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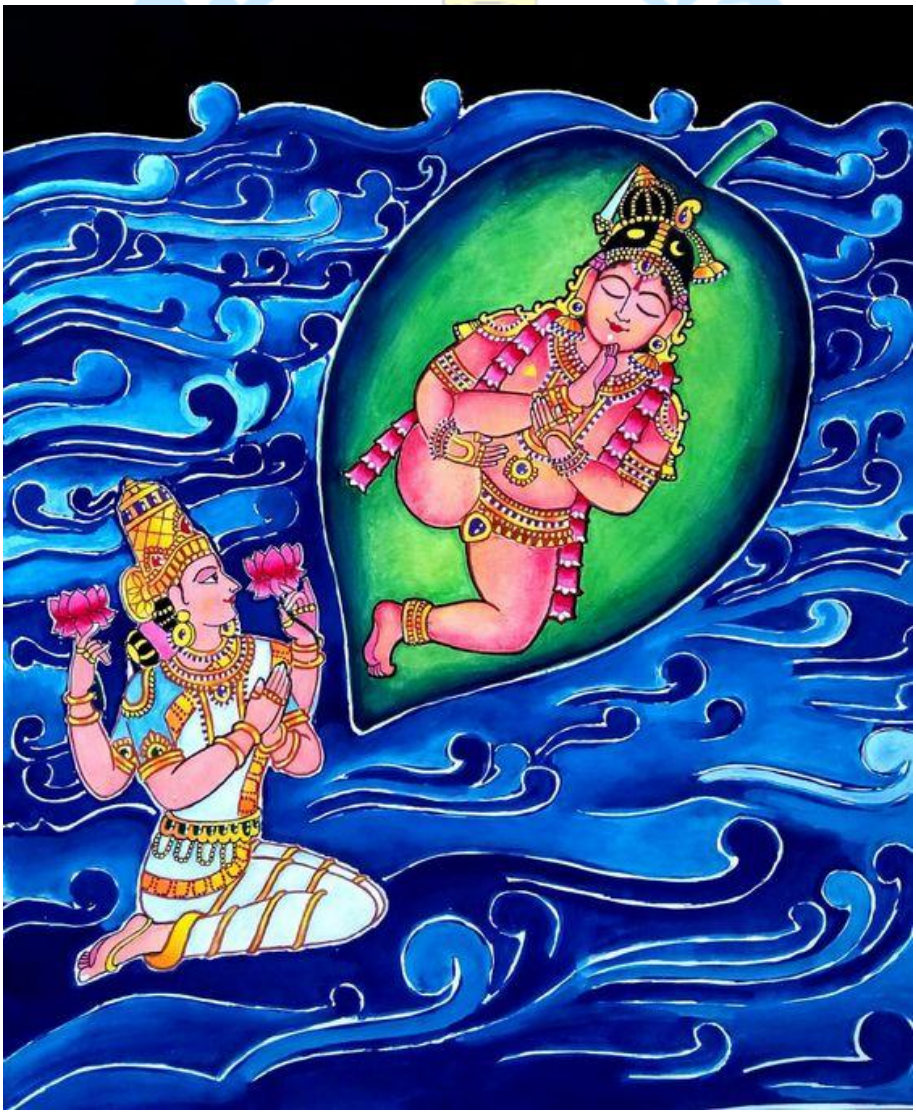
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श्री नारायणाय नमः ।

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The Only Guaranteed Method to Achieve Moksha

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Preachers of various religions and philosophies, even within Sanaatana Dharma, propagate various ideas, which are usually contradictory to each other. Most of them promise moksha or some form of salvation from the miseries of the life in this world. An average seeker with little jnaana would obviously be bewildered if one uses mere logic to try to comprehend philosophy and its purpose. The natural question would be how one could infer which philosophy is true? Even the Shaastras themselves say:

यच्छक्तयो वदतां वादिनां वै विवादसंवादभुवो भवन्ति ।
कुर्वन्ति तेषां मुहुरात्ममोहं तस्मै नमोऽनन्तगुणाय भूम्ने ॥

