

# Is Bhakti, a sine qua non for Mokṣa? A Psychospiritual exploration of Bhaktiśatak

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## **Abstract**

*Vedānta suggests various paths for attaining Moksha. Jñānayoga, Rājayoga, Karmayoga, and Bhaktiyoga are the popular methods followed by spiritual seekers. Here, a well-established vedāntic ideology posits Jñāna to be the essential requirement for Mokṣa. A perusal of Bhakti literature would generate doubt about the vedāntic pronouncement of Jñāna, as an imperative for Mokṣa, and tends to oppose it, by suggesting Bhakti as the mandate. Bhaktiśatak is a chief work on Vedānta, composed by Kṛpālu ji Maharaj of the 20th century. Composed in a lucid style, in the Khariboli dialect of Hindi, Bhaktiśatak's hundred verses enunciate Bhakti as the path that underpins all the other paths, and counsels one comfortably to Mokṣa. The goal of the current article is to scrutinise the paths of Jñāna and Bhakti, with reference to Bhaktiśatak and other major vedantic literatures like the Upaniṣad-s and the Bhagavadgītā. Overcoming māyā, the illusionary power of God, one attains Mokṣa. Bhaktiśatak propounds that māyā can only be overcome by the grace of God. The article therefore seeks clarity on the necessity of Bhakti for the attainment of Mokṣa. It further discusses the methods recommended by Kṛpālu ji to evoke Bhakti in a seeker.*

**Keywords** - Bhakti, Māyā, Mokṣa, Bhaktiśatak, Vedānta, Kṛpālu Ji Maharaj

## **I. Introduction**

*Prasthānatraya*, the vedāntic canon discusses various paths to attain *Mokṣa* (liberation), the ultimate goal of human life. A review of vedāntic literature would reveal the prominence of the four paths towards *Mokṣa*, viz. *Jñānayoga*, *Karmayoga*, *Rājayoga* and *Bhaktiyoga* (1-3). According to Swami Vivekananda, the four paths help aspirants realize the truth, as asserted by vedānta (4). But, bulk of the

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Upaniṣadic literature suggests *Jñāna* (self-realisation) as the most essential factor towards *Mokṣa*. On inquiring about the entity that forms the substratum of the senses and mind, the preceptor, in the Kenopaniṣad explains about the sentient one that provides power for the functioning of the senses, the knowledge of which would take one to eternity (5). This source of sentience stays beyond the purview of the senses and mind, but its realization helps one to achieve *amṛtatva* (eternity). The Īśavāsyopaniṣad affirms the realisation of *amṛtatva* through *vidyā* (6). In the Kaṭhopaniṣad, Yama professes to Naciketas that *Ātmajñāna* (self-realisation) leads one to liberation from the cycle of death and birth (7).

Nevertheless, not all the aspirants are readily equipped for *Ātmajñāna*. They have to prepare themselves through a cleansing process by performing *Karmayoga*. *Karmayoga* refers to performance of actions complying to scriptures, without claiming any credit for their execution or prompted by a selfish motive. Swami Vivekānanda says, “we have to take up work as they come to us and slowly make ourselves more unselfish everyday in the primary years we shall find that our motives are always selfish, but the selfishness will gradually melt by persistence” (8). Practice of *Karmayoga* would further balance the dichotomous mental constructs and render equipoise. Bhagavadgītā (BG) refers to an equipoised mind as Yogic as it is never tempted by gain or loss (9). As a whole, acting with proper discrimination and detachment would seem the right perspective to be followed, as one strives for *Ātmajñāna*. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa suggests one to practice avoidance of angst towards the results of one’s actions (10).

*Rājayoga*, otherwise known as ‘the royal path’, is one of the toughest methods for a spiritual seeker to pursue. A perusal of evolution of the literature on Yoga suggests spiritual leaders of India viz. Swami Vivekānanda and Swami Sivānanda, to be the propagators of *Rājayoga*. According to Birch, they developed systems of Yoga, known as *Rājayoga* and recommended *Yogasūtra*-s of sage Patañjali as the principal work on Yoga (11). Accordingly, it involves the eightfold method known as the *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*, propounded by Patañjali for disciplining oneself to comfortably engage in meditation. Since *Aṣṭāṅgayoga* is a holistic technique, it nurtures both physiological and psychological wellbeing of a practitioner (12-14). Ultimately, through sincere and rigorous practise of *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*, *Rājayoga*, serves as a path to dive deep within oneself, to experience the subtle inner realms of consciousness.

