

1.0 Bhakti

The intense love towards adorable God is devotion¹

// Sa Paranuraktiriishware //

The one that attracts the grace of God, the one that turns all the desires towards God. It means that the real meaning of Bhakti is intense love towards God. Devotion itself unveils its contents. The center of devotion is Lord God. When the devotee follows the path of devotion God incarnates. To have the vision of God we need not control our habits and senses.

It means ignoring all knowledge based karmas (works), ignoring all desires and lust, forgetting the pleasure and pain of life, forgetting what is righteous and what is non-righteous, single minded affection towards God is bhakti.

"Bhakti yoga is the only way by which God who is the very epitome of Satchitananda and is rasaswaroop (Whose form is very charming) could be attained".²

"By applying the collegium to the eyelashes, the collegium of 'bhava'. We can have the realization of God through all the senses".³

A yogi has the vision within himself and a devotee has a vision in the outer space. Moreover yogi has the vision of God in the form of illumined being within his heart and soul. On the other hand a devotee gets the vision of God in outerworld as a being perceived by the senses, "Bhava-sanskrit, Indriya gochar' God. "Along with the power of all the senses the quintessential 'bhava' of the mind is known as Bhakti"⁴. Therefore Bhakti could be called as the "ekantiki swamukhiwali" will power. The foremost aim of a human being is realization of Atma or Brahma, this Atma itself is Brahmaswaroop. Atma is God and Atma alone is the one worth

knowing. With all the feelings of the heart a pure love towards that Almighty is highest devotion leading to the realization of the soul. The great devotee Prahlada once said -

"Just as imprudent people have intense attachment towards the objects of the senses, O lord we may not have such attachment in our heart for you".⁵

Ya preetiravivekinam vishayeshvanavasini /

Twamanusmaratah sa me Hridyanmapsarpatu //

The devotion in which one doesn't desire for any returns and devote oneself with a vacant mind is "Prakrit Bhakti". From grammatical point of view if we look at the origin of Bhakti then Bhakti word has originated from "bhaj" dhaatu, it means "to serve" and "Bhajja Amardane". The word bhakti is defined in three ways - "Bhajanam Bhakti", "Bhago Bhakti" and "Bhanjan Bhakti".

In "Bhajanam Bhakti" a bhakta (devotee) time and again recalls the great play and the great traits and qualities of God. He relishes them.

"Nam bhajanam, bhajanam nam rasnam".⁶

It has been said that recalling the name of God, Chanting His name is the achievement of devotion. In "Bhago bhakti" a bhakta makes himself a part of God, to become a part of God it the distinct feature here. A devotee denies the existence at the worldly plane. According to Shrimad Bhagvat Bhajanam. Bhakti is also disinterested, entire (Akhand) devotion. Like an everflowing pure Ganga bhakti is joyous in remembrance of the Gunas (traits) of God.

Drutasya bhagvadbharda dhara vahikatam gata/

Sarveshe manaso vrittirbhaktirityarabhidhiyate||⁷

When the heart melts remembering the grace, greatness and gunas (traits) of God. Like an ever flowing stream all the desires of mind turn towards God is Bhakti (devotion). Bhakti is to get back something dear that was lost. When bliss occupies the whole space between the bright sky and humble earth. It is as if there is re-establishing of self.

There is a never-ending desire of the "Anuchaitanya Jeevatma" (Brahma which remain as cosmic consciousness in every atom of this existing world) to reach to its origin and abode. There are three paths by which one could reach from the world to the master of this world (from world to Vishwanath, from the world of senses to Jagannath). These paths are: - Karma (Work), Gyan (Knowledge) and Bhakti (devotion).

Bhakti (devotion) is the simplest path to become one with the divine God. Bhakti has been blessed by the Almighty, without bhakti yoga, knowledge and religion do not blossom."⁸ It means 'Dharma (religion) is not an escape from life, it is a step towards going deep into the truth of life.

Drinking all the flavors of life so as to satiate the thirst of the soul is Bhakti. "Bhakti or devotion means - to attain the bhagdheya (destiny). The scattered human mind roaming in the objects of sensual pleasures becomes condensed and contracted. With single mindedness the mind may run towards its center. This is the supreme fruit of devotion."⁹ "The path of devotion is - surrender of the ego, the "I", to "you" (God), combining this "I" with "you" one attains supreme bliss and gets complete satiation for the desire of love".¹⁰ Thus the origin of Bhakti or devotion is from 'bhava'. Every consciousness of the world arises from 'bhava'. 'Bhava' is validated by action.

Devotion is the search of the sources of eternal truth and bliss. It is the practice to imbibe them. It is the apex of supreme joy and supreme richness".¹¹ finally, in devotion a devotee is able to hear the hidden music of his heart in the whole world. There is no need for any other authenticity for devotion because devotion itself is the validation of feasibility, self-illumination and 'rasarupata'. Devotion is "swasanvedha" at the same time it is Shantiroopa and Paramanandaswaroopa.¹² There is no discrimination between God and devotion because when one realises God the tendencies are also converted into bhagwad swaroop. Therefore the result of devotion is devotion only.

*Brahmanando bhavedeshu chet parardhagunikritah /
Naitee bhakti sukhambhoge paramanutulamapi ||¹³*

It means bhakti in itself is blissful, when it reaches its pinnacle, devotion is spectacular in form and blissful. In devotion as compared to Brahmananda attained in Samahi, there is boundless, spectacular, bliss, intense chinmaya joy and the joy that comes with the palpitation of heart. These attributes and experiences are not found even in smallest degree in the joy of Brahmananda.

The intensity arising in the heart from devotion leads to divine bliss of 'chitraleela (beautiful scene) in the existing mental state. "Peaceful quiet joy is "Brahm state" and the joy which is hundred thousand time exposition with quick motion of joyous dancing is bhakti or devotion." ¹⁴ The persistent presence of man in God is devotion. A devotee becomes an ansha, a part of God.

A Devotion is not the realisation of chitta. Infact devotion endows "Alhadini Samvidatmika Swaroop Shakti" that gives eternal chinmaya and self-enlightened attributes to it.

For this reason it is not perceptible by the natural five senses, when 'anushtan' of sadhan bhakti and its parts (Shravan, Kirtan, Smaran etc.) is done - the mind is purified. In that state the chinmaya self- illumined devotion blooms, and blossoms in itself and gives synchronisation or co-relation to the five senses. It makes the natural five senses as chinmaya and aprakrit (unnatural).

In Shrimadbhagvat the rise of bhakti has been described in the following words: -

"To have faith in my immortal saga and stories, to sing my glory, to be eager in worship, my 'swadhan' by eulogies, love to serve me, to offer salutation to me using all the body parts, to worship me with my Bhakta's, to see God in all beings, to develop desire for 'sampurna angas' to sing my glory, to keep the mind in me only, to leave all desires, to renounce the pleasures of money and worldly happiness, whatever yagya, donation, havan, japam, austerities and fasts should be observed, it should be done for me only. This is the fundamental form of all bhakti."¹⁵

When two bodies meet, the joy arising out of that is Kama (physical love). When two minds meet and there is flowing joy, it is worldly love. Mind creates many webs. When the soul meets with divine souls there is the never ending flow of nectar and joy. It is devotion.¹⁶

When the ego sublimates one is able to step into the temple of bhakti. The first condition of bhakti is that I doesn't remain. Lust binds a person, bhakti liberates. "The synonyms of bhakti are austerity, faith, yoga, devotion, service and worship. They should be taken in one sense."¹⁷ "Often times the vadik worship is called "Upasana" and Pauranik worship is called as bhakti or devotion".¹⁸ "Bhakti infers to the establishment of loving consciousness in God".