"Due to His power, various philosophers propagate varying views and disagree among themselves, becoming bewildered. I offer my salutations unto Him."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 6, Adhyaaya 4, Shloka 31

The answer to this is simply that one needs to truly comprehend philosophy through actually practising it and experiencing the practise of yoga. Yoga refers to the union of the body, mind and self (aatma) with Paramaatma, contemplating upon Him through the course of one's actions. The true goal of philosophy is to realize our true nature or svabhaava and transcend the miseries in samsaara. The world we reside in is filled with all sorts of miseries and sufferings. The Vishnu Puraana (Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 5) briefly narrates these and summarizes the various sufferings which are inherent:

- **Aadhyaatmika (आध्यात्मिक)**: Those which harm to one's self or the body, such as anger, lust, greed, jealousy, insults, diseases, disabilities, etc.
- **Aadhidaivika (आधिदैविक)**: Those which are supernaturally caused, such as natural disasters, heat, cold or rain
- **Aadhibhautika (आधिभौतिक)**: Those troubles which are caused by other living entities

These three naturally exist in samsaara, the cycle of birth and death. Along with these, we are never aware of when a person may die. Death can occur just before birth, at birth, during childhood, youth or old age. A jeeva born in samsaara must progress through all the taapas and finally death. Depending upon one's karmas, one may even attain residence at Naraka before taking rebirth in accordance with one's pending karmas. While one may be tormented by samsaara, exiting it requires truly knowing its root cause first. The Vishnu Puraana (Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 7) explains that there are only two causes — *considering anything which is not the self (anaatma) to be the self (aatma)* and *considering what is not one's possession to be one's own possession*.

अनात्मन्यात्मबुद्धिर्या चास्वे स्वमिति या मतिः ।
संसारतरुसंभूतिबीजमेतद्द्विधा स्थितम् ॥

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"The mentality of Aatma being what is not the Aatma and one's possessions being those which are not possessions – they are the two kinds of seeds of the tree of samsaara."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 7, Shloka 11

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।
बन्धाय विषयासङ्गी मुक्त्यै निर्विषयं मनः ॥

"The mind is solely the reason for both bondage and moksha of humans. The mind's attachment to the objects leads to bondage and being unattached leads to moksha."

—Ibid., Shloka 28

The land, vehicles, money and other possessions we own are never really ours nor are the relationships with people here, as they are all transient. The body is transient and is almost always mistaken to be one's self, ignoring the fact that it is like a temporary garment for the jeeva, which ages and is subsequently replaced. So, the Bhaagavata Puraana says:

पुत्रदाराप्तबन्धूनां सङ्गमः पान्थसङ्गमः ।
अनुदेहं वियन्त्येते स्वप्नो निद्रानुगो यथा ॥

"The association with one's children, wife and even friends is like that of travellers meeting each other. With each change of body, one is separated from all such associates, just as one loses the objects one possesses in a dream when the dream is over."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 11, Adhyaaya 17, Shloka 53

Yet, most of us are in a tireless pursuit for happiness, trying to achieve it through material possessions. So, the natural question would be – what should our purpose in life be? This has been answered in the Shaastras: achieving the grace of Bhagavaan. In the Vishnu Puraana, Shri Paraashara Rshi explains as follows:

निरस्तातिशयाह्लादसुखभावैकलक्षणा ।
भेषजं भगवत्प्राप्तिरेकान्तात्यन्तिकी मता ॥
तस्मात्तत्प्राप्तये यत्नः कर्त्तव्यः पण्डितैर्नरैः ।
तत्प्राप्तिहेतुर्ज्ञानं च कर्म चोक्तं महामुने ॥

"The recommended cure for these sufferings is obtaining Bhagavaan, whose one characteristic is uninterrupted joy and emotion. Due to that, the duty of humans who are Panditas should be to apply all efforts to obtain it. The method of obtaining it is said to be jnaana (knowledge) and karma (actions), Maha-Muni."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 5, Shloka 59

