are called *kliśta*. These *kliśta* modes are the cause of *sāṃśāra*. Therefore, the purpose of *yoga* is to steady the mind so that the vicious tendencies may gradually be more and more weakened and at last disappear altogether. For this purpose the *yoga* system prescribes eightfold method consisting of *yama* (abstention), *niyama* (observance), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (regulation of breath), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *dhyāna* (meditation), *dharana* (contemplation) and *samādhi* (concentration).\(^{85}\) Of these the first five are:

\(^{84}\) *YS*, I.2

\(^{85}\) Ibid. 2.29
called பகரிண்டு or external aids while the last three are the முத்தராங்கர் or internal means.

According to the Viśṇu Purāṇa also, the mind should be restrained for the purpose of realizing Brahman. Here the word yoga means spiritual unification, i.e., union of the individual self with the Supreme Self. This unification is effected by that state of the mind which has attained perfection through the practices like yama, niyama etc. The aspirant whose yoga is characterized by the property of absolute perfection is called a yogi and mumuksu (i.e., aspiring for liberation). Now, when the aspirant begins the practice of yoga for the first time, he is said to be yoga-yuk (i.e., the practitioner). And when finally he attains spiritual union with Brahman, he is known as vinīśpanna samādhi, i.e., the one who has realized the truth within and experienced the inner bliss. Such a yogin attains liberation in this very birth as his karmans are burnt by the fire of yoga. Just like the Yoga Sūtra, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also enumerates eight practices for controlling the mind.

86. ātmaprayatnasāpekṣā viśistā yā manogatiḥ /
   tasyā brahmaṇi saṁyogō yoga ityabhidhiyate // VP. 6.7.31; Śrīdhara's Comm. on
87. evamatyantavaśīstahyukta karmopalaksanah /
   yasya yogasya vai yogi mumukṣurabhidhiyate // Ibid, 6.7.32
88. yogayuk prathamaṁ yogi yujñāno hyabhidhiyate /
   vinīśpannasamādhistu paraṁ brahmopalabdhimān // Ibid, 6.7.33

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Among the eightfold methods of yoga the first one is yama, which consists of ahimsā (non-violence), satya (truthfulness), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacaryya (sexual restraint) and aparigraha (non-acceptance of gifts) Viṣṇu Purāṇa also mentions these five constituents of yama.\(^8\)

The second one is niyama or observance, which, according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa consists of svādhyāya (study of the scriptures), saucé (cleanliness), santoaša (contentment), tapas (austerity) and brahma-pravāna (awareness of Brahman).\(^9\) The Yoga Sūtra also mentions these five niyamas; the only difference is that here the last one is said to be īśvarapranidhāna (meditation on Īśvāra).\(^9\) One, who practises these five yamas and five niyamas with some desire in his mind, gets excellent fruits. Again these same virtues when practised without any desire lead to final emancipation.\(^9\)

The third one is āsana or bodily posture. Āsana is a physical help to concentration. Patañjali simply mentions that the posture must be firm.

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\(^8\) brahmacaryamahīṁsaḥ ca satyāsteyāparigrahaḥ /
sevate yogi niskāmo yogyatāṁ savmāno nayan // Ibid. 6.7.36

\(^9\) svādhyāya āśa ca santoṣa tapani niyatātmavān/
kurvītā brahmaṇi tathā parasmin pravagāṁ manāh// Ibid. 6.7.37

\(^9\) saucasantoṣatapah svādhyāyesvarapraṇidhātani niyamāḥ. YS, 2.32

\(^9\) etc yamāḥ saniyamāḥ pāica pāica prakārtitāḥ/
iśīstaphaladāḥ kāmyaṁ niskāmāpāṁ vimuktidāḥ// VP. 6.7.38
pleasant and easy. There are various postures in which a yogi is directed to sit when he is engaged in meditation, e.g., bhadrāsana etc. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also it is said that a yogi should practise yama and niyama sitting on any of the postures such as bhadrāsana etc. The commentator describes bhadrāsana as that where one is to cross his legs underneath him and hold his feet on each side with his hands.