"The one who has 'para bhakti' towards God and just like God there is devotion towards Guru also, in the heart of such a person there is the divin light as mentioned in the Upanishads."¹⁹

The two elements love and melody (madhurya) are there in Bhakti, Gyan (Knowledge) and forgetfulness both are there, these are the two distinct elements that are present in Bhakti. There is Bhakti with various emotions, loving devotion holds an amazing sway over all kinds of devotions. A person is one with the Ishta, forgetting oneself. Bhakti is the fruit; bhakti is the instrument (sadhan).

1.1 The Origin of Bhakti

A being is born selfish, at times one worships God so as to satisfy one's desires. Yet there is the birth of Bhakti (devotion) when a being unselfishly holds a loving relationship with God.

According to the Anushruti of Padma Puran bhakti related the story of its birth and development to Naradji - "I was born in Dravida, broughtup up in Karnataka, remained in Maharashtra for sometimes and then went to Gujarat in old age."²⁰

According to kabeer panthi communities Bhakti was born in Dravid State of South India. Swami Ramananda brought it to North India. Then, Sages like Kabeer widely spread it.²¹

"There is elaborate discussion of karmamarga in vadik sanhita and brahman bhaga, in Aranyak and upanishads gyanmarg has been described. Though there are seeds of bhaktimarg in them too."

The mantras to worship Agni, Indra, Varun, Rudra, Savita, all these Gods of Samhitas, reflects devotion and the heart of devotee, because of the humility (Vinay-Bhawana) expressed in them.²²

Twamaskam Twasmasi

Rigveda 8-81-32

It means you are mine and I am yours.

*"Yatranandasp modasch mudah pramud asate....."*²³

Meaning - O Lord! Always keep me and my mind in the state of bliss, joy delight and happiness.

In mantras when there is the description of the intimate feelings of the worshipper towards the object of worship and the grace and compassion of object of worship, then it is a symbol of the sowing of the seeds of Bhakti.

-Pg-140 Braj Ke Dharma Sampradaya

Nayamatma pravachanen labhyo, na meghaya, na bahun shruten /

Yamaiveshe vrinuto ten labhyastasyeish Atma vivrunute tanu swaya //

- Kathopnisha 1-2-23

Meaning: This soul is realized neither by discourses nor intelligence or deep studies. It is realized by the one who accepts it. For such a being the soul itself expresses its true nature.²⁴

Here it is quite evident that if one completely surrenders oneself to the grace of God then the impossible also becomes possible.

Here there is a hint of the element of devotion.

Shri Madbhagwat and Geeta are the scriptures of absolute devotion.

"The Bhakti Marga Dharma was propagated by the yadavas of shoorsen Janapada. This was accepted and promoted by the creation of sensitive verser and eulogies by the Alvars (Vaishnavas) of southern India and Jayanar (Shaiva) devotees. This was the first phase of the path of Bhakti." ²⁵

The second phase of Bhakti path began with the commencement of the upasana of Alavar bhaktas of southern India and their verses in Tamil language full of bhava and bhakti.²⁶

This period from 5th century to 11th century in South India was the period of widespread movement of Bhaktimarg. Earlier there was dominance of the renunciation path of knowledge of Buddhism and Jainism before this period.

With the division of the path of bhakti, vaishnav and Shaiva religions came into prominence.²⁷

From the fifth century to tenth century of vikram samvat there were many Alvar devotees.

Alvar is a word of Tamil language that means, "A great being absorbed in spirituality, knowledge and devotion towards God."

The tradition of alvar remained uptill tenth century followed by the period of Vaishnav acharyas.

"The basis of the devotion of Alvars was ardent - pure devotion on the other hand the crux of lives of the Acharyas was a beautiful union of work and worship."²⁸

The varkari saint Gyaneshwar and Namdeva strengthened the Bhakti movement of 13th and 14th century.

Adiguru Shankaracharya himself has written Bhashyas on geeta and vishnu Sahastranam and treatise like Prabodh Sudhakaidi which are devotional scriptures. He has written: -

Yadyapi Sakaro ayam tatheikadeshi vibhati yadunathah /

Sarvagatah sarvatma tatha pyayam satchitanandah //

It means: If we consider yadunath shri Krishna as God with form then also he is not ekdeshiya (applicable is one instance only). He is Sarvantaryami (omnipresent) Satchidananda God himself."²⁹

Maitreyi has described devotion as, "The complete reliance of the mind on ultimate Truth" (11.25.32 Shri Madbhagwat).

Bhakti validates that God is anonymously, invisibly present in every soul. According to Maharishi Narada there are two main causes of the rise of devotion: "The grace of saints and the grace of God" (Bhakti tatva kalyanmal yantra).

There are three stages in the practice of devotion "Pravartak sadhna (nam sadhana), state of sadhak and Sidhawastha (state of the realized one). God is chidananda – endowed with Achintyabhakti because the name of God itself is Swatahchaitanyamaya. The mercy and grace of God uprises by this name only."³⁰

"A pure body is bhavaveda. The state of the Pravartak is in worshipping God by working, this is sadhna bhakti,"³¹ similarly taking God object of worship) as the centre of all desires and all the waves of mind the state of sadhan is sahaka State. When there is oneness with God, i.e. the 'I' is completely lost in God, then the body is kept only so that the senses may also enjoy the name and beauty (nam and rupa) of God.

Bhakti is Ahladini (delighting) bhakti, living in the Prakrat body of the 'bhavadeha' remains apart, and this is the nature of a devotee. This creates a mutual relationship between the Akriti and Prakriti (Bhakti Tatva).³² As the momentum of devotion increases the attachment of the devotee towards kirtan (singing the glory of God) also increases. The devotee becomes extremely affectionate.³³ Swami Karpatriji has remarked about devotion and knowledge that

after the realization of Gyan also without devotion there is no elegance of Gyan. Gyan, renunciation, work religion all are glorified by "Premlakshana" devotion only.

Aham bhakt paradheeno haya swatantra iva wij /

Sadhu bhirgasthridayon bhakte bhakti jana priya //

- Bhakti Tatva 9–4.63.66

God himself says that He remains subordinate to his devotees:

Chaturvidya bhajante maam janah sukritino Arjun /

*Arto jigyasushyaarthir gyani cha Bharatarshabh //*³⁴

- Geeta (7–16)

There are four kinds of devotees mentioned in the Geeta – Artharthi, Jigyasu, Arta and Gyani. By controlling and obstructing ego a devotee is privileged to receive the divine love of God.³⁵ It means when all efforts are turned towards God then Bhakti is born

Sadgun shrui maitrena maryi sarvaguhashruye /

Manogati ravichchina yatha Gangam bhaso ambudhau //

Laksham bhakti yogasya nirgunasya hayudalatam /

Ahetukyavyavahita ya bhaktih purushottame //

- Shrimabhagvat 11-29, 11-12

Shri Krishna himself says that the mind is attracted towards me when one hears my attributes. I am the treasure house of all upeyaksha. This eternal flow of the mind should be like Ganges. That which flows incessantly like an ocean is Bhuvateet Bhakti yoga. Basically, devotion is that mental state which is satiated only by serving God. For this reason once the

process of bhakti begins, then there is immense probability that the end of this process would be the achievement of ultimate goal.³⁶

In order to have the vision of the unknown the imagination has to wear the clothes of such traits that are found in the things known to us. Infact, the great Shankaracharya had also declared that though Brahma is formless without any attributes yet in takes a form for the sake of upasana (worship).³⁷

Tantras, Purans and other religious scriptures have imagined the supreme God as particular Ishta devata. Sometimes as Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Ram or Krishna. "These are the forms of Brahma with attributes (Saguna Brahma). A devotee selects any of these forms as per the interest of his mind and does bhakti towards this form.