Achieving Bhagavaan does not simply mean achieving moksha after death and residence in Vaikuntha. While the Shaastras describe the realm of Para Brahman as a region of unending

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bliss with absence of any sorrow or suffering, it is not something achievable in our lifetime in samsaara nor can it be our true purpose to be followed at all times. In the Bhagavat-Geeta, Krshna Himself answers this as follows:

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।
शक्य एवं विधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥
भक्त्या त्वनन्यया शक्य अहमेवंविधोर्जुन ।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परन्तप ॥

"Not by the Vedas, tapas, charity or propitiation, is it possible to see Me in this manner, as you have seen. By exclusive bhakti alone, it is possible to truly comprehend, see and enter into Me (i.e., obtain moksha), in this manner, O Arjuna, Parantapa."

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 11, Shlokas 53-54

The definition of bhakti itself says:

माहात्म्यज्ञानपूर्वस्तु सुदृढः सर्वतोऽधिकः ।
स्नेहो भक्तिरिति प्रोक्तः तया मुक्तिर्नचान्यथा ॥

"Firm knowledge of the greatness of and love (towards Bhagavaan), which is greater than everything else, is thus, called 'bhakti'. Through this, there can be mukti and not by anything else."

—Naarada Pancharaatra (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in the Mahaabhaarata Taatparyya Nirnnaya, Adhyaaya 1, Shloka 85; Shri Vallabhacharya, in Tattvaartha Deepa Nibandha)

An elaborate definition of bhakti also occurs in the Parama Samhita:

सर्वेषामेव यागानां मानसो याग उत्तमः ॥
अप्रसादे हि मनसः कर्मयोगोऽपि निष्फलः ।
स्नेहपूर्वमनुध्यानं भक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ॥
पूजनं हि विना भक्त्या कृतमप्यक्रतं भवेत् ।
अष्टाङ्गा भक्तिरुद्दिष्टा वैष्णवस्य विशेषतः ॥
यामवाप्य परां सिद्धिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ।

"Among all forms of yaaga (worship), the mental form is the best. Even karma-yoga does not bear any fruit when performed with an infirm mind. Anudhyaana performed with proper love for Bhagavaan is thus known as 'bhakti'. Any worship without bhakti leads to even the tasks which are performed becoming as good as not done. There are eight angas of bhakti towards Vishnu, whose attainment grants the highest siddhi sooner."

—Parama Samhita, Adhyaaya 4, Shlokas 70-73

The subsequent shlokas mention these eight angas of bhakti:

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देवस्याराधनं नित्यं समयस्य च रक्षणम् ॥
वैष्णवस्य च विश्वासः पूजायामादरो महान् ।
स्वयमाराधने यत्नं तत्कथाश्रवणादरः ॥
परबाधास्वनास्थाच तत्पूजानुपजीवनम् ।
इत्येषाष्टविधा भक्तिर्विद्यते यस्य देहिनः ॥

“(1) Regular worship of Shri Vishnu, (2) managing one’s time effectively, (3) maintaining a trustworthy relationship with other Vaishnavas, (4) possessing great interest in worshiping Vishnu, (5) applying one’s own efforts in worshiping Vishnu, (6) being interested in listening to the stories about Vishnu, (7) having no desire to harm other beings and (8) not making a living through the worship of Vishnu – these should be known to be the eight forms of bhakti.”

—Ibid., Shlokas 73-75

Now, to properly practise bhakti, it is also crucial to know who Para Brahman is, in accordance with our capacity. While it is true that Brahman is infinite and incomprehensible even to the greatest of Devatas like Lakshmi Devi, understanding a fraction of His qualities and power is a necessity to ensure that one can practise yoga. 'Yoga', derived from the word 'yuj' (to unite), simply means “union” and refers to the practise of the self being united with Paramaatma through the course of all actions. So, it is said:

आत्मप्रयत्नसापेक्षा विशिष्टा या मनोगतिः ।
तस्या ब्रह्मणि संयोगो योग इत्यभिधीयते ॥

“Effort by oneself and unique practices to control the mind, to become one with Brahman, is thus, called 'Yoga'.”

