# BHAKTI - THE DIVINE CONTEMPLATION

## (A formative approach from Kṛṣṇāṣṭaka)

**Dr. N. Usha Devi**

## Introduction

The uniqueness of human existence lies in the fact that the so called humanity is an expansion of a concrete subjective awareness within individuals. This conscious awareness never discards the awareness of the world with which he is entwined. To understand the basic structure of one's intricate existence in this world, the relation with it and the finding of a conjectural cause it is required to postulate at least one Super- conscious principle capable of bringing in such relational structure. In this context the Vedas and the Upaniṣads have uniformity of disclosure in that inquiring into such an essence can be made possible through a turning to our inside that makes our awareness about the Supreme Being in conformity with the individuality. The very notion of life comes in the form- 'Life is everything that exists- 'asti'. Life is the principle of existence (sat). Cosmic amplification (bṛhan) arises out of the power of Life, hence Life is equated with the Supreme principle.

Bhakti or devotion can be defined as being the most elevated, pure love for God which is eternal by nature and through following which one obtains perfect peace and immortality (release from samsāra). The implications in such a devotion are that one no longer has any selfish desires, nor is affected by the dualities of loss or gain for himself being fully content with (and experiencing ecstasy through) the process of bhakti itself. The Vedas and Upaniṣads disclose

two categories of bhakti- Parā-Bhakti and Aparā-Bhakti Upaniṣads emphasized Parā Bhakti. The Bhāgavata gives the definition of Bhakti as : When all the energies of the mind, including those of the organs of knowledge and of action, become concentrated as a unified mental mode directed to the Supreme Being spontaneous like instinct and devoid of any extraneous motives the resulting state of mind is called bhakti It is superior even to mukti. Like fire burns up the souls sheath of ignorance [1].

The prime task of the work undertaken by the great Advaitācārya Śri Śankara in the form of Krishnāṣtaka is to deliver the message for the common people that 'Krishna' is no doubt the Absolute Being Himself in incarnation and He is non-distinct from Brahman. It is mainly directed against self-estrangement of man from the duties, responsibilities and aims to which he is flighted off from the Divine Being brought about by ignorance and to establish the truth of the state-of-affairs in this world. It is particularly to make man understand and ascertain the nature of Divinity or Divine Existence which he has lost sight off due to his karma in the cycle of births and deaths. Through an example of his own performance, Krishna makes others to realize the nature of Truth accompanying the deep meditation or the devotional exercise.

The message starts in the form of a mythical utterance to Devaki and Vasudeva his parents that he is ready to be born to protect the world from self-estrangement brought by the demonic nature and establish the Truth in this world. The birth of Krishna is in captivity but really He is imprisoned. This is followed by the travel of Vāsudeva with the new-born child to the Nanda King without the knowledge of others. What is reflected here is the deepest sense of devotion exhibited by Vasudeva to the Lord which protects the child from the floods. Even no rain wets the child, for, it is protected by the Śeṣanāga, the symbolic of the Māyā aspect of the Lord. Then there comes the episode of peoples' devotional and respectful attachment to Krishna in Nanda's Kingdom. By showing several miracles and adventurous activities like destroying the demons or the evil forces, he becomes a perfect love-maker with the society and the parents and thereby

getting attracted by the gopikas of the kingdom. These ladies devotionally attached firmly with him. The attachment is so deep that even Nārada is in fully in praise of it. This devotional exercise really has to expand into the deeper level of divinity then only one can realize his closeness to God. Here one thing that can be understood is that Krishna tries to make realize the idea that the 'prima facie' or the Supreme Being remains out of reach of the perception of human beings. But it is also noted that Krishna stands very close to his staunch devotees. For e.g. Arjuna, Akroora, Uddhava etc. it is important that Krishna preaches Bhakti as the means to realize the Supreme Being. He elaborates the path to devotion and also its relation with jñāna, karma and Yoga. Through his flute, he provides the stage for metamorphism in the minds of many including even the animals. This sense of love is immeasurable and those involved get one with the sound of the divine forgetting themselves completely and thereby realizing the self-deceit. Similarly the famous Rāsalīla is a sense of highest love wherein the ladies feel the experience of nearness or the union with Krishna, the Divine.

**'Krishnāṣtaka' – Its elegance and Magnanimity**

'Krishnāṣtaka' is a charming and melodious devotional literature presented by Śankara directed towards the experience of the reality in the form of incarnation of Krishna. The linked sweetness of it when integrated into our hearts and spelt in its melody certainly can provide a metamorphosing effect on every being. However, being a devotional presentation it is necessary to understand that the presentation is on the Saguṇa aspect of the Reality. Though Śankara here presents a dauntless exposition of the nature of Reality as in its manifest form certainly he could not be claimed to be deviating from the Advaita line of thinking. The Reality as the incarnation of 'Viṣṇu' considered as Supreme Being forms the object of devotional attitude. Śankara claims that through this one can develop steadfastness in the object and in an unwavering continuity of devotion one can transgress into the Absolute. Aimed at the common people who are fallen into the abyss of ignorance he presents such a literature to uplift the people from ignorance and attach firmly to the Lord who is the only refuge in the world.

The aim of Krishnāṣtaka is not to exalt the ways of karma but to make clear that Jñāna and Bhakti are supreme the later leading to the former. Succinctly this is an attempt to set forth the transcendental experience of Reality in a total cessation of transmigratory life and its causes. In this connection it is important to remember the emphasis on Advaita though it is not explicitly stated. Lord Krishna is treated as the objective certitude. The statement in Gītā : Mayyarpitamanobuddhih..... That Lord will become nearer to the person and he can communicate with the Lord which means he has lost his sensual attachments and the universal love generated as 'He is my Own and all beings are myself' is the hallmark of Devotion. That Śankara here indisputably makes clear that revelation of the Truth through integral devotion can liberate one from the samsāra.

Equally important is the suggested pre-eminence of Jñāna over Bhakti in the scheme of Mokṣa or liberation. For Śankara: 'nothing exists here as purifying as Jñāna'whose content is 'Vāsudevah sarvamiti'. Krishna is all existence. This is in conformance with the Upaniṣadic statement: 'Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma' [2]. Through its God conception Śankara arrives at an Ultimate Being. Krishna is granted all the dignity as that of the Upaniṣads and is claimed to be the pratiṣṭhāna or ground of it.

Śankara, here blends the path of devotion and knowledge. One is the means and the other is the end. Once the basic intention of Śankara is understood the controversies over his scheme of thought regarding the role of Bhakti in Advaita which is Jñāna- centred, will be seen as unacceptable. Perhaps this fact may serve as an adequate ground for the devotional exegesis on 'Krishna'.

## KRISHNĀṢṬAKAM OR DEVAKĪNANDANĀṢṬAKAM

Saccidānandarūpāya Krishnāyākliṣṭakarmaṇe
Namo Vedāntavedyāya Gurave Buddhisākṣine.

With sincere salutations to Lord Krishna let me begin the elucidation of the work. To begin with it has to be accepted that man represents the noblest birth in the sense that his birth is endowed with the grandeur of knowledge through

which the life can be transformed into a series of blissful experience devoid of sorrows and sufferings. As a part of the Prakṛti (Nature) constituted with the five elements and involving the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas, the aspects of knowledge, action and inertia are natural in man. Experience alone is the doubtless means of making the life in this world blissful through discriminatory attitudes and activities, though the birth in the form of man remains prominent in rajoguṇa which is action-centric. The tranquillity of the mind that brings in removal of the sorrows and sufferings can be experienced through keeping distance from the objective world around us and attending on those which alone are much indispensable and urgent. 'Man will be able to attain the development of his personality only when he acquires stability, purity and the concentration of the mind'- this is the great message imparted to us from the great scholars of India since the Upaniṣadic age. In order to realize this and attain this goal which embodies the meaningfulness of the human birth, the preceptors of ancient India proposed Bhakti as the easy means foreseeing its virtual and evil modes.