Basically God is one only. God with form (sagun brahma) helps the devotee to reach to the highest level of devotion. About a devotee there is a statement of Bhagvat, "The ultimate truth who is God is the objects of the meditation and contemplation of the devotee."³⁸

For a devotee the word "Ananyata" means except God, renunciation of all other sustenance or support,

// Anyashrayanam tyagoananyata //

- Narada bhakti sutra, pg 25, swami prabhupada

"Naradastu tadarpitakhilacharata tadvismarane paramvyakulteti //

- 19th sutra Narada Bhakti Sutra, pg 45

"The fruit of all means (sadhana) is devotion or bhakti. Bhakti is both Sadhan and Sadhya (means and end). All other methods or processes are worthwhile only when they make us reach bhakti. This is the foremost reason of the excellence of devotion."³⁹

Kanthaavarodharomashrumih parasparam lapmanah

pavayanti kulani prithvim cha /

- 68th sutra Narada Bhakti Sutra, pg 153

With thwarted throat (hindered voice) in excitement and flowing tears the intimate devotees of God communicate with God. They purify not only their descent but the whole earth. Thus the origin of devotion fulfills its purpose of goal.

"Devotion has deeply affected Indian religion, life, society, literature and culture." The concept of religion and its flow is in the streams of gyan, karma and bhakti.⁴⁰ Gopinath Kaviraj has remarked that if there is Gyan, and if this gyan or knowledge reaches its pinnacle and there is up rise of devotion- if this Gyan gets converted into vigyan - "Gyan-Vigyan-Triptatma", as Lord Krishna says in Gita not only Gyan (Knowledge) but vigyan vishishtagyan).

Here "Vishishta Gyan" (distinct knowledge) means knowledge with devotion. It means when knowledge takes the shape of devotion then Parbrahmagyan doesn't remain the knowledge of 'tvam' element it becomes the knowledge of 'Tat' element.⁴¹ 'Tat' element means - God. By the grace of Guru if a person is blessed with devotion, it means, when Gyan or knowledge takes the form of devotion, at such an instant the infinite resides in the undivided ordinary things – a devotee could see this, this is the vision of devotion. The samvid (sense) of the swaroop shakti of God i.e. chitshakti and his hridayini shakti, the shakti by which God relishes joy when both of them are united, their crux is devotion or bhakti.⁴²

As compared to the intricate and difficult path of knowledge and dry path of karma, bhakti is melodious and sweet as it is endowed with emotional feelings. It connects the devotee

to God by its emotional relationship. It could be done in any form, at any place and in any conditions.

Devotions doesn't need any rituals, yagya, havan, flower and philosophic discussions. It doesn't need the renunciation of the world or family. By doing the routine activities, one can easily do bhakti along with worldly karmas. Bhakti is the asset of the common people of the common man, due to attachments with maya, they forget devotion⁴³. There are diverse opinions about the origin and development of devotion. "In the early part of Middle Ages there was widespread promulgation of Bhakti in South India. It became an integral part of the religious life of people. In this age it received a new bloom, its philosophical and intellectual base was also strengthened. Later it came to India through Acharya Ramananda.

In the Middle Ages Kabeer, Meera, Dadoo, Nanak, Chaitanya, Mahaprabhu, Raidas, Soor, Tulsee, Meera, Narasinha Mehta took it to be pinnacle by their bhavas. They widely glorified it. From North India, it again came to south India. Saint Samartha Ramdas, Gyaneshwar, Saint Tukaram, Janabayee, Chokhamela, all of them made the common man dip in the ocean of bhakti. In the early Middle Ages the beauty of devotion was established in South India."⁴⁴

The early middle ages Bhakti tradition, is the gift of the traditional religious thoughts and philosophy.⁴⁵ "The Indus valley civilization reflects the antiquity of devotion as the worship of shiva and shakti was popular at that time."⁴⁶ According to Dr. V. Ch. Pandeya. : "Basically Bhakti is a post Aryan tendency."⁴⁷

After the coming of Aryans, when the Dravids settled in South Indian they came with the bhakti of Shiva and Shakti. Thus, in its initial stage bhakti had its focus on Shiva and Shakti.⁴⁸

“Later on importance was given to Lord Vishnu and his incarnations as well in devotion.”⁴⁹

“The bhakti movement of Middle Ages is the next step of Early Middle Ages and it is the second period of its regeneration.”⁵⁰ The early middle Ages bhakti actually developed in South India. “The saints of the early middle ages made devotion a mode of popular public movement and social reformation.”⁵¹ On the one hand the saints endowed it with the simplicity and surrender of emotions, on the other hand the Acharya’s endowed it with a philosophic base. With the birth of human heart bhakti also took birth naturally. “Devotion is as old as human heart. With the passage of time the form of Bhakti developed more and more. But the basic form of devotion is as old as man, the base of devotion of faith. This faith is prevalent right from the beginning of creation.”⁵² “Bhakti is accumulated, cherished intense love for God.”⁵³

1.2 Types of Bhakti

Devotion is a psychological sense and various distinctions of devotion based on the same has been assigned by different Acharya’s. These types are the only means Bhumiya. In the third wing of Shrimad Bhagwat-Gita according to nature four types of devotion are: (1) Tamas (2) rajas (3) Satviki (4) Nirguna. These first three are Kamay and fourth is Platonic. Gavanmanakama and love is the only without attributes Bhakti Yoga. There are three forms of pure devotion in Bhagwat (1) pure (2) Nvdha (3) Prema. In Saptam wing navdha devotion has been explained by prahlad. In the above nine types of devotion hearing and chanting has been placed first. So chanting and hearing is particularly important⁵⁴. Kirtan has special importance in Pustimarg. In this, the devotee meets his beloved Lord. Some people consider that the Vadhi the

dignity. Similarly Kamrupa and Sambndharupa relates devotee with Krishna. When the devotee becomes Platonic devotee to God then it is called as Prabkti. Mr. Rupaswami called the resources devotion and Para devotion of Vadhi and Ragnuga as Practicable devotion. There are five as part of the means devotion (1) worshipers (2) beloved (3) Pujadravay (4) Pujavidhi (5) Mantarjap. Acharya confirm route founder was a combination of the deeds and devotion. Krishna religion is merely a desire to do their householder. So it must be done. According to you Premavstha Navdha exclusive means of devotion to God. Love is at the highest place in devotion. So their idea of love metaphor devotion is affection, attachment and addiction. These are three conditions. When devotee fall in love with God then infatuation affection for the world is destroyed. From attachment to worldly substances are irritants and addiction occurs when the devotee becomes Kritkrity. Devotee takes joy of union with god in love. Acharya Vallabh gives love main place in devotional. The communal nature of devotion Kumaril Bhatt Vedic rites and began re-installation of the movement on the other hand Jagdguru Shankaracharya has set monotheism. Monism of the unity of the Spirit and fauna while rendering the basic idea of the devotion he has proven ignorance oriented. His statement that the Spirit and life are the same, so what is the need for devotion? Devotion is between the two. Sri Sankaracharya his profound erudition, exceptional talent and skills and eccentric personality was famous for discussion. So then walked binding principle of monotheism. On the one hand Jag guru Shankaracharya was able to get most popularity and on the other hand south alwar devotees does not worry about this decided to give protection to Legendary devotion and put the current to flow. In the 10th century AD philosopher as it provided various Acharya's and communal devotion as Krishna was her only highlight. In 10th and 11th century AD, eknath Muni who was in the south establish

Vaishnava organization, collection of devotion posts and chanting in temples and explain the philosophy of Vaishnava Bhakti tradition emphasized doctrine⁵⁵. These efforts Acharya Krishna bhakti which was divided into several denominations sanak, Brahma and Rudra or Vishnuswami heads. The communities most affected vast areas of the north. Acharya of these communities are shri ramanujacharya, Shri Nimbakacharya, Shri madhvacharya, Shri Vishnusawami.

