

## Abstract No 04

### Bhakti in Śivānandalaharī

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*Bhakti* finds an important place in Hinduism. *Bhakti* is a Sanskrit word, which originates from the Sanskrit verb root भज् (bhaj). This means to divide, distribute, share with, enjoy, and so on. As such the word *bhakti* goes to mean distribution, partition and so forth. But the word *Bhakti* generally and most predominantly denotes devotion or attachment, faith or love towards God. Devotion is counted as a religious principle or means of salvation together with *Karman* (works) and *Jñāna* (spiritual knowledge). *Bhakti* is a sort of *bhāva* or indescribable feeling that arises through an uninterrupted relationship between human and God, which is called as an association between *Ātman* and *Brahman*. When a man loves the God eternally and unconditionally, it takes him to the state of *Bhakti*. In fact, this cannot be described in words, but has to be experienced. Many Hindu treatises deal with *Bhakti*. The *Srīmat Bhāgavata*, a famous *Vaiṣṇava* religious work, gives an utmost place to *Bhakti*. It emphasizes that there should not be any expectation or cause for *Bhakti*. It calls this as अहैतुकी भक्ति *Bhakti* should flow spontaneously and it should be an unconditional love towards God. *Bhagavadgita*, the well-known philosophical work in Sanskrit too defines and describes *Bhakti*, and further treats it as *Bhakti yoga*. *Nārada Bhakti Sūtra* and *śāandilya Bhakti Sūtra* also deal with *Bhakti*. *Śivānandalaharī* is a stotra literature, which is one of the compositions of Adi Śaṅkarācārya. In this, His Majesty praises Lord Śivā in hundred verses. The word *Śivānandalaharī* could be disjoined as Śivā + ānanda + laharī: ‘Śivā’ here means ‘Lord Siva’, ‘ānanda’ means ‘bliss or pure happiness’, and ‘laharī’ means ‘waves’. When one loves Lord Śivā or attached to Him out of devotion, he/she indulges in pure happiness. By putting the word *laharī*, Śaṅkarācārya aptly compares the experience of so called ‘bliss’ with the nature of the waves, which come uninterruptedly and unconditionally in the ocean. It is invariable, and it never retreats. In *Śivānandalaharī*, Śaṅkarācārya delineates the experience of bliss that arises through *Bhakti* towards Lord Śivā. This study would elaborate the unique verses in *Śivānandalaharī*, which specifically address *Bhakti*.

Keywords: *Bhakti*, *Hinduism*, *Śivānandalaharī*, Śaṅkarācārya