'Brahma satyam jaganmithyā'- In every being and everywhere the inner controlling principle is alike and the perceivable world is but inert and an illusory appearance- this concept of Advaita philosophy was infused by the great philosopher Sri Śankara through his numerous works. If the universe is non-conscious, there is no need to say that the objects in it as a whole are also of the same non-conscious nature. Then the deities accepted in various orders of worship like idol worship etc are also to be considered as the inert ones. As a solution to the problems like these, the visible world was provided with a special kind of existence- empirical existence- by the great Śankara who was an advocate of harmony in possible issues. He put forth the glaring light of knowledge that the world can be considered valid as far as nescience remains in the mind; when the true realization of Brahman occurs, the validity of those other than Brahman will be extinguished without any delay. The lustre of knowledge is personal because of it being subject to personal experience alone. This experience which is nothing other than the supreme bliss is verily the liberation from the cycles of birth

and death and it can be had in the human birth alone. This fact is disclosed by Sri Śankara in his Vivekacūdāmaṇi: 'Jantūnām narajanma durlabham....'. We can experience liberation which is the meaning of our life if we embrace the virtues of discriminative knowledge, aspiration towards liberation and contact with virtuous people. Sorrows and sufferings can be reduced and the supreme bliss can be experienced if the intellect wandering in external sensuous objects is directed towards the Atman with the help of concentration and stability of the mind. The most easy and simple way for attaining the concentration of the intellect is the way of Bhakti. Recognizing this fact, Sri Śankara wrote praiseworthy poems on all representations of God prevailed in the Hindu dharma. Bhakti is regarded with great value in Nārāyaṇīya also- 'Śreyomārgeṣu bhaktāvadhikabahumatih..'.

Bhakti epitomizes a truly empirical attitude. This Bhakti which is of the nature of love as defined by the great sage Nārada 'Sa tvasmin paramapremarūpa' involves in it the notion of difference at the preliminary stages. Because of the existence of difference between the devotee and the God, devotee can communicate with and pray for his favourable results to the God. But when the density of devotion increases, there occurs the realization of indifference of the two in the sense that the devotee and God will be merged into one Being. If devotion is not reached this stage, the devotee is considered as the servant to whom the God is the Master. This kind of devotion generates not the absence of sorrows but in their increase itself and therefore the true goal of liberation remains far from the reach of devotee. At this juncture, the Advaita philosophy acquires more relevance. The attitude of Sri Śankara, the seer of Reality in Brahman itself, in presenting the praises towards the multiple Gods to the world, is indeed deserves careful observation and proper analysis. Through exhibiting the false nature of the world he does not negate the total reality of the world but discloses the fact that the world is to be viewed as an entity existing in the phenomenal period itself. The notion of difference naturally evident in the external worship is but a representation of empirical knowledge. But the true knowledge is that of the non-dual Brahman that is far from all notions of difference and remains in the one

nature of elegant lustre. Thus the nature of Brahman and that of the world being different, the Advaita philosophy never strive in vain to negate the differentiated notions of the devotee, deity etc born out of the empirical existence. This being the truth, Bhakti becomes more plausible as a means of consolation to man who subjects to abundant sorrows due to the influence of the indispensable workings of body, senses and the mind. The stotra works of Sri Śankara succeeded in the metamorphosis of Bhakti in a different sense of a noble mental existence leading to the progress of man in his path towards liberation from the attitude of ignorant common man. Sri Śankara insisted that in spite of praying for material prosperity, the ultimate goal of Bhakti should be the intellectual elevation of man to the empire of true knowledge encompassed with the ecstasy of pure bliss. Keeping this scheme in mind, the Praise-poems written by Śankara remain in the zenith of greatness by involving the unique vision of Brahman which is attributeless, partless and aspectless supreme is the true principle behind every concept of God.

In this way, the Bhakti which implies the dignified status of human being in the material and spiritual realms of life is incorporated properly in the poem 'Krishnāṣṭakam' by Ācārya Śankara. It is already famous in the world that Bhakti when harmonized to the true knowledge is of great value and rewarding. All the details and essential descriptions of Sri Krishna elucidated in the Purāṇas are set forth by Sri Śankara in this poem without losing their inner fragrance. Along with this, he installs Lord Krishna to the zenith of philosophy by conceiving him as the Brahman, the principle of supreme bliss. In this way, the true form of Lord Krishna is put before the world by Sri Śankara without affecting the philosophical beauty and at the same time favourable to the minds of common man also.

## Bhakti - and its Major variants

Bhakti is of 4 types:

Sakhyabhāva - Arjuna's Devotional attachment

Dāsyabhāva - (Prahlāda) The Vaiṣṇavaite Saints of modern era

Premabhāva -The Gopis of Vrindāvan

And Dhyānabhāva - Pure Contemplative -The Upaniṣadic.

The scheme of bhakti is based on the Ṛgvedic hymn 'Viṣṇoh karmāṇi paśyata yato vratāni paścase Indrasya yujya sa vā'[3] This mantra was made the foundation for dharma in later periods and with reference to Viṣṇu the the bhakti turned into Vaiṣṇavabhakti. The Bhakti Yoga is also a special kind of Bhakti elaborated in Bhagavadgītā. In yoga- bhakti the yogin meditates in order to find release into a meditative absorption with the deity.

There are different bhāvas of bhakti: śānta, placid love for God; dāsya, the attitude of a servant; sakhya, the attitude of a friend; vātsalya, the attitude of a mother towards her child; and madhura, the attitude of a woman towards her lover. Several saints are known to have practiced these bhāvas as vātsalya.

The Vedic teachers promulgated an upward course of religion thoroughly introspective and meditative which is called 'upāsana' by which the mind becomes sufficiently purified and concentrated upon the conception of Paramātman or God in His super-sensuous glory. The mind at this stage cannot think of anything mundane. The individual soul then may be regarded as in the same element with the Divine Soul and in direct contact and communion with Him. This is 'upāsana' or 'close contact' and is recommended for mokṣa. Upāsana, at its higher course leads to pure knowledge or Soul-comprehension- vidyā or jñāna- and become identified with It.

Bhaktiyoga in the form of true upāsana aims at the life's self-realization or self-comprehension. Life here draws to life and grasps it in its own referral element. That is the Soul of upāsana proper better known as Dhyānayoga.

## Bhāvanābhakti

This is the second phase of the cult of devotion. Upāsana carries a new import in the Smārta systems and the Vedānta cult. The Āpastambagṛhyasūtra inculcates the duty of spiritual culture- 'Ādhyātmikān yogān anutiṣthet dhyānasahitān' (Practice the duties of Soul-contemplation and follow the rules for such). 'Ātman paśyan na muhyet cintayan kavih'- The thoughtful wise man should contemplate the Soul in all beings and he would not then be confounded. Similarly, says Manu- 'He who directs all his sacrificial devotion towards the

Soul and contemplates the Soul in all beings and all beings in the Soul ascends to the immortal kingdom of eternal unmixed joy'. This implies that jñāna and karma are necessary for liberation. Against this, which is considered as materialistic (kāmya and pravṛtti) there was non-materialistic path leading to liberation-

'Pravṛttam karma samsevyam devānāmeti sāmyatām
Nivṛttam sevamānastu bhūtānyatyeti pañca vai'[4]

It can be found that against the above theoretical presentations, there arose a view that was in opposition with Vedic sacrifices- to whom are oblations offered? To Gods? From whom are they? The supreme God, the Soul of souls. In reality, it is our own true soul, devote your thoughts to this soul within while doing your duties without. Know that for Him, for this Soul, is all the karma. If conviction goes deep into your heart, there can be no question of material hankerings. Salvation is then within your grasp. The essence of this above-mentioned thought is that all duties are to be discharged regardless of rewards and in a spirit of exclusive devotion to the soul. This simultaneous course of training in duties and devotion qualifies a man for ultimate absolute concentration upon the Supreme Soul which leads directly to eternal self-realization or liberation. Devotion to unselfish universal duties purifies the heart and the pure heart's devotion to Him strikes the root of material and mortal conditions (Tapasā kalmaṣam hanti vidyayāऽmṛtamaśnute- Manusmṛti). It is not disputed that a pure course of Dhyānayoga is imaginable as leading directly to self-knowledge and salvation. It is highly necessary that a code of religion should regulate the activities in all its phases and stages. The Śrutis and Śmṛtis provide the proper light to this. It is always to act in the highest self-interest or the interest of real Self. Such a practice finally leads to the wholesale concentration on the 'Self'.