1.3 The Discipline of Bhakti

All the creation of divine being has a meaning. He has created this world (Jagat) for his sport out of himself⁵⁶. He has also created the Jivas out of himself in a part form. This "Jivas Shruti", as it is known in Sastras, passes through various "Yonies" (reproduction process) and "Manushya Yoni" is one of them.

It is said that the divine being shows special compassion (krupa) on "Manushya Yoni" than shown on other yonies⁵⁷. He had provided hands, heart and mind to mankind. Hands indicated the power to do karma (actions), "Haiya" (heart) indicates to power of Bhakti, and "Magaj" (mind) indicates to the powers of intelligence using these three powers and the means (Sadhana) available to us, a man can with the assistance of a "Sad Guru" and his guidance can lead a life of dedicated dharma and ultimately reach divine person⁵⁸.

Vedas are the age old proofs of ancient (Sanatana) Vedic Dharma and have been accepted as such. Vedas are divided into two parts⁵⁹. In the first part, all the means that can be executed through "karma" are mentioned to achieve the divine contact, this mode of performance is known as "Karma Kanda". (Kanda denotes to a part). The part that exalts the path that leads to divine being by mentioning the processes and means is called "Karma Marg". The path of realisation is explained in detail in this part⁶⁰. In ancient times "Rishies" (Sages) - the masters of Vedic

knowledge - and those who practiced Vedic dharma regularly conducted "Yagnas" - names of ritualistic performances - regularly to propitiate celestials.

In the latter part (Uttara Kanda) of Vedas, spiritual elements like Brahman, Jagat and Jiva are described in extent. Since an elaborate knowledge is condensed into these works it also comes to be known as "Jnana Kanda". Rishies and Munies (Saints who contemplated on deeper knowledge) have strived in solitude to achieve this other wordly (Paralaukik) knowledge through means of yoga with the ulterior motive of realising divine being⁶¹. It is not easy for each and everybody to tread on this system called "Jnana Marga".

Vedas have granted permission to receive the "holy thread" - called yagnopavita - and recite "Gayatri Mantra" to three "Varnas" - categories i.e., general working systems - viz., Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya. Varna and Ashrama are the age old divisions of a human system working and observing certain religions a kind of a division under which the present caste system is arrived at⁶². The four Varna have specific functions to perform under religion sanctions. "Ashrama" have a broader acceptance into following religious duties and are divided into four divisions called:

1. Brahmacharya ashram - taking a vow of celibacy and lead a life of dedication to vedic life
2. Grahasta ashram - i.e., lead a life of a householder after marriage
3. Vanaprastha ashram - i.e., conducting a peaceful sojourn in an ashram where the couple will be free of all household responsibilities and
4. Sanyas ashram - i.e., relinquishing all attachment for worldly entanglements and striving for attaining emancipation known as Moksha

The fourth Varna i.e., Sudra and a woman are not entitled to receive "yagnopavita" or Gayatri Mantra without being consecrated into "yagnopavita diksha", one cannot be allowed to practice Karma Marga or Gyana Marga. Hence for the Sudras and women it has turned difficult to realise divine being^{63,64}.

Upanishads form a part of the literature of Vedas. Upanishads deal prominently with the knowledge about the other worldly elements and in a subtle forms deal with bhakti also⁶⁵. In a way one can say safely that the whole of Veda not only deal with the systems of karma and gyana but subtly mention about Bhakti also⁶⁶.

There were two Maharishis in ancient times namely Maharishi Narad and Maharishi Shandilya. Both the Maharishis were more of Bhaktas than Gyanies. Maharishi Narad was a deep devotee of divine being. He was called "Parama Vaishnava". Maharishi Shandilya was the "Purohita" of Sri Nanda Raiji. Purohit is a person who conducts religious practices on behalf of a householder⁶⁷. He lived all his life in Vraj and practiced Bhagavada Bhakti. Both these Maharishies have composed rules and regulations explaining the form of Bhakti and its doctrines on the form of Canon. Maharishi Narad had composed "Narad Bhakti Sutra". He had also composed another work called "Narad Pancha Ratna". Maharishi Shandilya had written a work called "Bhakti Sutras". Relying on these works propaganda for the system of Bhakti is undertaken during the period after the life time of Adi Sankaracharya⁶⁸.

Beginning from 10th century A.D. to 17th century - a span of 800 years - the whole of Bharat has seen a great insurgence of Bhakti⁶⁹. Among them, Sri Ramanujacharya was the first. He has established a tradition of Vaishnavism and encouraged Vishnu Bhakti. Following suit of this great Acharya, Sri Madhavacharya and Sri Nimbarkacharya have carried the banner for

Vishnu Bhakti and Krishna Bhakti through their traditions of "Madhava Sampradaya" and "Nimbarka Sampradaya". They carried on in South India and North India around 15th century CE. Shri Vallabhacharyaji has established his "Pusti Marga" and through his special kind of Bhakti called "Yasodatsanga Lalita Sri Krishnas Prema Lakshana Bhakti" and gave a great spurt to its propaganda throughout Bharat. During the same period Sri Krishna Chaitanya also has advanced "Nama SanKirtan Bhakti" through Bangal and North India. Later on, in 18th century, one Sri Sahajananda Swami has propagated on Sampradaya called "Swami Narayana" sampradaya and advocated the Bhakta of Sri Narayana. In this way we observe the growth of Bhakti cult started in around 10th century A.D. and is being propagated right through the present century. It is gaining hold every day⁷⁰. A great filling is added by the compositions of Bhakti poets who have kept the torch burning through centuries.

Shri Vallabhacharyaji has composed many works explaining the intricacies of Bhakti and its systems. In his commentary on Sri Bhagavata viz., Sri Subodhini, he had explained the concept of Bhakti in a beautiful way⁷¹. In this work he has pointed out what is "Prema Lakshana Bhakti" and how it has to be practiced. Even in his "Shodashgrantha" he has in many places, mentioned about this special kind of Bhakti which he named as "Prema Lakshana". HIS descendents had tried to simplify this doctrine by composing books on the subject in works like: "Bhakti Hausa: "Bhakti Hetu" and" Bhakti Ratna"⁷². There are many more books on this doctrine. Shri Dayarambhai has composed a long poem called "Bhakti Poshana" to explain the form of Bhakti⁷³.