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 7, Shloka 31

एतावानेव लोकेऽस्मिन् पुंसां धर्मः परः स्मृतः ।
भक्तियोगो भगवति तन्नामग्रहणादिभिः ॥

“These practices, such as chanting the names of Bhagavaan, are known to be the highest dharma of humans in this world and as 'bhakti-yoga'.”

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 6, Adhyaaya 3, Shloka 22

Patanjali Rshi mentions that Yoga has eight components, in the Yoga Sutras. This is also why it is referred to as 'Ashtaanga-Yoga'.

॥ यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ॥

“Yama, niyama, aasana, praanaayaama, pratyaahaara, dhaarana, dhyaana and samaadhi are the eight angas (of Yoga).”

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—Yoga Sutras, Saadhana Paada, Sutra 29

- The yamas are restrictions to be followed, namely Brahmacharya, ahimsa, satya (honesty), asteya (not stealing) and Aparigraha (detachment).
- The niyamas are rules to be followed, namely svaadhyaaya (study of the Shaastras), cleanliness (of the mind, body and speech), santosha (satisfaction and equanimity), tapas and self-control.
- The aasanas are the poses used to maintain one's health and help in practise of yoga
- Praanaayaama refers to the control of the breath and is known as 'sabeeja,' if it is accompanied by mediation on Paramaatma
- Pratyaahaara refers to detachment and control of the senses.
- Dhaarana refers to focusing the mind on continuous contemplation on Para Brahman during all activities.
- Samaadhi is the final stage where one achieves aparoksha-jnaana and is permanently in a state of being united with Paramaatma.

A person who achieves samaadhi and becomes an aparoksha-jnaani is almost certain to achieve moksha immediately after their current janma, as their praarabdha-karmas are exhausted soon.

विनिष्पन्नसमाधिस्तु मुक्तिं तत्रैव जन्मनि ।
प्राप्नोति योगी योगाग्निदग्धकर्मचयोऽचिरात् ॥

"One in vinishpanna-samaadhi certainly obtains mukti during the same janma itself, due to the Yogi's collection of karmas soon being burnt by the fire of Yoga."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 7, Shloka 35

As said in the Katha Upanishad, one who contemplates on Brahman sees the true form of Brahman. This form of Bhagavaan is seen through jnaana-drshti as one's own Indweller or Antaraatma residing within the Aatma, and not through the physical eyes. The process of yoga is subdivided into two other components, namely karma-yoga and jnaana-yoga, which refer to the regulation of one's actions and knowledge respectively. The Parama Samhita elaborately explains it as follows:

ज्ञानानं खलु सर्वेषां योगज्ञानं विशिष्यते ।
योगज्ञानाद्धिकैवल्यं प्राप्नोति परमं सुखम् ॥
केवलं तु कृतं कर्म योगज्ञानाद्विना नृभिः ।
न कुर्याद्विपुलां सिद्धिं तस्माद्योगं समाश्रयेत् ॥
स तु ज्ञानाक्रियाभेदाद् द्विविधः शास्त्रचोदितः ।
कर्मणां संविभागाच्च वैरूप्यान्मनसस्तथा ॥
ज्ञानयोगो भवत्येकः कर्मयोगः परःस्मृतः ।
यत्करोति समाधानं चित्तस्य विषये क्वचित् ॥

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अनाकुलमसङ्क्षोभं स योग इति कीर्त्यते ।
यदि कर्माणि बध्नाति चित्तमस्खलितं नरः ॥
कर्मयोगो भवत्येषः सर्वपाप प्रणाशनः ।
यदि तु ज्ञानैवार्थे चित्तं बध्नाति निर्व्यथः ॥
ज्ञानयोगः स विज्ञेयः सर्वसिद्धिकरः शुभः ।
उभयोर्योगयोर्यस्य न चित्तं विन्दतिव्यथाम् ॥
स तत्पदमवाप्नोति यद्विष्णोः प्रथितं पदं ।
उभयस्यापि योगस्य देव एव निबन्धनः ॥

