

RELEVANCE OF BHAKTI IN INDIAN CULTURE

Abstract

The importance of devotion is paramount in Indian culture. This tradition of devotion is present not only in India but also in Western countries. There is no part of the origin and development of life which has not emerged from motherly devotion. I believe that in Indian culture, devotion is the key to attaining the ultimate essence. The path of Bhakti is unique in Indian culture. The path of devotion is considered free from the weaknesses found in the path of knowledge and the path of action. Throwing light on the path of devotion, I want to say that devotion is the proper description and experience of the joy generated by love for God and the feeling of companionship. The culmination of religion is also reflected in devotion. This paper is an attempt to evaluate Bhakti in Indian context.

Keywords: Relevance, bhakti, Indian, culture, God, Devotion

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In Indian culture, the path of knowledge and the path of action have also been described as knowing the ultimate essence or god. But the path of knowledge and the path of action have their own weaknesses. It is very difficult for an ordinary person to follow the path of knowledge because in this the power of discrimination has to be awakened and the feeling of renunciation has to be strengthened. Similarly, the path of action is also not safe and secure. A common error in the path of Karma is that the common man is not ready to get entangled in the rituals, he thinks that adopting the rituals will not lead to intellectual and spiritual progress. Fixed method the realization of the laws will become its sole objective. ¹ We find the explanation of the word devotion and its characteristics in many of the scriptures.

The all-round development of devotion is visible to us only in the Bhagavad Geeta. Bhagavad Geeta preaches the path of profound knowledge for inquisitive people but for the common people, it propounds the easy path of devotion.

Shri Krishna, while preaching in Geeta, says that Jitendriya resourceful and devout man who attains knowledge and the knowledge attains by doing so, he immediately attains God and attains supreme peace without any delay.²

Shri Krishna says again. –

I am equal to all beings,

But those who worship me with devotion are in me and I am in them.³

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥ 3

I am equally widespread among all the beings, neither is anyone unpleasant nor dear to me, but the devotees who worship me with love are in me and I am also directly visible in them. The word Bhakti has been formed by adding a tin suffix to the Sanskrit word bhaj sevayam – dhatu. Which means to serve. Bhakti is said to mean surrender to God. Surrender is true devotion in Indian culture. Surrender is taught in Geeta and it is said –

Express all religions and take refuge in me alone.

will save you from all your sins, do not grieve.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्या म मा शुचः ॥ 4

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita is a devotional book. Every person can do the Hridangam of devotion and that is why the path of devotion has been described as simple and easy. Only knowledgeable people can follow Gyan Yoga and only those who have conquered their desires and desires can follow therefore the path of devotion is open to all people.

Shri Krishna says that the person who considers Lord Vasudev as his lord and worships him with devotion gets welfare. In this context, Shri Krishna says again:

There wise man always distinguishes one devotion.

For O knower, I am dear to us in vain, and he is dear to me.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्य एकः भक्तिः व शष्यते।

प्रयां हि ज्ञानीनोऽत्यर्थमहं सः च मम प्रयः ॥ 5

The devotee who daily worships me with undivided love and devotion is the best because I am very dear to the devotee who knows me from the essence and that knowledgeable person is very dear to me.

In Hindu culture, devotion is essential for devotion. Without devotion, the achievement of devotion, religion and knowledge is not possible. When there is no faith and reverence towards God then human life will it is not possible to have devotion in the heart. This is the reason why Goswami Tulsidas has written in Vandana in Ramcharitmanas.

भवानी शंकरो वन्दे श्रद्धा वश्वास रू पणौ ।

याभ्यां वना न पश्यन्ति सद्भाः स्वान्तःस्थमीश्वरम् ॥ 6

The history of Indian culture is very old. From Rigved til today the essentiality of devotion has been accepted. A part from Hinduism, devotion his also been emphasized In Islam and Christianity. It is said in Christianity.

Blessed are the pure in heart,

For they shall see God. (7)

Bhakti has been accepted in some form or the other in every religion. In Hindu religion, emphasis has been laid on the grace of God for devotion. Only he who receives great blessings from God can demonstrate love and devotion towards God. Devotion, which is synonymous with dedication, is an Instinct of human life.

When I studied Hindu scriptures, I found that Hindu scriptures are full of examples or illustrations of devotion. Narad and Shandilya have made the first attempt to explain and depict the glory of devotion. It is said in the Narad - Bhakti sutra that intense and immortal affection towards God is called Bhakti. Similarly, Shandilya Bhakti Sutra states that only intense love for God is called devotion. Madhusudan Saraswati believes that the mental attitude of devoting oneself to God, aroused by hearing the qualities of God, should be considered as devotion. Shri Shankaracharya says that constant desire - free remembrance of God is devotion. Goswami Tulsidas the nature of devotion has been explained in Ramcharitmanas in this way –

का महि नारी पयारि जि म लोभीहि प्रय जि मदाम ।

ति म रघुनाथ निरंतर, प्रय लागहुं मोहि राम ॥

Tulsidas prays and says to Shri Ram O Ram, I love you as much as a man loves a woman and greedy person loves money.