The fourth one is prāṇāyāma or regulation of breath. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also describes prāṇāyāma as the regulation of breath (prāṇa). This being done, mind control becomes easy. This prāṇāyāma may be sabhū (with the pronunciation of mantra etc.) or nirbhija (without any such support). Prāṇāyāma consists of three parts – recaka, puraka and kumbhaka. When a yogi controls prāṇa and apāna (i.e., expiration and inspiration) air with the help of each other then these are called recaka and puraka. When both the modes of breathing are suppressed simultaneously,

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93. sthirasukhamāsanam. YS, 2.46
94. ekam bhadrāsanādīmām samāsthāya guṇairyutah
   yamākhyairniyāsca yunīā niyato yatīty// VP, 6.7.39
95. Śrīdhara’s Commentary on Ibid.
96. tasmin sati śūṣaprasāṣayogavatvicchedah prāṇāyāmaha. YS, 2.49
97. prāṇākhyamanilam vaśyamabhyāsāt kurute tu yat /
   prāṇāyāmaha vijñeyah sabijō bija eva ca // VP, 6.7.40
then there is kumbhaka.\textsuperscript{98} Actually prāṇāyāma consists in taking in breath, keeping it for a while and then giving it up. The guidance of the guru is essential for the right performance of prāṇāyāma.\textsuperscript{99}

The fifth one is pratyāhāra. It indicates the withdrawal of sense organs from their objects.\textsuperscript{100} In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa also the very word pratyāhāra is described in the same manner. Pratyāhāra consists in restraining the sense organs from their susceptibility to the outward objects and making them subservient to the mind. When by prāṇāyāma the vital airs are controlled and by pratyāhāra the sense organs are restrained, then only the yogi will be able to keep his mind steady in its perfect support or asylum (śubhāśāraya).\textsuperscript{101} The best support of the yogi is Brahman, the supreme consciousness.\textsuperscript{102}

The sixth yogāṅga is dhāraṇā or attention to a particular object. This may be extra-organic or intra-organic. Fixation of mind in the particular objects for a long time indicates that he is fit for the yoga practices.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{98} paraspāreṇaḥbhībhavanāḥ prāṇāpānaḥ yadānīlau //

kurutah sadvidhānena tṛīyāḥ sanīyamāttayoḥ // Ibid. 6.7.41

\textsuperscript{99} Śrīdhara’s Commentary on Ibid.

\textsuperscript{100} saviṣayāsāmprayoge cittasvarūpānukāra evendriyāpānā pratyāhāraḥ.YS. 2.54

\textsuperscript{101} pranayamena pavaniḥ pratyaharenas evendriyāih

vasikrtaistatah kuryat sthiram cetah subhasraye // VP. 6.7.45

\textsuperscript{102} asrayascetaso brahma ............... // Ibid. 6.7.47

\textsuperscript{103} dehabandhascittasya dharana. YS. 3.1
*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* defines *dhāranā* as the fixation of the mind on *Viṣṇu*. The whole universe is the expression of *Viṣṇu*. Hence, it is natural that the abode of this supreme truth is also situated in everyone’s mind (*citra-sthita*). As fire blazing in the wind burns dry grass, so *Viṣṇu*, seated in the heart consumes all sins of the *yogi*. *Viṣṇu* is the perfect asylum (*subhāśraya*) of even the all-pervading self. *Dhāranā* is not possible without any manifest from of the God. Hence, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes the manifest form of *Viṣṇu* on which a *yogi* should fix his mind.

When the form of *Viṣṇu* on which the *yogi* fixes the mind does not disappear from his mind even when moving, or sitting, or doing anything voluntarily, then one should gradually contemplate Him as having but one single limb and then fix his whole thoughts upon the body to which the limbs belong. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* describes the continuous flow of concentration on or awareness of the Lord without any attachment whatsoever as *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* is affected by the former six *aṅgas* like *yama* etc. The definition of *dhyāna* of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* corroborates to

104. *tasmāt samastāsaktināmādhāre tatra cetasaḥ /*
    *kurvīta saṁsthitiṁ sā tu vijñeyā sūḍhadhāranā // VP, 6.7.74*
105. Ibid, 6.7.73-77
106. Cf. Ibid, 6.7.79-86
107. *tadrūpapratyayāyaikā santatiścānyanisphā /*
    *taddhyānaṁ prathamairajñaiḥ sadbhirnipādyate nrpa // Ibid, 6.7.89*
some extent to the view of Patañjali, but there is some difference also. The *Yogasūtra* defines *dhyāna* as the resulting state of an even current of thought. This is nothing but the continuous awareness of the object of meditation. This object can be external or internal. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* on the other hand, prescribes *dhyāna* of Viṣṇu only.