*Bhakti* can be comprehended as a bridge that ushers one towards *Mokṣa*, through the practice of *Karmayoga*, pinpointed on achieving a higher state of consciousness or divinity (15). Assimilation of *Bhakti* helps a devotee develop inner expansiveness, where one sees all beings as inseparable from God and thus, enjoy the profound experience of oneness. Kṛṣṇa shares his perspective of a *bhakta* (devotee), as “complemented by ennoblement qualities of love and compassion, and never hateful of other beings. Being detached and not being self-centred, a *bhakta* is always balanced within, in joyous or sorrowful outcomes. In addition, a *bhakta* is determined, marshalling mind and intellect endeavoured, in the service of God” (16). Thus, Bhakti can be understood as actions executed with compassion, renouncing any and all attachments towards the world, and focused on achievement of a higher spiritual goal.

A seeker striving for *Mokṣa* would face a dilemma to either seek *Jñāna* or move in the path of *Bhakti* towards *Mokṣa*. Do the vedāntic scriptures propound both these paths as complementary? At such decision-crossroads, tenets and teachings of vedāntic gurus like Kṛpālu Ji Mahārāj (henceforth reafter referred to as Kṛpālu ji) could assist in making the right decision. *Bhaktiśatak* (BŚ) is one of the principal works of Kṛpālu ji that enlightens a vedāntic seeker on the fundamentals of vedāntic philosophy. Meticulously expounding the goals achieved by pursuing the paths of *Jñānayoga*, *Karmayoga*, *Rājayoga*, and *Bhaktiyoga*, BŚ prescribes the imperative for *Mokṣa*.

## II. **Bhaktiśatak - A brief summary**

The title ‘*Bhaktiśatak*’ refers to a treatise of 100 verses on *Bhakti*, authored by Kṛpālu ji. Composed in the *Khariboli* dialect of Hindi, it discusses various metaphysical and practical aspects of vedānta. Albeit BŚ elaborates vedānta from a *Vaiṣṇava* perspective, and stresses on *Bhakti* as an essential prerequisite for accomplishment of *Mokṣa*, scholars have traced specific traits pertaining to diverse schools of thought on Vedānta. BŚ seems to emulate various teachings, reflected in the BG and the *Bhāgavata*. Besides BŚ, Kṛpālu ji has composed other philosophical works like *Prema Rasa Siddhānta*, *Rāsa Pañcādhyāyī* and *Rādhā Govinda Gīt*, influenced by analysis and summarisation of various Vedāntic scriptures, including *Bhakti*. In recognition of his contributions to the dissemination of spiritual teachings centred on Vedānta, the *Kāśī Vidvad Pariṣad* bestowed on Kṛpālu ji with the esteemed title of *Samanvayācārya*. He was subsequently revered with the title *Jagadguru* (foremost among the world *guru-s*) (17).

## III. **A metaphysical analysis of Bhaktiśatak**

Traditions of vedānta follow *sagunopāsana* as well as *nirgunopāsana*. Upaniṣad-s point out few *sagunopāsanā* methodologies like meditation on *omkāra*, *prāṇa* etc. In the context of *advaitin-s* who follow the *sagunopāsanā* tradition, there are plenty of Śiva and Kṛṣṇa devotees like Appayya dīkṣita and Madhusūdana saraswati respectively. Following the *sagunopāsana* method through Bhakti, seemingly eases the path rather than dwelling in the *upāsanā* of *nirguṇa* and *nirākāratattva*. Sherma observes vedānta as a philosophy where *Bhakti* is never eschewed but does not consider *Jñāna* as the final step towards liberation (18). BŚ has been composed inline with the foundational aspects of vedānta but giving superiority to Bhakti. The vedantic aspects propounded here are that the world is considered unreal and the realization of *Brahman* (universal consciousness) by the individual self is *Jñāna*. Kṛṣṇa is the *Īśwara* (God), the master and only by his grace can one achieve *Mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is a state regarded as beyond the *Jñāna*.