It can be said that Iśvara as the presiding spirit of Māyā is the connecting link between gross creation and the principle that stands above it. He is the principle that bridges the gulf separating the two- Māyā and Māyātīta or the Transcendent. He receives the creative impulse and the creative idea and gives in concrete expression. He expresses things essentially inexpressible, He is thus

then Nārāyaṇa or the great water-dweller- also Brahma or the amplifier- the first definite embodiment of the great Soul, Brahman's will-to-be. He has the whole universe with its jīvas and ajīvas entirely at His command because in Him everything lives and moves (Āpo nara iti prokta āpo vai narasūnavah Ta etasyāyanam pūrvam tena Nārāyaṇah smṛtah-Manusmṛti.). Sadvisṛṣṭah satpuruṣo loke Brahmeti kīrtyate (Manusmṛti). Thus the mutual dependence of the three- Iśvara, Māyā and Jīva is established. The outcome of this idea is that 'devotion to the One was henceforward to be regarded as devotion to all, for, the One must be contemplated in all. It was all-comprehensive rational devotion- bhāvanabhakti .'

The method of jñānayoga and dhyānayoga produced an exclusive doctrine of abstract devotion and salvation in self-contained and self-contented consciousness. It says that whomsoever we may worship, for whatever purpose, we really render our homage to the One Supreme Being. Our services are always for Him. An impersonal God can never invoke such sentiments. At the bottom of this is the great feeling of oneness or solidarity with Him. This is bhakti in its truest sense. (Note: Bhakti comes from the root 'bhaj', to share, to divide). The concept of a supreme personal God was revived which represented the true Vedic religion:

'Akāmassarvakāmo vā mokṣakāma udaradhīh
Tīvreṇa bhaktiyogena yajet puruṣah param'[5]

'Whether one desires everything or nothing, or whether he desires to merge into the existence of the Lord, he is intelligent only if he worships Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by rendering transcendental loving service.'

In order to find out the attributes that constitute the very essence of the highest Principle through devotional exercise we must first of all look within and explore our inner consciousness. By that we can find three different functions there. The Soul works- to know, work- to feel the pleasures of life, works- to express itself in actions of life. These are not independent. 'To know is to exist and to feel happy' and 'to exist is to know and be happy' and 'to be happy is to possess knowledge and feel existence'.[6] In its pursuit of knowledge, this seeks to

grasp Infinite Reason. In its emotional activity, it strives to realize the Fullest Joy. In its will-to-be its aspiration is to participate in the whole course of universal existence and then to secure fullness of existence. Since it carries the essence of the unbound it allows itself to be drawn towards the unbound. The essence of the Highest Soul or Puruṣottama is found in the three attributes internally indicated in man. He must be regarded as All-Knowledge, All-Joy and All-Existence. He knows Himself and the universe and has implanted the principle of knowledge in man that He also may know as He lives. He is in the fullest enjoyment of eternal ecstasy through and above this creation and it is open to man, for, he has His gift in Him to participate there in full life's joy. He acts for Himself and all that is His and man has been given by Him the secrets of life whereby to act for Himself and all that is His. In Upaniṣadic terms the absolute is Saccidānanda Puruṣa and man can realize Him because He is also Saccidānanda himself. The existence that is in Him is not abstract existence but expresses itself all-round. His consciousness or reason is not a mere ideal but stands for a knowledge of realities. The joy in Him is not self-contained contentment where there is nothing to contribute to joy but joy is positively joyous condition of life.

How, then can one fully comprehend the glories of the Lord, Krishna as involved in His eternal attributes? The nature of the attribute makes it realize to the fullest extent only by the combined functional activities of the human soul. To know Him, we must approach Him through that principle of pure knowledge which lies within us pre-eminently fitted for this use. Our samvit will take us through the manifestations of His samvit. Similarly, the principle of joy in us will disclose the contents of His pure joy. The way by which alone we can fully realize our own existence in relation to the whole universe a mode of life devoted to the service of all life- will reveal the mysteries of His realized existence in its universal and transcendental harmony. His sincerest loyalty and whole-souled devotion will be rewarded with the fullest realization of Himself in the company of Lord as a partner of His highest life as experienced by the Gopikas of Vrindāvan.

Bhaktiyogena manasi samyakpraṇihite∫male
Apaśyat puruṣam pūrṇam māyāñca tadupāśrayām [7]

Such a path is known as bhakti. It is bhakti that literally stands for devotional service to Him and for glorious association as a partner with His Life of infinite greatness. It leads the whole souls to Him for complete realization through Him. It makes the soul feel the Highest Soul, the Life of lives within (Para vai Brahmaṇi bhāvitātma, bhaktih Pareśānubhavah.[8] It is the whole doctrine of the Soul. In his pursuit of religious knowledge- jñānayoga- the bhakta devotes his thoughts exclusively towards Him and hopes then, through His grace to unravel the secrets of all that He thinks of eternally Himself and what is His, inside and outside. In His religious emotion- rāgamārga- he seeks His love and comradeship and secures through Him his due share in the eternal pleasures of Life of infinite Love and Joy, Rasa which constitutes the very essence of all that He stands for emotionally.[9] In His religious activities there is vidhimārga he will act for Him, live for Him and Him alone, the Embodiment of Eternal Life, and his life activities will be directed towards the well-being of all that comes from Him- the whole sphere of created life. Such a course of life will reveal at once fully to Him His infinite goodness, kindness and love throughout all His dealings with everything that lives, for, it is His spirit that moves Him benevolently.

The ultimate aim of life of a bhakta is different from that of a jñānin or karmin who aims for videhamukti. But for a bhakta, aims at life in a glorious way in his Divine Knowledge to share with God the joys of a full life in eternal and devoted service to Him. The real happiness of a bhakta enjoys in his emancipation is not at all tainted with worldliness, for, he has then shred off his material nature which is never to return to him in difference to karmic law. Mukti in the sense of absolute eternal relief from cosmic troubles has come to him spontaneously. This sole concern is unfettered devotion to Him.

**Bhakti and Pure Abstract Self-Knowledge**

In Bhakti, there lies a clear consciousness of release from bondage to the world forces. But this does not mean that bhakti is in identity with pure abstract self-knowledge. Negative freedom is not complete freedom and a mere sense of release is nothing but negative freedom. True freedom of life

is never fully expressed in the passive state of quiet life. A free life ever seeks to be full in its freedom. Free life and full life are interchangeable and a life of bhakti stands as much for the one as for the other. The important thing is that a bhakta in his pursuit of self-freedom will unfailingly seek the spiritual liberation of his fellow-beings according to Bhagavata- 'Naitān vihāya kṛpaṇān visusṛkṣa ekah'.[10]

The soul or true life has three fundamental phases- sat or sandhinī, the phase of life or existence; cit or samvit, the phase of knowledge; and hlādini or ānanda, the phase of joy. A free life implies unrestricted activities of one and all of these principles- 'yathā asti bhāvayati ca, yathā vetti vedayasi ca, yathā nandati nandayati ca' . The principle of sat or sandhinī requires the bhakta to live and make others live without illegitimate restrictions. The principle of cit or samvit, prompts him to know absolutely the fundamental laws and existence and make others know them. The principle of ānanda leads him ever to feel unhampered the joys of good life and help others to do the same. Life expressed in these three aspects obviously covers the entire course of free life.