The last *yogāṅga* is *samādhi* “After sufficient practice of *dhyāna* the mind attains the power of making itself steady; at this stage it becomes one with its objects and there is no change or repetition. There is no consciousness of subject, object or thinking, but the mind becomes steady and one with the object of thought. This is called *samādhi*. *Dhyāna* culminates in *samādhi*. Patañjali says that the idea of identification with the object of meditation which is as if devoid of any individual nature is called *samādhi*. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* the idea of *samādhi* is somewhat different from that of Patañjali. Here the object of meditation is Viṣṇu. When an accurate knowledge of that Lord free from all imaginary distinctions is attained by means of mental meditation, it is called *samādhi*. Man generally imagines a difference between the subject and

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108. tatra pratyayaikatānata dhyānāṃ. *YS*, 3.2
110. tadēkarthamātraṇirbhasāṃ svarūpasūnyamiva samādhi. *YS*, 3.3
111. tasyaiva kalpanāhinaṃ svarūpagrahaṇāṃ hi yat/
    manasā dhyānaniṣpaḍyaḥ samādhiḥ so’bhidhiyate // *VP*, 6.7.90
the object of meditation under the veiling power of ignorance, and when such imagination disappears during meditation, the supreme self is realized. This state of self-realization is known as samādhi in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

When ignorance, the cause of all distinctions and differences is completely destroyed, it is not possible to think of the non-existent difference between the Ṛtman and Paramātman, i.e., the individual self and Universal self. Realizing such a supreme state of unity the self becomes liberated from this world. The state of samādhi or yoga is the state of freedom from suffering. Hence, Khāṇḍikya in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa says this yoga as Vimuktiprada, i.e., bestowed of liberation. Describing this Brahma-yoga, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa concludes that Khāṇḍikya attained absorption into Viṣṇu being engrossed upon Govinda.

5. Bhakti as a Means of Liberation:

The Purāṇas prescribe the path of devotion (bhaktiyoga) over and above the path of action, yoga and knowledge. Actually, bhakti or devotion

112. vibhedajanake jnāne nāsāṃatyantikaṁ gate /
ātmano brahmaṇo bhedamāsantaṁ kaḥ kariṣyati // Ibid, 6.7.94

113. tad gaccha śreyase sarvāṁ mamaitadbhavatā kṛtaṁ /
yadvimuktiprado yogāḥ proktāḥ keśīdvajāvyas // Ibid, 6.7.99

114. tatraikāntarātirbhūtvā yamādignasādhitah /
viṣṇvākhye nirmale brahmaṇyavāpa nrpatīlavaṁ // Ibid, 6.7.102
occupies the predominant position in the Viṣṇuīte Purāṇas. According to Nāradīya Purāṇa, the triple method of devotion, action and knowledge cooperate with one another in the matter of reaching the highest goal. It is said that liberation is attainable by knowledge, which is pure and free of sins. Sins are destroyed by supreme faith or devotion. Devotion is again generated by actions like giving of gifts (dāna), sacrifice, visiting of places of pilgrimage etc. Devotion towards Hari yields all the desired objects of worldly life. The fruits of devotion are described in great length in the Purāṇas.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa also upholds the glory of the path of devotion. It states that the only remedy of the worldly evils is devotion to Lord Viṣṇu. Devotion is the quickest means to the destruction of sufferings. However, it seems that the concept of bhakti, though given a very important position in the course of the spiritual journey, is not so much developed here as we find in some other Purāṇas.

