



2020 Jagadguruttam Divas

Ways of Practicing Devotion

The eternal holy scriptures describe three ways of emancipation from Maya or God realization.

लक्षन्तु चतुरो वेदा लक्षमेकं तु भारतम्॥
lakṣantu caturo vedā lakṣamekaṃ tu bhāratam ॥

Ved Vyas divided the Vedas (also known as *vinirgat granth*) into 4 books and all together they encompass 100,000 hymns. Of all the *mantras* in the Vedas,

- 80,000 *mantras* explicate the philosophy of *karma* (vedic rituals),
- 16,000 *mantras* explicate the philosophy of *gyan* (knowledge) and
- 4,000 *mantras* expound *bhakti* (devotion).

The Bhagwat also asserts the same three paths –

योगास्त्रयो मया प्रोक्ता नृणां श्रेयो विधित्सया । ज्ञानं कर्म च भक्तिश्च, नोपायोऽन्योऽस्ति कुत्रचित्॥

११.२०.६

*yogāstrayo mayā proktā nṛṇāṃ śreyo vidhitsuṣyā /
 jñānaṃ karma ca bhaktiśca, nopāyo'nyo'sti kutracit ॥*

11.20.6

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मार्गास्त्र्यो मे विख्याता, मोक्षप्राप्तौ नगाधिप । कर्मयोगो ज्ञानयोगो भक्तियोगश्च सत्तम ॥

दैवी भाग. पु

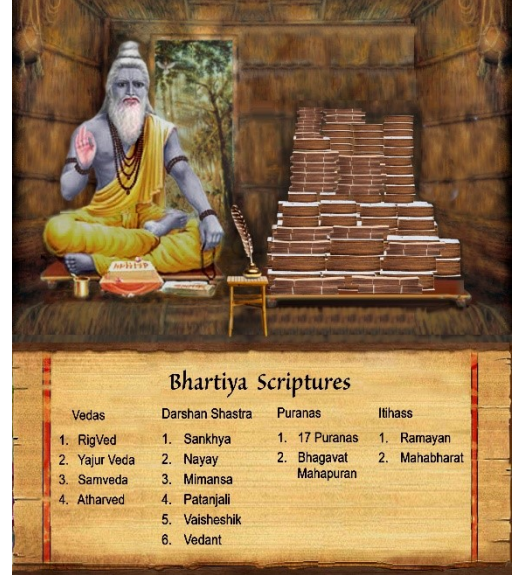
*mārgāstryo me vikhyātā, mokṣaprāptau nagādhipa /
karmayogo jñānayogo bhaktiyogaśca sattama //*

daivī bhāga. pu

The Ramcharit Manas and the Geeta also describe these three paths of God realization.

But the fifth original Jagadguru, who was honored with the title of Jagadguruttam i.e. supreme-most amongst all Jagadgurus, Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj has conclusively proven, using references from the same scriptures, that *bhakti* is the one and only path to God realization. The other paths such as *karma* and *gyan*, can also be practiced along-with *bhakti* (see [karma](#) and [gyan](#)), but without *bhakti*, no-one has or can ever attain God realization.

At the end of Dwapar Yug (see [kaal-time](#)), the great saint, Ved Vyas wrote most of the scriptures – Gita, 4 Vedas, 17 Puranas, Ramayan and Mahabharat, 6 *Darshan Shastra* etc. But he did not experience any peace of mind. Noticing his discontent, Saint Narad suggested that He had written a lot about *karma*, *gyan* and *bhakti*; however, his explanations of *bhakti* were inter-mixed with *karma* or *gyan*. Saint Narad asked Him to compose something describing the meaning and greatness of *bhakti* alone. He told Ved Vyas that, that was the only way for Him to attain peace”.



Ved Vyas Maharaj heeded to the sage advise of Sage Narad. However, to compose a scripture on pure Bhakti, practicing and personally experiencing that Bhakti was very important. So, Ved Vyas performed unalloyed devotion to Shri Krishna and attained His darshan (divine vision), after which he composed the Shrimad Bhagavat Mahapuram. He revealed the esoteric facts of pure devotion along with the methods of attaining the highest achievements of life thereafter.