So far, the world is concerned, to live for life and to help every unit of life to live for all-life are of course, to always so act that the needs of life are satisfied all-round. To work for human life is to work for the whole world of life. This is because, everywhere, in every centre of life, there is nothing but man; where there is a being apparently other than man, there also is correctly the soul or life of a man confined in that state for the realization of his impulses acquired as a man. To work for life at once implies that the worker must avoid everything that will kill life. So preservation of life stands as the main concern for the bhakti cult (Karmaṇā manasā vāca sarvabhūteṣu sauhṛdam.[11] To feel for the whole world as a phase of our own life is the first article of faith in the doctrine of bhakti. This conjures with the Vedic phrase- 'Thou shalt not kill any life'.

Finally, a bhakta is one who in terms of Vedic and Purana terminology,

- does not hate any living being
- cultivate friendship and compassion

- give up the feeling of "I and Mine"
- be unmoved by happiness or misery
- be forgiving
- strive for self-control and strong determination
- always be content with what he/she has and desire nothing
- surrender his/her mind and intellect to God.
- not be afraid of anyone; and none in the world should fear him/her
- be pure and efficient
- be free from elation, anger, fear and turbulence of mind
- be indifferent to what befalls him/her
- be free from weakness of mind
- free from the feeling that he/she is an independent agent
- have no feeling of elation and enmity or desire
- develop an attitude of mind which rejects good as well as bad things
- have no attachments and should accept pain and pleasure, honor and disgrace, heat and cold equally as his/her portion
- look upon friends and foes alike
- not indulge in idle talk
- not attached to any fixed abode
- be steadfast in mind.

It is such a 'Bhakta' that is dear to Sri Krishna. And most important of all, those Bhaktas are most dear to God who love him with full faith in Him.

**The First Verse.....**

Śriyāśliṣto Viṣṇuh sthiracaragururvedaviṣayo
Dhiyām sākṣi śuddho Harirasurahantābjanayanah
Gadī Śankhī Cakrī Vimalavanamālī Sthiraruchih
Śaraṇyo Lokeśo mama bhavatu Krṣṇo'kṣhiviṣayah.

Here the devotional exegetics comes in the form of the deliberation that 'Let Krishna be my object of visualizationv. It means let the Lord, Krishna be the object for my eyes. Let me visualize the beautiful form of the Lord. The

different words in the verse describe the beauty of the Lord. He is endowed fully with Sat characters. ' Śriyā āśliṣtah Viṣṇuh' Viṣṇu embraced byLakṣmī. Śankara here considers Krishna as Viṣṇu himself who is the Supreme Being. The same is implied in Viṣṇupurāṇa:

Yasmādviśvamidam sarvam tasya śaktyā mahātmanah
Tasmādevocyate Viṣṇuh 'viś'dhātoh praveśanāt'.

The omnipresence of the Lord is also disclosed in the Bhagavadgītā: 'Viṣtabhyāhamidam kṛtṣnamekāmśena sthito jagat'. The Lord is embraced by Lakṣmi, his consort or the Māyā. The Lord associates with the Māyā as an adjunct and reflectively becomes Iśvara. This is certainly the Advaitic notion of Iśvara in its fullest extent. It is further elaborated in the Śvetāśvataropaniṣad: 'Yo Brahmāṇam Vidadhāti pūrvam Yo Vai Vedāmśca prahiṇoti tasmai
Tam ha devamātmabuddhiprakāśam Mumukṣurvai śaraṇamaham prapadye.'[12]

The word 'Sthiracaraguru' denotes the three aspects of of Viṣṇu that are implicit in Him since He associates with the Māyā these three aspects exist in Him as Desire, Activity and Knowledge as the three different Powers. By Sthira it is implied that the Lord is omnipresent endowed with the power of Desire and stays unmoving. By 'Carah' it means that the lord is endowed with the Consciousness or Cit and denotes the power of Activity Whereas by Guru it is implied that the Lord is the remover of darkness through the power of Knowledge. This represents His Jñāna Śakti. In this way the Lord described as the omnipresent unitary Consciousness having Knowledge aspect and being the Controller of the Universe is none other than Krishna. Such a description of the Lord helps one to bring Him, who is the inner being of all manifest beings in the world and is the Consciousness element into one's own deeper realm of the mind and thereby realize Him.

Krishna is pointed out as the 'Vedaviṣayah'. In commonsense usage of the term it can be said that he is the object of elaboration of the four Vedas. But in a deeper perspective Veda means knowledge and so the lord is stated as All-knower. He is existent in all kinds of knowledge and so, philosophically speaking, is

the knower, knowledge and the known. If it is looked from a broader sense He can be said as the Witness Consciousness that is always awake and that cannot be known through any other semblances. Therefore, this inner Consciousness which is non-different from the Brahma Caitanya is the real form of Krishna, according to Śankara.

This verse explains the non-difference between Atman and Brahman. Krishna as the Ātman in cognizable form and the beyond cognitive one is the Mūlatattva- Viṣṇuh. The principle elucidated here is-'Ātma ca Brahma'(Brahmasūtrabhāṣya of Śankara. Introduction). Through the objective mode one has to experience the Reality, i.e. manifested and through that he has to understand the non-difference of the cognized one and the eternal one. Through this, the individual soul experiencing the Lord passes on through the experience of the non-duality of the individual soul with the Absolute. Such a non-dual experience is difficult to perceive or experience. Because of this difficulty, the Lord himself appeared in a communicable form with attributes of 'Puruṣa'. Such a Lord is appealed to be the object of cognition for the eyes. When one fully experiences the beauty of the Lord, he will become deeply concentrated in Him and this is the stage of 'nididhyāsana' which is the culmination of meditation wherein one can experience the Divine Being. Śankara elaborates the attributed manifest Lord giving certain appendages. The term 'Krishna' itself indicates grandeur.

The Lord is supposed to be engrossed by Lakṣmī. Here Lakṣmī represents the Māyā aspect of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is associated with or is non-differenced from the Māyā. The Lord has some relational association (upādhi). So wherever the form of the Lord becomes apparent, it implies the influence of upādhi and the Māyā also becomes apparent and shows its effects in the form of the creative episode. The term 'Māyā' has the concealing tendency and it makes the Reality hidden within it or in other words, it makes difficult to perceive the Lord. But it is interestingly told that when this Māyā can be overcome through deep meditation wherein the Reality becomes self-revealed. Hence, no doubt, Śankara here does not leave the non-dualistic presentation of the Reality.

Brahman is the foundational consciousness and is the essence of everything. Such an unconditioned existence is the Upaniṣadic teaching and Śankara justifies this. The unconditioned becomes conditioned through Māyā. The Māyā is indefinable and hence the manifestation into the conditioned is described as 'however'. The knowledge of the existence such unknowable Brahman is made possible through the scriptures only. Śankara calls for realizing that Brahman which is disclosed in the Upaniṣads, for, there is no other evidence possible in the case of the non-dual Brahman. What Śankara advocates here is about a principle of abstraction that is becoming the essential content of each individual but is hidden within due to Māyā. what he means is that this Māyā creates further illusion and deception causing the awareness of Reality to be delusive and to the utmost extent considering it as a fantasy of the falsest creating an extraneous society. Śankara here calls for the Lord to give everyone the 'eyes' through which he can visualize the fully attributed form of Krishna to come out of the fetishes of the effects of Māyā. Through these eyes one can bring in an adequate conception of the excellences of the Lord and generate in him the spirit of devotion to the Lord. He can communicate with the Lord in its widest sense and thereby realize the illusoriness of one's existence in the midst of other objects and also the illusoriness of all the 'other' including the world itself. The visualization of the attributed Lord, Krishna can magically transform and metamorphose oneself leading to the realization of the Absolute which is nothing but mokṣa or liberation. In its true sense, it implies that one has to turn his mind from the external orientation to the inner divinity first through objective concentration and then gradually relieving the object-centred approach to a subject-centred one.