The term bhakti is derived from the root bhaj meaning to serve, to adore, to worship, and to be attached to. Bhakti in the Purāṇas generally means service to the Lord or worship of God. It also means attachment to God. In the Gītā bhakti indicates an attitude full of love for god arising

115. NP, 1.33.27-31
from the awareness that he alone is the source of all.\textsuperscript{116} This love is so powerful that it fills the devotee’s mind with a constant remembrance of his beloved Lord.\textsuperscript{117} Śāṇḍilya in his Bhaktisūtra defines bhakti as supreme attachment to God.\textsuperscript{118} Nārada defines bhakti as the supreme love of God.\textsuperscript{119} Bhakti involves total surrender of the devotee towards his Lord.

In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa instances of such great devotees like Dhruva, Prahlāda and the Gopis are found. The Ṛṣis advised Dhruva to worship Viṣṇu since he who adores Hari, the supreme soul, supreme glory and Supreme Brahman attains what is difficult of attainment.\textsuperscript{120} By worshipping God a devotee can obtain everything.\textsuperscript{121} Dhruva performed penance contemplating on Viṣṇu, the sovereign of all the gods as abiding in him. When his mind is wholly absorbed in meditation he realized God in his heart.\textsuperscript{122} This is contemplating devotion (bhaktiyoga) by which Dhruva

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate / 
\quad iti matvā bhajante māṁ budhā bhāvasamanvitāḥ// BG, 10.8 & 10
\item \textsuperscript{117} satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ yatantaśca drīḍhavrataḥ / 
\quad namasyantaśca māṁ bhaktyā nityayuktā upāsate // Ibid, 9.14.
\item \textsuperscript{118} ātmaratyavirodheneti śaṇḍilya// NBS, 18
\item \textsuperscript{119} sa tasmin paramapremarupāḥ// Ibid, 2
\item \textsuperscript{120} paraṁ brahma paraṁ dhāma yo’sau brahma tathā paraṁ / 
\quad tamārādhya hariṁ yāti muktimapayatidurlabhāṁ // VP, 1.11.45
\item \textsuperscript{121} Cf. Ibid, 1.11.46,48
\item \textsuperscript{122} ananyacetasastasya dhāyato bhagavān hariḥ / 
\quad sarvabhūtagato vipra sarvabhāvagato’bhavat // Ibid, 1.12.7
\end{itemize}
attained the most exalted position. For Viṣṇu Himself said to Dhruva that the man who worships Viṣṇu attains liberation.\textsuperscript{123} Not only liberation, the \textit{Viṣṇu Purāṇa} says that for attaining the four \textit{Puruṣārthas}, viz., \textit{dharma}, \textit{artha}, \textit{kāma} and \textit{mokṣa}, one should propitiate Viṣṇu.\textsuperscript{124}

The story of Prahlāda in the \textit{Viṣṇu Purāṇa} also upholds the significance of devotion. Prahlāda was a great devotee of Viṣṇu. Prahlāda loved Viṣṇu with all his heart. He wanted to love God with the same attachment as the worldly people feel for sensual pleasure.\textsuperscript{125} Knowing that Viṣṇu is all-pervasive and exists in all beings he loved all beings also. He even prayed for the protection of the wicked priests who wanted to burn him by magic. He advised his father to love all creatures assiduously as Hari is all things.\textsuperscript{126} Viṣṇu is pleased with him who has faithful attachment to Him.\textsuperscript{127} Prahlāda also maintains that liberation is in his hand whose faith

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 1.12.89
\textsuperscript{124} dharmamarthaṁ ca kāmaṁ ca mokṣaṁ ca vinicchaṁ ca sadā /
\hspace{1cm} ārādhaniyau bhagavān anādīḥ puruṣottamaḥ // Ibid, 1.14.16
\textsuperscript{125} yā pritiśrīsvekānāṁ viṣayeśvanapāyini /
\hspace{1cm} tvāmanusmarataḥ sa me ṇ̄dayānāṁ āpasparatvau // Ibid, 1.20.19
\textsuperscript{126} evam sarveṣu bhūteṣu bhaktiravyabhicāriṇī /
\hspace{1cm} karttavyā paṇḍitairjñātvā sarvabhūtamayam hariṁ // Ibid, 1.19.9
\textsuperscript{127} Cf. kurvataste prasanno'ham bhaktimavyabhicāriṇīḥ// Ibid, 1.20.17
\end{flushright}
is firm in Him who is the root of the universe. Viṣṇu also bestows liberation to him whose heart is filled with immovable devotion to Him.¹²⁸