"Among all forms of knowledge, the knowledge of yoga is the best, as only through that, one achieves kaivalya and the greatest happiness. Performing actions without the knowledge of yoga will not lead to proper siddhi (achievement) and so, one should take refuge in yoga. Certainly, it is differentiated into the two types, jnaana (knowledge) and kriya (actions), based on karmas and the states of the mind, as explained in the Shaastras. Jnaana-yoga and Karma-yoga are known so as they are that which cause equanimity of the mind with regard to any matter. That which keeps the mind calm and composed, without turbulence, is known as 'Yoga'. If a human being fixes the mind in actions, it is karma-yoga, which destroys all paapas. But if one fixes the mind for the purpose of knowledge, it is understood to be jnaana-yoga, which is auspicious and the cause of all siddhis. One whose mind does not experience suffering in either of them, obtains that which is the well-known abode of Vishnu. The foundation of both of these (jnaana yoga and karma yoga) is the One Deva."

—Parama Samhita, Adhyaaya 10, Shlokas 2-10

Aparoksha jnaanis exhibit the characteristics of always possessing self-control and being in satisfaction and equanimity, through the course of all actions. They are almost never affected by negative emotions or disturbances. The jeevas with a Saattvika svabhaava, upon completing their saadhana, achieve this state. In the Mahaabhaarata (Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 321), Yaajnavalkya Rshi explains the characteristics of such a person. An aparoksha-jnaani remains undistracted by even loud noises and can even carry a container filled with oil to its brim, across a staircase while being threatened with dangerous weapons. The phalashruti of the Vishnu Sahasranaama also says:

न वासुदेवभक्तानामशुभं विद्यते क्वचित् ।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिभयं नैवोपजायते ॥

इमं स्तवमधीयानः श्रद्धाभक्तिसमन्वितः ।
युज्येतात्मसुखक्षान्तिश्रीधृतिस्मृतिकीर्तिभिः ॥

न क्रोधो न च मात्सर्यं न लोभो नाशुभा मतिः ।
भवन्ति कृतपुण्यानां भक्तानां पुरुषोत्तमे ॥

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"There is nothing inauspicious for the bhaktas of Vaasudeva and the fear of birth, death, old age and diseases does not occur. A person with sincerity and bhakti who studies this Stava becomes filled with bliss, calmness, opulence, a firm mind, memory and glory. Anger, jealousy, greed and other negative emotions do not exist in the bhaktas of Purushottama who commit pious deeds."

—Mahaabhaarata, Anushaasana Parva, Adhyaaya 254, Shlokas 134-136

Achieving aparoksha-jnaana can take several janmas, depending upon one's svabhaava and current status in their saadhana. Unlike other religions, the darshana of Tattvavaada does not state that perfection in bhakti or any other destiny is to be achieved in the same life. Like all habits, aparoksha-jnaana takes its time to manifest, as one slowly progresses in achieving perfection in the practice of yoga. So, it is said:

यद्यन्तरायदोषेण दूष्यते चास्य मानसम् ।
जन्मान्तरैरभ्यसतो मुक्तिः पूर्वस्य जायते ॥

"Even if defects obstruct and corrupt one's mind, by repeated practice of it through multiple janmas, one is led to mukti."