The word 'dhiyām sākṣi' reveals the witness- consciousness. Witness always relates directly to the concerned things. Hence the consciousness implied here is that which is connected directly to the intellect of beings. Witness consciousness makes the passive intellect conscious. Even in the process of worship, the direct communication with God can be had for the devotee only because of

the increase in Sattvaguṇa. In this way, the consciousness reflected in all beings in the form of sattvaguṇa is perceived by Śankara as Lord Krishna.

The term viśuddhah' denotes the principle devoid of all kind of impurities and afflictions and so also beyond the empirical world. In this universe, constituted of five elements, all bear impurity except the fire. But due to the reasonable argument that the universe as a whole is to be considered as impure as it is (the effect) originated from Māyā, the whole universe is to be considered as impure through the touch of ignorance. This impurity in the universe cannot be even doubted of the Lord because He is the controller of this universe. This is the idea intended by Sri Śankara.

The name 'Hari' is meaningful for the Lord in many ways. He who dissolves the whole universe along with its cause, the nescience, into Him through remembering Himself who can eliminate the sins of beings, he who has the lustre of green colour- in these senses the word 'Hari' is appropriate for the Lord. Krishna comes in the minds of devotees with the beautiful form of wearing ornaments of Gada, Conch, Sudarśana, and Vanamāla. But all these ornaments carry symbolic implications. This fact is revealed in Purāṇas-

Krishna's form is the essence of Sat, Cit and Ānanda. It is the support of the spheres of the universe whose parts constitute as it were the limbs of His being. These limbs symbolize one special character. The Kaustubha on the neck is the jīva consciousness depending upon its existence. The mark Śrīvatsa on his chest is the spreading brilliance of the same. The floral wreath (vanamāla) on his neck is his own Māyāśakti having the three guṇas and their evolutes as its flowers. The brilliant yellow garments he bears Chandas and the thread across his chest is the sacred Aum with its three syllables. His earrings are the Jñānayoga and Aṣṭāngayoga, the spiritual disciplines leading to him. The diadem he bears is the Brahmaloka, the highest sphere attainable by spiritual striving. The serpent of infinitude called Ādiśesa on whom he rests is prakṛti (matter- objectivity) in its unformed condition. The sattvaguṇa which stands for morality, knowledge, duty etc is the lotus on which he is seated. The mace (gada), kaumodaki in his

hand, is the prāna, the cosmic energy which is the sense of the source of all strength, stamina and impressiveness. His sword, Nandaka is the bluish element in the sky. His shield is the category of Tamas (darkness or inertia), his bow, Śārañga is the category of time, is quiver of arrows is the potential karmas. This discuss , Sudarśana, is the element of fire. The pāñcajanya conch is the element of water. The lotus he playfully holds in hand is six fold bhaga. Aiśwarya etc. the two chāmaras held on his sides are righteousness and glory. His vehicle, Garuda, is the three Vedas. His abode is Vaikuṇṭa, the state of bliss and freedom from fear. In this mode, he has to be worshipped or contemplated. He manifests himself as the Lord in such a person.

The word 'Sthirarucih' declares the form of the Lord with the lustre and beauty of light. Philosophically speaking, the sense of the Lord in the form of effulgence which is self-incarnated before the ignorant people as the supreme principle is appropriate here. The self-effulgent Brahman being realized through experience alone, the direct visual experience of the Lord paves the way for realizing the true principle by discriminating the fallacy of the universe around them for the ignorant people. The reference to Lord in Nārāyaṇiya- 'Tvayyuccairāramanti pratipadamadhure cetanāh sphītabhāgyāh' occupies relevance here. So also Nārāyaṇa Bhattatiri recalls: 'Sukṛtijanadṛśam pūrṇapuṇyāvatāram' . In this way, the Lord with the most sweet, beautiful and the incarnate of the perfect merit is harmonized with the philosophical sense of the Supreme Brahman who is the controller of all variants of radiance available in the universe by Ācārya Śankara.

The word 'Śaraṇyah' with the meaning of one, who can be received as the reliable refuge, reveals the sense of the final refuge of all individual souls in the opinion of Sri Śankara. In the world, it can be seen that adults give refuge to children and scholars provide refuge to ignorant people. At the same time, all people beyond the differences of caste, colour, creed, age etc take refuge in God Himself. This sustainer of all is considered with the form of Krishna by Sri Śankara.

Through the word 'Lokeśah' , Śankara recalls Krishna as the protector of all worlds as well as all people. The word 'lokah' implies the universe in the sense that that which is visible. Lord Krishna who is the protector of the whole universe may subject to the visual knowledge of us, let us see Him.

**Second Verse .....**

'Yatassarvam jātam viyadanilamukhyam jagadidam
Sthitau nihśeṣam yo'vāti nijasukhāmśena madhuhā
Laye sarvam svasmin harati kalayā yastu sa vibhuh
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayahv

May that Krishna who is the source of origin of the whole universe formed with the five elements of earth etc, who protects the whole world in its state of existence with the minute part of His nature of bliss, who withdraws the whole visible universe into Himself during dissolution, be visible to our eyes. Sri Śankara describes the form of Lord Krishna non-different from the Viṣṇu described in the Ṛgveda and Bhagavadgīta. The origin, sustenance and dissolution of the whole universe is under the control of the Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore it is said in Viṣṇusahasranāma- 'Jagadvāśe vartatedam Krishnasya sacarācaram' . Sri Śankara asks the Lord to be the object of vision who is nothing other than Ānanda. This ānanda is of one form and there is no distinction of any sort. There is a clear indication of the Advaita principle. It is the true endorsement of the Upaniṣad: 'ānandam Brahmeti vyajānāt'.[13] The whole world is born from ānanda, sustained by ānanda and dissolves in ānanda. The Lord requires only a part of His ānanda to sustain the world. Though it is the Lord Krishna addressed here the true intention of Śankara is to disclose the fact that Krishna is the manifest being of Brahman. This also implies that there is no difference between the Supreme and the manifest. So also there is no distinction between the jīva and Brahman for jīva is also manifest form of Brahman but with different limiting adjuncts (upādhis). Krishna is untouched by Māyā but the jīva is concealed by Māyā making the lord difficult to be perceived. Śankara holds that this cover of Māyā can be disposed off when the devotee is firmly attached to the Lord and dedicates every action to Him.

The word "Madhuhā' requires some elaboration. Herein we can notice the kind of bhakti called Vidveṣa bhakti – bhakti through confrontation. Goddess Māyā is generally conceived as the famous killer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha as disclosed in the Purāṇas. Madhu and Kaiṭabha who are born from the malice produced in the ears of Viṣṇu. Madhu and Kaiṭabha were the door keepers of Viṣṇu. They were cursed by the seers because of their haughtiness and lost their heavenly status. These were to be reinstated after 3 successive lives of hatred. These have to end their life in each birth due to killing by the Lord only. As such these servants of the lord entered the life cycles and were in full confrontation with the Lord even denying his existence. In their first life, when they attempted to kill Brahma, the Prajāpati, Brahma was unable to kill them and he requested Viṣṇu to help him. Accordingly, Lord Viṣṇu called his concert Yogamāyā in the form of Nidrā situated in the eyes of Viṣṇu with the concentrated mind taking seat at the navel of Viṣṇu. The Goddess pleased by the praise from Brahma appeared before him. At this time, Mahāviṣṇu woke up from his Yogic sleep and fighted with Madhu and Kaiṭabha for nearly five thousand years. But they were not conquerable by him. They even ordered Vishnu to ask for any boon. Sensing this occasion, the Lord asked the boon: 'you two should be killed by me'. Accepting defeat, Madhu and Kaiṭabha requested Viṣṇu to leave them at a place where there is no land surrounded by water. Agreeing to this request, Viṣṇu cut the heads of them with his divine wheel of Sudarśana. Though the name 'Madhuhā' is applicable to Viṣṇu, Krishna is here identified with the Viṣṇu and is referred to in this way.