In this way the Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes the importance of bhakti in the spiritual endeavour of man. But it must be admitted here that the concept of bhakti is not assigned such a position as we find in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. It is true that there is a leaning towards bhakti in this Purāṇa, though it is not fully developed. It is also not clearly mentioned what is meant here by bhakti. From the aforementioned stories it seems that bhakti here means attachment to or love of God. In some place bhakti also means yoga.

¹²⁹ Singing (kirtana) the name of Hari is a form of devotion. Vyāsa in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa declares that the fruit which one achieves by meditation in the Satyayuga, by performing sacrifice in the Tretāyuga and by worshipping in the Dvāpara, that very fruit can be attained by kirtana only in the Kaliyuga.¹³⁰

In the Yamagītā portion of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa a vivid description of the salient features of a devotee of Viṣṇu (Viṣṇubhakta) is given. Here Yama, the God of Death advises his messenger to keep clear of the devotee...

¹²⁸ Cf. Ibid, 1.20.27; also see Ibid, 1.20.28
¹²⁹ Ibid. 1.12.8
¹³⁰ dhāyan kṛte yajan yajñaiṣtretāyāṁ dvāpare’rccayan/
yadāpnoti tadāpnoti kalau saṁkīrttya kes’-avam// Ibid, 6.2.17
¹³¹ Ibid, 3.7

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of Viṣṇu, as Vaiṣṇavas are not under his rule. Being asked by the messenger he then describes the characteristics of the Viṣṇubhakta. A devotee is one who does never deviate from the duties prescribed to his caste, who looks with equality to a friend and a foe; who does not take anything which is not his own, nor injures any being.¹³² That person is a devotee whose mind is not defiled by the blemishes of Kali age and who is always thinking of Janārdana.¹³³ A bhakta never takes another's wealth even secretly. He always devotes his thoughts to the lord.¹³⁴ He is pure as a mountain of clear crystal. Vāsudeva abides in his heart who is pure, free from malice, contented, leading a holy life, friend of all beings, speaks wisely and kindly, is humble and not deceitful.¹³⁵ The person in whose heart the Lord resides is very pleasant to look at.¹³⁶ All sins of the Viṣṇubhakta are dispersed because sin cannot remain in the heart of a person where the Lord abides. As darkness cannot stay where the sun

¹³² na calati nijavarṇadharmato yaḥ samamātirātmāsamuddvipaṁśkapakṣe //
na harati na ca hanti kiñcīduccaiḥ sitamanasāṁ tamavaihi viṣṇubhaktaṁ
Ibid, 3.7.20

¹³³ kalikalauṣamalena yasya nātmā vimalamatermalinīkrto'stamohe //
manasi kṛtajānārdanaṁ manusyaṁ satatamavaihi hareratīva bhaktaṁ // Ibid, 3.7.2

¹³⁴ Ibid, 3.7.22

¹³⁵ vimalamativimatsarah praśāntah śucicario'khilasattvamitrabhūtaḥ //
priyahitavacano'stamanāmāyo vasati sadā hrdi tasya vāsudevaḥ// Ibid, 3.7.24

¹³⁶ Ibid, 3.7.25
shines, similarly sin cannot remain where its destroyer, the God abides.

A Visṇubhakta is one who has firm faith in Vāsudeva and conceives that Puruṣottama as one with its votary and with this entire world. He constantly invokes Viṣṇu, the asylum of the world and the supporter of the earth.

In this way the Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes the characteristics of a devotee, who is protected by Viṣṇu against Yama also.

