

Jesus bhakti mār̄ga

**How
YOU
can know
GOD**

The Christian message is called the Gospel, which means Good News. The good news is that God has revealed himself to man through Jesus Christ who is the ultimate avatāra or incarnation of God. Jesus was and is true God and true man. His main mission on earth was to suffer and die for us all, the perfect for the imperfect, so that he could do away with our sin and our bad karma. Surrender your life to Jesus through faith and you will have your bad karma cancelled. Isn't that good news? Through faith in Jesus and through the power of his Spirit we can experience union with him and with God. This spiritual union with the Paramaātman produces joy and peace which surpass anything the world can give, and there is also the promise of eternal salvation (moksha); not unconscious absorption into God, but a life of bliss in his presence. Isn't that good news?

The present generation of educated Indians is almost as secularised as its counterpart in the West and has little knowledge of, or interest in, the traditional piety of popular Hinduism. Their chief medium for the assimilation of Hindu religious philosophy is Indian films. In other words, many are Hindu by culture only, and cannot claim to be religious or to know God.

Saccidānanda

I bow to him who is Being, Consciousness and Bliss,
I bow to him whom worldly minds loathe,
Whom pure minds yearn for, the Supreme Abode.

He is Supreme, the Ancient of Days, the Transcendent,
Indivisible Plenitude, Immanent yet above all things,
Three-fold relation, pure, unrelated, knowledge beyond knowledge.

The Father, Sun, Supreme Lord, unborn,
The seedless Seed of the tree of becoming,
The Cause of all, Creator, Providence, Lord of the universe.

The infinite and perfect Word,
The Supreme Person begotten, sharing in the Father's nature,
Conscious by essence, giver of true salvation.

He who proceeds from Being and Consciousness,
Replete with the breath of perfect bliss,
The Purifier, the Swift, the Revealer of the Word, the Life-giver.

Victory to God, the God-Man

The transcendent image of Brahman blossomed
And mirrored in the full-to-overflowing Eternal Intelligence –
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Child of the pure virgin, Guide of the universe,
Infinite in Being, yet beautiful with relations –
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Ornament of the Assembly of saints and sages,
Destroyer of fear, Chastiser of the Spirit of Evil –
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Dispeller of weakness of soul and body,
Pouring out life for others, whose deeds are holy –
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Priest and Offerer of his own soul in agony,
Whose life is Sacrifice, Destroyer of sin's poison –
Victory to God, the God-Man.

Tender, beloved, Soother of the human heart,
Ointment of the eyes, Vanquisher of fierce death –
Victory to God, the God-Man.

1.

GOD

God exists as a trinity sometimes called **Saccinanānda**.
Sat = Being, cit = intelligence, anānda = joy.

In Christian terminology the trinity consists of the Father who is the I AM, the Son, Jesus Christ, who is the Wisdom or Word of God, and the Holy Spirit who is characterised by joy, peace and love.

Jesus the Word is from all eternity one with the Father in the Trinity, and yet for the sake of those who had fallen victim to the deceits and temptations of māyā-sakti, he entered the realm of māyā, coming to earth as **the true avatāra** who is fully man and fully God.

When the unmanifested becomes manifest,
when the avyakta becomes ayakta,
when Brahman becomes Ishvara,
when God is revealed in the face of Christ,
only then can men know Him as He is.

Jesus Christ is not merely a personal god (Ishvara),
he is not just an ista deva, a chosen deity,
he is not like Krishna who is an avatāra of Vishnu,
he is an **incarnation of God** himself,
the ultimate Truth, the Supreme Being.

No one has ever seen God.
God's only Son who is close to the Father's heart,
has made him known.
(John 1:18)

A personal God

Jesus, the eternal Son of God was born of a virgin as a human being.
He lived a perfect, sinless life in submission to God whom he called Father.
He can be loved and worshipped,
he can be approached with feelings of deep love and devotion

The study of God starts with the study of Christ,
and the knowledge of Christ starts with a personal experience of the indwelling Christ.

Jesus said: "the Father and I are One" (John 10:30) meaning that there is fusion between God and his human body. He also said: "The Father is greater than I" (John 14:28) meaning that as a man he is necessarily inferior to God.

Just as Jesus is united to God, so you can be united to Jesus by faith.

This faith-union (yoga) begins by rebirth and results in a new creation.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:
everything old has passed away;
see, everything has become new!
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Avatāras come and go, but Jesus lives on forever.

The historical Jesus is now our spiritual guide (antaryāmin).

The living Christ is a permanent union of God and man.

In union with him our spirit (ātman) is united to the Supreme Spirit (paramātman).