Here the question is: how do Madhu and Kaiṭabha can give a boon to the Lord? In the system of Bhakti, as referred to by Krishna, a genuine devotee is equal to the Lord Himself. Though this was the case incited by the instinctive antagonism to the Lord they were always in fear of Him and intensely thought of him in the mind. Due to this thought they attained the feet of the Lord. It can be said here that Vidveṣa bhakti can develop and transform the state of mind. It is that fear of God that made them think constantly on the Lord and they

became washed off all their sins and got liberated.[14] Further killing at the hands of the Lord made them purified. It can be pointed out that antagonism to God can produce the absorption of the mind in which it is concentrated. Actually what is intended ere is the killing of the impure mind and then concentrating it on the object of devotion? That is the implication of 'Madhuhā'

In order to maintain the whole universe, a minute part of bliss of the Lord is enough. There lies a significant philosophical grandeur. Here, in Śankara's terms, there is a harmonization of the form of the Lord with Ātman. A part is non-different from the whole. As such, jīva, a part of bliss is non-different from the supreme Brahman and therefore it is truly Advaita. In this way, Lord Krishna is picturesquely described as the causal principle of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe as disclosed in this verse.

The Chāndogya passage 'Let a man meditate on the mind as Brahman'.[15] holds that one has to discard the outwardly directed associations completely of the mind and concentrate the mind on the Lord to know Him. Firstly, Śankara here suggests one to fully concentrate the mind on Brahman that is attributed and then through continuous and unwavering devotion pass on to the state of Brahman. Further one can notice that he uses the Upaniṣads for validating his statements. This is to confirm the fact that the Upaniṣads are the highest and only authority on the Absolute.

**Third Verse.....**

'Asūnāyamyādau yamaniyamamukhyaih sukaraṇaih
Niruddhyedam cittam hṛdi vilayamānīya sakalam
Yāmīdyām paśyanti pravaramatayo māyināmasau
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'

Lord Krishna is revealed as the subtlest principle experienced by the great seers. These great seers, in the opinion of Sri Sankara, are those who had discarded the contact with external world through the purity of senses and the mind attained by the practice of the eightfold Yoga and who had dissolved the whole objective world in the mind through the tranquillity attained by Prāṇāyāma. The

nature of jñānin is explained in the Muṇḍakopaniṣad:

Bhidyate hṛdayagranthih chidyante sarvasamśayāh

Kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi tasmin dṛṣte parāvare[16]

For one who realizes the supreme principle, all the bondages in the minds, doubts, actions etc disappear. Those seers visualize the Lord as the controller of Maya and so also as worshippable. That protector of the universe, the final refuge of all, let he be the object of vision in me. Here Śankara harmonizes the idea of Śvetāśvataropaniṣad:'Māyāntu prakṛtim vidyāt māyinam tu Maheśvaram'.[17]

Śankara prescribes Aṣṭāngayoga for restraining the natural fluctuations of the mind as a basic necessity for even developing a sense of devotion in beings. Through this, the attributeless principle of Krishna is taken as the object of concentration of the mind and experience of the joy. The meaning and aim of human birth are synthesized by Srì Śankara. Along with this, the possibility of philosophical enlightenment in the devotee is also presented here. This is especially prescribed for common man.

This verse points towards the Jñānabhakti. In this type of Bhakti a jijñāsu or enquirer after truth is also a devotee. Here the inquiry turns inwards or to the 'I sense' and its source. The eagerness to know the Reality is as much an urge of the soul as passion for the lord. This inquiry ends in Sat-Cit-Ānanda or the Supreme Being. The unwavering contemplation on the formless Being leads to total capitulation and absorption in Him. It can be called an intellectual love ending with oneness with the Divine. However it can be said that in pure jñāna, one is completely absorbed in Brahman-the 'I' whereas in Jñānabhakti one is absorbed in the 'He'. This bhakti is also called Śāntabhakti for devotion of the serene mood. Such are the jñāna bhaktas like Rishabhadeva, Muchukunda, Nārada, and Śuka. A complete self-surrender to the Lord is the crux of this type of bhakti leading to tattvajñāna elevating oneself to the level of universal love. Such a devotee sees the lord reflected in all beings, perceives all beings in the Lord.

Śankara refers in the Gītābhāṣya[18] to the mode of devotion to be followed as prescribed by the Lord. Krishna says: 'fix your mind on Me alone; Let your

understanding be absorbed in Me; Henceforth, doubtless, in Me alone will you dwell'. Surely you will dwell as one with the Lord.

Śankara in the 3rd śloka picturesquely describes Krishna as the great principle who is visualized by the Jñānabhaktas. The jñānamārga consists of right practice of the aṣṭānga yoga by which one discards all the sensual feelings and develops complete calmness in the mind even abandoning contact with the external world and regulation of airs within gets absorbed in the divine. Thereby one can visualize Krishna in the non-objective principle. This is referred as the great bhakti by Śankara and such persons are called as highest jñānis.

The most important thing here is the disclosure of the omnipresence of Lord as both the individual soul and its identity with the Supreme Being- the 'Jīvātmaikattva.'. It is also said that the bhakti can generate the sense of universality in the bhakta and characteristically he becomes passionate towards all. He sees the lord in all beings and all beings in the lord. This is the paramārthasatya.

**Fourth Verse.....**

Pṛthivyām tiṣthan yo yamayati mahīm veda na dharā
Yamityādau vedo vadati jagatāmīśamamalam
Niyantāram dhyeyam munisuranṛṇām mokṣadamasau
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'

The verse reveals the form of the supreme Inner Controller (antaryāmi) of the whole universe as explained in the AntaryāmiBrahmana of the third Chapter of Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad. Such a form is attributed to Krishna with a grand outlook by Sri Śankara. It is said: 'Ya imam ca lokam param ca lokam sarvāṇi ca bhutāni yo'ntaro yamayati' who is the inner controller of all beings in this world and the worlds thereoff. Following this, it is said: 'Yah prthivyām tiṣthan prthivyā antaro yam prthivī na veda yasya pṛthivī śarīram yah pṛthivīmantaro yamayati eṣa te Ātmā antaryāmyamṛtah'.[19] Here, Śankara clearly depicts the Ātmatattva. That which is hidden inside every being and controls everything is the lord in the form of Krishna. This scriptural text holds that that which stays in the Earth and being deep within even the Earth Itself but which does not know

that principle and again who has made the Earth His body and staying within controlling it is the inner principle or the Ātman. The term Pṛthivī here when taken in the Universal context applies to the manifest Universe and Krishna is then the Principle called the Ātman, the Universal Soul. Here also the underlying implication of the verse is to disclose the oneness of the individual soul with the Universal Soul. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad holds that 'Dost thou know the internal Ruler?[20] and "He who inhabits the Earth, but is within it, whom the earth does not know, whose body is the earth, who internally controls the earth is the eternal internal Ruler of thou". It is the Supreme Lord. He is all-pervading. According to Śankara, if one who can know his inner being he knows everything. That is the Being called Nārāyaṇa which is another name for Krishna before incarnation. If one understands this truth one is relieved of all the bonds of the samsāra at once and such a person is the real Brāhmaṇa or Jñāni. Though Śankara here refers to the Cosmic form, what he implies is that the cosmic form is an indicatory mark of the Absolute and through knowing the cosmic form one can understand the Absolute immortal Being.