6. Bhakti in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa:

The most vivid description of the concept of bhakti is found in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. Bhakti in this Purāṇa is described as of two types: saguṇa and nirguṇa. Saguṇa bhakti is prompted by three guṇas, viz, sattva, rajas and tamas. But the highest bhakti is nirguṇa bhakti, which is not prompted by any guṇa. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Kapila instructs his mother about the characteristic of this nirguṇa bhakti. He states that the

137. हृदि यदि भहगवैनानादिराष्टे हरिरसिष्णहहदीधतरीप्रेः।
       तदागमनहाूविहूँतकरत्वहिन्नमं भवति कथानि सति कृंडहकार्मार्के। //
Ibid, 3.7.27

138. सकालमिदामाहातिका वृसुदेवः परमपुमन परामेस्वरः सा एकः। //
Ibid, 3.7.32 (a)

139. Ibid, 3.7.33

140. भक्तियोगो बहुविद्यो भावर्भाविनी भाव्यते।
       स्वाभाव गुणांगर्गेन पुमसानि भावो विभिद्यते भवं। // BP, 3.29.7

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steadfast movement of the mind towards the Lord like the uninterrupted flow of the river Ganges towards the sea, inspired by the mere hearing of the qualities of Him, is considered to be the characteristic of nirguna bhakti. This devotion to the Lord is disinterested and steadfast. It is not motivated by any desire. Even liberation is not desirable to such a devotee. The nirguna bhakta loves God only because He is the dearest of all dear ones. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa declares that nothing can be greater than the selfless bhakti. A devotee does not desire to attain any of the five kinds of liberation such as sālokya etc., rather he takes delight only in the service of God. Liberation comes to him automatically.

According to the Bhāgavata, bhakti is the highest Puruṣārtha. In India four Puruṣārthas, i.e., goals or ends of human existence are accepted. The four Puruṣārthas are, dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. Just like the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Bhāgavata Purāṇa also states that bhakti is the safest means to attain these Puruṣārthas. Thus it is said that the service of the feet of Hari is the only means of attaining one's good like dharma, artha.

141. Ibid, 3.29.11-12
142. Ibid, 3.29.12 (b)- 13
143. Cf. ahamātmātmanāṁ dhiṭāḥ preṣṭhaḥ san preyāśāmapi /
atto mayi ratiṁ kuryādehādīrkrite priyaḥ // BP, 3.9.42
144. Ibid, 3.29.13-14
kāma and mokṣa. But the Bhāgavata Purāṇa goes a step further. Bhakti here is not merely the means to an end but it is the end itself; it is both the sādhana and the sādhyā. It alone can give full meaning to man’s life. It is not one of the arthas, but it is the highest artha, the highest purpose of human life. One-pointed devotion to the Lord, which expresses itself in seeing Him everywhere, is considered to be the highest good of man. Sūra Kṛṣṇa also told Uddhava that for the devotee who surrenders completely to him, there is no other artha (goal) to be achieved. As has already been mentioned, bhakti is superior to mukti or liberation. The king Parikṣit exclaimed that among tens of millions of those who have attained liberation, it is very difficult to find a perfectly serene person who is exclusively devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Concluding the story of Ṛṣabha, Sūrya declared that the devotees of God even disregard the final emancipation which is the highest goal of man, because all their desires are fulfilled through their belonging to the God. Thus, according to the Bhāgavata-

145. dharmārthakāmamokṣākhyām ya icchechchreyā tātmānāḥ / ekaṁ hyeva harestatra kāraṇāṁ pādasevānāṁ // Ibid, 4.8.41
146. Ibid, 7.7.55
147. Ibid, 11.19.24
148. Ibid, 6.14.5
149. Ibid, 5.6.17
Purāṇa bhakti is not only the best means to fulfill the Puruṣārthas but also the goal of all Puruṣārthas.

Devotion has nine constituent parts or nine successive stages, which are often regarded as nine kinds of devotion. A devotee proceeds towards supreme love or supreme devotion through these stages. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa enumerates these nine kinds of bhakti. These are śravana (listening to), kirtana (singing), smarana (remembrance), pādasevāna (propitiation), arcana (adoration), vandana (salutation), dāsa (offering service), sakhyā (friendship) and ātmanavedana (self-surrender). These nine stages are regarded by the later votaries of devotion as sādhanabhakti (or bhakti as means). In this view, loveful devotion is the sādhyabhakti or phalarup bhakti. These nine types of bhakti yielded liberation to different bhakta. Thus, Parīkṣit was liberated by listening to (śravana), Śūka by kirtana, Prahlāda by remembering Him (smarana), Lakṣmī by serving to His feet (pādasevāna), Prithu by worshipping (arcana), Akrūra by vandana, Hanumat by performing service, Arjuna by friendship, Bali by giving up everything he possessed.