There are many methods of practicing *bhakti* (see [sadhana bhakti](#)), but *navadha bhakti* (nine methods) propounded by Saint Prahlad, crest jewel of devotees, is the most accepted and advocated by most of the saints. It is so because *navadha-bhakti* encompasses most of the other methods proposed by other numerous *acharyas*. *Navadha-bhakti* comprises the following:

श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम् । अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम् ॥

भा ७.५.२३

*śravaṇaṃ kīrtanaṃ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṃ pādasevanam /
arcanaṃ vandanaṃ dāsyam sakhyamātmanivedanam //*

1. **Shravanam** (श्रवणं) - Listening to the names, forms, pastimes, attributes and abodes of *ishtadev** is termed as *shravanam*. Parikshit practiced this form of devotion. He realized God by listening to the leelas of Shri Krishna written in Shrimad Bhagavat and recited by Shukdev Paramhans.
2. **Keertanam** (कीर्तनं)- chanting the names of God with feelings of love and devotion is termed as *keertanam*. Saint Narad practices this form of devotion to stay immersed in the divine bliss.
3. **Smarnam** (स्मरणं) - continuous remembrance of God is termed as *smaranam*. Saint Prahlad followed this form of devotion and remembered God at all times even in the face of adversity.



4. **Paad-sewanam** (पादसेवनम्) - *paad* means feet and *seva* means to serve. Dedicatedly serving the lotus feet of *ishtdev** is termed as *paad-sewanam*. Goddess Mahalaxmi propounds this form of devotion.
5. **Poojanam** (अर्चनं / पूजनम्) - Ritualistic worship (विधि पूर्वक) of one's *ishtdev* is called poojan. King Prithu is the greatest example of worshipping God with this method of devotion.
6. **Vandanam** (वन्दनं) - pleasing God by glorifying His names, form, pastimes, attributes and abodes is named as *vandanam*. Akroor adopted this method.
7. **Dasyam** (दास्यं)- loyally serving Him with great love and dedication is known as *dasyam*. Hanuman Ji is an excellent example of this method of devotion.
8. **Sakhyam** (सख्यं)- loving God as the dearest friend is termed as *sakhyam*. Arjun is an example of this method of devotion.

9. **Atma-nivedanam** (आत्मनिवेदनम्) – surrendering everything including oneself at the lotus-feet of the Lord is termed as *atma-nivedanam*. King Bali is the greatest example, who gladly surrendered everything including himself at the lotus feet of Lord Vaman.

In Bhagavat, Shaunak and other rishis asked Soot Ji

यच्छ्रोतव्यमथो जप्यं यत्कर्तव्यं नृभिः प्रभो ।
स्मर्तव्यं भजनीयं वा, ब्रूहि यद्वा विपर्ययम् ॥

भा १.१९.३८

*yacchrotavyamatho japyam yatkartavyam nr̥bhiḥ prabho /
smartavyam bhajanīyam vā, brūhi yadvā viparyayam //*

bhā 1.19.38

“For human beings what is worth hearing, chanting and remembering to attain the ultimate goal of life?”

This question indicates that they consider only three methods for the ultimate upliftment of mankind, i.e. *shravan* (hearing), *keertan* (chanting) and *smaran* (remembrance). Since



1. *shravan* - One needs to listen about the beauty, attributes, merciful nature and pastimes of God to be continuously reminded that God alone is mine and God is my ultimate refuge.
2. *keertan* - Understanding the above then singing and conveying the same message to others to fortify the knowledge and devotion.
3. *smaran* - Thus, constant reflection on God would provide the necessary impetus to meet Him.

According to Shaunak and other sages these three are essential processes of *bhakti*.