Śankara commenting on AntaryāmiBrāhmaṇa says: 'God with the name of Nārāyaṇa controls Goddess Earth by seating within it, with the presence of God in the form of Witness Itself. There occurs pravṛtti (activities) and nivṛtti (renunciation) in Beings'. Everything in the universe including water, air, fire, atmosphere, heaven, sun, directions, moon, stars, sky, darkness, lustre, vital airs, words, eyes, ears, the mind, skin, knowledge etc are controlled by the inner conscious principle Nārāyaṇa Himself. This principle is described by Śankara as shining in the form of the Pratyagātman who is devoid of al empirical attributes. This inner controller is called 'akṣara'- 'Etasya vā akṣarasya praśāsane Gārgi Sūryācandramasau vidhṛtau tiṣthatah'.[21] In the scriptures themselves, it is revealed that the knowledge of the Supreme principle Nārāyaṇa will result in liberation from the bonds of the world. One who knows this principle is rightly called Brāhmaṇa also.

**Fifth Verse.....**

Mahendrādirdevo jayati ditijānyasya balato
Na kasya svātantryam kvacidapi kṛtau yatkṛtimṛte
Balārātergarvam pariharati yo'sau vijayinah
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'

The greatness of the Lord Viṣṇu is elicited here. As the sustainer of the manifested world He is the mighty power. Lord Śiva and Brahma and Indra seeks the help of Viṣṇu to destroy the demonic forces. If and only if one is within the protective circle of Viṣṇu can he be able to experience freedom in engaging in his duties. This is portrayed in the Bhāgavata where Indra who because of his falling prey to ignorance gets enslaved to the Ego and forgets his duties and is cursed by the teachers. Indra, realizing his mistakes through Viśvarūpa who advices him to approach Lord Viṣṇu, requests for help from the Lord to overcome these. Krishna reveals that: Just as the flames of blazing fire burn up all the fuel, so devotion to Me destroys all sins. It is said 'those who are averse to the lord are overpowered by His Māyā and consequently they forget their own nature as spirit and think of themselves as bodies. Because of the body consciousness they see duality in the forces opposed to them and become subject to the fear of destruction. Therefore the lord advices man to serve Him with single hearted love and devotion' .[22] It can again be stated that the Māyā which conceals the truth from human understanding can be overcome only by the Lord and therefore what are called the destructive forces of the world certainly belongs to Māyā only. The purāṇas had referred these forces as demons. Therefore only the lord can destroy the destructive forces and turn the world process into right manner. In this comport whom else than Lord Krishna, the embodiment of sattvaguṇa one has to surrender and seek refuge in? Therefore, let me visualize this Krishna who is the only refuge of all and everything is the request of Śankara.

**Sixth Verse.....**

'Vinā yasya dhyānam vrajati paśutām sūkaramukhām
Vinā yasya jñānam janimrtibhayam yāti janatā

Vinā yasya smrtyā krmiśatajanim yāti sa vibhuh
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'

Here Śankara discloses the importance of Dhyāna. Dhyāna is the one-pointedness of mind in contemplation. One who has deepest concern towards Krishna can only meditate upon him. Here one has to concentrate on the Cit aspect or the Savajñānatmaka aspect making it as the object of dhyāna. Such persons can only realize the eternal Truth (Jñāna) and also thereby get liberation. The Vedānta unequivocally declares that for a martya, liberation can be had only through the path of Jñāna which is affirmed by the Śruti and this is the tenet of Advaita.

When a person ceases to be 'attached to 'gives up the sense objects, becomes non-attached to works- obligatory or contingent, desire prompted and forbidden he is said to be in Dhyāna. Since all desires are rooted in mental constructions these are to be discarded for getting concentrated in the one object the Lord. The lord says in Gīta: "With the inner sense tranquillized, fear is gone and he gets established in the chastity; then controlling the mind, thoughts anchored in Me the Yogin should sit intent in Me".[23] This kind of Bhakti is called Mūdhabhakti which is a result of mental absorption in Īśvara. This is bhakti without the aid of knowledge. In this category of Bhakti love depends on the idea that God is 'mine', 'I am His', He is mine, and I am He. One's devotion progresses towards these three forms in accordance with the respective stages of spiritual striving, 'I am His' represents Jñāna bhakti. In the case of 'He is mine'it is love as personal relationship. Here the object of meditation is not the attributeless Lord or even the attributed and formless but God with a divine form. It may also be an Incarnate form as it is more nearer to the person. There is identification of oneself with the Lord as the friend, master, father, mother, husband or lover. Krishna is said to be the most perfect incarnation and therefore Śankara asks for visualization of that Lord. The uniqueness of the life of Krishna depicts different types of divine love and His nearness to the devotees. The feeling that comes to the mind is in the form that He is their child, friend or lover. Here one

thing is more apparent that these devotees had the awareness of His divine incarnation. This is revealed in [24] where it is said that the Gopikas speak of Him as the witness of the innermost consciousness which is the essence in all beings. But this sense was overpowered by the nearness and frivolous relationship with the Lord. Here it is the 'mineness' that is stressed. The touch of Krishna purifies all souls transforms them all even the most sensually attached persons. The Bhāgavata describes such a bhakti in saying; 'They never learnt the Vedas, they never served any teacher, they practised no austerity but by association with Me attained to Me.'[25]

All the scriptures declare that for man liberation can be had only through Jñānaniṣthā. The Omniscient Lord has to be taken as the object of meditation which results in knowledge of the Supreme Being which leads to liberation. One who is involved in sensual experiences cannot know the eternal Truth. One who does not realize the truth will be born in the lower animals according to their sins. The example of pig given shows the impureness, ignorant nature and the associated characters that a man has to experience due to his sensual attachments in successive births. So it is said that only through praying to Krishna can one transgress into the Jñāna which is Brahman Itself. The Bhagavadgītā clearly discloses this:

"Mām ca yo'vyabhicāreṇa bhaktiyogena sevate
Sa guṇān samatītyaitān Brahmabhūyāya kalpate" [26]

**Seventh Verse.....**

'Narātaṅkottaṅkah śaraṇaśaraṇo bhrāntiharaṇo
Ghanaśyāmo vāmo vrajaśiśuvayasyo'rjunasakhah,
Svayambhūrbhūtānām janaka ucitācārasukhadah,
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'

A man who experiences sorrows and pains in life, according to Śankara is he who has neglected the devotion to the Lord and instead lives merely for satisfying physical and social values. The exalted duty of a person is to practise devotion to the Lord. All other duties are to be subservient to this. Gems,

Mantras, and medicines can be able to solve the problems of life to a certain extent only. These have varied effects on the life of people. But one who has purified his mind by Devotion to Krishna can come close to Him and communicate with Him which can remove all the sorrows of life at once. The same is highlighted in Gītā : 'Mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhakta sa me priyah'.[27] This will bring in freedom from worldly sorrows and he can be said to be liberated. In this manner Śankara holds that Krishnabhakti is the only boat that can help persons to cross the ocean of worldly sorrows and pains. This is what is implied in word 'Narātaṅkottaṅkah' in the verse.There is another verse in Bhāgavata where Krishna depicts the potency of pure devotion with no other aid.

Mayi bhaktirhi bhūtānamamrtattvāya kalpate.
Dishtyā yadāsīnmatsneho bhavatīnām madāpanah.

Loving devotion to Me enables all beings to attain to Immortality. It is therefore fortunate that you have that type of devotion leading to Me.[28] Being drawn towards the sensual fixations men have to depend on each other. This is no doubt experienced by all. The fact that one who has given refuge to the other cannot expect to have the continuance of it forever. The other persons who give refuge are subservient to their own personal indignations depending on the body and mental conditions. The mental and bodily conditions are subjected to change such refuge cannot be expected to last long. However there is one who can give refuge permanently despite ones status, his caste, creed or the like.That is Krishna the Supreme Being. So He is the sole refuge of all and hence is called 'Śaraṇaśaraṇah'.