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 7, Shloka 34

अन्नपानं धनं पुत्रं आयुरैश्वर्यमास्पदम् ।
आपद्यपि नयाचेत पूजकः पुरुषोत्तमम् ॥
नाप्रसन्नो ददाम्येष याचितोऽपि दिने दिने ।
अयाचितोऽपि तत्सर्वं सुप्रसन्नो ददाम्यहम् ॥
नकालः कारणं तत्र नार्चनस्य च गौरवम् ।
न पूजकस्य दुःखं वा मत्प्रसादस्य पद्मज ॥
स्वयमेवतु जानामि पूजकस्य गुणागुणान् ।
पजायाः संपदश्चापि कालस्य गमनं तथा ॥
स्वयमेव प्रसीदामि संपदं प्रेक्ष्य सर्वदा ।
प्रसन्नस्त्वनुगृह्णामि त्वरया न कदाचन ॥
इह जन्मनि नस्याचेदन्यजन्मनि तद्ध्रुवम् ।
अन्य जन्मनि नस्याच्चेत्परजन्मनि तद्ध्रुवम् ॥
नत्वेनमनुगह्णामि जन्मान्तरशतेऽप्यहम् ।
सकृदप्यर्चयित्वा मां परिवृत्तमुपासनात् ॥
कर्मणां पच्यमानत्वा दपरेषां परीक्षये ।
प्रकाशयामि भक्तानामहं किं मदनुग्रहम् ॥

(Shri Vishnu said): "A worshipper of Purushottama should not wish just for food, drink, wealth, children, more years of life, power, position, etc., even in times of distress. If I am not pleased, I shall not grant them, even if asked day after day. I shall grant them even

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without being asked, if I am pleased. Not time, the magnitude of worship or the sorrows of the worshipper are the cause of My grace. I Myself know the worshipper's merits and defects, the merit of the worship offered and the flow of time. I shall Myself become pleased after having understood the merit of the worship at all times and being satisfied, I shall bestow My benedictions, though never quickly. If My anugraha is not achieved in this janma, it will be in another. If not even in another one, then in another. I shall not grant it even in a hundred janmas, if one simply performs worship once and abandons it. Through the ripening of one's good karmas and destruction of one's sins, I shall manifest what My anugraha is, to my bhaktas."

—Parama Samhita, Adhyaaya 30, Shlokas 7-14

विकस्यापराधेन यथा नौर्विनिवर्तते ।
एवं मद्भक्त्यपायेन संसारोऽस्य विवर्धते ॥

तस्मादविकला भक्तिर्मद्गता देहिनां गतिः ।
तस्या एव विभूत्यर्थं सर्वमन्यत्पितामह ॥

यः पूजयति मां नित्यं यदुदाहरति स्तवम् ।
यो ध्यायति च मामेव तेन भक्तिर्विवर्धते ॥
भक्ताववियमानायां प्रयत्नः सुमहानपि ।
लोकाडम्बरमेव स्याद्फलं प्रेत्यचेहच ॥

तस्मात्सर्वं प्रयत्नेन भक्तिमेव विवर्धयेत् ।
सा तु वृद्धा नयत्येव वैष्णवं परमं पदम् ॥

"Just as a boat goes backwards due to the sailor's fault, by giving up bhakti towards Me, samsaara thrives. Therefore, the sole resort of the embodied beings is proper bhakti towards Me. Everything else should be as a secondary purpose, for its growth alone, O Pitaamaha. One who worships Me daily, recites praises of Me or performs dhyaana of Me has their bhakti increase through this. In those where bhakti is absent, all efforts, even though great, result only in material benefits and bring no beneficial results. Thus, through all efforts, one should focus on advancing their bhakti. And certainly, it leads to the highest abode of Vishnu."

—Ibid., Shlokas 31-35

In Anuvyaakhyaana (Adhyaaya 3, Paada 4), Shri Madhvacharya quoted the following mantra from the Shvetaashvatara Upanishad:

यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ ।
तस्यैते कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥

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"One whose bhakti in the Divine One is the Highest and so, in a Guru, to that Mahaatma, that which has been explained here will become manifest."

—Shvetaashvatara Upanishad, Adhyaaya 6, Mantra 22

He then stated as follows:

भक्त्या ज्ञानं ततो भक्तिस्ततो दृष्टिस्ततश्च सा ।
ततो मुक्तिस्ततो भक्तिः सैव स्यात्सुखरूपिणी ॥

"From bhakti, jnaana arises and due to that, (pakva) bhakti manifests, which leads to the sight of Paramaatma, from which (paripakva) bhakti arises. Thus, it leads to mukti, from which bhakti manifests again, which alone is in the form of total happiness."