Meaning of word "Bhakti": This word "Bhakti" is a sanskrit word. It is derived from the verb "Bhaj" to this is added a "pratyaya" "kitana" and as a derivation it become "Bhakti". The

meaning of the verb "Bhaj" is to offer seva⁷⁴. "Kitana" means with affection. Hence the combined word "Bhakti" means to serve Sri Thakurji with an emotion of love or attachment under Sanskrit grammar when a verb (dhatu) is associated with a "pratyaya" the meaning becomes more leaning on the "pratyaya" than on its verb. Hence with this word "Bhakti" the meaning of "Sneha purvak" i.e., with attachment remained the important factor. If you offer service (seva) without the accompanying "sneha" or love it cannot be said "Bhakti". In order to put pressure on the aspect of "sneha" the adjective "Prema Lakshana" is added before the word "Bhakti". Hence the new concept turned out to be "Prema Lakshana Bhakti". Hence, Bhakti means: attachment towards divine being (Bhagavan)⁷⁵. In other words: to serve divine being with love. Since the combined word consists of a verb "Bhaj" it indicates to the acting side of word viz., to serve. If a person shows only attachment towards divine being but does not serve HIM, then we cannot say that he is having Bhakti. Supposing another person attends to the part of Seva only - just for duty's sake, or for sustenance or for his stomach's sake, but does not entertain any attachment for divine being then also his Seva cannot be called Bhakti^{76,77}.

Let us understand this through an illustration: a woman delivers a child in a Maternity Home. A nurse trained in a child care attends to the child. In spite of the special knowledge she attends the child care as part of Nursing home duties so we cannot say that she is doing it with Bhakti. Neither can we say it is Seva. Look at the mother. She becomes a mother first time. She has no knowledge of how to care for a child⁷⁸. But she shows immense love for the baby child. Whatever she does for the care of her infant is called "Santana Bhakti". It is Seva to Santana i.e., her own child. Hence it is essential that Seva should be enveloped with the sentiment of oneness,

attachment. When this love takes the form of action it completes as Bhakti. Bhakti is divided into two parts:

1. Para Bhakti - Mukhya Bhakti - Prema Lakshana Bhakti or Pusti Bhakti
2. Gauni Bhakti - Maryada Bhakti

We have observed that the character of a person is influenced by the combination of three qualities called "Gunas" 1. Satvic Guna. 2. Rajas Guna and 3. Tamas Guna. When these Gunas intermingle they become nine gunas. 1. Satvic - Satvic, 2. Satvic - Rajas, 3. Satvic Tamas, 4. Rajas - Rajas, 5. Rajas - Satvic, 6. Rajas - Tamas, 7. Tamas - Tamas, 8. Tamas - Satvic and 9. Tamas - Rajas. There is one more element called "Nirguna" i.e., without any attributes. It is the 10th Guna. In the system of Maryada Bhakti a Bhakta is guided by these nine kinds of causes and as such follows "nine kinds of Maryada Bhakti" called "Navadha Bhakti". These methods are narrated in Shastras⁷⁹⁻⁸².

But Pushti Bhakti is special. It adopts "Nirguna Bhakti". In this way we also observe that there are two more kinds of Bhakti called Saguna Bhakti and Nirguna Bhakti. The learned scholars' categorize Maryada Bhakti as a system laid down by Shastras. Since it strictly observes the norms of Shastras it remains under certain Vedic order and is called Maryada Bhakti (Maryada itself suggests certain limitations lay down under Shastras)⁸³. A Maryada Bhakti does upasna (a mode of worship) and other procedures as have been mentioned in Shastras. Under Maryada Bhakti, a Bhakta (devotee) can worship any celestial (Dev or Devi). Keeping one of them as their Ista (chosen) deity, the final result of this kind of Bhakti is - if it comes to the utmost obtaining Moksha or emancipation⁸⁴.

Again Maryada Bhakti is divided into Sakama Bhakti (doing Niskama Bhakti i.e., Bhakti without any anticipation of results). If someone conducts Bhakti with an intention of obtaining materialistic results or achieving other world results, then it is called "Sakama Bhakti". This kind of worshipping an "Ista Deva" has selfish motives behind their action⁸⁵. Such a sakama Bhakta must be doing Maryada Bhakti with an intention to an end to the affliction of the world, or to gaining worldly pleasures, or to obtain Moksha after death or to obtain heavenly benefits. There may be some Maryada Bhaktas who do not wish to gain any of this and other worldly achievements and may do the upasana and puja of his "Ista Deva"⁸⁶. Then it is called Niskama Bhakti". The result of this kind of Bhakti is Moksha. We have read some famous Maryada kind of Bhaktas like Narasimha Mehta and Mirabai whose Ista Deva is Sri Krishna. They have been great devotees of Sri Krishna. But even then they had entertained the thought that their worldly affliction be mitigated by HIM. Hence, whenever Narshimha Mehta passed through any material afflictions he used to call for the assistance of divine being. Any slight inconvenience in life would make him shout for divine help, thus causing exertion to Sri Krishna when her brother-in-law Rana had sent poison to drink, Mirabai, instead of simply swallowing it, offered to her Ista Deva Sri Krishna, thus putting HIM into inconvenience that is why Maryada Bhakti is not pure and complete Prema Lakshana Bhakti⁸⁷.

We said that Pushti Bhakti is also called Prema Lakshana Bhakti. It is also called "Para" i.e., something superb and "Mukhya" or chief Bhakti. In this kind of devotion we anticipate aspects like Bhakti of "Ananya" i.e., having no parallel character, pure, without any guilt and Niskama attachment for Purna Purushottama, parabrahma Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Pushti Bhakti

can never be practiced with expectation in return. Hence it is called "Bhaituki", i.e., without a reason, or "Nishkama" or desireless⁸⁸.

The aim in conducting Pushti Bhakti is not to get freedom from worldly sorrows, to obtain worldly pleasures, not to attain heaven after death and to obtain Moksha - it is done out of nature affection for Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Hence a Pushti Bhakta does HIS Bhakti. For this reason it is called "Prema Lakshana Bhakti"⁸⁹.

But no one finds any extending description of this Bhakti in Shastras. Therefore it is also called "sastra avihita" Bhakti i.e., not expressed in Shastras. In practicing Pushti Bhakti the Maryada or orders of sastras do not form an obstacle. A Pushti bhakta practices life long the Bhakti of purna purushottama, Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Learning HIM aside, he never attempts to offer any upasana or puja to any Devi or Deva. He never tries to give exertion to HIM for his personal comfort. He does not even entertain any expectation for receiving supernatural results. He believes that Bhagvan Sri Krishna is dearer than his very Atma (self). He lives for HIS comfort only⁹⁰. He does not even consider about his personal longings or conveniences. We are told that the first lucky persons who have practiced this kind of Pushti Bhakti lived in Vraj during the "Sarasvata Kalpa" (a distinct period during Manifestation of Sri Krishna) are "Vraj Bhaktas".

The same Pushti Bhakti is revived by Shree Mahaprabhuji for the benefit of Pushti Jivas. The reason offered is: according to the contention of Shree Mahaprabhuji a jiva has an origin of Pushti. i.e., he has emanated from the body of Bhagavan, he is a special jiva of divine being, and he has been created for the seva of Sri Thakurji⁹¹. There is no other reason for Pushti Jivas to live except Bhagavad seva. Hence Shree Mahaprabhuji has exposed Pushti Bhakti for Pushti Jivas.