There are two foundational but inseparable philosophical powers known as the *ahlādinīśakti* (power of love) symbolised as Radha and *śaktimān Īśwara* as Kṛṣṇa. Both are never disparate but the *ahlādinīśakti* is always based on *śaktimān* Kṛṣṇa. Among the infinite number of powers of *śaktimān*, three powers seem to be important viz. *māyā*, *jīva* and *parāśakti*. Building his theory in line with the *Vaiṣṇava* philosophy, Kṛpālu ji posits that the *jīva* (soul) belongs to the *taṭasthaśakti* (border potency) of Kṛṣṇa. A *jīva*, since its birth, is under the control of *māyā* and forgets one's master Kṛṣṇa. By leaving the master and attaching oneself to the body and other worldly pleasures a *jīva* gets entangled in the clutches of *māyā*. *Māyā* manifests as *vidyāmāyā* and *avidyāmāyā*. *Avidyāmāyā* could be transcended through self-knowledge, meanwhile *vidyāmāyā* can be overcome only through the grace of God, Kṛṣṇa. Regarding the existence of God, BŚ expounds on various metaphysical levels based on the association of attributes or their absence. Association of attributes evince the presence and close acquaintance of God with the mundane devotees. Among different levels, the subtlest *Brahman* is the divinity where all the powers exist in a dormant form and is defined as *sat-cit- ānanda*. *Paramātman* is considered to be the divinity beyond the purview of divine *līlā*-s or intimate divine association and resides eternally within every soul. Here, God is attributed with infinite divine forms, names and virtues. Finally, the form of God where infinite names, forms and powers are revealed is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is known to be performing divine *līlā*-s (divine plays) and has intimate divine associates. It is by the grace of Kṛṣṇa that a *jīva* overcomes the power of *māyā*. BG verifies the same, stating “*māyā* as the greatest divine and unfathomable power of Kṛṣṇa. One taking refuge on Kṛṣṇa escapes from its clutches” (19).

#### **IV. Bhakti as the paramount tool for Mokṣa**

Śaṅkarācārya opines, “among various tools, Bhakti is the most conducive to liberation. Seeking one's real nature is known as Bhakti” (20). Etymologically the term *Bhakti* is derived from the Sanskrit *dhātu ‘bhaja sevāyām’* (21). Here, ‘*seva*’ refers to selfless service activities and *upāsanā* of one's chosen deity. In sage Śāṇḍilya's words, “*Bhakti* is the greatest love for one's chosen deity” (22). Consolidating the etymological denotation along with the opinions from the ācārya-s (authentic spiritual masters), Bhakti is an altruistic mentality towards one's action which in itself is reverential and filled with love towards one's God. The ultimate motive of practising Bhakti is to realise one's own real nature.

Treading the path of Bhakti, an aspirant may have to face numerous obstacles. One may come across various testing circumstances in life, causing even to lose one's hope of achieving the spiritual goal. During such state of affairs, a strict adherence to *tapas* (a strict routine of spiritual practise) is necessary and a methodology has to be followed for the *upāsana* of one's deity. Kṛṣṇa recommends *ācāryopāsana* (approaching an authentic spiritual master) and *gurupūjā* (honouring or worshiping a spiritual master) as a requirement (23-24). An *ācārya* has the right vision and knowledge to guide a true aspirant. Chilcott posits, “among the recommended practices of rule-based devotion, taking initiation from, following the instructions of and serving a qualified *guru* a spiritual teacher who is viewed as capable of guiding the

devotee on the path of devotion are particularly important. Under a *guru*, a devotee becomes ritually linked to the lineage of teachings, submissively learns about the path of devotion, and engages in devotional practices" (25). Therefore, the primary step to be followed by a spiritual aspirant is to seek guidance of a *guru*. The Māndūkya Upaniṣad proclaims, "to achieve knowledge one has to approach a *guru*" (26). It is a true master who guides one through the right path towards achieving the spiritual goal. Chāndogya Upaniṣad states, "one who follows an *ācārya* realises the truth" (6.14.2). By consistent practice of selfless service, an aspirant gains detachment from worldly objects, and stays focused on *Bhakti* towards God.