Shri Jaya Teertha, elaborating upon these explanations in Nyaayasudha, states that bhakti is of three types:

(1) **Bhakti**, which precedes paroksha jnaana
(2) **Pakva-bhakti**, which manifests after obtaining paroksha jnaana
(3) **Paripakva-bhakti**, which manifests after achieving aparoksha jnaana

To truly comprehend Bhagavaan, one also needs to possess jnaana. Jnaana is said to be aagamottha and vivekottha, which are achievable by learning the Shaastras and contemplation upon their meanings, respectively. Through this, one achieves knowledge of Shabda-Brahman, which leads to the knowledge of Para-Brahman. Paroksha jnaana is the knowledge one can obtain through the knowledge of the Shaastras, obtained properly from a Guru. It is apara vidya and not the greatest knowledge, as it still does not enable one to be in the state of samaadhi, or constantly being engrossed in thoughts of Paramaatma alone. Through continued saadhana, one achieves aparoksha-jnaana and paripakva-bhakti. Moksha occurs as a by-product of paripakva-bhakti. One's ultimate goal, therefore, should be bhakti, which is an end in itself and not a saadhana to achieve any other purpose. So, Kapila Maharshi says:

द्वे ब्रह्मणी वेदितव्ये शब्दब्रह्म परं च यत् ।
शब्दब्रह्मणि निष्णातः परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥

(Kapila Maharshi said): "There are two Brahmans– Shabda-Brahman and that which is Para (Supreme). One who knows Shabda-Brahman attains Para-Brahman."

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 276, Shlokas 1-2 (Quoted by Shri Vedaanta Deshika, in Rahasyatraya-Saara, Chapter 2)

Naaraayana Rshi mentions the following in the Mahaabhaarata, while instructing Devarshi Naarada:

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मुक्तानां तु गतिर्ब्रह्मन्क्षेत्रज्ञ इति कल्पिता ।
स हि सर्वगतिश्चैव निर्गुणश्चैव कथ्यते ॥

दृश्यते ज्ञानयोगेन आवां च प्रसृतौ ततः।
एवं ज्ञात्वा तमात्मानं पूजयावः सनातनम् ॥

तं वेदाश्चाश्रमाश्चैव नानातनुसमाश्रितम् ।
भक्त्या संपूजयन्त्यद्य गतिं चैषां ददाति सः ॥

“He is the refuge of even the mukta-jeevas and is known as 'Brahman' and 'Kshetrajna'. He is said to be the refuge of everything and devoid of material qualities. He can be seen through jnaana-yoga and even we have manifested from Him. Knowing all this, we worship Him, the eternal Aatma. The Vedas and all aashramas, though characterized by differences of opinion, all worship Him with bhakti and He who is speedily moved to grace, confers on them the highest destiny.”

—Mahaabhaarata, Shaanti Parva, Adhyaaya 342, Shlokas 42-44

Even Yaajnavalkya Rshi states that this jnaana is vital and should be obtained from any Saattvika member, regardless of varna, sex, race, etc.

ज्ञानान्मोक्षो जायते राजसिंहनास्त्यज्ञानादेवमाहुर्नरेन्द्र ।
तस्माज्ज्ञानं तत्त्वतोऽन्तेषितव्यं येनात्मानं मोक्षयेज्जन्ममृत्योः ॥

प्राप्य ज्ञानं ब्राह्मणात्क्षत्रियाद्वा वैश्याच्छूद्रादपि नीचादभीक्ष्णम् ।
श्रद्धातव्यं श्रद्दधानेन नित्यं न श्रद्धिनं जन्ममृत्यू विशेताम् ॥

“Moksha results from jnaana, O Raajasimha. It has been declared that it cannot occur through ignorance, Narendra. Due to this, the true jnaana of the Tattvas which frees the Aatma from birth and death, should be procured. Obtaining knowledge from anyone, be it a Braahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, a Shudra or even a lowly person, one should always use it faithfully, with sincerity, as birth and death cannot control one who is sincere.”