We should try to understand on more differences between Maryada Bhakti and Pushti Bhakti under Maryada Bhakti. Followings are nine steps as enumerated by Shastras:

1. Katha sravana (listening to the episodes of Bhagavata)
2. Kirtan (praising the magnificence of divine being in songs)
3. Smarana (remembering God)
4. Vandana i.e., bowing before God
5. Pada Sevana or worshipping the feet
6. Archana or offering prayers or worship
7. Desya sentiment of a servant
8. Sakhya or comradeship
9. Atma nivedana or surrendering one self

Thus we see that a Maryada Bhakta has to pass through eight processes of devotion before he reaches the stage where he dedicates everything to his Ista deity. In this way Maryada Bhakti has the backing of Sastras⁹³. HIS Ista is known as "Premaya". (A Premaya is an demonstrable object). The method used in the practice of nine steps of Bhakti is the means (Sadhana). The results obtained would be from gaining worldly benefits to reaching the stage of emancipation called Moksha.

There are some grand wrong notions on the subject of Bhakti amongst members of Vaishnavas society. The reason for this is: they believe that they are practicing true Bhakti, but in fact it is not the true form of Bhakti⁹⁴. Many people out of pure show as if they are following Bhakti, while others respect the actions of Bhakti following others. Very few can be said to be practicing Bhakti. In order to understand the three kinds of Bhakti it is compared to a coconut. A

coconut has a hard outer surface with fibrous growth around. If you taste the outer crust it will be very repulsive. You will not find the delicious taste of the kernel. Those who practice Bhakti for outward appearance or out of pride it is something like tasting the fibrous content of the outer coconut. No result can be achieved by show⁹⁵.

Sree Hariraiji has specifically mentioned in “Shiksha Patra” that if at all you desire to achieve some results, never attempt practice Bhakti either to gain material comforts or to establish you are a great bhakta. Do not exhibit your worldly skills in the practice of Bhakti. You may attempt to deceive the world but you cannot decoy Jagadisha (the lord of the world). Our Prabhu knows whatever transpires in your mind (Antaryami). HE will know the truth if their mind. Hence never practice showing up or deceit in Bhakti⁹⁶.

To adopt bhakti to show to others, to practice it to earn money, to gain showers of praise by seva, to fill your stomach by professing seva – all these are not true forms of Bhakti. It amounts to show off alone.

1.4 Notion of Bhakti Sangeet

Music is considered as a performing art which is the medium of expressing the feelings of human pleasures. In simple words, we can say that Music is directly related to soul. But, as we refer to the definition of Music, we can say that: “Music is the combination of three fine arts namely: singing (vocal), playing instruments (instrumental) and dance”. Music is a gift for all human beings in the form of fine arts. It is said that, God himself is personified as ‘Nadabrahma’. Indian Music is among the oldest forms of Music in the world. We may remind ourselves of quotation⁹⁷,

*“Naham Vasami Vaikunthe nayogi hridya ravau,
Madbhakta yatra gayanti tatra tishthami Narady”*

“I dwell not in Vaikuntha or in the hearts of yogis, where my bhaktas sing, there I am Narada.” But, one cannot admire the unbroken chain of continuity of these aspects in present century, where science plays much greater part in the realm of art as well as in the life of people. The Indian Music has a very long and continuous tradition which accumulate heritage of centuries. In India, Music is known as ‘Sangeet’. Three basic elements of Indian Music are ‘Swara’, ‘Tala’, and ‘Laya’. All these basic elements directly indicate that music is employed for its three fold meanings, namely Gayan (Vocal Music), Vadan (Instrumental Music) and Nritya (Dance). The definition of music according to *Sangeet Ratnakar* is:

*“Geetam Vadyam Tatha Nrityam,
Trayam Sangeet Muchyate”*

The definition given by Sangitacharya Pandit Sharngdeva also indicates that music has three-fold paths namely, Geetam (Vocal Music), Vadyam (Instrumental Music) and Nrityam (Dance). This definition is being followed by all scholars till today.

*“Geetvaditranritynam Rakti: Sadharno Guna:
Ato Raktivihinam Yatna Tat Sangitmuchyate”*

Geetam, Vadyam and Nrityam have ultimate supremacy to entertain everyone. Thus, music which cannot entertain (Rakti) should not be called Music (Sangeet). The origin of Indian Music is said to be rooted in the ‘Vedas’. As, the Sound which pervades the whole universe is ‘Nadabrahma’, the origin of Indian Music are considered as divine. It is said that the musician has to cultivate an attitude of self-abandonment, in order to fuse with the divine power, God

Brahma who is said to be the author of the four ‘Vedas’, of which the ‘SamaVeda’ was chanted in definite musical patterns. Vedic hymn were sung in plain melody, using only three notes⁹⁸.

*“Sama-giti-rato Brahma Veena-Sarasvati,
Kinnaye Yaksh-Ggdhrvadeva-Danav-Manva”*

God Brahma is deeply concerned in ‘Samgana’, while, Goddess Saraswati occupies and engaged intensively in musical instrument ‘Veena’. If we see the picture of Goddess Saraswati, we can easily make an idea through the accessories like Veena in one hand and book and necklace of pearls in other hands that, Goddess Saraswati represents art and knowledge. Music is famed as the most abstract and flexible form of all arts which exist as ‘Sound’. Sound is the chief medium through which most of the species communicate with ease. Taking the clue from nature, primitive man evolved the sign-language as they found it as the most self-expressive method. The dancer resorts to the physical action while the singer resorts to the medium of human voice. Thus, the sign language and sound language are the earliest natural and common forms used for articulate speech, music and dancing. In the sound language, the complicated and delicate shades of emotions can be brought out with remarkable precision by affecting the musical quality of the vowels. This kind of musical utterance employing modulate changes of pitch and stress was easily understood by all races of mankind, whatever language they speak. These emotional and imitative sounds are the very first source language which proves the great antiquity of music.

Vocal Music is known as the base of all instrumental music according to various scholars. Also, the human throat is known as the very first musical instrument therefore both vocal music and instrumental music are mystically connected to each-other. It is quite appropriate that India,

the classical store-house of manifestations of human mind, has kept alive almost all stages of expansion of the art of music.

The origin of Indian Instrumental Music goes back to pre-vedic period. However, continuing process of evolution of Indian Classical Music is easily apparent in the Vedic literature, Epics, Buddhist, Jain sources, Panini's Ashtadhyayi, Puranas and the surviving Sanskrit texts in music such as those of Bharta, Narada, Dattila, Matanga, Abhinavgupta, Nanyadeva, Someshvara etc. till we reach the time of Sarangdeva, whose *Sangeet Ratnakara* (1230 A.D.) contains entire record of evolution of Indian Classical Music in his time. His work epitomizes the typical instance of the Indian Classical Music in comprehensive and accurate manner, thus later works like Sudha Kalasha's *Sangitopanishatsaroddhara* (14th century), Maharana Kumbha's *Sangitaraja* (15th century), Subhankara's *Sangita Damodara* (15th century), Pundrika Vittala's *Sadaragachandrodaya* (16th century) and other works have drawn much from Sangita Ratnakara. Indian music has attained its classical form by Sarangdeva's time. Music, like any creative art, is never static. We find that though the basic concepts about the Shruti, Grama, Murchana, Jatis, Svara, Grama-ragas, Gitis, Varna, Tala, Raga, Prabhandas etc. did not change, even from Matanga Muni's time, gram ragas and desi sangeet began to influence Indian Classical Music and as a result new musical forms emerged gradually replacing the older ones. In the meantime, vaggeyakaras and instrument players continued to create new ragas, music patterns, and instruments to enhance creativity and innovative urge. Thus there was "tremendous upsurge of tala construction" as is evident from the fact that while Bharat Muni mentions only five talas, by the thirteenth century the number had risen to one hundred twenty⁹⁹.