Man hankering after the worldly pleasures and splendours which are the creations of Māyā do not care for the Lord and do not have any control over their mind. It has to be understood that the fluctuations within the mind that brings in object –object relations mostly result in ignorance rather than true knowledge. Such ignorance makes one feel the things that really are not there. Further the ignorance can also result in small concerns making much more contradictory and even confusing. Such are the mental afflictions. These are viewed as worldly matters and nobody is bothered about these or takes care of these.

Śankara calls for dissociating from all these sorts of ignorance. A true bhakta does not care for anything except serving the Lord. This is what is implied in the term 'Bhrāntiharaṇah' The Ācārya calls for depending on Him who is having the colour of dark clouds and is the beautiful to be adored in the heart and is fond of his devotees who have unswerving devotion to Him. Krishna had spent the childhood in Vrindāvan as the 'friend' of the Gopas and the 'lover' of the Gopikas. But He acts as the best teacher of Arjuna when the latter feels disgusted and turns away from fighting the war. Such a greatness of Krishna is disclosed in the verse by Śankara.

Śankara also calls Krishna as 'Svayambhū' implying His primal Being, the non-destructible one and the Absolute principle. He is not caused by anything other than Himself being beyond the 6 Bhāvavikāras – Creation, sustenance, increase (development), transformation of organs, gradual decay and destruction. Because the universe comes out of Him, He is called the creator of the Universe and the Cause of everything. Śankara here justifies the Taitiriyopaniṣad statement: 'Yato Vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante....'[29] Krishna is referred to as ' bhūtānam Janakah'. The word 'Ucitācārasukhada' refers to the destroyer of sorrows that are common to man. The common tendency of the people is to bring obstructions in the minds of those who are intelligent, active and have developed powerful attitude through mental restraints. Such characters were referred to as demoniac in ancient period. These demoniac characters were really the targets of destruction for the Lord. But those who have successfully overcome these tendencies were protected by Him.

It is characteristic of most of the human beings that those who have achieved intelligence, activity and power through their strenuous exercises, restraining the mind from sensual attachments and acting for the welfare of the world to be obstructed or harnessed in their advancement in life by those overpowered by egoistic tendencies . Neither do they get any due recognition or place in the social structure. These egoistic people use any means to contain the virtuous people even not permitting them to live peacefully in the society

itself. They do never hesitate even in killing the wise people. Such forces were referred to in ancient India as the demoniac forces. The characteristic feature of demons was to obstruct the sacrifices conducted by the sages aimed at the welfare of the world. The demons ever acted the impediments to the sustenance of the world. It was the Lord who came to the world as incarnation that destroyed these demoniac forces and established righteousness. Such a state-of- affairs can be witnessed in the present social structure also. Those who try to progress in knowledge will be obstructed or harassed in their duties. Those people who are the demons in present condition get due recognition and power. Such is the kind of ignorance and the world has been the victim of that. The fact that no society can survive wherein the wise-activities are overcome by the wickedness has to be understood. The causative factor behind all these is the 'Ego' and only when this ego is prevailed upon there will be righteousness in the world.

Śankara with the aim to transform the egoistic tendencies of these people suggests the path of deep- rooted devotion to the Lord who is none other than Krishna. This will take the person near to the Lord and he can communicate with the Lord. Through that all the egoistic tendencies will be dispensed off and the man can feel free of all sorrows and pains. This will lead to oneness with the Absolute ultimately and it is liberation. Therefore Śankara holds that one who is attached stoutly to Krishna will no doubt experience the due recognition and desired progress in life for he is looked after by the Lord Himself. He pleads the Lord to give such great and majestic vision of the Lord who ever bestows prosperity and well-wishes to the wise people. Truly He is the protector of the world, Īśvara.

**Eighth Verse.....**

Yadā dharmaglānirbhavati jagatām kṣobhakaraṇī
Tadā lokasvāmī prakatitavapuh setudhrdajah
Satām dhātā svaccho nigamagaṇagīto vrajapatih,
Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'

The verse reads: 'Whenever there is decline of righteousness and righteousness prevails affecting the prosperity and even existence of the world then the Lord will project Himself to restore the righteousness'.

For the right existence of the world, protection of righteousness is must. Righteousness promotes prosperity and makes way for emancipation of all beings. When there is decline of this righteousness or values the world will become immersed in the wickedness and ignorance and it moves towards complete destruction. In such a case when unrighteousness prevails, the Lord through Māyā projects Himself and accepting a suitable body in His attributed form destroys the wicked and restores righteousness. The Lord who is without birth and death, lifts the world from ignorance like lifting of the Govardhana mount through a finger tip. This indicates the Lords mighty power. It is also to be noted here that ignorance can be removed by the Lord only. The Muṇḍakopaniṣad statement: 'Tamevaikam jānathātmānamanyā vāco vimuncathāmrtasyaiṣa setuh'[30] is justified here. The adjective 'Satām dhātā' implies the concern in the Lord for the restoration of righteousness. The Lord incarnates in this world to care for wise people and see that dharma prevails. This will help the world to move in right direction. The Sattvaguṇa in Īśvara destroys all the illusoriness within the world. This illusoriness may result in even in dissolution of the world. In this context Śankara calls that Īśvara in the Krishna aspect as 'svacchah' or Pure Being devoid of any ignorance. This pure form of the Lord is described in Bhāgavata:
'Yasyāvayavasamsthānaih kalpito lokavistarah
Tadvai Bhagavato rūpam viśuddham sattvamūrjitam'.

The word 'nigamaganagatih' implies His majesty and prudence. Śankara here admits the truth that what the scriptures describe as 'Brahman' is none other than Krishna Himself. The Lord is also called 'Vrajapatih' for He is the Lord of the people, Gopālakas in Dwāraka. Therefore Śankara pleads for visualizing such a Krishna who protects the world by incarnating and restoring Dharma and protecting the wise. Let the pure Being, the majesty of the scriptures and the Lord of the Gopālakas bestow virtuousness on us and protect us destroying the

ignorance associated with our minds. Let us bow before Him with deep attachment forget everything else.

Mattah parataram nānyatkiñcid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idam protam sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva'[31]

"Sri Krishna said: O Arjuna, there is no truth superior to Me. This entire Universe, Every living being & everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread."

So, Let's surrender our ego in the Divine feet of Krishna & adore Him only so that He can give us a blissful life.

Lord Krishna says:

Ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi mayi samnyasya matparah
Ananyenaiva yogena mām dhyāyanta upāsate
Teṣāmaham samuddhartā mrtyusamsārasāgarāt
Bhavāmi na cirāt Pārtha Mayyāveśitacetasām[32]

O' Pārtha, those who surrender all works to Me making Me their Supreme Goal and worship Me, meditating on Me in a state of undivided union, who have set their thought in Me, I shall soon be the deliverer from the sea of empirical life leading to death.

Therefore, the final advice to all in this world is :

Sarvamātmani sampaśyet saccāsacca samāhitaḥ,
Sarvam hyātmani sampaśyan nādharma kurute manaḥ.

'That everyone concentrating his mind fully recognizes in the Self all things, both the real and the unreal, for he who recognizes the universe in the Self does not give his heart to unrighteousness.'[33]

Further,

Ātmaiva devatāssarvaḥ sarvamātmanyavasthitam,
Ātma hi janayatyevam karmayogam śarīriṇām.

Know that the self alone is the multitude of Gods, the Universe rests on the Self; for, the Self produces the connection of these embodied with actions.'[34]

**Śaraṇyo lokeśo mama bhavatu Kṛṣṇo'kṣiviṣayah'**

**Notes and References.**


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8. Ibid. XI.42
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