—Ibid., Adhyaaya 323, Shlokas 87-88

Thus, the highest duty of a Deva-bhakta should be to remember Shri Vishnu through the course of all actions, while mentally being detached from material possessions. One need not become a sannyaasi and abandon all possessions for this purpose. As mentioned in the Puraanas, especially in the age of Kali, even simple practices such as chanting the names of Bhagavaan are suitable ways of saadhana.

अवशेनापि यन्नाम्नि कीर्त्तिते सर्वपातकैः ।
पुमान् विमुच्यते सद्यः सिंहत्रस्तैर्मृगैरिव ॥

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यन्नामकीर्त्तनं भक्त्या विलापनमनुत्तमम् ।
मैत्रेयाशेषपापानां धातूनामिव पावकः ॥

“Even by unintentionally singing His names, a person is immediately freed from all paatakas, just as animals are frightened by a lion. By singing His names with bhakti, all sins are destroyed, without exceptions, like the melting of gold and other metals in fire, separating them from impurities.”

—Vishnu Puraana, Amsha 6, Adhyaaya 8, Shlokas 19-20 (Quoted by Shri Madhvacharya, in Krshnaamrta-Mahaarnava, Shlokas 65 and 59)

भक्त्या मामभिजानाति यावान्यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।
ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा विशते तदनन्तरम् ॥

सर्वकर्माण्यपि सदा कुर्वाणो मद्व्यपाश्रयः ।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥

चेतसा सर्वकर्माणि मयि सन्न्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥

(Shri Krshna said): “I can be known as I am, through bhakti. Therefore, having known Me through the knowledge of reality, one subsequently enters Me. Even performing all actions all the time, in My refuge, by My grace, in this manner, one achieves the eternal and imperishable abode. Consciously surrendering all actions to Me, with Me as the goal, take refuge of buddhi-yoga and become conscious of Me.”

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 18, Shlokas 55-57

कर्मभिगृहमेधीयैरिष्ट्वा मामेव भक्तिमान् ।
तिष्ठेद् वनं वोपविशेत् प्रजावान् वा परिव्रजेत् ॥

यस्त्वासक्तमतिर्गेहे पुत्रवित्तैषणातुरः ।
स्त्रैणः कृपणधीर्मूढो ममाहमिति बध्यते ॥

अहो मे पितरौ वृद्धौ भार्या बालात्मजात्मजाः ।
अनाथा मामृते दीनाः कथं जीवन्ति दुःखिताः ॥

एवं गृहाशयाक्षिप्तहृदयो मूढधीरयम् ।
अतृप्तस्ताननुध्यायन् मृतोऽन्धं विशते तमः ॥

(Shri Krshna said): “Filled with bhakti, one can perform duties of a householder and worship Me staying at home, or can go to the forest, or if having suitable progeny, can take up sanyaasa. But one whose mind is attached to home, children, wealth and women, is miserly and foolishly concentrates on 'I' and 'mine', is certainly bound. He is distressed and thinks, ‘Alas, how will my elderly parents, my wife with a young infant and other children, live

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without me, with no protector?' So, overcome by desire, the foolish and unsatisfied one concentrates on them and after death, enters andhantamas."

—Bhaagavata Puraana, Skandha 11, Adhyaaya 17, Shlokas 55-58

Finally, at the end of the Bhagavat-Geeta, Shri Krshna Himself mentions the following as His most confidential secret:

सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः शृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥

"Again, listen to My greatest and most confidential secret of all. Since you are very favourable to Me, I am speaking it for your benefit. Thinking of Me, being My bhakta, worship Me, offer salutations to Me and you will definitely and truly obtain Me. I promise this, as you are dear to Me."

—Bhagavat Geeta, Adhyaaya 18, Shlokas 64-65

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श्री हरये नमः ।

श्रीकृष्णार्पणमस्तु ॥

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