With the establishment of the Muslims (Turuks, Persians, Khurnis, Taziks, Afghans, and Mughals etc.) in the era 1200-1600 A.D., a lot of new supplementary had been introduced to the Indian Music, which was very valuable for the Indian Music. For example, the Muslims had brought with them advanced system of music and number of musical instruments like Rabab, Qanun, and Nay etc. The rudiments of Arab-Persian and Central Asian music were visible at the court of Delhi sultans and in the musical assemblies of the Nobles and Princes. We find that in the establishment, the interaction was slow, but gradually, for various reasons which have been discussed at some length, Indian Classical Music came to acquire a pre-renowned position. At the same time, Muslim Music, particularly Instrumental Music continued to take delivery of beneficiation of the Sultans, the Mughal Emperors, as well as of such nobles who came to India.

It took a long time for music to come to the form found presently in India. The most important advancement in music was made between the 14th and 18th centuries. During this period, the music sung in the north came in contact with Persian Music and assimilated it, through the Pathans and the Mughals. It is then that two schools of music resulted, the Hindustani and the Carnatic. Hindustani Music adopted a scale of Shudha Swara Saptaka (octave of natural notes) and Carnatic Music retained the traditional octave. During this period, different styles of classical compositions such as Dhrupad, Dhamar, Khayal, etc. were contributed to Hindustani Music, along with many exquisite hymns, bhajans, kirtans, and etc¹⁰⁰.

It is very difficult to divide Indian music in various categories. Some most famous categories are:

- Indian Classical Music or Shastriya Sangeet

- Indian Semi-Classical Music or Up-Shastriya Sangeet
- Folk Music or Lok Sangeet
- Religious Music or Bhakti Sangeet
- Popular Music or Jana Sangeet

The detail study is given below for various categories:

Indian Classical Music or Shastriya Sangeet

Indian Classical Music is bound by certain laws. This is also known as ‘Art Music’ or ‘Kalatmak Sangeet’ or ‘Raagdari Sangeet’ or ‘Shastriya Sangeet’. In Indian Classical Music, emotions are expressed through a particular raga, though the lyrics or composition has its own importance. This can be effective if the musician renders the raga in its various stages and moods. This is not the case with folk music, where the musical notes have less value and the poetic content has greater impact and rhythm plays a very important role.

Indian Semi-Classical Music or Up-Shastriya Sangeet

Indian Semi-Classical or Up-Shastriya Sangeet is also known as ‘Light Music’. It is less rigid than classical music and does not require the knowledge of classical ragas and rhythms on part of audience. In such music, there is a proper blend of poetry, tune and tempo. But, less attention is paid to the purity of raga and more towards content of compositions.

Folk Music or Lok-Sangeet

A reasonable statement that can be made for folk music is that it has no conscious grammar, even if it changes historically like classical music. Folk Music has different forms depending on the region it belongs to. With flexibility in its expression, it is not bound by laws or any set pattern. Folk Music has its peculiar expressions and emotions and has established a

tradition of its own. Songs and lyrics of folk music portray the common life of the villagers.

Popular Music or Jana Sangeet

Popular Music is simple and very easy to understand by an ordinary man. That is why popular music is called 'Jana-Sangeet'. Popular music can be identified as a musical product of numerous subcultures that co-exist in a society. New waves of migraines, temporary or a sudden fascination of the general public with religious cults, changing but fierce commitment to political or social movements, and 'explosive' way to new musical formulae, are some of the more obvious factors responsible for emergence and propagation of popular music. Another important factor is the growing middle class population and acceleration in process of urbanisation. In addition, concepts of leisure time, desire, and capacity for recreation demands a specific kind of music identified as Popular Music. The mass-media functions not only to propagate popular music but also act as a major shaping influence. Hence, media-idioms, time-restrictions / allocations, available transmission facilities, and other operational features of the media govern the techniques, forms, as well as content of Popular Music.

Religious Music or Bhakti Sangeet

Religious Music or Bhakti Sangeet in India consists of three sub- expressions, described as 'Upasana-Sangeet', 'Bhakti-Sangeet' (Devotional), and 'Goodhatma' (Mystical). Musically, the second sub-expression is more prominent and relevant in the present context.

Bhakti Sangeet is a devotional Sangeet based on Hindustani Classical Music that includes Dhrupad. This was a devotional movement emphasising the intense emotional attachment of a devotee towards his personal god. The term 'Bhakti' is first used around 800 BC in Pali literature. The devotional fervour of the Alvars and the Nayanars, the saints who lived in South India

between the 5th and the 10th centuries, also travelled north. In due course 'Bhakti' became a widespread Hindu religious movement and way of life, inspiring copious volumes of superb religious poetry and art. The 'Bhakti' cult spread to the north in the 14th and 15th centuries, where it resonated with the Rama and Krishna devotional cults. Theoreticians like Ramanujacharya and Ramananda and saint-poets like Kabir and Tulsidas belonged to the Rama tradition. Vallabhacharya and his contemporary Sri Chaitanya spearheaded two separate Krishna cults in the 17th century. The Vallabha cult directly contributed to the theory and practice of music. This impacted Hindustani Art Music as well through Ashtachap, Pushti and Haveli Sangeet.

By the 15th century, large parts of the areas under the sway of Hindustani Art Music were well ahead in linguistic and literary development. Using the regional language, Braj, Avadhi or whatever, as the vehicle, saint-composers were able to reach to people in social strata otherwise impervious to the influence of art and music. In the Bhakti movement as in Hindustani Art Music, songs and composite presentations, using elements of speech, dance and drama, played a major role in propagating ideas in art and music. The works of composers like Jayadeva (11th century), Vidyapati (1375 AD), Chandidas (14th-15th centuries), Bhakta Narasimha (1416-1475 AD) and Meerabai (1555-1603 AD) are ready cases in point.

The Bhakti movement remains an isolated example of a collective use of the structures and stylistic features of art music. As we had seen earlier that Shree Vallabhacharya propounded the Shudhadvaita Vedanta (pure non-dualism) or Pushti Marg (the road to grace). His sect was known as the 'Rudra Sampradaya'. The Vallabhacharya cult revived an older stream of music. The religious and musical procedures of the cult were systematized by Vallabhacharya's son

Goswami Vitthalnathji (1516-1698 AD). The 'Ashtachap' stream of music was thus established (1607-8 AD). It was named after the eight musical acharyas or preceptors who composed the music of the cult. The legendary Tansen too came under its influence.

Haveli Sangeet is temple music practiced by the *Vaishnavites* of Nathdwara in Rajasthan. Nathdwara is the main seat of the *Vaishnava* devotional cult which created a rich historical tradition of temple-based music. '*Haveli*' here is referred to a palace that the deity chooses to live in. In comparison to *Dhrupad*, Haveli Sangeet, as it is known in Rajasthan and Gujarat, claimed superior resilience as it was believed that Lord Krishna himself was the very audience for its performances. In this music practice, the very essence of the song revolves around Krishna *Bhakti* and is sung in the form of *Kirtans*, *Bhajans* and *Bhava Nritya*. Known to incorporate a fusion of classical and folk music, the dominant style of singing is still *Dhrupad* and *Dhamar*. The temples of *Radha Vallabh* at Vrindaban, *Krishna* at Nandgaon, *Shri Radha Rani* at Barsana, and *Sri Nathji* at Nathdwara are all known to reverberate with Haveli Sangeet. Haveli Sangeet is almost extinct. It is known to be more vulnerable than classical Dhrupad, mainly due to the audience's lack of understanding it. While an '*art music*' audience can recognize Dhrupad as well as Haveli Sangeet as more sophisticated musical genres, the ordinary listener would merely consider Haveli Sangeet to be devotional songs like *Bhajans*. The musical history of the post-Ashtachap period of Pushti-Sangeet coexists with many developments in Hindustani Art Music. The advent of the Dhrupad, Khayal and Tappa, the dissociation of dance from music, and the shift from the pakhawaj to the tabla, all happened during this period¹⁰¹.