It is necessary here to discuss about the other paths of spirituality like *Karmayoga*, *Rājayoga* and *Jñānayoga*, pursued by a seeker and how do they complement in achieving the objective of one's spiritual journey. The goal of two paths viz. *Karmayoga* and *Rājayoga* is known to purify the psyche by dissolving the negative emotions and thoughts. They quieten one's mind and take an aspirant to the inner depths to realise the inner essence, the *Paramātman*. Among them, *Karmayoga* is more easier to practise than the latter since it deals with activities which are tangible but done with a reverential mentality and surrender. BG proclaims thus, "Like the lotus leaves which are never wet with water, one who performs actions with surrender unto the divine, never gets tainted by sins. Therefore a true yogin performs actions renouncing attachment to the world for the purification of oneself" (28). Thus *Karmayoga* leads to a blissful state rendering a serene composure. Dhiman delineates, "How is selfless action a blessing? Because it bestows purity of mind. Self-knowledge can only dawn in a pure mind, a mind that is free from the taint of self-centeredness" (29). An aspirant treading the *Rājayoga* path follows the eight fold path set forth by sage Patañjali in his *Yogasūtra*-s (YS). One begins with the *Yama* and *Niyama*, the ethical precepts which form the foundation of *Rājayoga*. Swami Vivekānanda opines, "*Yama* and *Niyama* as we see, are the moral trainings; without these as the basis no practice of *Yoga* will succeed" (30). The *Yama* includes restraints that one needs to practise viz. *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (celibacy) and *aparigraha* (non-hoarding) (31). Few observances are suggested by sage Patañjali as *Niyama* and includes *śauca* (cleanliness), *santoṣa* (happiness), *tapas* (austerity), *swādhyāya* (self-study) and *īśwarapraṇidhāna* (surrender to God) (32). These primary steps assist an aspirant to discipline one's psyche and prepare one for the higher steps like *āsana* (yogic posture) and *prāṇāyāma* (breath regulation techniques). According to sage Patañjali, regular practise of *āsanā*-s improve physical flexibility and ability to maintain stillness of a meditation posture easily (33). In addition to this a disciplined practitioner of *āsana* wins over mental dualities (34). Studies suggest that regular practice of *āsanā*-s and *prāṇāyāma* improves the flexibility levels, physical conditioning, emotional balance and reduces stress in both the genders of all the age groups (35-39). Practicing *prāṇāyāma* along with *āsana* improves mental stillness and the practitioner becomes an adept in withdrawing one's senses from the external objects. Patañjali terms the state where the sense organs settle back within oneself by giving up their own objects as *pratyāhāra* (40). *Dhāraṇā* is considered as the next step where the aspirant's mind is fixed internally on one particular object (41) which results in a continuous flow of vision of that particular object known as *dhyāna* (meditation) (42). The Yoga scriptures consider *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* as two stages of meditation

that occur in sequence (43). The *asṭāṅgayoga* culminates in *samādhi*, a state of complete effortless absorption in the divine which is not different from seeking oneness with *Paramātman*, the ultimate goal of *Rājayoga*. According to Varambally and Gangadhar, *Rājayoga* is the highest practice, the philosophical basis and theoretical background of which has been codified under the *Asṭāṅgayoga* tradition (45). The *Asṭāṅgayoga* advances the methodology to achieve realisation of one's true self, the ultimate objective of *Rājayoga*. Proceeding further towards achieving *Jñāna*, an aspirant realises oneness with consciousness that pervades the universe, termed by the Vedantic scriptures as *Brahman*. Realisation of the oneness with *Brahman* establishes a firm understanding that in absolute reality, none of the beings are separate from oneself and this realisation is considered as *Ātmajñāna*. Śaṅkarācārya, the propounder of Advaita philosophy in his commentary to the Kena Upaniṣad posits, “Intelligent seekers, by means of discriminatory knowledge realise that every being is pervaded by the same pure consciousness and therefore renounce desire for anything material. They gradually lose their attachment to their body and ego and finally attain realisation” (45). Here, the complication is, since *Brahman* and *Paramātman* are not associated with any attributes and are beyond *vyāvahārikatva* (empirical existence), practitioners of the path of *Jñāna* and *Rājayoga* may attain self-realisation but liberation always stays beyond their purview. BG discloses, “an embodied being has to work strenuously towards realisation of the unmanifested” (46). Therefore, practising *Bhakti* towards God is comparatively easier and the essential requirement for *Mokṣa*. Reflecting on the importance of *Bhakti* as propounded by the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, Narsalay and Potnis-Damle opines, “*Bhakti* is a dominant path to union with the divine and Bhāgavata emphasises the value of *Bhakti* in attaining *Mokṣa* by way of establishing a direct relationship with Viṣṇu in the form of Kṛṣṇa” (47). The imperativeness of *Bhakti* for *Mokṣa* is suggested by McDaniel while describing degrees of premaBhakti (devotional love) as propounded by sage Nārada, “One begins by glorifying and appreciating the God's greatness, then loving his beauty, worshipping him, and remembering him constantly, identifying with being the God's slave, then his friend, then his parent, and then loving him as a wife loves her husband. The devotee should entirely surrender to Kṛṣṇa and feel absorbed in him, yet still feel sorrow at the pain of separation from him. This feeling of union yet separateness is considered to be the highest religious state in Sutra. Such experience is not intended to be left behind when a person achieves liberation” (48).