This is not absorption into God, but a spiritual union with him.

2.

KARMA

Man has lost true knowledge (nyāna) of God and is in bondage to ignorance (avidyā).

He is not ignorant because of māyā, he is ignorant of God's love and purpose for him.

The Bible expresses it this way:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
(Romans 3.23)

The problem of karma

God created man to have fellowship with him, but man went his own way and mankind is now characterized by:

1. Ignorance of the knowledge of God
2. Taking God for granted and/or disobedience to him
3. Falling short of God's standard

The Christian concept of **nyāna** (knowledge) is:

1. understanding God and oneself
2. understanding our wretched state
3. knowing the way of escape from it
4. knowing what we should and should not do

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
(Romans 6.23)

This spiritual death results from our sin and bad karma.

God loves us and offers us eternal life (eternal anānda) through Jesus Christ.

Bad karma results in separation from God,
so that one is not conscious of his presence.
Ultimately it means hell.

People seek to erase this karma by their own efforts:

- through knowledge (nyāna mārga)
- through good works (karma mārga)
- through religion (dharma mārga)
- through devotion (bhakti mārga)

but the only way to achieve moksha is through Jesus:

Those who believe in him are not condemned,
but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they
have not believed in the name
of the only Son of God.
(John 3:18)

Those who believe in Jesus, who find union with him, are freed from their karma, which he canceled, nailing it to the Cross. Those who reject Christ on the other hand, continue to be subject to the law of karma which is all the time judging them and awarding them the consequences of their deeds.

3.

MOKSHA

Jesus Christ is the way that God has given us to have our sins forgiven, to have our karma cancelled. Through him we can experience God's love and grace, and his purpose for our lives.

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, he was buried, and he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

(1 Corinthians 15.3-4)

The Cross reveals the tremendous cost which God paid for our redemption. It is our sin that has brought about the suffering and death of Jesus on the Cross. If God forgave without the Cross, he would be laying aside his own moral law which he has established among men.

Christ's death is the true nishkāmya kārma, the supreme act of self-denial.

The bhakta who is devoted to Christ must be conformed to Christ's pattern.

Jesus answered,

I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

(John 14.6)

Moksha (release or salvation) is to be found in union with the living Christ through faith. It is not absorption into God, but a loving personal union with the God-Man who said:

“Abide in me”

That is the chief purpose of man.

This union is a moral union based on love and obedience.

It is the harmony of the individual soul with the Divine Soul -

in thought and imagination

in purpose and will

in humble deed and adoring devotion

Moksha is expressed in the Bible as “eternal life”

Eternal life is the knowledge of God through union with Christ.

It is a continuous contact with Reality

It is personal, conscious and radiant with joy

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He who has the Son has life;

he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

(1 John 5.11-13)

4.

BHAKTI

Bhakti mārḡa is believing that God releases us through a saving relationship with himself. Jesus bhakti mārḡa is faith in salvation through the God-Man Jesus Christ, the Sat Guru.

Bhakti begins by receiving Jesus into your life

To all who **received** him,
to those who **believed** in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God.
(John 1.12)

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.
(Revelation 3.20)

This involves being born again, a spiritual rebirth, a change in the very substance of our being. It is the indwelling Spirit of God, rather than the sinful nature of man, who becomes the decisive factor in the life of the bhakta.

An unbeliever

- relies on himself
- is his own master
- goes his own way
- follows his own desires

A Jesus bhakta

- trusts Jesus for everything
- confesses Jesus as Lord
- is guided by God's Spirit
- is fulfilling God's purpose

What happens when you follow Jesus?

The day that you surrender to Jesus, the following things will happen:

1. Jesus enters your heart and your body becomes a temple of God.
2. Your sins are forgiven and your karma is cancelled.
3. You become a child of God, a member of God's family.
4. You receive eternal life and the peace and joy of God.
5. You start a new life in God's will.

A prayer of commitment

Lord Jesus, I believe in you. I praise you because you are the Supreme Being. Thank you for dying on the cross and paying the penalty for my sin and bad karma. I open my heart to you and receive you as my Saviour, my Guru and my Swāmi. Thank you for forgiving me and canceling my karma, and giving me eternal life. May your Spirit fill me with peace and joy in the consciousness of your presence. Give me your wisdom to help me change my life and live as you desire.

What helps a Jesus bhakta to grow?

1. Undivided devotedness to God (ananyabhakti)
2. Daily prayer
3. Daily meditation in the Bible
4. Following Jesus as a disciple
5. Humility (namrata) and forbearance (ksama)
6. Communion with God through His Spirit.
7. Turning one's back on the world (vairagya)
8. Handing all your problems over to God