Jagadguruttam Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj has laid the entire emphasis on *smaranam bhakti* (continuous remembrance of God). According to him, however large the effort might be, unless it is accompanied with *smaran*, it will not (rather it cannot) yield the desired result. Just like multiplying a number, however large it might be, by zero never yields anything but a zero; without *smaran* performance of any of the other eight methods yields no divine fruit.

$$0 \times 1 = 0$$

$$0 \times 100 = 0$$

$$0 \times 1000 = 0$$

$$0 \times 1,000,000,000 = 0$$

This is so because God records only the thoughts in His divine annals and not the physical actions. Except *smaran* all other forms of *bhakti*, stated above, are done by either action-oriented-senses (कर्मेन्द्रियाँ) or knowledge-oriented-senses (ज्ञानेन्द्रियाँ). Only *smaran* is done by mind (मन). Take for example – while listening to Bhagvat Katha, if your mind is engaged in material thoughts, what will be the outcome? Will it result in peace / happiness or immerse you deeper in the material world? It will lead you deeper into the material world for sure! And that is what has been happening since eternity. Each soul has recited God's names countless times, spent countless hours in *pooja*, yet, since the mind was not engaged in the loving remembrance of God, we are still roaming around in this world looking for the ultimate bliss.

There are only 2 eternal realms - material and divine. If the mind is not engaged in God then it is certainly engaged in some material matters and vice-versa. "Thinking about God" means choosing one of His countless all-attractive divine forms as your *ishtdev** and focusing the mind on that form. For this kind of remembrance Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj has coined the term *roopdhyan*. *Roop* means form and *dhyan* means meditation.

भक्ति मन से हो नित्य गोविंद राधे । भाव निष्काम अनन्य बना दे ॥ कृपालु त्रयोदशी
bhakti mana se ho nitya govinda radhe / bhava nishkama ananya bana de // kripalu trayodasi

"Mind has to be engaged in continuous devotion to God. That devotion needs to be selfless and exclusive to your *ishtdev*". Again, he says -

सब साधन जनु देह सम, रूपध्यान जनु प्रान। खात गीध अरु स्वान सब, कामदिक शव मान ॥

भक्ति शतक

*saba sadhana deha sama, rupadhyana janu prana /
 khata gidha aru svana saba, kamadika sava mana //*

bhakti shataka

"All other means (such as *gyan*, *karm*, *yog*, austerity and rituals etc.) are like a body and *roopdhyan* is like the soul of devotional practice. Without remembrance all other efforts are like a corpse - a body without a soul".

* *Isht Dev* – A particular form of God, which is chosen by the devotee to meditate upon.

So, according to Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj, you may adopt any method you like but never forget to do *roopdhyan*.

What is God-Realization?

We are endowed with the sensory capabilities to see, to touch, to hear, to smell and to taste the material objects. Though, some people's senses are more acute than others yet before God-realization no-one can perceive any non-material objects. God is divine so, though He is omnipresent, we can't see Him.

Perceiving the Supreme God with all the senses is called God-realization. This means that after God-realization the *jeev* can -

- see the divine form of God, which is infinitely more soothing than the rain-laden clouds
- hear God's words, which are infinitely sweeter than the cooing of a nightingale
- touch God's divine skin, which is infinitely more lustrous than a blue diamond and tender than the petals of a blue lotus,
- taste God's prasada, which are infinitely more delicious than ambrosia
- smell God's fragrant body, which is infinitely more fragrant than a blue lotus.



Kripalu Leelamritam - Propriety of listening (*Shravanam*)

When Shri Maharaj addressed the scholars of Kashi Vidvat Parishad in 1957, a very young scholar was in the assembly. Later the scholar organized a conference (*sammelan*) of scholars and the topic was "synergies between Ramayana and Vedas". Many scholars were invited to that event and each of them spoke for the allocated time, but no-one really addressed the core topic.

The organizing scholar was rather upset and longed to hear Jagadguruttam Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj, who was honored with the title of Jagadguruttam by Kashi Vidvat Parishat. The scholar recalled how Shri Maharaj Ji was so clear in his thought and precise in communicating the concepts. The scholar asked around to find the whereabouts of Shri Maharaj Ji and was finally successful in his search. To his utter surprise and delight, Shri Maharaj Ji was expected to be in town the very next day.

The next day, anxious to get *darshan* of that divine personality and to request him to speak at the conference, the scholar again visited the devotee's house. Shri Maharaj Ji had stopped speaking in conferences and used to speak in public forums for everyone's benefit.

The scholar humbly requested Shri Maharaj Ji to speak at the conference even if it was for just an hour. He agreed to send one of His senior preachers Sushri Braj Manjari Ji to speak for an hour. And said if people don't like her then He will speak at the conference.