Attainment of liberation means to free oneself from *māyā*, and through *Bhakti* a devotee attains the grace of God to overcome *māyā*. Kṛṣṇa posits, “*māyā*, the divine entity that possesses three *guṇa*-s is my creation and is difficult to be transcended. But the one who surrenders unto me transcends easily” (49). Specifying the path of a devotee Kṛpālu ji says, “realisation of *Brahman* is through *Jñānayoga*, *Rājayoga* is the path for the realisation of *Paramātman* and God is attained through *Bhakti*” (50). A true devotee, therefore, aspires neither for worldly pleasures and prosperity nor for liberation, but wholeheartedly submits himself in devotion to God. Additionally, BG clarifies, “after innumerable births does one knowledgeable person arise who leans on God as a sole refuge and regards realisation of God as one's greatest achievement” (51). Therefore, among all the paths like *Karma*, *yoga* and *Jñāna*, BŚ proposes *Bhakti* as the most essential for *Mokṣa*. A clarification on the method of practise is suggested by Kṛṣṇa,

“those devotees, who by renouncing all the actions, meditates on me, get swiftly uplifted by me, from the ocean of death and birth” (52). Referring to the necessity of surrender for liberation, Kṛṣṇa proclaims, “surrender unto me by abandoning all other forms of practices, and I shall liberate you from all the sins” (53). One who resorts to *Bhakti* attains *Mokṣa* since *Bhakti* does not depend on other accessories like *Karma*, *yoga* or *Jñāna*. Hence Kṛpālu ji says, “*Bhakti* is independent and complete in itself” (BŚ 44).

The path towards attainment of *Mokṣa*, as proposed by BŚ, has been represented in figure 1, the *Bhakti* flowchart. In the flowchart various shapes have been used to logically represent different stages indicating a *jīva*’s journey towards *Mokṣa*. According to Wang *et al.*, in a flowchart, various shapes like oval, diamond and rectangle represent beginning or end, decision to be made and processing activity respectively, in a sequential process (55). Considering a *jīva*’s spiritual journey from birth until *Mokṣa* to be a sequential activity, depiction on a flowchart is helpful for comprehension of the idea. A *jīva* can decide on various paths like *Jñāna*, *Karma*, *yoga* or *Bhakti* (represented by diamond) towards achieving one’s spiritual goal. *Bhakti* is the easiest path that directly provides *Mokṣa* (represented by an oval shape denoting the end) by the elimination of *māyā*. According to BŚ, *Jñāna* is the second important path by which one realises oneness with *Brahman* (represented by a rectangle), the all-pervading consciousness and this is otherwise known as self-realisation or *Ātmajñāna*. By following *Karmayoga* and *Rājayoga*, a seeker realises *Paramātman* (represented by a rectangle), and further, by means of *upāsana*, realises *Brahman*. A *jñāni* attains self-realisation but elimination of *māyā* or *Mokṣa* happens only through *Bhakti*.