This type of bhakti cannot be attained by one’s own effort; it is a grace of God. The highest form of devotion is a gift of the lord. 151

150. Ibid, 7.5.23-24
151. Ibid, 6.14.2
in the *Bhāgavata* is also conceived as a reciprocal relation between God and the *bhakta*. As the devotee loves god with all his heart, so also the *bhakta* is very dear to God.\(^{152}\)

In this way the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* delineates the concept of *bhakta* very elaborately. The divine love proclaimed in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is the purest and highest kind of love when all duality is transcended; it is the enjoyment of absolute bliss. Pure love naturally expresses itself in service. The selfless service of the God is therefore, enjoined in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* for total upliftment of the devotee.

7. *Bhakti* in the *Nārada Bhaktisūtra*:

*Nārada* in his *Bhaktisūtra* defines *bhakti* as of the nature of supreme love of God – *parama premarūpa*. This supreme love is not based upon selfishness or egotism. There is no trace of selfishness or any motive in this love. Jadunath Sinha opines that the word *parama* in the definition indicates three things: “(1) Devotion is undivided love for god, free from attachment for worldly objects. (2) It is not overshadowed by knowledge and action. It is the highest end. (3) It is manifested in thought, word and

\(^{152}\) na tathā me priyatama ātmayonirnā śāṅkaraḥ/
na ca saṅkaraśano na śīrṣaivaṁ ca yathā bhavān//Ibid, 11.14.15

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In its intrinsic nature, *bhakti* is nothing less than the immortal bliss of freedom (*amṛtasvarūpa*). Attaining this supreme love makes one become perfect, immortal and fully contented. He has no more desire for anything, he is free from grief and hatred. He does not rejoice in worldly things and does not exert himself in furtherance of self-interest.

According to Nārada the essential characteristics of *bhakti* are the consecration of all activities through complete self-surrender to the Lord and extreme anguish in the event of forgetting Him.

Nārada divides *bhakti* into *gauni* (secondary) and *mukhya* (primary). Secondary devotion is of three kinds depending upon the *guna* of the person or depending upon the devotees who are ārta (distressed) etc. Secondary devotion is born of desire and is threefold as sāttvika, rājasika and tāmasika, depending on the predominance of the *guna* like sattva etc. in the character of the devotee. In another way Nārada differentiates secondary devotion according to the types of devotee stated in the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā* declares that the devotees are of four types, viz., ārta (distressed...
According to Narada, devotion is of three types. Of these three types of devotion each preceding one is superior to each succeeding one.

Primary devotion is the one pointed love of God for his own sake. Narada also emphasizes that this love of God is anirvacaniya, i.e., it defies exact and precise definition or description. But it is self-evident and needs no external proof. It is like the dumb man’s joy, which he feels but cannot describe it in words. This supreme love is devoid of all attributes and free from all characteristic tendencies to selfish action. It is expanding every moment, is continuous and extremely subtle. This love is of the nature of an inner experience. Attaining that one sees and hears only that, talks and thinks of only that.

Narada describes eleven forms of devotion. Though devotion is one in kind, yet it manifests itself in eleven different forms. These are: (1) Love of the glorification of the Lord’s divine qualities, (2) Love of his enchanting beauty, (3) Love of his worship, (4) Love of constant

Nārada lays stress on the love of a servant (dāsyā bhakti) and love of a wife (kāntā-prema) for the God. Constant servitude and un-swerving wifely love to God are the two most desired form of love. Nārada further holds that devotion is greater than action (karman), knowledge (jñāna) and yoga. It is higher than these means of liberation, because it is not a means to any and, rather it is the end itself, the summum bonum of life. In this regard also Nārada’s view conforms to that of the Bhāgavata.

164. Ibid, 82
165. Ibid, 66
166. Ibid, 25, 26