The audience were highly impressed by Sushri Manjari Didi's eloquent and insightful discourse however the scholar's thirst was not satiated. That scholar however desperate to hear Shri Maharaj Ji speak, continued to beg Him to re-consider his request. Out of desperation to convince Shri Maharaj Ji, he even decided to go on a hunger strike until Maharaj Ji agreed to speak. The devotee family was not too happy about a *brahmin* (and that too a person who knows Vedas) dying at their doorstep, so they too pleaded for him. Not only is Shri Maharaj Ji called Kripalu but he is kripalu (gracious). Shri Maharaj Ji conceded and spoke at the conference for an hour only on the consistencies between Ramayana and the Vedas. The audience were spell-bound and highly impressed.



The scholar felt greatly obliged however other scholars including his Guru were not so thrilled. They accused him of being partial towards Shri Maharaj Ji. The scholar with folded hands explained that Shri Maharaj Ji has covered so much ground in one hour and reconciled Ramayana and Vedas that no other speaker so far has been able to do or could predictably do so in future. This was done for the benefit of the listeners. The scholar further said, if Shri Maharaj Ji was willing, he would have allocated much more time to Him, but he had to be content with the one hour agreed to, by Shri Maharaj Ji.

Moral: God-realized saints descend on earth to lead the people to God. They first explain the true nature of the world to wake up the soul. Then they educate the public on the practical way of treading on the right path. Their words carry weight because they are God's words and are communicated by the Guru, who has experienced God. So, after finding your Guru (God-realized saint) listening to different *sadhus* (God-realized or not) is pointless for

1. If speaker is not God-realized then a blind can't lead the blind OR
2. If speaker is God-realized then listening to multiple doctrines will create confusion; for which you will seek clarification. When all of your time is spent in creating doubts and seeking clarifications, when will you practice devotion to progress spiritually?

We are so blessed to have sought shelter under the lotus feet of the greatest *acharya* of all times as our Guru.

Shrimad Padvakya Pramad Paravareen, Ved Margpratishtapanacharya, Nikhildarshan Samanvayacharya, Sanaatan Vedic Dharm Pratishthapan Satsampradaya Paramacharya, Bhaktiyograsavataar, Bhagavantnant Shrivibhushit, Jagadguru 1008 Swami Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj Ki Jai.

Bhakt Vatsal Kripalu Mahaprabhu ki jai.

Kids Story - A Wise Devotee

Once upon a time, there was a king. One fine morning the king ordered his messengers to beat the drums and announce, "tomorrow morning when the palace gates open, everyone is free to touch any object of their choice and whichever object they touch, will be gifted to them". Hearing the news, all residents of the kingdom flocked in front of the palace gates and waited through the night, eager for the gates to open. While standing there, they imagined touching and thereby owning the objects of their desire like gold, precious stones, clothes, furniture, horses, elephants and herds of cows etc.

When the gates opened the next morning, there was a rampage. The king sat there looking at his subjects and was saddened by their greed and naivety. Meanwhile, he noticed a young girl approaching the throne. He wasn't sure what she wanted; maybe she wanted a dispute to be settled, maybe she had a question or something else.

While he was still contemplating the girl climbed the steps, reached the throne area and touched the king. Now the king belonged to her and so does everything that belongs to the king! The king was extremely pleased with the wisdom of the little girl and lovingly picked her up in his arms.

Moral: God is the master of all living and non-living things. People worship God to ask for different things from Him. When He is pleased, He appears in front of the devotee and asks them to ask for a boon. Some ask for *riddhi-siddhi* (super natural powers), some want *moksh* (liberation from *maya*), some want *swarg* (a subtle celestial abode with lot more luxuries than the earth) etc. God willingly gives people the objects of their desire but He is not so prompt in giving "divine love".

But when God appears, the smart ones ask for nothing except the "divine love", under whose control the almighty God remains. So once devotee gets that love, God along with all His divine powers, comes under the control of the devotee.



So be smart, ask God to give you His love alone. Don't sully the waters of loves with any other desires.



On Jagadguruttam Divas I bow down
countless times at the lotus feet of
My Beloved Gurudev
Jagadguruttam Shri Kripalu Ji Maharaj