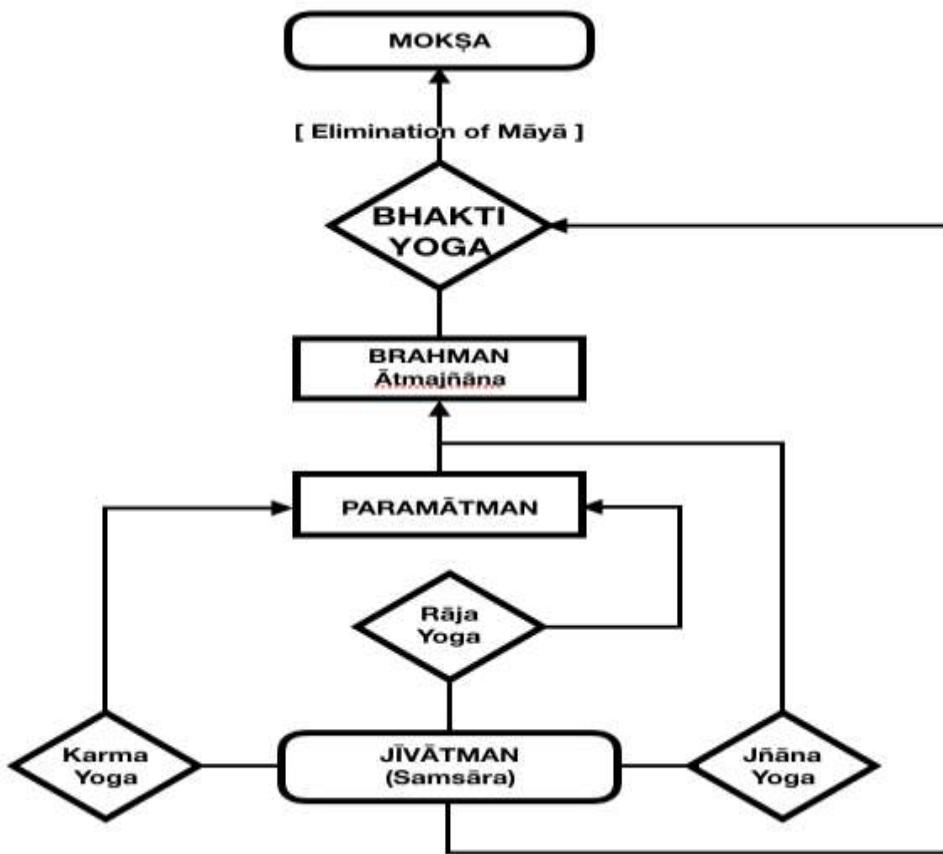


Figure 1. *Bhakti* flowchart

## V. Methods to evoke Bhakti

Kṛpālu ji presents various pointers that can help an aspirant nurture and sustain one's devotion. *Samarpana* (surrender) is one of the chief aspects of true devotion. Hence, the question arises - what is to be surrendered, and how? BG mentions, "performance of action with the mentality that 'it is done for Kṛṣṇa', takes one to the highest spiritual goal. If performance of action with surrender is not possible, renunciation of results of actions is the recommended option, as through renunciation one attains peace" (56). Surrendering one's actions, along with its results, at the feet of the deity, is the mark of a devotionally aligned personality. "Renunciation of the result of actions is known as renunciation", says Kṛṣṇa (57). Practice of renunciation nurtures and sustains an evolution, within the aspirant, that guides one's consciousness to a higher plane, where one surrenders the mentality of 'I' and 'Mine', symbolising the surrender of one's ego. In the case of surrendering, a fundamental difference can be traced between the path of *Jñāna* and *Bhakti*. Following the path of *Jñāna*, one has to transcend and overcome the notion of 'I' and 'Mine', since they are connected with body, mind and ego; but in the path of devotion, the awareness of 'I' and 'Mine' always remain related towards God, and connects with the feeling of complete surrender unto

the divine i.e. 'I belong to God' and 'God is mine'. BG attests the same concept, by describing the nature of renunciation - "one offers all actions like consumption of food, religious practices, rituals and austerities unto God and thereby gets detached from actions and their results.....the ones who practice devotion in this manner with love, reside in Me and I reside in them" (58). The scriptural standpoint here reflects on the possibility of union of the paths of renunciation, action and devotion. Assuming the proposed ideology to be viable, Kṛpālu ji opines, "some urge the practice of renunciation alone, whereas others urge adherence to the path of devotion; both are naive, as renunciation and devotion need to be practised together" (59).