1.5 The Path of Divine Grace

Pushti Marg also known as “the Path of Grace” is a Vaishnav sect of the Hinduism, founded by Vallabhacharyaji (also known as Mahaprabhuji) around 1500 AD. Followings are some of the main philosophies of the path of grace:

- It (Pushtimarg) is spontaneous, selfless and motiveless love for Shri Krishna.
- It is based on pure love for Shri Krishna.
- It is expressed only through service of Shri Krishna - "Seva".
- It is love after realising Shri Krishna's true nature.
- The knowledge gained is not a means of liberation.
- Liberation is considered secondary to the enjoyment of Shri Krishna's bliss.
- Its aim is Shri Krishna's happiness.
- No caste, creed, color, sex or age prevents one from attaining Shri Krishna's Grace.
- It does not know any boundaries, be it time, place or anything else.
- It does not require a devotee to give up a householder's life. In fact, one can serve Him better, by being a householder. This is different from other philosophies that require a life of contemplation as a monk.
- All the worldly desires are diverted towards Shri Krishna; they are then not required to be suppressed.
- World is not looked down upon but is treated as Shri Krishna's creation and thus as real as Shri Krishna himself.
- Shri Krishna is the Supreme; all the other deities reside in his form. Therefore total faith is placed in Shri Krishna alone.

- In the state of liberation the entity of the devotee merges into *Shri Krishna's blissful form, but in Bhakti (especially Pushti Bhakti) the devotee does not seek liberation but he enjoys Shri Krishna's bliss by participating in it as a separate divine entity.

Seva is a key element of worship in Pushti Marg. All followers are expected to do seva to their personal icon of Krishna. In Pushti Marg, where the descendants of Shri Vallabhacharyaji reside and perform Seva of their own idol of Shri Krishna is called a "haveli" - literally a "mansion". Here the seva of thakurji(Shri Krishna) is performed with the *bhaav* of the Nandalaya. There is a daily routine of allowing the laity to have "darshan" (adore) the divine icon 8 times a day¹⁰². The Vallabhkul adorn the icon in keeping with Pushti traditions and follow a colourful calendar of festivals. Some of the important aspects of Pushti Marg Seva are:

1. *Raag* (playing and hearing traditional Haveli music)
2. *Bhog* (offering pure vegetarian saatvik food that does not contain any meat or such vegetables as onion, garlic, cabbage, carrots, and a few others)
3. *Shringar* (decorating the deity with beautiful clothes and adorning the deity with jewellery)

All of the above three are included in the daily *seva* (devotional service) which all followers of Pushtimarg offer to their *Thakurji* (personal Krishna deity), and all of them have been traditionally prescribed by Goswami Shri Vitthalnathji almost five hundred years ago. Shri Vitthalnathji is also called Gusainji (Vallabhacharya's second son). The *raag*, *bhog*, and *shringar* offerings vary daily according to the season, the date, and time of day, and this is the main reason why this path is so colourful and alive.

Seva is the most important way to attain *Pushti* in Pushti Marg and has been prescribed by Vallabhacharya as the fundamental tenet. All principles and tenets of Shuddhadvaita Vaishnavism stem out from here.

Other two main concepts of Pushti Marg are “Saranagati” and “Samarpana”. In sanskrit the word “Sarana” has three meanings :- (a) one who protects or protector. (b) Asraya : or shelter. (c) Ghar or home. A person needs some basis for sustenance. To be safe you need a protector for freedom from anxieties, a home and for various requirements of life a shelter of some competent person. It is difficult to find a single person who can offer us all the three requirements in worldly sense, because the capacities of people as regards wealth and power are very limited. Even the celestial Devies and Devatas, entities that belong to “Vyuha” or incarnations are not fully capable of providing shelter to mankind. Each has his or her limitations. Devas are under the governance of Nature (Prakruti). Even the abode of divine being called “Aksharadham” enjoys only limited bliss calld Ananda. Only Purna Purushottama Bhagavan Sri Krishna is the most distinguished person. He has unlimited capabilities. HE is the master of wealth of Ananda that can never be decreased. His lotus like feet is our shelter or our home. HE can stand support to us in our joys and sorrows. HE alone can provide full protection to us. For this reason Sri Mahaprabhuji has recommended taking shelter of Sri Krishna alone. Then a person can be free from all anxieties¹⁰³.

In the system of Bhakti the principle “sarana” takes the form of a foundation. A many stories building can stand firmly on a well prepared foundation. Hence, Bhakti should stand on a foundation of the principle “Saranagati”. That is the reason why Shri Mahaprabhuji has treated “Saranagati” as a part or division of Bhakti. Since Bhakti is bifurcated into Maryada and Pushti

Bhakti even the “Sarna” or shelter is divided into Maryada and Pushti. The “Sarana Marga” advocated in Shri Gitaji is related to the Sarana Marga of Maryada. Sri Mahaprabhuji has pointed out to another Sarana Marga which has a bearing with Pushti Marg and is different from the other one. For this reason Shree Mahaprabhuji is called “Pruthats Sarana Margo Padeshtah”.

In Maryada Bhakti Marga you offer something (Arpana) to divine being. But in Pusti Bhakti Marga you surrender everything. A Pusti Bhakta never keeps anything for himself. He surrenders all to HIM. He takes a vow to remain a dasa or servant. There is a fundamental difference between this aspect of “arpana” and “samarpana”¹⁰⁴.

Shastras have explained in following sentences:

*If a person though a supreme holder of his vast properties
decides to offer everything to another, and leave all his
ownership over it, then it is called “dana” i.e., bestowing all to
somebody. Dana means giving up your personal authority over
your property.*

Here satraps are clear in their dictates. They say that when once you have granted your permission to someone else, you cannot under any circumstances take it back. A donor cannot even use the donated property for himself. Even if he enjoys it unknowingly, he will be subjected to moral offence. It amounts to a Mahadisha (great offence) and one has to perform “Prayaschita”. (It is a process where you perform certain rites to compensate your offence).

In this manner if a person donates any object of his possession to any Devi or Devata it is called “arpana” i.e., an offering. The principles of “dana” (donation) apply even to this kind of religious offering when an object is offered in this fashion to any Devi or Devata. The donor

cannot then claim any right over it or attempt to use it. Whatever is donated to Devi and Devata is known as “deva dravya” i.e., money belonging to celestials. Any usage of “deva dravya”, under Shastras, is considered to a great sin. Shastras go to the extent of claiming that, even if you touch a person who uses the “deva dravya”.

Not only in Hindu Dharma but even in the Jain Dharma, the followers when they offer anything to their chosen deity would not dare to touch it again. This “deva dravya” should be utilised for devas only. When you offer something to “Mahadevji” it is called “Shiva Nirmalya”. This Shiva nirmalya is not accepted even by his devotees. Only his “pujari” – priest takes it. But no one would like to exchange a daughter in marriage or sit with him in feasts when once he accepts Shiva nirmalya. He would be considered to belong to low status¹⁰⁵.

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