Bhakti is such a state of mind where the attraction of all the things of the world ends and a true affection towards God is expressed. This is the reason why a true devotee never doubts his favorite and adored deity nor can he listen to opposition. In this context, we always remember the words of Saint Tulsidas.

जाके प्रय न राम वैदेही,
तजिए ताहि कोटि वैरी हम,
जध प परम स्नेही । 8

Therefore, the only goal of devotion is the attainment of the supreme truth. From sat to that is supremely dynamic and is being animated.

I believe that devotion is everything. Progress in human life and the fulfilment of goals can be achieved only by following the path of devotion. We see the special importance of devotion. Various forms of devotion have been described in Hindu culture. Through devotion, man wants to establish an identity with God. So now we will discuss various forms of devotion.

1. Saguna devotion.
2. Nirguna devotion.

The importance of Sagun Bhakti is paramount in Indian culture. The devotee first of all expects such as tangible on which he focuses his attention. The Sagun form of God has been accepted in the Hindu religion. In Hindu religion, God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient, merciful, etc. With infinite qualities. God is Considered universal and transcendental.

In Indian philosophy, Shankaracharya's philosophy is considered to be based on nirguna Bhakti. Shankra expressed faith in Nirgun Brahma and said that -

एको ब्रह्म द् वतीयो नास्ति ।

That is only Brahma has the ultimate existence and all the things in the world are not true. On one hand, Shankar believes in Nirgun Bhakti and on the other hand, he believes that Brahma is in Shagun for worship becomes real. Therefore, even Nirgunist like Shankar had to accept the power of Shaguna Bhakti and say that research in one's form is devotion.

Hindu culture is replete with many examples or illustrations. Which tells that Shagun devotion is easier and simpler than Nirguna devotion. The devotional part of the Purans is also the path of pure Love. Many glories of devotion have been Sung in the Puranas. It is said in Padma Purana that Ram asks Shankar Lord if you are beyond human speech and thought then can any person try to know you. Lord Shankar says, O mighty Ram, I will tell you the means through which this ultimate essence can be known. First of all, the mind has to be concentrated through devotion to the Saguna God and the ability to understand the formless form that comes with it. Just as a thirsty person, while running towards the mirages, finally reaches a pond and succeeds in quenching his thirst, similarly, he becomes capable of understanding the formless form of the supreme being.⁹

When I seriously contemplate and study Nirguna Bhakti and Sagun Bhakti, I find that Shaguna is not opposite to Nirguna, nor does Nirguna call Shaguna false. The truth is that the Nirgunatva of Saguna is an excellent form of Saganatva.

In Hindu culture, the tradition of considering the ultimate truth as Saguna has been going on since the Upanishad period. In the Upanishads, truth has been understood as a Saguna Brahma, who is the creator of the world. He is worshipped and revered. He protects the devotees and grants them salvation. Described in Chandogya Upanishad.

Whatever we are seeing is Brahma. From him, all this has arisen and in him, it gets its rhythm and because of him, it continues to exist.¹⁰

In this context, I believe that in Indian culture, devotees have worshipped God in many forms. The person worships the God or Goddess whom he adores. The virtuous god Shiva is sometimes worshipped as Ram and sometimes as Krishna. Bhagwat says that the supreme being itself is the subject of its meditation and contemplation. Therefore, people have more faith in Shaguna Bhakti.

In this context, I want to say that the way a child is taught the alphabet is by arranging pieces of stone in front of him. Similarly, the status of wood, clay, stone, etc. are made only so that the knowledge of supreme Brahma can be obtained through them.

Human intelligence is not capable of understanding everything. This is the reason why the human mind can not understand that ultimate essence through its intellect. The truth is that the intellect can understand only things of that level, which are limited to the level of human life. Even a great Western philosopher like Kant failed to understand the nature of ultimate truth and in the end, he had to admit that the intellect is incapable of understanding the ultimate essence. But what Kant could not understand through his intellect, he succeeded in understanding it through faith, belief and devotion. Radhakrishnan has written only the truth.

The human intellect is utterly incapable of making reliable declarations about a subject which is beyond its limits. But the human heart is completely successful in understanding that ultimate essence.¹¹

The importance of devotion and faith is especially important for devotion in Indian culture. If a person walks with the lamp of faith lit in his heart, then the light of this lamp will continue to burn unwaveringly in any storm and storm and the person will be able to succeed in reaching his goal. Russo was one such person who lit the lamp of faith in the heart to know the ultimate essence. According to Russo: The devout person rises above the valley of the shining logic of discussion about God and experiences God with the innermost reverence of his heart. Therefore, for a devout person, God is Joy, love, everything. God can never be attained through logic.