One's attachments and repulsions, concerning human life's sojourn in the mortal world, are revealed through one's emotions. A pleasing object arouses feelings like *kāma* (passion) to possess the object, and if unsuccessful, in pursuit of that objective, could lead to *krodha* (anger). As enunciated in the BG, *krodha* in turn results in a chain of other psychological disturbances, ensuing in self-destruction of an individual (60). Hence, the scriptures proclaim that a spiritual aspirant should overcome the *śadvairī-s* (six enemies): *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (stupor) and *mātsarya* (envy). Condensing the six inner enemies into three - *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha*, Kṛṣṇa states, these are the three doors to the hell of self-destruction and advises one to wholeheartedly discard them (61). Giving up the *śadvairī-s* is not an easy task, as it calls for persistent awareness and immense practice. Kṛpālu ji suggests, "rather than striving hard in renouncing the *śadvairī-s*, they can be related to God" (62). Applying the philosophy into practise, a devotee diverts one's anger towards one's own shortcomings and not towards the outer world; greedy or envious mentality over worldly objects can be overcome by diverting such emotions towards God.

*Bhakti* can be practised in two ways - *Samyogabhakti* (devotion in union) and *Viyogabhakti* (devotion in separation). *Samyogabhakti* is practised in the physical presence of one's deity or guru in close proximity; in the *Viyoga* form, the deity is physically not present or beyond the grasp of the senses, evoking a pain of separation, making one an intense seeker. Kṛpālu ji opines, "*Viyogabhakti* is superior because in *Viyoga*, Kṛṣṇa is experienced as all pervading" (63). Mahātmā-s like Sūrdas, Sukhdas, Nandadas, Mirābī, gopī-s of the Vṛndāvan are few, who are known to have followed the *Viyoga* mode of devotion. In the context of *Viyogabhakti* experienced by the gopi-s, in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, Coleman delineates, "the *Bhāgavata* articulates an explicit soteriology of *viraha* (separation), so that Kṛṣṇa's temporary disappearance and final departure from the mortal world, effectively enable the gopīs' salvation by inflaming their passion and passion for continuous contemplation of a physically unattainable Kṛṣṇa" (64). By practising *Viyogabhakti*, a devotee gains a holistic outlook i.e. to seek God all around. This is by sensing similarity in the attributes of the animate and inanimate objects, to the attributes innate to God. For instance, by seeing dark rain clouds, a devotee remembers the dark blue skin tone of Kṛṣṇa, a yellow coloured cloth sparks memory of the dress worn by Kṛṣṇa, bamboo reminds one of Kṛṣṇa's flute. A devotee, with such an outlook and purity of mind, is rarely seen; therefore, Kṛṣṇa comments, "mahātmā-s who realize Vāsudeva (aka Kṛṣṇa) to be all pervading are rare" (65).

## VI. Observation and Conclusion

A perusal of BŚ evinces Kṛpālu ji as an ardent devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛpālu ji follows the traditional tenets of the path of *Bhakti* as propounded by Bhāgavatapurāṇa and BG. Even though being an adherent to *Bhakti* path, the authority of the Upaniṣads are not denied by him and considers knowledge imparted by the Upaniṣads to be divine. But since the Upaniṣadic knowledge does not instigate devotion, Kṛpālu ji says such knowledge is like ‘a body without life’. Even though at the outset of BŚ, Kṛpālu ji refers to Brahman as a dormant entity, he considers Kṛṣṇa as the manifested form of Brahman and Kṛṣṇa reveals himself to the ones very intimately connected, like the gopis and other members of Braj.

Kṛpālu ji suggests Bhakti as an imperative to *Mokṣa*. *Jñāna* equips one with self-realization. *Rājayoga* and *Karmayoga* guides a seeker towards *Jñāna* by means of self purification process and meditation respectively. But, *Bhakti* is the path where surrender and renunciation is practised to achieve one’s beloved God. Love for the deity binds the seeker to follow the path to the divine and with God’s grace the seeker attains *Mokṣa* by eradication of illusions of *māyā*. This would seem as an easier path to attain *Mokṣa* but a seeker faces extreme testing situations, where one’s resilience and determination are assessed. Therefore Kṛpālu ji suggests a seeker to practise surrender of one’s actions and renounce attachment towards the results of actions. Overcoming the six inner enemies is an important aspect towards cleansing oneself and inner purification takes one closer to the divine. *ViyogaBhakti* is indicated as a chief means of practising *Bhakti* for sustaining one’s intense yearning for the divine. This mode of *Bhakti* expands one’s vision and the devotee seeks and recognises a oneness of every element of this universe with the divine.

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