Goswamiji has emphasized on faith and said:

बिनु वश्वास भगति नहीं, तेहि कनु द्रवहि न रामु ।

राम कृपा बिनु सपनेहु, जीव न लह वश्रामु ॥ 12

In Bhagwat, devotion is considered a very important means to attain God. Goswami Tulsidas has also given special emphasis on devotion in Ram charit manas. Tulsidas did “Navadha Bhakti” has announce. in their words :

नवधा भगति कहउँ तोहि पाही। सावधान सुनु धरु मन माही।
प्रथम भगति संतन्ह कर संगी। दूसरी रति मम कथा प्रसंगी ॥
गुरु पद पंकज सेवा तीसरी भगति अमान ।
चौथी भगति मम गुण गन करइ तजि गान ॥
मंत्र जाप मम दृढ वश्वासा । पंचम भजन सो वेद प्रकासा ।
छठ दम सील फरता बहु कर्मा ।
निरत निरंतर सज्जन धरमा ॥
सातवं सम मोहि मय जग देखा । मोते संत अ धक करि लेखा ॥
आठवं जया लाभ संतोषा । सपनेहु नहिं देखई परदोषा ॥ नवम सरल सब सन छलहीना। मम
भरोस हियँ हरष नदीना ॥ 13.

Navada Bhakti is also considered important in Bhagwat. These are “shrvana, kirtan, smaran, padasevanam, Archana, vandanam, dasya, sakhya and Atma-Nivedanam.” Self-submission is complete, gratuitous and absolute self-surrender to God. This is the highest form of Navdha Bhakti. Through prapatti, the devotee establishes an identity with God. Just as God is true in the practice of devotion, similarly his name is also true. Bhakti is a major science among the spiritual sciences. One who has a love for god is truly a prosperous person. A devotee's love for God is the only right path. Therefore, the name of God, his qualities and his pastimes should be constantly remembered. His Lotus feet are the main subjects of meditation. Therefore the devotee drinks the nectar of God's love. The relevance of devotion in worship remains intact. Vaishnav sect, Shiva sect and Shakta sect, the usefulness of devotion is still present in all the sects. Even today devotees worship Vishnu, Shiva and Durga with faith and belief. That is why human life is of devotion. It has an important place. Devotion gives important direction to personal life and social development. Man is selfish by nature, but devotion eliminates his selfishness and creates a feeling of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in him. A devotee's only love is for God.

There are many unique examples of devotion in Indian culture. A Devotee faces all the adversities of life with a smile because he has faith that the supreme Lord God, who is all-powerful, is with him and will successfully rescue him from every difficulty.

The faith of a devotee is powerful. In Indian culture, there were many devotees like Bhakta Dhruv, Bhakta Prahlad, Ajamil, Draupadi, and Mira, whose welfare Vishnu incarnated in various forms. But Saint Tulsidas says about a person who is not religious or who does not have faith in religion.

भगतिहीन नर सोहड़ कैसा,
बिनु जल बारिश दे खअ जैसा । 14

In Indian culture, the path of devotion is the best path on which a devotee can meet his favourite God. Faith and belief are invaluable weapons in devotion, no matter in what form of medium devotion is displayed. History tells that due to his devotion, Tulsidas succeeded in creating a new zeal and enthusiasm in Hindu society. Mahatma Gandhi fought against the most powerful state of his time without any weapon and by taking independence, showed the world how a devotee can overcome even brute forces due to his faith and devotion through social sacrifice and can achieve victory.

In the end, I want to say that the usefulness of devotion is still present because there is a unique power inherent in devotion. In Kalyuga, the display of devotion is completed only by "Naam- Smarana". Tulsidas says:

राम नाम मनिदीप धरु, जीह देहरी द्वार ।
तुलसी भीतर बाहरेहूँ, जो चाह स उजियार ॥ 15

Therefore, the state of bliss obtained by devotion is beyond happiness and suffering. The feeling of joy that comes from devotion is called the feeling of supreme bliss.

No matter how much we praise devotion in Indian culture, it appears to be in short supply, because we see the number of devotees increasing day by day. In the end, I want to close my pen with the lines of Ram Charit Manas.

कलयुग समय युग आन नहिं जो नर कर वश्वास ।
गाइ राम गुण गान वमल, भव तर बिनहिं प्रयास ॥
कलयुग केवल हरि गुण गाहा गावत नर पावहि भव थाहा ॥16

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